





# **SAINT YOGASWAMI**

**And**

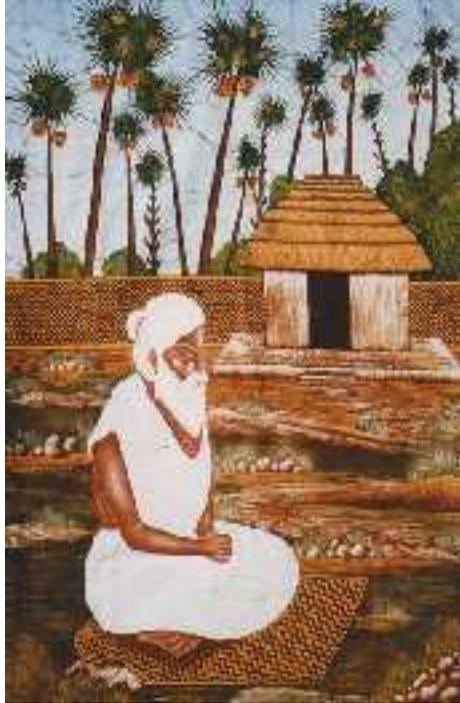
## **THE TESTAMENT OF TRUTH**

**ST. YOGASWAMI CENTENARY RELEASE**

Being a study of the Life and Teachings of Yogaswami with Selections from his poems and writings entitled Natchintanai translated into English from the original Tamil with a Philosophical commentary based on the Oral Transmission and Hindu Scriptures. By Ratna-Ma Chelliah Navaratnam, Former Director of Education, N.R., Ceylon.

# Testament of Truth

## A Study of the Life and Teachings of Yogaswami



With selections from his poems and writings entitled Natchintanai translated into English from the original Tamil with a Philosophical commentary based on the Oral Transmission and Hindu Scriptures. By Ratna-Ma Chelliah Navaratnam, Former Director of Education, N.R., Ceylon.



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# AUM

## A TRIBUTE

By

SWAMI PREMATMANANDA,  
Vice President and Head of the Ramakrishna  
Mission (Ceylon Branch)

The name of the venerable *Yoga Swami* has come to mean the wisdom of the ages. He is a Maha Purusha as defined in the Purusha Suktam, sung by the vedic Rishis. He is greater than his teachings, for He dwelt in the infinity of Truth, and in him was no falsehood. *Oru Pollappumillai* is the essence of his Upadesh.

I have known Swami for over half a century and held him in deep veneration as the Light of Truth. He lived in the simplest and humblest manner, a man among men, but with a halo of purity. He did not see evil anywhere and nowhere and so his counsel, gentle or very harsh, critical or forthright, made an abiding impression on me.

*St. Yoga Swami* and *The Testament of Truth* follows the two previous publications of *The Testament of Love*--A study in Tiruvacagam and *The Testament of Wisdom*--A study in Muruga worship, by the Author who with her pious husband--*Thiru* and *Ma* as they came to be known in Swami's circle of devotees--had the privilege of "sitting near devotedly" at the Guru's feet, in order to imbibe his nectar of Grace. Swami's songs of wisdom and truth entitled *Natchintanai* have been presented with great lucidity and humility by the Author in varying facets, and yet her different approaches meet in the arc of Oneness, that all is in each and each is in all.

***"Ekam Sat Vipra Bahudha Vadanti"***

**"Truth is One Sages call it by various names"**

This Book is released as a Centenary Memorial release in "profound gratitude and all consuming love to be relayed to Swami's ever widening circle of friends embracing the whole world," in the words of the dedicated writer. It is our pious hope that *The Testament of Truth* will be read with love and understanding by all those who have come under the spell of Swami's influence, and that His message of goodwill and harmony will be

carried to further shores of East and West. It is also our earnest wish that the idea of dedicated service conveyed by Swami in his life and utterances and termed *Sivathondu* by him, and transmitted by the Author in her own inimitable way, shall pave the path to the goal of Truth and establish Universal Peace among all the nations of the world.

A real study of Yoga Swami is first hand experience of God.

Ramakrishna Mission,  
(Ceylon Branch)  
Ramakrishna Road,  
Colombo 6. (Ceylon)

Vaikasi Visakam,  
26.5.1972

## THE MIRACULOUS PRESENCE

By

T. P. MEENAKSHISUNDARAN, M.A., M.L., M.O.L., D. Litt.,  
*Sometime Vice-Chancellor, Madurai University.*

St. YogaSwami of Lanka is a great saint of universal love--a true Siddha, in whom Love that is verily God blossomed forth in all its perfection. The feeling of oneness with the universe allows no running away from the society. Renunciation is not renouncing the world but the renunciation of the dichotomy born of the feeling of the *I* and the *mine*. Really the *I* is not in the centre but extends to the circumference when every living being becomes the sacred temple of that Love - God whose reflection is but the very *I*.

YogaSwami heard the desperate but unconscious call from those around him demanding his spiritual touch for healing the sufferings which are but the signs of the growth yet to be realised--a growth from the farthest stage of the mysterious evolution, back to the source through stages of involution. His heart rushed to their help. He was a yogi, a master of the spiritual science of Tantra, a great Jnani and withal a true example of a karma yogi, working for prohibition and other kinds of social, and therefore as he realised, of spiritual elevation of the poor and the down-trodden and through them for the whole humanity.

The strength of a chain is measured by its weakest link. How can the world be safe for peace and love as long as the sub-human men and women remain as they are? Now are the so-called "well to do and the educated" any better for they are but perversions developing more the outward form and the external behaviour allowing the heart and soul to atrophy and die as far as they are concerned. The conquest of the objective Nature has not brought us a corresponding conquest of the inward Nature--the revolting spirit of man. That is the crisis in the world of today. To the latter also, Swami was an eye-opener. His divine presence worked a subtle and a deep conversion, not only among the easterners but also among the westerners who came into contact with him. Out of his over-flowing kindness, he sent his embassy of Love which included the author of this book and her husband to distant England to carry and deliver the message of Saiva Siddhanta. *The Testament of Truth* is indeed a step in the right direction to carry out the Guru's mission of universal love and oneness to the further shores of the world.

The tired and weak, the hungry and the worried--spiritually, intellectually, mentally and physically--came to him as though to a mother. His piercing and glowing look of love plumbed the depth of their hearts and lo! there came peace and joy. It may look all madness. But to the worldly, the other world is all madness, and to the other worldly too, the world is all madness--so sings the great Alwar Saint Kulasekhara. YogaSwami used to sing the songs of the Tamil Saints and also his own songs from *Natchintanai* and he made us also sing in his presence. The words which we previously thought we had understood completely were in those moments with him, infused in a new dimension of immeasurable depth, which we could not clearly express, though experiencing the truth of the songs in his mysterious presence.

He arranged *pada yatras* or walking on foot by *Sivathondars* from village to village on Sundays, which stirred the dumb millions to a spiritual awakening of love. He started a Journal to spread the message of *Sivathondu*. He spurred us all to study the great spiritual heritage of the Tamilians truly and calmly, never disturbed by dogmatic assertions of commentators. He gave his gospel of *Natchintanai* in Tamil in simple poetry of divine intoxication to be sung by all, young and old, educated and un-educated. His physical garb is no more but his eternal presence hovers about us all. May his miraculous presence help us to live and work as he desired!

In her Book, Mrs. Ratna Navaratnam has with a fine sensibility dwelt on Swami's magical-play or *leela* of the One--as the one and many, as the immanent and the transcendental, as the world and the beyond, as the Absolute and the relative, as the joy and the sorrow, all somehow harmonised in that Whole of the Supreme--*Muluthum Unmai*. He knew as we did not, that there was nothing wrong anywhere, *Oru Pollappumillai*, that everything was good and that the secret of it all was to be quiet, *Summa Iru*--by drowning ourselves in It, or surrendering everything unto It, allowing It to work at Its best without our obstructions and grumblings which would mean nothing.

It is my sincere wish that this Book will carry the message of this great Teacher to all English speaking friends throughout the world.

June 5th, 1972.

## PREFACE

By

V. SIVA SUPRAMANIAM,  
*President, All Ceylon Hindu Congress,*  
*Judge of the Court of Appeal,*  
*Member, Constitutional Court of Sri Lanka*

For over half a century a spiritual beacon burnt brightly at the unpretentious Ashram at Columbuturai, in Jaffna, and the effulgent beams of light emanating from it illumined not merely this small island of ours but reached countries far beyond. Many a weary traveller found the Path he was seeking for by the aid of those resplendent rays. Though the physical form of that beacon can no longer be seen, the spiritual aura that enveloped it continues to be as radiant as ever and serves as a guide to many.

St. Yoga Swami who shed that spiritual light showed the Path towards Self Realisation to his devotees principally through his sublime songs--called *Natchintanai*--which are veritable treasures of thought and of language. These songs contain the distilled essence of the Vedanta and Saiva Siddhanta systems of Hindu philosophy. The Sage saw no conflict between the two systems. The exquisite language, the haunting melodies and the lucidity with which the steps towards Self realisation are unfolded fill the devotee with ecstatic rapture.

In this work "*St. YogaSwami and the Testament of Truth*" Mrs. Ratna Navaratnam presents to the English speaking world some of the treasures contained in *Natchintanai*. There is none better qualified than Mrs. Navaratnam to have undertaken this task. Apart from her scholarship in both Tamil and English language and literature, and her deep knowledge of the Hindu shastras and Philosophy, she is one who has enjoyed in ample measure the Swami's Grace for over forty years and, as such, is specially qualified to interpret the Message of the Master.

In her translations of the selections from the *Natchintanai*, Mrs. Navaratnam has succeeded in capturing the spirit as well as the harmonious melody of the original without straying far from the text. This is a most creditable achievement. The classification of the subject matter under separate headings and the admirable commentaries under each head, along with the translations of the songs, enable the reader to unravel with ease the

intricacies of Saiva metaphysics and at the same time to get a glimpse of the greatness of *Natchintanai*--an undoubted masterpiece of devotional literature.

As in her valuable work on *Tiruvacagam--The Hindu Testament of Love--*, Mrs. Navaratnam has adopted an unique line of treatment of her subject and her analysis is both penetrating and refreshing. Her parallel quotations from various sources, both of the East and of the West reveal a wide range of scholarship and research and enhance considerably the value of the work.

We cannot be sufficiently grateful to Mrs. Navaratnam for this very welcome addition to the religious literature of the world.

Vaikasi Purnami--1972  
4, Horton Terrace,  
Colombo 7.

## FOREWORD

By

Dr. T. M. P. MAHADEVAN

*Director*

*Centre of Advanced Study in Philosophy,  
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Human birth, longing for liberation, and association with a great man--these three things, says Sri Sankara, are rare indeed, and come to one as a result of the grace of God. It was my good fortune to have known Saint Siva Yogaswami of Columbuturai who was, and still continues to be, a source of tremendous spiritual influence on many a spiritual aspirant of the Hindu faith, although his physical frame has disappeared.

As in the case of many other saints, the early life of this illustrious saint, popularly known as the Sage of Columbuturai, is shrouded in mystery. We do not know much about his early life excepting that he was born in a Saivite family on May 29, 1872 in the village of Mavidapuram off the Northern Coast of Yalpanam, that he was not interested in his studies at school, and that while he was working as a storekeeper he used to spend his leisure time in reading and enjoying the Saiva literature to which he was drawn, and that he became a disciple of Chellappa Swami of Nallur. Sri Siva Yogaswami acknowledges very frequently his gratitude to his *guru*, Chellappa Swami, "the crescent jewel of grace," who showed him the way of bliss and made him attain, through his grace, wisdom and joy. From the year 1934 when he started the religious journal, *Sivathondan*, till March 24, 1964 when he attained *videha-mukti*, he was spreading religious fervour and spiritual awakening among all those who had the good luck to come under his benign influence.

*The Testament of Truth* written by Mrs. Ratna Navaratnam, a devotee of the Sage of Columbuturai, contains not only an outline of the life of Sri Siva Yogaswami and the important landmarks in his career, but also an account of his teachings based on *Natchintanai*.

The central teaching of the Swami is contained in an aphoristic declaration, "*muluthum unmai*," which means: "All that is, is Truth absolute." Sri Siva Yogaswami insisted on the importance of the practice of dharma and the need for grace of the *guru* to guide us in our life spiritual. A realised soul

that he was, he was able to convey profound truths through simple, but effective language. Consider, for instance, the way in which he testifies to the marvel which the grace of his spiritual preceptor has worked on him as recorded in *Natchintanai*.

The Swami was never tired of saying that renunciation and service go together. To him, service to the people is service to *Siva, siva-thondu*. His was a life of service to the ideal which was dear to his heart.

Mrs. Navaratnam has done a valuable service to the cause of spirituality in general, and to Saivism in particular, by writing this book which can be characterised as a meditation on the life and teachings of St. Siva Yogaswami who, in his own inimitable way, restated in *Natchintanai* the wisdom contained in the Vedas and Agamas. It will be obvious to everyone who reads *Natchintanai* that every word of the Swami is based on his authentic spiritual experience.

I heartily commend Mrs. Navaratnam's book *The Testament of Truth* to all those who are interested in the spiritual heritage of Hinduism of which St. Siva Yogaswami was a living exemplar in our times.

University Buildings,  
Madras--5.

Adi Pirappu, 1972.

## SIVAMAYAM

“Hiranmayena pâtrena satyasyâpihitam mukham  
Tat tvam pûsan apâvrnu satyadharmâya drstaye.”

*“The face of Truth is hidden by thy golden orb, O Sun.  
That do thou remove, in order that I whose law of  
Being is Truth may behold its glory.”*

*--Isa Upanishad. 15.*

Saha nâv avatu, saha nau bhunaktu,  
saha vîryam karavâvahai,  
te jasvinâv adhitam astu, mâ vidvisâvahai,  
Aum, Santih, Santih, Santih.

*May the Supreme Truth protect us both--Guru and Sishya  
May we together experience the bliss of Truth:  
May we create a channel of divine energy;  
May we be endowed with the lustre of wisdom.  
May there be no discordance between us.  
Aum, Peace, Peace, Peace.*

*--Taittiriya Upanishad. II.I Invocation.*

*“They are God to me who on Him meditate  
Day and night drawing nigh unto Him, nigher  
As the light within their eye; The essence of thought,  
The Absolute Truth gleaming in the etheric space.”*

*--Tayumanavar--268.*

We take up the symphony of *Natchintanai*-- The Testament of Truth--  
(Tirumantram 123) articulated by the profound Yogiswara, our *NatGuru*,  
*Siva YogaSwami* who saw Truth in its many facets, as well as experienced  
It, in consonance with his Guru's *Mahavaakiam*--”*Muluthum Unmai*--All  
that is, is Truth Absolute,”

**“Open the eyes that give insight into the Testament of  
Truth”.**

*--Natchintanai. 269*

Swami has testified the vision of Truth--the Supreme *Param Porul*-communicated by the Vedas and Agamas, and opens new vistas for the mind of man. Truth is the same in whatever pathways the mind might approach It.

The act of 'sitting near the SatGuru devotedly,' which is the true meaning of the term 'Upanishad,' has been our sanctified source to unravel ever so dimly even, the *Anmopanishad* that is *Natchintanai*, the Word of Swami.

*“He who transcends the seen came down on earth  
As a Guru to abide in the hearts of the virtuous,  
And illumined them by His gracious Love.  
The peerless Siva is the matchless NatGuru.”*

*--Tirumantram. 1576.*

Thus do we begin our contemplation on the *Testament of Truth*, and invoke the fulfilment of our NatGuru's testimony:

**“The songs of Swami Yoganathan  
Shall reveal the beautiful Path.  
They'll fill thee with ambrosial bliss  
Till you breathe, and crown thee  
With the truth of Aham Brahmasmi.”**

*--Natchintanai. 172.*

Thy Grace we implore in the *Anma-Yagjna* that we undertake in all humility and dedication:

Oh Flawless One!

Thou didst illumine me  
As day by day I came to Thee,  
And tasted thy manna of Grace  
Whence the fickle mind was stilled  
By the gaze of thy luminous Eye.

Oh Treasure of Love!

Thou art the Wealth of devotees true  
The luminous Light of yogic seers.  
Thou supernal Bliss that abideth

Ne'er separating from my inner soul,  
Lo, That art Thou and Thine am I.

Oh Resplendent GuruGem!

Who taught me the truth of the Vedas,  
The perennial secret of Upanishad core,  
The embodied essence of the Saiva Agamas,  
In that simple song of *Sivam art All*.  
Obeisance unto Thy fragrant Feet.

## OUR SUBMISSION

The *Testament of Truth* is an attempt to convey the incommunicable elixir, undying and inexhaustible (Amrtattva) that poured forth from Siva YogaSwami of Lanka. His timeless nature is that of the *Now* without duration, of which we who can only think in terms of past and future have not and cannot have experience; and from him all things proceed and in him all are unified at last. In the words of Dr. Ananda Coomaraswamy, "His kiss who is both Love and Death awakens us to know the Self and his love bite is being there."

No attempt has been made however to analyse the sources of *Swami's Marga*. It is enough for us to take it as it comes to us and hear the lovely music in the truths he sang, to try to live the life of inspired service--*Sivathondu*--and practical devotion which he taught. For these things the world will always be in debt to Siva YogaSwami.

In this book of the Testament of Truth has been recorded Swami's Life and Songs and message to the world under twenty headings. An account of the most important landmarks in His spiritual career, as well as significant events that touched the writer's orbit of experience have been outlined as a framework to his *Natchintanai* Songs. Swami has expressed his deepest insights in Songs, the accents of which range from the lyrical to the mystic and high philosophic. Those in the present Volume which include a hundred Songs and a portion of his Prose discourses and Letters have been carefully selected to show every facet of his teachings.

Some of these Songs have been translated by us in verse form and some in poetic prose, and the *Mahavaakiam*--the centrifugal force of Swami's message--has been transcribed and translated so as to retain the original flavour, while uniformity of expression has been made secondary to clarity of thought. Thus it will be seen that a certain elaboration was inevitable in order to make comprehensible to the English reader, the background-perspective of our highly developed tenets of the Saiva Religion; yet this with due knowledge of the indigenous tradition and veneration for the peculiar 'Guru Paramparai' initiated by the eminent Kadai Swami, the Preceptor of Sage Chellappa Swami, the exalted Guru of Maha Siva YogaSwami.

Our aim therefore in the *Natchintanai* translations has not been to achieve a literal rendering, but rather, to convey in clear and simple English the sense

and spirit of the original. Original terms with spiritual connotations have been retained, so that the readers might benefit from the association with which usage has already enriched the English language. The recurrent benedictions like *Santam Upasantam*, *Aum Tat Sat*, *Siva Siva Sivayave*, *Namasivaya*, have been retained to suggest the mode of information. A certain running commentary became necessary in order to make comprehensible in English language, the mystic imagery and the subtleties of the Saiva Metaphysics, enshrined in Swami's Songs.

We have humbly striven for over forty years to imbibe the gnosis of Swami by meditation on his Vâc, sitting near devotedly and imploring his ambrosial grace for a true understanding of his expression of divine truth. We have concentrated on those select and delectable poems which Swami made us sing frequently in his Ashram, in order to convey to the reader the splendour of him whose *Natchintanai* reflect the glory of the Saiva tradition in which he lived and moved. *Natchintanai* opens out a way, so old and yet so new, for the attainment of Siva. A full understanding of this, no translation can impart faithfully. It requires a life-time of continual application.

The sectional headings indicate the dominant themes and the angles of approach to the NatGuru's Reflections of Grace. All That Is, is Truth Absolute--*Muluthum Unmai*--has been the determining axis of our meditative study.

The Testament of Truth deals pre-eminently with the Lyric of the Living Presence of the *Yogi of Lankapuri*. By his *Anma Yagjna*, he establishes the integrity of his being. His encounter with the Guru marks the end of a phase of bewilderment of the divided self, and the stepping into the phase of the knowledge of the Self--*Anma Jnanam*, leading to the recovery of the wholesome self. Perennial is the *Guru Amrtattvam* transmitted to him by Sage Chellappah Swami.

***Oru Pollappumillai*--Intrinsic evil there is not.**

***Eppavo Mudintha Kariyam*--Accomplished is His Will.**

***Naam Ariyom*--We know not.**

***Muluthum Unmai*--All that is, is Truth Absolute.**

The Testament of Truth reflects St. Yoga Swami's over-whelming experience of the Real in direct knowledge and his attainment of the Luminous Feet of Siva. His realisation of *Siva Jnanam* in the blessed land

of Lanka, where the Divine Mother's Lila illuminated the *Theradi* at Nallur and the Way to Columbuturai, is revealed with wondrous sight and insight in the *Anmopanishad* that is *Natchintanai*.

In time and eternity shall resound with infinite value and meaning, the *Guru Vaakiam* of Siva Yoga Swami.

***Thanai Ari--Know Thyself***  
***Sarvam Sivamayam--Sivam art all.***  
***Summa Iru--Be still.***  
***Ellam Sivan Seyal--Siva's Will be done.***

They signify the essence of the Oral Transmission and the core of his teachings. “Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.”

*“As smoke and sparks arise from a lighted fire  
kindled with damp fuel, even so, Maitreyi,  
have been breathed forth from the Eternal  
all knowledge and all wisdom . . . . They are the  
Breath of the Eternal.”*

*--Brihadaranyaka Upanishad.*

In whatever way we may try to apprehend Swami, the Peerless Siva YogaSwami, we can never do so in the perfection of his real Being, rendering each of our ventures to achieve success in a way incomprehensive. Nevertheless our knowledge of him circumscribed by our individual approach is not at the same time completely false, for each one sees in him only what he can see with his own particular conditioning at a particular moment. To each according to his measure of love and understanding and need will be revealed the profound meaning of Swami's utterances. No two persons can say that they have understood alike.

This reminds us of a passage in the Upanishads:

Gods, men and asuras--all three descendants of Prajapati lived with him for a time as students.

Then the *Gods* said: “Teach us, Sir.” In reply Prajapati uttered one syllable: ‘*Da.*’ Then he said: “Have you understood?” They answered, “Yes, we have understood. You said to us ‘*Damayata*’--“Be Self controlled.” “Yes,” agreed Prajapati, “You have understood.”

Then the *men* said: “Teach us, Sir.” Prajapati uttered the same syllable: 'Da.' Then he said: “Have you understood?.” They answered, “Yes, we have understood. You said to us 'Datta'--“Be charitable.” “Yes,” agreed Prajapati, “You have understood.”

Then the *asuras* said: “Teach us, Sir.” Prajapati uttered the same syllable: 'Da.' Then he said, “Have you understood?.” They said, “Yes, we have understood. You told us “*Dayadwam*”--“Be compassionate.” “Yes,” agreed Prajapat, “You have understood.”

The *Anmopanishad* on *Anmanathan's Natchintanai*--The Testament of Truth--is an act of *Anma Yagjna* to the Guru for his countless mercies and infinite forbearance at our imperfections.

**Verily He is Truth--The Testament of Truth is Swami.**

### **FOR EVER AND EVER**

**The unseen Feet which Kannan failed to perceive afford us protection. Aum.**

**The revealing Feet that link heaven and earth in Oneness art our protection. Aum.**

**The peerless Feet that can fathom the minds of all afford us protection. Aum.**

**The goodly Feet that inspire the vac of the devout art our protection. Aum.**

**The beauteous Feet unaffected by good and evil afford us protection. Aum.**

**The animating Feet that perform the cosmic dance art our protection. Aum.**

**The blessed Feet that art the essence of all afford us protection. Aum.**

*--Natchintanai. 264.*

**Guide Radiant Feet of God, guide thou us on!**

*--Ratna Navaratnam*

## THE PROLOGUE

*“Infuse in me the Wisdom to delineate Thee  
as Thou art,*

*“For unspeakable is the communion with Thee,  
Surpassing the summation of all other experiences.”*

*--Tiruvacagam 22. 3.*

THE Dance of Wisdom--*Jnana Nadanam*, moved in melodic progression on the wave length of light and sound. It was set in motion by Siva, who manifested as *Dakshinamurti*, Master of wisdom's bliss under the banyan tree and transmitted down the ages by the Vedas, the Upanishads and the Agamas. Its symphony was taken in this *Kali-Yuga* (Dark Age) by Siva-Guru YogaSwami of Lanka and resounded in his *Natchintanai*--The Testament of Truth.

The resonance of *Natchintanai* echoes far and near, within and without. How shall we ponder on It? We recall St. Manicavasagar's prayer in *Tiruvacagam* quoted above, to infuse the light of Wisdom to unravel the hidden truths of God-realisation. In equal measure do we too offer the sacrifice of self for the unction of his sanctifying Grace, at the Feet of the Master Sivathondan, who was fondly addressed by his devotees as SWAMI. We join the chorus with the renowned author of *Tiruvacagam*, in his supplication for the illuminating Grace of the God-Guru.

*“Thou art the desirable acme of Wisdom.  
All that we desire Thou dost grant,  
Yet art Thou aloof to Brahma and Vishnu  
Who desireth Thee. Ever my humble service  
Thou did'st desire. In Thee was a desire  
For me, and in me was a desire for Thee.  
If ever I should desire for aught,  
E'en that'll chime with what thou desireth.”*

*--Tiruvacagam. 33. 6.*

## THE GENESIS OF NATCHINTANAI

*Natchintanai* unravels the profound fount of grace, wisdom and love, that flowed from the lofty Seer of Columbuturai. In the language of the heart,

Swami kindles the flame of Truth, and recollects in tranquility the intimations of Grace transmitted to him by his peerless Guru, Sage Challappa Swami of Nallur.

These gems captivate the attention of one and all by the elegance of language, the exquisite grace of diction and the musical inflow of syllable into syllable and line into line. Swami has clothed the esoteric meaning of the *Sanatana Dharma* in poems strikingly sweet and fascinating. His words speak from the heart to the heart. They fall like petals of flowers on the shrine of his adoration, and the appeal is from the aesthetic to the spiritual. We behold Swami the poet in the saint, the mystic seer in the mellifluous singer.

His word-garlands are woven cadences for the peerless worship of the God-Guru, wherein is communicated the actualities of life's experiences covered with the mantle of an inimitable grace, like that of St. Manicavasagar in the poetry of *Tiruvacagam*. Swami has translated the truths of Saiva religion and metaphysics into matchless poetry of flawless charm, that accounts for its living influence and immense popularity among all sections of the people, where the Tamil language is spoken and read.

These poems popularly designated as *Natchintanai*, were sung over the years by Swami, but they began to appear regularly in the religious journal called *Siva Thondan* which he inaugurated in 1935. Every issue carried one of his songs as the special feature. Moreover, his spontaneous utterances were recorded by his devotees in the course of his itinerary in Ceylon and India, and during his periodic visits to his devotees living in the different parts of Ceylon. These compositions were in private circulation only, and a few select devotees collected and recorded them in manuscript form and cherished them dearly as their spiritual manna.

Many a time was the Master approached for his sanction to publish these Reflections of Grace for the benefit of all seekers after Truth, as did the followers of Guru Nanak in compiling the *Guru Granth*. For reasons unknown to us, Swami withheld his permission over the years. When the question of publication was again taken up after the *Sivarathiri* fast in February 1955, he sang that hymn where St. Tayumanavar delineates the God-realised Seer, who sheds off all forms of distinctions, and undisturbed enjoys the beatific communion with the ParaSivam:

*“To caste or class, he lays no claim,*

*Or note of character or name;  
He knows not any need.  
No stir of passion doth he feel,  
Or of possession's strong appeal.  
He knows not the lure of gain or greed.  
He is not bound by comings and goings,  
And ties of home hath no hold on him.  
For he has found rest from all sorrow freed.  
Matchless is the glory of him  
Who is deemed to be ParaSivam  
Who endows the bliss of Mukti.”*

*--Tayumanavar. 351.*

So singing, he signified to my husband and my brother who had taken up the request with the Guru, that the harmony of Oneness should not be disturbed; and so the publication of the *Natchintanai* collection of songs was again postponed indefinitely.

It was the year 1957. In one of those unforgettable visits to his Columbuturai Ashram from our sphere of work in Colombo, we prayed for his Grace and renewed our request for the compilation of his precious utterances for the benefit of the devout seekers scattered far and wide. The experience of St. Sundarar was revived, when we sang his Tiruvarur Devaram of *Meela Adimai Umake Aallaai*, and consecrated the servitude of many births at his Feet.

“Cast ye pearls by the wayside? Who can assimilate what is beyond assimilation? Indigestion will lead to putrefaction. Who knows? We do not know.” Such was the Guru's reaction to our repeated and persistent appeals.

The Knower knows best. The knocking at the Sun-door ceased for awhile. Meantime *Ma* fulfilled the wish of her father to make an intensive study of *Tiruvacagam*, by writing a thesis on St. Manicavasagar's Testament of Love. This work was completed, and as publication was arranged with the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan in Bombay, *Ma* was in India in December 1957. While she was in Madras, there came the unexpected relay from her husband that Gurunathan had at last given his consent so precious to publish the *Natchintanai* collection in India, and that it should not carry any foreword or preface. It was a singularly blessed act of Grace!

The work was undertaken in all reverential humility as an act of dedication, and the collection of *Natchintanai* songs which were preserved in manuscript form was handed to the Vasantha Press, Adyar, who printed it in record time, so that on *Tiruvarthirai* day in December 1958, the Book of *Natchintanai*, the garland of woven cadence was laid at his Feet. He bade *Ma* sing the songs beginning from the first page up to the eighty fifth page of the book and ordered its release to the devotees at the forthcoming *Sivarathiri* week in February 1959. Indelible is the genesis of the publication and release of *Natchintanai*, and it marked the beginning of a significant phase of dedication in the history of *Sivathondan*.

The *Guru Vaakiam* of Siva YogaSwami, constituting the *Natchintanai* embody the ancient Hindu doctrine of the ultimate nature of Reality. Swami seeks to dispel the cloud of unknowing from the face of the Sun of Truth, by working on the mystic formula of God Is --*Muluthum Unmai*--Absolute Truth to a realised Seer. It is the sanctified mantra given him by the Mahaguru, Sage Chellappa Swami of Nallur. In the kingdom of Truth, there can be no intrinsic evil--*Oru Pollappumillai*. Denial of truth would savour of falsehood. Hence dualism is unknown to a realised Sage and Seer. The profundity of divine Grace shall for ever remain unfathomable--*Aar Arivaar?* The *Atma* cannot know, so long as it is attached to the phenomena of the senses--We know not--*Naam Ariyom*. The mind and ego must be stilled, so that by self realisation and the descent of Grace, *Saktinipada*, can be effected the attainment of *Siva-Jnanam*--everlasting existence, transcendent consciousness and ineffable bliss. *Eppavo mudintha kaariyam--Appadiye ullathu--*'That is what It is.'

The unique charm of The Testament of Truth is that it radiates a new power of sight. Swami's utterances magnify the "effulgence of the Seeing Eye", the light of the Grace of Siva. And whom He chooses, him He gives at once freedom from desire and power to know. Thus guided with heart and head consecrated to Him alone, the Perfection of all That is, one gains the infinite calm, the serene peace, perfect peace-- "*santam, upasantam.*" Such a 'See-er' is the scribe of Eternal Truth, the author of the Reflections called *Natchintanai*.

The billows of luminosity and waves of pure vibrations radiate from those gems of *Natchintanai* selected by us for establishing the Testament of Truth. They exalt the ParamaGuru Sage Chellappa Swami, and his Maha Vaakiam; they extol the eternal essence of the *Anma*--the wisdom of the Self within the self, and revel in the *Advaitic* relationship of the *Anma* with

the Lord. They inspire in us a yearning for the discipline of service unto Siva indicated by the term *Sivathodu*, as carried out by the legion of the followers of Siva called the *Sivathodar*. Yet all these radiations are focussed on the centrifugal force, the determining centre of *Natchintanai*, which revolves on the axis that Siva's will prevails in the Kingdom of Truth.

His Will is the propelling energy, the lifetron in all planes of existence, in all planes of consciousness, and in infinitude. His Will is the invisible and visible support of Existence and Consciousness of man and the world-  
-“*Ellaam sivan seyale*”

In the perfection of Siva's Will, which can be perceived by the realised seers on the edifice of immaculate purity, illumined Truth, and beatific grace, there lies the award of eternal Love and serene Peace. Swami declares it as the state of “*Summa Iru--Ellaam Nan Mona Niraive.*” The liberated *Anma* realises that there can be no intrinsic evil, that absolute is Truth, and from everlasting to everlasting is the vibration of *Aum Tat Sat*-That alone is Real. Swami's Reflections thus communicate a tranquil peace which has a transcendental and numinous value, unknown to those who have not been infused by the purifying waters of the Guru's Grace.

The tuneful chants of *Natchintanai* kindle the invincible power of Grace, wherein the heart of man weighed by the density of darkness is turned to the light of Siva. Here is the affirmation of Swami:

**“The single Word hath purified my dross,  
Sing the soulful incantation of Siva, Siva . . .  
Enraptured in an ecstasy, Siva, Siva,  
By constancy of love do I apprehend  
Yet in trepidation, I gaze at nothing.  
Magnificent indeed is the mystery,  
Baffling the ken of e'en the realised seers.”**

*--Natchintanai. 18.*

## THE WORD IS GOD

Each of our selection can be termed a *mantra*, as it emanates healing powers. When the world burdens us by the weight of its matter, we go to Swami's songs to soothe our mind and hearts. The impurity in our hearts burns up, and they begin to glow like the sunkist lotus. The incantation

provides a discipline of life inspired by passionate devotion to Siva, and guided by the example of the Guru's own life. It shows the way to Siva--Realisation through loving remembrance of His name, the letters Five.

*Vac* is represented in Rg. Veda 1.3.12 as omnipotentia and as conjoint principle with intellect. *Vac* is the *Sophia* of Dante, equating with wisdom. Wisdom is the mother of all first principles. *Vac* is also the divine thought of Him who set the universe in motion. It is the principle controlling the universe and is called Logos. This logos is a law, an irresistible force which bears along the entire world and all creatures to a common end. It is an inevitable and holy law from which nothing can withdraw itself.

Thus it is that the distinctive norm of our *Natchintanai* selections is the revelation of the Oneness of all things, that all is in each and each is in all.

**“In the core of the individual being, blossomed always  
The fragrant and protecting Feet of Siva.”**

*--Natchintanai. 156.*

The constricted consciousness of man is expanded to the universal, so that he sees all in Himself and Himself in all. This vision of non-duality is expressed in many a gem of Swami's Garland of Songs:

The Upanishad-Seers too raised the prayer for the liberation from the play of opposites and duality in the dawn of history.

“Asato ma sad gamaya,  
Tamaso ma jyotir gamaya.  
Mrtyor ma mrtam gamaya.

*From the unreal lead me to the Real.  
From darkness lead me to light.  
From death lead me to Immortality.”*

In the Ashram before the living presence of Swami, the melody of *Natchintanai* songs would waft their fragrance night and day. They ignited the hearts of the listeners, dispelled the gloom of the singers, and revitalised the harmony of *Sivathondar* for *Sivathondu*--consecrated offerings of service unto Siva who art All.

It was his wont to strike the first note and he lead the choir. His singing

stirred the hearts of even the most dormant ones aflame with love and devotion meek. With what gusto did we join in the chorus day by day, and sing the songs of Eternal Truth, Wisdom and Love, face to face with the Subject of adoration, commingling with the object of Knowledge! The Sun of Grace cannot now be discerned in the physical plane. In profound gratitude and an all-consuming love, we take up the symphony of *Natchintanai* to be played to a wider circle of 'His Friends,' embracing progressively those with the common background of Hindu Culture, and the tradition of the *Sanatana Dharma* in our own land of Lanka, our motherland of India, and encompassing finally the whole world.

**“Shall we not invoke the name of Siva and gain clarity?  
Shall we not rejoice in His gracious Feet?  
Never shall we forget to offer the blooms of grateful love.  
To far off lands shall we traverse in the service of Siva.”**

*--Natchintanai 60.*

*The Testament of Truth is an attempt at communication of the Divine Word of God recorded by an illumined Guru. Its truth is verifiable in one's own personal experience. “Come unto Him all ye who are weary and He will give you the nectar of Natchintanai.” Therefore a detailed, analytic study with too literal a translation in an alien idiom was not attempted, as it would tend to detract from its original spontaneity. We have striven to imbibe the teachings of Swami by meditating on his Vac and supplicating his perennial grace, for only then can one however dimly, perceive the lustre of his pearls of wisdom.*

The translation of the most cherished of the *Natchintanai* songs has not been an easy task. The style adopted in our translation is poesy by courtesy and poetic prose, in order to give a similar experience that the lucid language of the songs communicates to the Tamilian of today. Many of the songs are deceptively simple, and upon more mature consideration will be found to enshrine profound spiritual truths. And though the pathways of St. Manicavasagar and Siva YogaSwami separate, who is to say that they do not ultimately converge? Sage Chellappa Swami left not himself without a witness.

In this spirit of self abnegation, we undertake a *Jnana Yagjna* by offering our *Odes of Dedication* at His Lotus Feet:

## THE PRELUDE

Reposing in the lap of the Divine Mother,  
She relished the nectar of His songs.  
Speechless, she gazed at the pole star.  
But soon He bade her haste in pious speed,  
At sunset hour to far off climes,  
With bondsmen four to speak *Siddhanta*.  
Here and there, His pool of grace she tapped.  
And raised aloft the flag of *Sivathondan*.  
This buoyant band had not respired in vain,  
Torch bearers of His holy mission Westward.  
Then came the Dawn when He mingled with Savitur.  
In that sunrise hour did the lotus bloom  
'Midst caverns filled with streams of love,  
Where rocked the Babe of *Natchintanai* sweet.

## ANMA DARSHAN

The azure of the void lay in quiescence  
Whence gleamed forth the beam of light,  
The harbinger of the dawn of Grace divine.  
The depths were stirred, the gods awakened,  
The enchanting seeds of earth bloomed aloft  
And danced around the myriad rays of light.

The auspicious Eye smiled upon her.  
Her golden mien filled with power divine  
As the crescent moon held the serpent twined,  
And within her did vibrate the lute of love,  
that played its tune to cosmic measure  
And set the chords of music manifold.

He willed, and lo the winkless Eye  
Gazed at her who did so ignite  
Into myriad forms of life, *Svaha!*  
And all glory lay at His Feet, *Svaha!*

The smile of love filled the void of life,  
As the white lotus touched the red lotus bud.

She felt the quiver and trembled,  
At the beauty of the formless beaming into form.  
Who is She and who art Thou? Oh unique One!  
The same that art enshrined in every heart,  
The same that suffers birth and death,  
The same that broods in silence beyond space.

In Immanence Thou did'st float from Oneness,  
Oh *Shakshat Paramesvara*, aura of *Jyothi-Aham!*  
To unite with *Shakshat Paramesvari*, *Svaha*.  
Thou art Sivam, Thou art Sakti!  
Mother of gods and man, and Guru gem!  
Hail *Sivathondan* of empyrean heights!

Thy whispering word of farewell  
All's right; All's Sivam-- "*Ellaam Sari*"  
Art enshrined in letters of gold--*Svaha*.  
She looked on while into midnight blue He rose,  
And blurred was her gaze with drops of grace,  
When the seeing Eye mingled in the luminous Orb!

Her glistening vision melted into a tear, *Svaha*.  
A tear that was a ransom for the past, *Svaha*.  
And a promise of the future, *Svaha*.

### CONSECRATION

All that we are springs from thy Grace,  
Thou source of our Life, Love and Light.  
In seven births upon seven were we Thine,  
Thou the giver and we the receiver.

OM tat Sat OM!

We see the dark valley of doubt and fear.  
The past dissolves, and those happy yesterdays  
give place to irksome todays and uncertain morrows,  
Where, Oh where art concealed our divine Songster?  
OM Tat Sat OM!

Alas, Sun of life who leads us  
By the light of thy benign rays.

Shake our gloom and fearful ways,  
Make thy bondsmen bask in thy warmth.

OM Tat Sat OM!

In the vale of separation, all things looked darksome and the next step came to a halt in an anguish of indecision. Then it was that *Ma's* brother sent this Poem on *The Maha Samadhi*, and helped her in bringing out the Testament of Truth, as a way of renewing the pledge that “*Now stands He, self revealed as God.*”

### THE MAHA SAMADHI

Realisation, Infinite, Supreme  
Above the world, whose region is the *Atma*,  
where lives eternal Truth supreme  
As boundless Freedom, like a shoreless sea,  
That hath this Sage become.  
With the passing of the body unto death  
His soul on purest thought did rise  
To that height where thought is dead  
And Wisdom doth alone endure;  
It rose, emancipated from form,  
On argent wings of great celestial Peace  
Into that vastness of the everlasting Self  
Whose Form is radiance Eternal,  
Whose soul, Realisation Infinite;  
It rose above the world to God.  
Scattered are the many earthly bonds  
Which made the personality of him--  
*Now stands He, Self revealed, as God.*  
In life He taught 'Om Tat Sat Om'  
Whose Consciousness is Everlasting Life,  
Now--the Truth 'Om Tat Sat Om'  
With him 'Sivoham' is verily become.  
He, the *Jnanin* in *Jnanam* hath been merged.  
The *Jnanin* and the Lord are now One Indeed,  
In the Light which is *Satchitananda*--All Hail,  
Above the gloom of ignorance of this Vale of tears.

C.T.

24th March, 1964.

At the close of this testimony of unimpeachable faith in the God-Guru, we can faithfully re-echo Dante's famous lines in the Divine Comedy, as we begin our ascent up the mount of *Natchintanai*--The Testament of Truth.

*“I have been in that heaven the most illumined  
By light from Him and seen things which to utter,  
He who returns hath neither skill nor knowledge.  
For as it nears the object of its yearning,  
Our intellect is overwhelmed so deeply  
It never can retrace the path it followed.  
But whatsoever of the holy Kingdom  
Was in the power of memory to treasure  
Will be my theme until the song is ended.”*

*“Behold, before me stand  
Both my Guru and the Lord.  
At whose Feet shall I prostrate?  
At the Feet of thy guru, O disciple  
For was it not he alone  
Who lighted thy way to the Lord.”*

*--St. Kabir.*

**THE DIALOGUE**  
**SWAMI! WHO AM I?**  
**SWAMI'S LETTER**

*Sivamayam*

**“Thou art not the body ; nor art thou the mind.  
Neither art thou intelligence nor even consciousness.  
Thou art Atma. Atma is eternal, imperishable.  
Such is the realised experience of the seers.  
However, there is one thing you should bear in mind.  
Do not swerve from the path of Dharma. Reflect that all  
beings are in the hallowed presence of the supreme One.  
Kaduval is within and without.”**

*Yours,*

*Avane Thaane.*

*Natchintinanai. (Photo-stat.)*

The wisest seers of all ages, climes and creeds have posed the question *Who am I?* and directed the intelligence of man to *Know himself*. In response to our query who am I, Swami however posed the question *Who art thou?* and conveyed the answer in a lucid letter, written by him to a close devotee. It adorns the opening page of the *Natchintanai*. *Swami* is a term meaning Lord and Master--'He who is one with the Self-Swa'. It is also an endearing form of addressing an enlightened Guru. We use the term with specific reference to Siva Yogaswami, the seer of Lanka, who lived and moved amidst us in the hermitage of Columbuturai in Yalpanam.

**AVANE-THAANE**

Swami who knows the secret of the entanglement of human existence reminds us in this letter, of the infinite stature of the immortal soul--Anma, beneath the emotional and intellectual convolutions that enwrap our conscious being. This Reality is unfolded in Swami's letter by the revealing expression of Avane-Thaane : Thyself in Himself. It is the symbol of the indissoluble relationship of Siva and the Anma, which implies the obliteration of all kinds of existing differences by a process of mutual interpenetration. It connotes the attainment of the Feet of Siva, the commingling of the One and the Beyond, celebrated in verse 2577 of the eighth Tantra of Tirumantram.

When the mind is rendered quit and free from all disturbing distractions, incident on a sense

of identity with the body or the faculty of reason, a sense of divine joy dawns on the Anma. The sense of duality disappears in serene light of undifferentiated non-duality. This light brings out the hidden powers of consciousness, which once awakened, the Illumined Anma realises the Truth of the Supreme One. Purity and refinement of the entire being of man, and elevation of the empirical consciousness to higher spiritual planes are defined in Swami's letter as the first code in the path of self-realization. It is by faithful adherence to *Dharma* interpreted as righteous living, that man is made fit for illumination by the divine light.

The term *Atma* as designated by Swami, connotes the true self of all existence, the true self of every individual and the universe. It is Eternal. It is the basis of the blissful experience of all enlightened sages. It is contained in the sacred utterance of Muluthum Unmai, which the illumined consciousness of Swami realised. He perceived the essential unity between the true self of the individual and the true self of the universe. Sanmarga or Unmai-neri is the spiritual approach to Truth-realization. *Natchintanai* reveals this *Yoga-vidya* of Maha YogaSwami, by which he realised the Absolute Truth. It is of timeless and placeless validity, true nowever and everywhere.

In the letter, Swami signs as Avane-Thaane, which term occurs in the tenth sutra of Sivajnana Bothan:

Thaane is *Himself*--the Infinite One, in *Avane*--thyself, the finite one. It is the supreme awareness that the Anma is in perpetual communion with the Lord. This identity is the secret of the divine energy of Sivam--evolution and dissolution, light and darkness, remembrance and forgetfulness, action and inaction. This '*and*' uniting incompatibles expresses the fundamental character of the Highest Being, who is termed Siva, whose energy is Sakti. The opposites are fundamentally of the one essence, two aspects of the God-head. Thus the anma who is in tune with Himself, perceives all his actions to be His, in consonance with the Will of Siva, and sees action in inaction, and inaction in action. In this state of perfect surrender, he attains the Be-attitude, the blissful state under the Lotus Feet.

The prologue Sivam art All is a song of jubilation which marks the awakening of man from the sense of egoity to spiritual universalism whence he realises the goal of human life. This attainment is an experienced certitude for an illumined sage like our Guru, Siva YogaSwami.

***“This universe and all therein art Sivan.  
My own invincible Lord too is Sivam”***

## **THE SANATANA DHARMA**

Swami's fundamental code of righteous living is embodied in his letter by the term Dharma. He admonishes us not to err from the pivotal force of Dharma. Hinduism is a

growing tradition and not a fixed revelation, and hence called the Sanatana Dharma. The Hindu Dharma is without beginning and end. It stands for all those ideals and purposes that have built up the essence of man. By Dharma is implied the law of righteous living, the observance of which Swami assures us, secures the object of happiness on earth as well as spiritual freedom or Moksha. The aim of Hindu Dharma is to lead man to the realization of the Eternal Truth. It is the ultimate truth which is the basis of all life. This is the main theme of Swami's letter.

The Hindu *Dharma* enjoins the spiritual perfection of man as the aim of all endeavour. The highest life enjoined by the Dharma is what follows spontaneously from the indomitable faith in the Reality of God. Swami enjoins that the indwelling of God in man is the significant truth, while the ideal conduct is that which translates it into practice. Every act of such a man is termed Sivathondu or service to Siva

The establishment of the dialogic relationship of the *Anma* with Siva is brought about by a mastery of the *Anma* over the senses five, when clouds of hate and passion, attachments and impurities dissolve; the *anma* becomes filled with serenity. In this state of quiescence, Swami vouchsafes that the devotee shall realise Siva. He becomes Sivathondan. Such a purified aspirant views Dharma as an inspiration from within; for the others of course, it is an external path-way which they follow blindly, prompted by custom and logic.

The *Sanatana Dharma* is the Hindu tradition which has been sustained by the convictions of countless generations of men, who had helped to build the temple of truth in us. If Moksha or spiritual liberation is the ideal towards which humanity moves, then all living beings can rise to their divine destiny of being in union with Sivam. This letter of Swami brings out the vision of the unity of all things in God. "Reflect that all beings are in the hallowed presence of the Supreme One."

## KADAVUL

The term Kadavul is fraught with significance. *'The Supreme Lord abides within and without.'* It is ultimately within the centres of perception, that is, within the living individuality, that we must search for the Reality, which pervades in the cosmos. The cosmic or elemental energies must be basically found in our own beings as well, for we cannot know something which is not in ourselves. It is only a self-illuminated seer who alone can see everything in the work of manifestation as creating an illusion of multiplicity, which prevents the realisation of the basic oneness of all beings. All means of perception are oriented outward to a man of the world. Once he is made to look inwardly, he can behold the *soul* of all things within himself.

St. Tayumanavar in his *Ananda Kallippu* sings on the immortality of the *Anma*:

*"Thou art not the elemental forces.  
Thou art not the five senses*

*Nor the inner faculties of the mind.  
Thou art Chit--Intelligence pure.  
So said my Guru full of Love.  
His utterance is full of sweetness.  
Sankara Sankara Sambu."*

*--St Tayumanavar. 1429.*

It is only the grace of a Sat-Guru that can direct the light of knowledge within one's heart. Such an aspirant can attain Him who lies beyond. The term Kada-vul in Tamil connotes the idea of stepping inside and discovering that the Lord who prevades has universal appeal, and because of its universality, it can be asserted with equal authority from many different points of view, as testified by the great mystic poet, St. Tayumanavar:

*"The Vedas, Agamas, Puranas great,  
So legends and the other diverse lores,  
Set forth at length the vast Advaita's creed.  
And Dvaita too! for Dvaita's truths well grasped  
Do lead us on towards Advaita's light.  
Here reason, facts and sacred texts agree.  
And Dvaita and Advaita are at one  
Enough! no more of discipline I want:  
What'er I think, I that become indeed;  
So by the constant thought that Thou art I,  
I can well tread Advaita's path indeed.  
What'er I think of Thee, in that same form  
Thou dost descend O Sire! What need I more!"*

*--St. Tayumanavar. 91*

# THE MONOLOGUE

## OUR GURUNATHAN--WHO ART HE?

Swami's canzone on '*Enkal Gurunathan*' unfolds the profound truth underlying the mystic formula of the Vedas--*Aum Tat Sat*. The lyric is the spontaneous outflow from the spring of the Guru's Grace. Thiru sang the song in his own peculiar cadence with closed eyes and meditative resonance. My heart pondered in silence on the beauteous communion of Grace Divine. The scintillating chorus of *Enkal Gurunathan* in every line of the canticle resound the melody of Swami's majestic adoration of his gracious SatGuru, Sage Chellappa Swami of Nallur. It is a testimony of his direct spiritual experience of Truth. In like manner did St. Tirumular, the illustrious mystic Seer of early Saivism celebrate the causeless act of God's grace in *Tirumantram*:

*“My Guru's Grace bathed me in a sea of nectar  
My Guru's Grace taught me the love divine  
My Guru's Grace made me taste bliss divine  
My Guru's Grace has crept its way to my heart.”*

In the spiritual illumination communicated by Swami in the Incantation on His Guru, we become aware of the elimination of diverse barriers between the individual self and the universal Self. His verses breathe of the joy he experienced at his first penetrating insight into Truth, wrought about by Chellappa Swami's beatific Grace!

**In me art Thou  
In Thyself am I  
We are what we are  
Thou art what Thou art**

These magnificent simple utterances of Swami convey his wondrous relationship with the God-Guru--*Ontraai, Veraai, Udanaai*. God is the Infinite Being who is both in us and out of us. If God were not in us, there would be no sense of Need. If God were not out of us, there would be no sense of worship. Our highest knowledge of God through the power of the intellect can only be partial. There always remains something which is unknown and unspoken. Swami like many other illustrious Hindu saints and seers, experienced the formless supreme Godhead in the form of Grace, which came down in human habitation as Sage Chellappa Swami. Therefore

it behoved him to hail his Guru as the guide and guardian of the world at a particular point of time and context of human situation.

Guru Nanak the Founder of Sikhism, in the *Guru-Granth* exclaimed that if a hundred moons went up and a thousand suns arose, even then in the midst of such a light there would still be intense darkness without a *GURU*. In Swami's song on *Our Gurunathan*, we get the vision of unity in the universe as an experienced certainty. Sparks of love and wisdom irradiate in every line of this Song of songs.

### THE GURU'S GRACE

The Guru's Grace has the power to purge the human ego into a purified, subdued 'egoless ego'; and Swami perceives himself in all beings and all beings in himself, freed from selfishness, attachments, envy and lust. The refrain--*Enkal Gurunathan*, at the end of every line of this Poem strikes the chords of aspiration in our hearts and fills us with a thirst divine for the elixir of the Guru's Grace. The beacon light of Our Guru encompass the orbit of our existence, and we follow from behind, in the footprints of the Lamp Lighter, who lights up the dark chambers of our inner self.

When by meditation the mind is purified,  
The inner light begins to shine forth.  
When the knot of ignorance is broken,  
The Sun of our soul shall shine in all its glory.  
Dreams of pain and pleasure will no more be seen,  
And the boon of divine Grace shall we attain.  
The soul is the Supreme everlasting Self,  
The Light of Truth Effulgent.

Swami reiterates the Saiva Siddhanta doctrine of Grace, that it is the Lord who comes down in the form of Grace, and removes all obstacles in the pathway of liberation. The Guru establishes the reign of Grace on earth.

*“He is the Guru who granted me grace to gain  
Good for the life that is, good for the life to be;  
Being most worthy to show me true wisdom's way  
How best to be but the doer of good only;  
He draws me to him with mother like tenderness  
And in my heart-temple, He the Guru dwelleth.”*

--St. Tayumanavar. 541.

'He who knows the knowledge of the Knower, He indeed is the Teacher.' A Guru dispenses his grace with discerning love, and dispels innate darkness with radiant wisdom. Sang St. Tayumanavar in *Ananda Kallipu*:

*“He is Truth and beloved of his devotees true,  
The gracious Guru who's the essence of serenity.”*

Swami too sings of the SatGuru's Grace as effecting tranquil quietude. The soul's sense of duality and relativity disappear in the serene light of the vision of Oneness, which according to him is not a momentary attainment, but a permanent possession and the highest consummation of Grace. The *Atma* is realised as a continuum of luminous light, endowed with infinite power.

Thus did our Gurunathan make me *Know Myself*. He made me acquainted with the deepest layers of my external and internal, gross and subtle self, and I discovered Himself in myself”: “His peerless Feet, the symbol of His Grace reposed on my head.”

*--Enkal Gurunathan--I--Nathintanai.*

In a most touching stanza of *Tirumantram*, St. Tirumular too signifies the luminous impact of the Guru on an awakened soul:

*“It's enlightenment to bask  
in the Guru's presence;  
It's enlightenment to take  
the Guru's sanctified name;  
It's enlightenment to receive  
the Guru's ambrosial word;  
It's enlightenment to meditate  
upon the Guru's sacred form.”*

*--Tirumantram. 27.*

This vision of Truth fills the soul with ecstatic joy, and Swami conveys in his poem *Enkal Gurunathan*, the beatitude of bliss when infinite varieties are seen as an expression of the One, and when the One reveals itself in every point of the infinite. In the same sweet naive tones did Saint Kabir too convey the unspeakable communion with His Guru:

*“It is the grace of my Guru that made me know the unknown  
I have learned from him how to walk without feet,  
to see without eyes, to hear without ears,  
to drink without mouth, to fly without wings.  
I have brought my love and my meditation into the land  
where there is no sun and moon, nor day and night.  
Without eating, I have tasted of the sweetness of nectar,  
and without water, I have quenched my thirst.  
Where there is response of love, there is fullness of joy.  
Before whom can that bliss be uttered?”*

At the going down of the Sun and in the morn, let us sing the canticle of *Our Gurunathan* so that its melody may float on wings of love. Let its meaning penetrate deep within, lighting up the dark recesses of our divided selves. Let its symphony awaken hope and solace that shall restore the split personality of man today.

## ENKAL GURUNATHAN--OUR GURU

### **1. Our Gurunathan is He**

**Who made known to me my greater self,  
His peerless Feet reposed on my head.  
Father, mother and Guru, He became,  
And endowed me with sovereign power.  
The effect of my deeds of yore He effaced,  
He who cannot be fathomed by the triune,  
Beyond the duality of good and evil,  
His flame lightens my being.  
He is our Gurunathan.**

### **2. He is our Gurunathan**

**Who said that body art thou not.  
He illumines my consciousness to the brim,  
And bids me give up my desires alluring,  
And attain *Mukti* in desirelessness.  
He did enslave my impetuosity,  
He who pervades both heaven and earth,  
He made me thirst for the waters of grace.  
'Twas Truth indeed that I did behold,  
Our Gurunathan is He indeed.**

**3. Our Gurunathan is He  
Who taught me the mysteries of Yoga  
By exalted contemplation pure,  
To merge the finite consciousness  
With that of the Divine source.  
Then did I perceive the non-dual,  
Supramental, timeless beyond space.  
'Do thou apprehend the cosmic dance,  
That pulsates in universal consciousness,  
By giving up all attachments,' so said He.  
He is our Gurunathan.**

**4. He is our Gurunathan  
Who suspends the vital process of the breath,  
That shall unveil the secrets many  
And gain the mastery of the mind and body.  
Attuned to hear the unheard melody,  
I awakened to the resonance of Aum.  
'Be thou pure and realise,' said He,  
'The indissoluble link between you and I.'  
Our Gurunathan is He.**

**5. Our Gurunathan is He  
By whose grace the cosmic powers did reveal  
Their abiding place within my core.  
Myself did mingle in His cosmic self.  
Adorned with the mystic insignia,  
He bade me melt in yearning love,  
And chant the sacred name of Letters Five.  
'Eternal art Thou,' was his assurance.  
He is our Gurunathan.**

**6. He is our Gurunathan  
Who made me seek without striving,  
And realise that Sivam art in the *Anma*.  
He made me espouse spontaneous worship  
And walk in the goodly path,  
By songs unpremeditated, and bade me  
Join the band of devotees meek,  
In the certitude of faith and good cheer.  
'Live well in this world,' said He.**

**Our Gurunathan is He indeed.**

**7. Our Gurunathan is He  
Who with one sweet word,  
Revealed the calm of inner consciousness.  
Indweller in all the objects of the world,  
He towers above the causal existence.  
Unknown even by the celestials,  
He soars above the experiential planes,  
And so enriched I felt with grace sublime.  
He is our Gurunathan.**

**8. He is our Gurunathan  
Who knows not the beginning nor the end.  
'That art Thou,' He said and chimed  
That perfection is supernal Effulgence.  
His is the plea to overcome finitude.  
Non-pareil and self-luminous is He  
Who bestowed on me such bliss.  
Our Gurunathan is He.**

**9. Our Gurunathan is He  
Who kindled in me the lore of yogic cult,  
That shall sustain the inner force.  
Himself untainted by fear and wrath,  
He did alleviate my egoity,  
And unveiled by gradual stages,  
The way to attain the unitive experience.  
'Pursue the beatific goal,' said He  
And He is our Gurunathan.**

**10. He is our Gurunathan  
Who affirmed that we are what we are.  
And that we lack nothing whatever.  
Effaced shall be the reaction of deeds,  
With no comings nor goings, said He,  
Thou art what Thou art--One with Truth,  
Resolve not but submit to Divine will.  
'Aum' of sublime power did he impregnate,  
And infused the peace of the voiceless word.  
Our Gurunathan is He indeed.**

## THE ENCOUNTER

As the lyric closes on the high octave of sweet serenity, we breathe a word of prayer to *Our Gurunathan* to guide us by a fraction of the divine grace, as was ministered to him by his Guru, so as to enable us to dissolve the ego by the panacea of desirelessness. “Unless the Divine Guru guides us to the Turth, of what use are the words spread out in books?” “Words and books,” says St. Tirumular, “are mere useless tissue dangling from goat's neck.”

In this Poem, Swami illumines everyone with the resplendent gleam of the Guru's Grace, which frees the soul of its finite limitations and gives it the wisdom of Siva--*Sivathuvam*. Once the veil of obscuration is removed, the soul lightens with *Sivajnanam*. Umapathi Sivachariar in *Tiruvarutpayan* asks the question, “How can the world know Him who without being known came down to breathe His Grace?” V.3. Swami answers this question in this magnificent on *Our Gurunathan*.

He recounts how Chellappa Swami came down as a 'madman,' to ensnare men, and the world did not know him. Swami hails his Guru and remembers him every split second of his life, because his Guru imparted in secret, the lore of self-knowledge unto him. It is only when the Guru's grace works on an *Anma*, can it know the 'truth about the doer, the deeds done and the fruits thereof, and the Lord who brings the fruit home to the *Anma*.' *Tiruvarutpayan*--V.16 & 17. The Lord's grace that permeates the whole world also irradiates withn the *Anma*. With illumination comes renunciation--purification--and perfect resignation. The grammar of this scale of Grace experienced by Swami is given in *Tiruvarutpayan*--VIII. 4.5 'To stand behind Grace is the true way of uniting oneself with it; in advaithic union is supreme felicity.'

According to St. Manicavasagar, it is the benign Grace of the Guru that ensures both the realisation of the self as well as of Sivam, the absolute beyond, the universal everywhere, and the life of the individual within.

*“Thee oh transcendent One,  
Benignly manifest on earth,  
Diffusing grace in human form!  
I see thus the splendour of my Guru,”*

--*Tiruvacagam IV. Potri Tiruvahaval.*

Sage Chellappa Swami came into the life of Siva YogaSwami at Nallur *Theradi*, even as the coming of the Guru under the Kuruntha tree at *Perunturai* to Varthavur-Adigal.

*“..... In Perunturai, Himself did come  
And on this earth, a gracious Form  
Descending did He reveal the Primal Braham;  
Such informing Grace, He alone can grant.”*

*--Tiruvacagam, The Holy word. 43.I.*

With the descent of Grace, Swami declared that all the taint of the accumulated deeds of yore wrought by the domination of the *tattvas* dissolved, and he experienced the truth of the self and the gnosis of God. The validity of his experience is testified by the songs of matchless love, which reflect the intimate communion of the soul with the ParaSivam.

St. Tirujnanasambandar has also enjoined in one of his *Devarams*, that the mode in which the Guru imparts His Grace and makes each *anma* His own, is not to be analysed by logic, reason or doctrine. St. Sundarar refers to his divine Guide as *Pitha* or madman. We recall St. Manicavasagar's utter amazement at the manifestation of Guru's Grace in his life:

*“He gave His sacred Grace, that falseness all  
Might flee and showed His golden Feet.  
Himself the Truth, He stood in presence there,  
This matchless miracle, I cannot tell.”*

*--Tiruvacagam. 41.I.*

Swami's testimony on his Guru's Grace reveals an integrated experience of a transcendent state of consciousness, which is neither subjective nor objective, as it bears no relation between the experiencer and the experienced. In the transcendental consciousness, Reality is its own immediate witness, its own self-awareness, and its own freedom of complete being. There is nothing which is not revealed in it.

In the lyric of Our Gurunathan, Swami speaks of the deepest experience of Reality, when God's revelation and Guru's Grace, seem to be two sides of the One Eternal Truth. We shall turn to the great Seer, St. Tirumular to hear what he has to say on this perennial subject of the Guru's dynamic power of Grace ineffable:

*Formless Himself, God is the home of all forms.  
Sourceless Himself, He is the seed of all things;  
Unattached Himself, He's the weaver of all attachments;  
Yet only a Guru can open to us the door of Realisation.”*

The prince among the ascetic mystics of Saivism, Pattinattadigal too shares with Swami, the experience of the sovereign sway of Guru's grace in enabling the *Anma* to know everything in their true nature, power and essence:

*“Sooner did I get thy Grace, Oh Siva!  
Than the veil of maya was torn, the steadfast  
Turiya Jnana came to me, and having imbibed it,  
I knew myself, I knew the objects around,  
I knew all thy various manifestations!  
Those who do not see Thee are of the manner  
Of those who do not know themselves.”*

*--Tiruvidadaimaruthur--Mummanikovai XIth Tirumurai*

## **THE SEMPITERNAL SILENCE**

In the last verse of *Enkal Gurunthan*, occurs the lines, '*Thou art what Thou art,*' connoting union with the absolute Truth. There is total and perfect consonance between the will of man and the will of God. In the closing refrain, the vibrant *mantra AUM* mingles in the light of consciousness, interpenetrating light and sound, when ultimately the soul merges in the beatitude of ineffable Peace.

The knower who realises that the Supreme shines in and through all life does not waste words. He becomes the most enlightened among men, and he is the whole universe. Heaven, earth, sky, mind and life-breath are all woven into him. He is the one and only existence. Truth wins ever, and not untruth. with Truth is paved the road to the Divine. On that road walk the great Yogis, Sages and Seers with desires all subdued, to the goal of the Supreme abode of Truth. Truth is the only pathway to God.

St. Tayumanavar describes in a psalm of great beauty in Chidambara Rahasyam (21), his experience of felicity supernal, as eluding all analysis and beyond the realm of duality. It is the realisation of the infinite wisdom of sempiternal silence, through the operation of the Guru's Grace; “Every single one of the innumerable barriers of the finite bonds gets dissolved in

the luminous stillness of union with the eternal Siva.”

“And dispensing the true knowledge of natural and unique silence, which destroys all bondage and in which there is no meditation nor ego, no space, no time, no direction, no association, no elimination, no differentiation, no expression, no phenomena of night and day, no end, no beginning, no middle, no interior nor an aggregate of all these.”

“Grace shows further--that, though all these are eliminated, *It* is not void, but is natural eternal Being, inexpressible in words, not manifesting as ego, but is the Reality engulfing all, having swallowed all ignorance like day dissolving night, and absorbed unhindered all knowledge, changing the person into *Itself*.” “It shines in silence, Self Effulgent.” *St. Tayumanavar--22*. Such is the essence of the undifferentiated quiescence (*Mounam*) glorified as beatific bliss by all the sanctified saints, and attained by Swami.

**“Our Gurunathan is He who made me  
Realise the Serene Peace of the voiceless word.”**

*--Natchintanai. 3.*

It is the summation of Swami's at-one-ment with His Siva-Guru.

Silence is the primordial and modeless state of being. It is a state of eternal rest and eternal work in simultaneity. There Self, our-Self, him-Self both sleeps and wakes, sees and sees not; night and day of supernal time and darkness and sunshine are not like our night and day in succession but simultaneous. In this pure consciousness, the soul experiences *Sivanubhuti*, and there is no separation whatsoever ever after.

In an exquisite state of integration, in the plenum of infinite tranquillity, the God-Guru and the perfected *Anma* commune in felicitous peace. It is the call of the Deep unto the Deep. The great Teacher Siva YogaSwami proclaims the summum bonum of the Guru's Grace in lines that haunt our memory with the perfume of eternity:

**“All words lead to the haven of voiceless stillness.  
All acts lead at last to the calm of tranquil awareness.  
All, All is poised in the pleroma of sublime serenity.”**

*--Natchintanai. 380.*

# THE LUMINOUS SIVA IN NATCHINTANAI

## SIVAM ART ALL

*Sivam art our father and mother.  
Sivam art our dear brethren.  
Sivam art the matchless consort.  
Sivam art the adorable children.  
Verily Sivam art the ruler too.  
Sivam art the host of heavenly gods.  
This universe and all therein art Sivam.  
My own invincible Lord is Sivam.*

--Natchintanai.

## THE BREATH ETERNAL

IN consonance with the *Sanatana Dharma*, the song *Sivam art All* contains the quintessence of Siva YogaSwami's teachings. The vibration of the Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita, the devotional ecstasy of the Saiva Nayanmars and the Vaishnava Alwars, the certitude of the Vedanta-Siddhanta, the symphony of St. Tirumular and Tiruvalluvar, and revealing-experiences of the realised Seers then and now, resound the immanence of the Transcendent Sivam.

That Absolute is Truth, 'Muluthum Unmai,' is the great utterance, the Maha Vaakiam enkindled by Siva YogaSwami's illustrious Guru, Sage Chellappa Swami. The absolute nature of Truth can be rediscovered in the heart beat of Swami's mellifluous song *Sivam art All*. Wherever he went, he urged the young and old to sing it, and the refrain of this song would be heard floating on the wingless melody of exalted devotion. by those devotee swho sought his grace in his holy abode at Columbuturai, Yalpanam.

## SIVAM ART ALL

The song in the Original Facsimile

Appanum Ammayum Sivame  
Aria Sahodhararum Sivame  
Opil manaviyum Sivame  
Audharum mayindarum Sivame  
Sepil arasarum Sivame  
Devaadi devarum Sivame  
Ipuvi Ellaam Sivame  
Ennai aandanthum Sivame

In this lucid ode is revived the intuitive perception of the Seer who sang the Isa Upanishad, which recognised the essential unity of all things and beings underlying the diversity of the world.

*Isavasyam idam sarvam yat kim ca jagatyam jagat.*

*“In the heart of all things, of whatever there is in the universe dwells the Lord.”*

He alone is the Reality. His universal and almighty presence has been acclaimed by Sri Krishna:

“Yo mam pas'yati sarvatra saram ca mayi pas'yati  
tasya 'ham na pranas'yami sa ca me na pranas'yati.”

*“He who sees Me every where and sees all in Me; I am not  
lost to him nor is he lost to me.”*

--Bhagawad Gita, VI. 30

In Srimad Bhagavatam, Suka's prayer to the Lord reverberates this universal truth:

*“Oh Thou Lord Supreme, I bow down to Thee!  
Thou art the highest in the highest!  
Thou art the innermost ruler of every heart.  
Thy ways are blessed ....Thou art the Truth.  
Thou doest manifest Thyself as the One and the many  
according to our understanding.  
Salutations to Thee!*

--Bk. II.3. 26.

Thus it is that Swami's song on Sivam art All reveals the paramount experience of the profound unity of all things in the One. When we are one with the divine Truth in us, we become one with the whole stream of life.

In that immortal Tamil classic of Tirukural, the opening couplet embodies the truth of the immanence of the primordial God in all the subjective and objective phenomena of this universe.

*“Just as the first letter of the alphabet 'A' is inherent  
in all the other letters,  
So too is the world inseparably knit to the pristine glory  
of the all-pervasive Bhagavan.”*

In the Eighth Tantra on Mahavaakiam, St. Tirumular alludes to the supreme goal of life as

the attainment of the vision of Oneness in the effulgent Sivam.

*“They do not know the path to the supreme ideal of life,  
Who cannot efface the dual play of knowledge and ignorance,  
And cherish the inseparable, ever abiding Lord,  
Whose luminous wisdom everywhere illumines everything.”*

--Tirumantram, 2580

We now dive into the perennial springs of the sublime devotional canticles of the Saiva Saints, and discover therein many a gem of serene beauty, where the vista-vision of the immanence of Sivam in the universe outside and within the heart of man holds us in worshipful wonder. St. Tirunavukarasar who lived in the seventh century A.D. and who was a contemporary of the great pioneer of Saivism, St. TiruJnanasambandar sang before the Diety at the Tiruvaiauru temple, the well known Devaram:

*“Thou art the bliss of purified consciousness,  
Thou art the nearest and dearest of kindred,  
Thou art the peak of wisdom's perfection,  
The fulfilment of the tranquil seers,  
More beloved than the loved mother on earth,  
Thou'rt the Lord who imprinted thy feet within me.”*

--Tirumurai. VI. 38.6

*“The all embracing universe art Thou,  
The unity that pervadeth everywhere art Thou too.”*

--Tirumurai. VI. 38. 7

In the spiritual lineage of the enlightened Saiva Seers of the classical and modern ages stands St. Tayumanavar who lived in South India in the latter half of the sixteenth century. That he became overpowered by the experience of the Truth of the Supreme One by the grace of his Mouna-Guru, has been embodied in his Invocation Ode on Adoration to ParaSivam. We recognize in this song, the harmony of the linked lay of the vision of Oneness conveyed in Swami's dulcet strains on Sivam art All.

*“ 'Tis not here nor there; It shines everywhere,  
Supreme in bliss, what filleth all with Grace?  
Who thrives in all as life of life, ordaining  
The whole of million, million globes and all  
To bide at will within His realm of Love?  
What lies beyond the reach of mind and tongue?  
Of whom the million noisy creeds and sects  
Wage ceaseless war in every clime and age?*

*All powerful, Blessed, Eternal Intelligence,  
What goes beyond the bounds of night and day?  
Him who is verily the guest of my heart,  
The expanse of Peace that circles all--we adore.”*

Swami reiterates in many a psalm in *Natchintanai*, the truth that Siva reigns supreme in the beateous pure cave of one's heart, as well as in the universe. In a simple sweet song, Swami makes a stirring call to humanity to live the light of *Sivam art All*.

#### LIST TO MY CALL

*Oh my brethren and mothers, listen!  
Live in the knowable truth that we're divine.*

*Whoever can decipher and say what we are?  
So why need we fear when all art Sivam?*

*Is it meet to forget the wise axiom of the Seers  
That not an atom animates except by His Will?*

*'Tis blessed to live in the world with the awareness  
That not here nor there, but all pervading art Sivam.*

*It's Sivathondu to live in peace with Sivathondar  
Who realised by Eye of Grace the Light of Sivam*

*Ah! My lowly head adorns the Feet of Sages  
Who glorify the Oneness of Truth Supreme.*

**--Natchintanai 83**

We begin our venture, in utmost humility and in token of grateful devotion, into the unexplored region of Swami's territory of experience, wherein he has reported insights which came to him as expression of divine truth. In the hours of meditation, with heightened clarity of vision, he gave out answers to the questions posed by the prancing mind:

*“Swami, who am I?  
Who art He, The Guruthan?  
How far am I from Siva who art all?  
Which is the axis of the Mahavaakiam?  
What is he to me and I to Him?”*

*It is our earnest prayer to encourage all seekers after Truth to know Swami's Reflections of Grace-Natchintanai--not for themselves but study of that by which we can realise the*

*truth of Sivam art All. It is our pious belief that a real study of Swami is first hand experience of God. To know him is to have the perfect knowledge which is God.*

Sivam alone art--the light adorable and the truth imperishable. Sivam art with form and without forms, eternal among non-eternals.

*“Whoever finds Siva within himself,  
He finds infinite peace, santam. upasantam”*

## ADORATION TO SIVA

Sivam sings the litany on Siva, and those around him take up the refrain, *Varuha, Varuha--Come, Oh Siva, come and fill our being with thy presence.* The vibration resounds far and near. Stars in their circling, trees in their trembling, the cow and calf in their frolicking, and the tuneful voices of the devotees gathered round him, participate in this symphony of adoration of the Supreme Lord of Perfection. That incessant call of Sivanavan Varuka, *Kadauvul, Varuha, Devan Varuha--*we hear, calling us to join in the chorus today, this moment, the eternal now. It seems to us that the whole universe evolves round that one single moment.

### **Come Thou Oh Siva! Heed Our Call And Come!**

*Thou art beyond the relativity of time,  
Thy countenance glows with benevolence.  
Creator of all dual and non-dual forms,  
Sovereign ruler of our hearts, Come unto us*

*Thou art beyond the finite consciousness,  
Thy glory, no words can express.  
Thou pervadeth earth and heaven,  
Siva whose splendor blazes aloft, Come.*

*My Lord, flawless gem so non-pareil,  
Radiant flame of benignant rays,  
Immaculate one with gleaming holy ash,  
Thou Supreme One who sways the ganga, Come.*

*Thou wonderous One, in manifold forms,  
Oh pure One who doth the cosmic dance.  
Stainless art Thou with Sakti by thy side,  
Illumined rock of the Vedic seers--Come.*

*Salutation to Thy gleaming Feet of Grace*

*'Tis the Feet adored by the wise:  
Inexplicable is Thy Feet so fragrant,  
Repository of Grace to the weak, all Hail!*

*Incomparable are Thy Feet so lofty,  
Yet manifesting like my meek self-  
Ever vigilant in its protecting care,  
Symbol of Truth universal as the sky, all Hail!*

*The mystic lover of the eternal Sakti,  
He whose roseate Feet trod the earth.  
Oh Thou Absolute and Eternal Sivam!  
Consciousness and wisdom, all Hail!*

*Oh primeval One that art perfection,  
Faithful guide of thy devotees true.  
Oh Gem that vibrates within and without,  
Indweller for ever in my heart, all Hail!*

*No longer can I endure this finite body,  
Oh sweet treasure unattainable,  
Thou Absolute One, Divine Lord,  
Effulgent luminous, Thy glory we praise.*

*Oh Supreme Felicity, Verily art Thou too,  
Who doth manifest with Sakti by thy side.  
Thy Infinite Being not subject to finite laws,  
All Hail, Hail to Thy golden Feet.  
Praise be unto Siva, praise we Siva, Siva.*

**--Natchintanai. 34-35**

Thus Siva the unattainable, the imperceptible came down to earth with His insignia, in response to the irresistible call of His yearning aspirant, in the form of the Guru. At the sight of His healing Presence, all miseries fled silently. When he who fixes the mind on God's Feet remains disireless amidst tempting desires, then he finds the *One*; and he crosses the confluence of strife and misery; the ego is enfeebled while the Self becomes ever so dynamic. The knower of God stands aloof from exultation and grief; and with utter self-surrender and equanimity, recognises the Sun of Truth hidden in the world of manifestation, and in the lotus of the heart. He is forever sustained by the continual remembrance of the consecrated Word of God. The surging waves of bliss break on the shores of the heart in a paean of praise.

HALLOWED BE SIVA-SIVA

*The single Word hath purified my dross,  
The soulful incantation of Siva Siva  
No more do I succumb to good and ill,  
Nor to the distinction of one and the many.  
No more aching sorrows, as I awaken  
To the knowledge of my real Self.*

*Sing ye the hallowed name of Siva, Siva  
I've attained the goal of this life.  
And am in command of everything around.  
I roam at will in sweet leisure,  
With the whole world as my ken.*

*Sing ye in joyful strains Siva, Siva.  
The felicity that generates from the Word,  
I cannot recount, except be immersed in it.  
The end of knowledge is mine without learning.  
I hold the key of existence in my hand.*

*Oh magnify the praise of Siva, Siva.  
The macrocosm, the whole of the cosmos  
I see with veneration deep within me  
Therein I behold His fragrant Feet,  
Where arise the devas and the triune.*

*Enraptured in an ecstasy, Siva, Siva.  
By constancy of love do I apprehend;  
Yet in trepidation, I gaze at nothing,  
Magnificent indeed is the mystery  
Baffling the ken of e'en the realised seers.*

**--Natchintanai 18.**

## SIVA'S WILL SUPREME

According to the Saiva teachings, Siva's Grace directs the manifold activities in the universe. He reveals His Grace in the manifested objects like the sun, moon, sky earth, fire and water. He gives to each its moving force. His reign of Grace lends charm to the poetry of existence. The operative Energy at work in the universe and in the inner chambers of every human being unfolds the magnitude of His Grace, and the everlasting testimony of the All-embracing Divine Will of the Supreme Sivam. This is the Testament of Swami in the following posy:

*Who bids the sun to move?  
 Who makes the moon resplendent?  
 Who impels the stars to twinkle?  
 Who directs the force of sunshine?  
 Who illumines the eyes to see?  
 Who animates the air to blow?  
 Who stirs the waters to rise?  
 Who inspires the wise to praise?  
 Who rotates the earth?  
 Who tends the flowers to blossom?  
 Who inspires the legs to walk?  
 Who steers the hands to work?  
 Ponder deeply and you'll discern  
 That Siva's Will reigns supreme.  
 Thus shalt thou attain liberation.  
 This testament of Swami do thou understand.*

--Natchintanai. 132

We recall the odes of St. Manicavasagar and St. Tayumanavar who too have placed similar bonquets at the altar of humanity. They have delineated in moving poetic cadence the showers of Grace that fall upon the universe, and have testified to the supremacy of the Divine Will of Siva:

*“He vouchsafes the sun its illumination.  
 He gives the moon its exhilarating coolness.  
 In the mighty fire, He kindles the flaming heat.  
 His pervasive power, He places in the ether.  
 Endues the gambolling wind with energy meet;  
 Imparts savour to the life-giving waters bright;  
 And to the visible earth, He imbues strength;  
 Thus to millions of beings and agencies,  
 He infuses its own distinctive nature.”*

--Tiruvacagam. III. 20-28

St. Tayumanavar in the Canzone on 'Perfect Bliss' exalts the Supreme Will of Siva as the moving Force in the universe.

*“Stands not the ocean deep without a dam?  
 Did not the deadly poison turn nectar sweet?  
 Bides not the seismic fire within the deep?  
 Do not the unnumbered orbs move firm on high?  
 Speed not the floating clouds at Indra's bidding?*

*Was not the stone made to live again?  
A bashful maid by touch of Rama's feet?  
Do not men get what'er they want on earth,  
By talismans, magic and by spells?  
It is hard for Thee some means to plan  
Somehow, to subdue the accursed mind of mine?  
Oh perfect Bliss that leaving nought, fill All."*

*--St. Tayumanavar. II.9.*

#### HIS WILL BE DONE

*My son, live well on earth, unattached  
Tangent like the dewdrops on the lotus.  
Invoke Siva within and strive to do good.  
Revere the virtuous and know thyself.*

*Your father, mother and kindred are all  
A motley group as seen in market places.  
Love God the Father always--His will be done.  
Now is the right moment to draw nigh.*

*He is dear to me and dear is He to everyone.  
Matchless is His infinite glory.  
The subdued tusker's hide adorns His body.  
And He dwells in Lanka's pleasant groves.*

*He holds the Axe and deer with Devi by his side,  
All-pervading, all powerful. incomprehensible  
To Brahma-Mal who sought Him above and below,  
His temple is Lanka with fragrant groves.*

*--Natchintanai. 104.*

#### THE ARMOUR OF GRACE

*The Truth of Oneness is my protection.  
So are the devotees of God my protection.  
The ascetic adepts and devas are my protection.  
And the shelter of Grace illumines my mind.*

*The eight Vasus afford me protection.  
The bestower of bliss divine is my protection.  
The eight directions extend their protection,*

*And succor I draw from the eternal Siva-Sakti.*

*The inhaling and exhaling breath is my protection,  
As also the vibration of the vital Pranavam.  
Who dons the serpent and Ganga is my protection,  
And strength I take from the Grace of my Guru.*

*The five sensations afford me protection.  
Thy adoring saints are my protection.  
The elephant-faced One is my protection.  
And refuge I seek from Thy child Vadivel.*

*The Sun and Moon give me protection,  
As well as all sentient beings everywhere.  
From the Vedas, Agamas and incantations sacred,  
From this great Earth do I inhale protection.*

**--Natchintanai. 192**

### **GLORY BE TO SIVA--AUM**

Truth is not formed by ripe scholarship, by feats of illustrious sacrifices and penance nor by exalting the I-ness in man. He who studies the Guru's word gets rid of egoism, and the light of Truth is felt when the mind is happily engrossed in chanting the name of the Lord.

*“He with one Word, with grace prevenient, made  
me His, and made me live by love.”*

**--Natchintanai. 145-146.**

The words of the Guru are sweet, and thrice blessed is he in whose heart the perfume of the Word prevades. This song has the mystic formula of the Mulamantra Aum as its refrain, and many a time Swami would sing this song or get it sung, and convey by speechless silence the potency of an earnest worship of the Lord for divine succour. The ceaseless resonance of Aum, connotes an unconditional submission to His Will.

*“One word, a wonderous word, there is  
Which in itself contains  
All other words; by it is cleansed  
The soul of all its stains  
It is the word the Guru gave  
One word, unmoving goal  
Fixed as a mountain top is firm  
Towards which moves the soul.”*

At the sonorous vibration of the *Pranava mantra* of Aum, egoism gets subdued from *within*. God Himself comes to the rescue of the loving devotee, by taking His abiding place in the soul of His beloved one, till he is immersed in peace and felicity. In this canticle of praise, we find the God-Guru enthroned in the hearts of all devout souls.

Sivam is All in All. There is no other above or beyond Sivam. The idea is echoed by St Tirumular who dwells on Siva's Immanence and Transcendence, and glorifies His peerless divinity, in his Invocatory cantos on ParaSiva Pirabhavam:

St. Tayumanavar too prays for the cessation of sorrow, to be made an 'heir of Grace,' and be restored to the life of beatific bliss. "My sinister deeds of past births weigh me down in this life. Have you not the compassion to turn to me and save me from the encircling gloom? Not for my sake, but for Thy own graciousness will it be a score, as it will be a reflection of Thy glory, Oh Life of Perfect Bliss!"

In Natchintanai Odes, Lord Siva is depicted as the source of Truth, Love and Grace. He alone can dispel the gloom of life's afflictions by the light of His wisdom, if we evoke continually the Word of God-*Aum*. Therefore Swami bids the devotees worship Him by constant remembrance of His Name and Grace. Grace is an unearned gift of God. Those imbued with the grace of Siva have no burden of darkness and error to carry in their heads and hearts.

He whose inmost heart is pure, in him is cut off all fear and misery. No more bondage. Siva's unfailing fountain of perfect Love has the saving power to endow all true devotees with the certainty of His grace. It is the highest gift, which a Divine Guru alone can have it conferred on the suffering humanity. Before the infinite light of Siva's Eye of wisdom, and the beauteous solace of His Feet of Grace, all discords and ills flee, and every soul is exalted to the radiance of His Presence--this is indeed to attain '*Mukti*' or liberation, the illumination of His Feet.

***'Thy lowly one has no prop other than Thy valiant Feet, Aum  
Be Thou the strength of Thy beloved bondsman, Aum***

**--Natchintanai--145.**

By selfless worship in obedience to the divine will, and actuated by intense love, Swami assures one and all, the inheritance of the Kingdom of Siva.

"Oh Devotee true, make that Beloved your undying friend,  
and always fix the mind on the sole Support of your life.  
The delight of the word of God, Aum, and His overflowing  
Grace shall fill thy heart with the nectar of bliss."

Hearts and minds dissolve in ecstatic Love as this incantation is sung. It embodies the loving gift of the selfless soul to the supreme Siva; and prostrating at His Feet so tender and beautiful, the devotee in an act of total surrender, exalts in singing this song of adoration and love:

***“Thine are We, of Siva Aum,  
Thy locks bespangle with the crescent moon.”***

**--Natchintanai. 145.**

Swami elicited this song from us so spontaneously on certain memorable occasions, as when we left SivaThondan Mission to the West and on many a sacred *Sivarathri* and *Tiruvathirai* days. We hang this vibrant song in his hermitage, after the termination of every local *Pada-yatrai*, and the fatigue of our weary limbs would disappear in an upsurge of his grace. The vibration of the incantation *AUM* pulsed in intensity in His Presence, and peace, serene peace, filled the atmosphere and tugged at our heart strings, when we sang this canticle at the moment of His final emancipation from the coils of mortality, as the clock struck three in the early dawn of March 24th, 1964.

***“Illumine us to know that all things  
Move to thy Supreme Will--Aum.  
For ever shield Thy lowly devotees true--AUM.’***

**--Natchintanai. 146.**

In the melody of this song which can turn man into a god, and all the world into a sweet scented garden, Swami has woven the harmony of Grace. The soothing panacea from the parched heat of worldliness with its agony of folly, vice and shame would be the holy society of *Jivan Mukhtars--Adiyavar*, meaning a coterie of consecrated and loving saints of Siva:

***“Oh beautiful Aum!  
The delight of Saints who see Thee in their inner Self.”***

***“Oh Plenum of Aum!  
In submission meek art Thou sought by the virtuous”***

The God-Guru's role is to show the Way to the seekers after Truth to realise Him in beatific union, in the galaxy of the blessed servitors of Siva. This highest objective of the *Saiva darshana* is cited in *Sivajnana Botham*, Sutra XI:

*“The soul in union with the eye causes it to see, the nature of the eye being to see when it is caused to see; and the soul itself sees. Similarly God in union with the soul causes it to know; and God Himself knows. Therefore,*

*by love, in which the soul never forgets but firmly maintains its union with God, it attains the experience of divine bliss, the Sacred Feet of God.”*

The eye cannot by itself see an object unless an illuminating light uniting with the light of the eye falls also upon the object. Similarly souls, whose nature it is to know when helped to know and cannot know unless God's knowledge unites with theirs, cannot by themselves perceive or know anything. Therefore God must be in union with the soul and know, so that the soul may perceive and know.

***“Oh Ambrosial Aum!  
Embalmed in the hearts of illumined seers!”***

*--Natchintanai. 146*

When the soul, never forgetting that its true being is in advaita union with God, praises Him with devotion, it attains the Sacred Feet. It attains *Mukti*--the blissful experience of communion with the Lord. It is the experience of Divine Blessedness of the soul in inseparable union with Siva.

***“Glory to the Primal Source of Being, Grace divine Aum.”***

*--Natchintanai. 146.*

The ceaseless abidance of the Grace of Siva in the soul, and the sublime experience of intimate communion with Siva is the Theme of the Guru in this canticle. This is also the import of the truth propounded by St. MeikandaDevar in *Sivajnana Botham*, the classical text of Saiva Siddanta.

THINE ARE WE, OH SIVA AUM

***Thy locks bespangle with the cool crescent, Aum.  
Indweller, whom the select devotees treasure, Aum.  
Yogi, with Grace by Thy side and comely bull, Aum.  
Thou Effulgence that illumines heaven and earth, Aum.  
Oh Hara, who holds the flame aloft in Thy palm--Aum.  
Thou who bideth for e'er with Thy dearly loved ones, Aum.  
Who bestows the timeless vision of oneness, Aum.  
Thy faithful devotees are we who seek Thy solace, Aum.***

***Lovely in Thy bee-stalked garland of Konrai, Oh Siva Aum!  
The delight of saints who see Thee in the inner Self--Aum.  
Come Thou, Guru mine, to grant Thy unfailing love, Aum.  
Bestow on me the boon to extol Thy Feet in holy company, Aum.  
A thousand names betoken Thy glory, Siva with crescent, Aum.***

*Soaring bliss bestirs those who acclaim Thee thus--Aum.  
Thy lowly one has no other prop than Thy valiant Feet. Aum.  
Be Thou the strength of Thy beloved bondsmen--Aum.*

*Forbear Thou our concious and entrenched ills, Aum.  
Siva who vanquished the force of the god of Death, Aum.  
Our Father who art all-powerful, Aum.  
Lord, who dwelleth in beauteous Nallur as the Guru, Aum.  
Absolve me from fearsome acts and lead me in grace--Aum.  
Oh adorable one whom the pious praise with tender blooms, Aum  
And protect for e'er Thy fervant devotees true--Aum.*

*Thou friend of the virtuous and the pure, Aum.  
Light resplendent, unseen by Vishnu and Brahma, Aum.  
Fountain of Truth and source of Grace, Aum.  
Endless and beginningless art Thou, luminous Wisdom, Aum.  
Ambrosia embalmed in the hearts of illumined seers, Aum.  
Lord of devas who adore Thee in joyful strains, Aum.  
King of heroic hordes with trident arms, Siva Aum,  
in homage meek, Thy hallowed ones implore Thy Grace, Aum.*

*Glory to the Primal Source of Being Grace divine, Aum.  
Oh plenum, sought by the virtuous in submission meek, Aum.  
Transcendental yet Primal Cause of existence, Aum.  
Radiant Flame with sheltering grace, my Protector, Aum.  
Peerless One whose lighted Eye gleams midst holy ash, Aum.  
Thou art the goal of the legion of sanctified seers, Aum.  
Oh Siva with insignia of Ganga, Moon and thumbai, Aum.  
Bless Thy beloved bondsmen with Grace ineffable--Aum.*

--Natchintanai. 145-146.

## THE MYSTIC WORD-AUM

*Sarve veda yat padam amananti, tapamsi sarvani ca yadvadanti,  
Yad icchanto bramacharyam caranti, tat te padam samgrahena bravimi:  
aum ity etat.*

*Etadd hy evaksaram brama, etadd hy evaksaram param.*

*Etadd hy evaksaram jnatva, yo yad icchati tasya tat.*

*Aum is the word which all the Vedas rehe arse,*

*And which all austerities proclaim,*

*Desiring which men live the life of religious bramacharya.*

That word is Aum.

This syllable is the imperishable spirit!  
This indeed is the highest end.  
Knowing this syllable, truly, indeed.  
Whatever one desires will be his.

--*Katha Upanishad. 1-2-15-16.*

The aim of all religious quest is to realise through all form, the Formless. Every mode of expression is struggling to reach that ultimate Reality, the One without a second. The primordial sound substratum conceived as a form of monosyllabic mantra, *AUM*, aims at the total elimination of subject-object by the expression of sound rhythms. In the undifferentiated substratum of thought, an intention or mental impulse appears and that is *ParaVac*, the self radiant. 'The monogrammatic syllable *AUM* represents the totality of all sounds and the music of the spheres chanted by the resonant Sun. This audible symbol serves as a support of contemplation.' "One infers the unseen in the seen, the unheard in the heard," as expounded by Dr. Ananda Coomaraswamy.

The sound without vibration which is called *anahata dhvani* or the voice beyond, can be heard by the Yogi who is indrawn, and this *pranava* sound is the aggregate of all existing sounds, and gives birth to the cosmic process itself. It is the basis of the *Nada--Brahman*. The moment we think, an unheard sound is formed. As an idea gets visualised, the sound that occurs spontaneously, the voice that sees, is the basis for all forms. Sound is thus the soul of all form.

Vac is thus classified into four stages. Para Vac is the unmanifest stage. It gives rise to sound effect called *pasyanti*, the potential sound which is the vehicle of thought, visualising towards the visible in all directions. *Pasyanti* throws light on the idea. When this sound begins to crystallise into luminous sound, it becomes light, *madhyama*. It is the stage where the idea takes a yet silent verbal form. *Madhyama* is seen through the mind. Luminous sound by creating patterns makes the definition of space possible. Forms accessible to human experience are projected and the finale stage of *Vaikaari*, sound in the form of articulate syllables, opens possibilities of myriad permutations out of the one harmonious primal sound. It is the word manifest.

**“Omkaarathin Udporul aanavan”**

--**Natchintanai. 194.**

The Casual Word which represents the Divine thought, the source of existence correspond to the power of will known as *Siva-intention* or *Ichha Sakti*. The power of knowledge known as *Vishnu-formulation* or *Jnana Sakti*, and the power of action known as *Brahma-expression* or *Kriya Sakti*, also express the Casual Word. *Para-Vac* is the unmanifest fourth stage in this principle of speech--*Sabda Brahman* or the word principle. It is also known as the *Vac-Tattva*. Swami makes reference to this principle of *Nadanta* in

Natchintanai. The power of action is expressed as the word-principle.

The sound before sound or the *Anahata Dhvani* reverberates upon itself and produces sound energy that evolves as forms with resonance. Sound is the reflex of form and form is the product of sound. Therefore every form has its density of sound as an accompaniment of its energy.

The sound *Aum* is the sound symbol of the supreme One. It is composed of three *matras* A-U-M-, and corresponds to a straight line, a semicircle and a point. Every divine form possesses a *bija mantra* which is a germinal syllable or nuclear syllable. The *bija* as the smallest sound unit represents the essential nature of divinity when sound vibrates. Light is sound at a particular frequency. Thus every phenomenal object is seen as the concentration and reflection of light in a certain pattern. All forms--*rupa* emerge in light, and all names--*nama* in forms. Matter and energy are dependent upon the existence of light, and light itself on sound.

When a *Mantra* is pronounced correctly, its corresponding form--*rupa* begins to manifest itself, the quality of manifestation depending upon the nature and intensity of the pronunciation. Hence *Mantra* or thought-forms to be effective must be imparted by the Guru, the spiritual preceptor.

***“Take up the contemplation of AUM, my little ones.”***

**--Natchintanai.**

The mystical utterance of *Aum* is understood also as an expression and affirmation of the totality of creation. A--is the state of waking-consciousness. U--is the state of dreaming-consciousness. M--is the state of dreamless-sleep, the natural condition of the quiescent, undifferentiated consciousness. The silence following the pronunciation of the Pranava *Aum* is the ultimate unmanifest, wherein perfected supraconsciousness totally merges with pure transcendental essence of Divine Reality. *Aum* is the sound-symbol of the whole of consciousness-existence, and its affirmation:

***“Aum did originate the worlds.  
Aum too is the truth of Involution.”***

**--Natchintanai. 260.**

The glorification of the contemplation of *Aum* is found in the Upanishads, and it is hailed as the soul of the Hindu Religion. In Chandogya Upanishad it is said that the essence of essences is the Udgitha which is a combination of Rik (speech) and Sama (vital breath) and which is the syllable Aum. Devas adopted the threefold knowledge of the Vedas, protecting themselves with the metrical hymns called *Chand* as but they were not free from Death. Finally they entered the asylum of voice--Swara (*Aum*). Taking Its support, they became immortal and secure. Brihadar-anyaka Upanishad says that this *Aum* is the Veda, and that

one knows through it all that has to be known.

Svetasvatara Upanishad states that the soul is pervaded within the body by the sacred word *Aum*, like the fire is concealed in its cause, the wood. Making the body the lower piece of wood and the sacred Pranava *Aum* the upper piece, one should practise meditation as the rubbing and realize the Self as the concealed fire is made manifest through percussion. One should hold the upper part of the body erect, other parts steady, and subdue the senses and the mind within the heart, and should, with the raft of mystic *Aum*, cross over all the dreadful worldly currents.

In Naradaparivrajaka Upanishad, Paramesti (Brahma) enlightens Narada thus: Aumkara is Brahma, being both Vyasti (individual) and Samasti (cosmic). Brahma Pranava is one only, the substratum and support of the whole universe. Aumkara is indestructible in past, present and future, immortal and ageless. Become aware that your Atma is Parabrahman.

*Aum* is called Pranava as it runs through prana or breath or pervades life. *Aum* is both *saguna* and *nirguna*. Taittiriya Upanishad declares that the Lord of all, pre-eminent among the Vedas in the form of *Aum*, is ever immortal and leads one, with such knowledge of the Self, to immortality.

The glorification of the contemplation of *Aum* is found in the Principal Upanishads:

“Aum iti brahma, aum itidam sarvam, aum ity etad  
anukrtir.”

“Aum is Brahman  
Aum is this all.  
Aum is verily compliance.”

--Taittiriya Upanishad. 1. 8.

“Aum is the one eternal syllable of which all that exists is but the development--The past present and the future are all included in this one sound, and all that exists beyond the forms of time is also implied in the word Aum.” “Aum is the self--Atman indeed. He who knows this, with his self enters the Self.”

--Mandukya Upanishad. 1.1 12.

“Aum is the one indestructible sound the Immensity. He who abandons the body, his mind intent on me, uttering the syllable Aum attains the supreme purpose of his destiny.”

--Bhagavad Gita. 8. 13.

The syllable *Aum* which is the imperishable Godhead is also the Universe. Whatever has existed, whatsoever exists, whatsoever shall exist hereafter is *Aum*, and whatsoever transcends past, present and future, that also is *Aum*. By meditating on the three aspects of A-U-M, man can realise the Reality of the God-head. Beyond it is pure unitary consciousness, wherein awareness of the world of multiplicity is completely effaced. It is ineffable Peace. It is *Sat-Chit-Anandam*.

***“Beyond the thirty six Tattvas is the Dance of Bliss.  
Beyond the thirty six Tattvas is the Home of Bliss.  
Beyond the thirty six Tattvas who can compare,  
Beyond the thirty six Tattvas coalesce the beatific.”***

**--Natchintanai. 255.**

Thus *Aum* is the Name of the Nameless, the common symbol of God, Isvara, or Brahman. *Aum* is the essence of the Vedas and Vedas are the exposition of *Aum*. *Aum* is the basis for life, thought and action. *Aum* covers the three-fold experience of man. *Aum* is the first and the last word of every religious ceremony. The aspirants that realize the meaning and mystery of *Aum*, enjoy supreme bliss. The assimilation and application of *Aum* destroys the undercurrents of passion, greed, hatred, pride, jealousy and egoism, root and branch; *Aum* is the solace of life and the Ultimate Reality. The whole world is in and of *Aum*. The universe comes from *Aum*, rests in *Aum*, and dissolves in *Aum*. *Aum* is the alpha and omega of everything: So sang Swami.

All names and forms of this universe are contained in this mysterious, sacred monosyllable *Aum* for their existence. *Aum* is the solemn and solid reality radiating peace, joy calmness, and it denotes our true nature of divinity. There are four aspects, namely, *Sabda*, *Artha*, *Jnana*, and *Anubhava*. *Sabda* means sound, name, *Nama*. *Artha* means *rupa*, form. *Jnana* means wisdom of *Satchidananda*, the basic universal Consciousness behind and beyond name and form, *Nama* and *rupa*. *Anurbhava* means self-realization, and the attainment of *Satchidananda*-- Bliss.

When we say or hear '*Aum*' it is *sabda*. When the *sabda* denotes *Sat Chit Anand*, our true nature, it is *artha*. The *sabda* '*Aum*' and its *artha* (meaning) are comprehensible and relative, being only intellect-deep. When we go still deeper, and transcend the theoretical and superficial experience of mind and intellect, and of name and form of the universe, we touch the basic principle *Satchidanand* which is the true dawn of wisdom beyond the worldly triplet--knower-knowledge-known. This is *Jnanam*. When this wisdom of the Self Supreme becomes our very being, then it is *anubhava*, (practical realization), the glory and goal of life.

Swami reveals that the mystic *Aum* indicates everything which is beyond the conception of time. *Aum* is all-pervading. He declares *Aum* as the axis of contemplation in his Garland of *Dhyanamalai*.

Know *Aum* which is soundless and of infinite sounds.

It is ever-peaceful on account of negation of duality.

It is free from all distinctions.

This Truth has been realised as non-dual and free from the illusion of the manifold, by the Wise who have overcome fear, anger attachment and ego.

It is the Guru's verdict that the ceaseless chanting of *Aum* will lead a Meyadiyar, bondsman of Truth, to attain the highest wisdom of the Self.

***“Don the indescribable Feet of Grace,  
Establishing the Alone in the Void.”***

**--Natchintanai. 187.**

Swaimi bids one and all to chant *Aum* with profound feeling. Chant *Aum*, knowing Its omniscience, omnipotence, and omnipresence. Pour forth *Aum* vibrations from the depth of your heart into the world at large, with vigour and vitality.

Chanting *Aum* will shut out worldly thoughts and bring your being in tune with the Infinite.

To chant *Aum* is to melt the mind and intellect into the Infinite.

To chant *Aum* is to realize that you are the Light of lights. *Aum* instills in you the divine energy and makes you a spiritual dynamo.

Thus *Aum* is the symbol for Absolute Reality--*ParaSivam*. He who knows this is a See-er.

***“Behold *Aum* to be the *ParaSivam*  
Ever luminous in the inmost soul of all,  
All-pervading and All-knowing  
Everlasting abode of Bliss ineffable.”***

**--Natchintanai. 215.**

# THE GLEAMING FEET OF GRACE

## THE EQUATION

SWAMI saw beyond the humble hamlet of Nallur, where lived the *Guru*, Sage Chellappar. Nall-ur signified a haven of peace and goodness, and Nalluran cast an aura of sanctity over this fair Isle of Lanka by his great Equation. His testimony on the dynamic power of Grace unravels the mystery of his impact on his votaries.

The Vedas proclaim the infinite glory of *Hara Hara, Siva Siva*. The Agamas extol Him as the Indweller in the hearts of all beings.

He abides eternally in the inmost caverns of our hearts and unveils His glory only when by grace, we surrender our all at His Feet.

*“He is also the radiant power of the worlds.  
Verily He is the light of the Universe,  
And by His All-pervasive luminosity,  
He illumines my own perceptive powers too.”*

Let us therefore join in the refrain of Hara, Hara, Siva, Siva, and meditate in tranquillity on the great Equation:

### HARA HARA SIVA SIVA

**“Indweller in the hearts of lovers,  
Hara, Hara! Siva, Siva! The core of the Vedas!**

**Golden and gem-like art Thou O comely King!  
The Monarch whom all accomplished ones extol.**

**Oh luminous insight 'neath the seeing eye,  
All-filling and illumining like the sun ray!**

**Male art Thou and yet female too,  
The Heavenly One whom devotees adore.**

**The crescent moon adorns Thy hair,  
And the hunted tiger's skin Thou dost wear.**

**Thou did'st conjure up the sea of milk,**

**And pervadeth both heaven and earth.**

**Thou dost reveal the essence of holy texts,  
The slim-waisted She on Thy left adorns.**

**O supreme Knowledge who at Thillai danceth,  
Siva, Siva! Siva, Siva! That art Thou O Lord!**

**O bestower of bounteous Grace!  
Who in form like mine manifested in Nallur!**

*--Natchintanai. 119.*

### **OH BLISS INFINITE**

**In the expansive firmament is the Father and mother.  
In the expansive firmament is the soul of existence.  
In the expansive firmament is the elemental forces five.  
In the expansive firmament do I too dwell.**

**Deep within me I see the microcosm and macrocosm.  
My innate self I see as macrocosm and microcosm.  
Yet my intrinsic Self sees not the microcosm and macrocosm.  
I permeate both macrocosm and microcosm.**

**The peerless One who is Father, Mother and Guru,  
He fosters me as in me He dwelleth.  
the Primal One absolves me from past deeds.  
Him I come to know and merge in Love with Him.**

**He's ambrosia in the hearts of hoary saints,  
Bliss eternal and ever immortal.  
He's the balm that heals the burns of finitude.  
Freed from affliction sore, I awaken to Reality.**

**He's the immaculate One, with and without Form.  
He's my Guru who willeth to make me His own.  
Above the sway of the twenty four principles, (Tattwas)  
He alone prevails as the efficient creative cause.**

**He's Effulgence who banished my fears.  
He's the soul of Justice who shuns false hearts.**

**He's the Alpha of all true religious sects.  
His Holy Feet on my head, life indeed is blessed!**

**The Primal One beyond the sixty four categories,  
The magnanimous Radiance that dispels distress,  
He's the mediator who showed grace to sage Agastya.  
My unsullied heart is His favourite abode.**

**The Consort of the tender *Sakti* takes His abode  
In the inner shrine of those who've subdued the senses.  
The Essence of Letters five cannot be realised  
In the passion-torn minds who perpetuate finitude.**

*--Natchintanai. 342-343.*

### **MY FATHER**

**Oh Lord, who bides within the hearts of thy servitors  
Who call on Thee as Our Father, Dear Father!  
Oh Form of Grace divine, descent! O Bliss that fills the eyes!  
Take me 'neath thy sway, for now is the crucial time.**

**Depraved I feel without an iota of charity or penance,  
Yet I feign to be a man endowed with high wisdom--  
Oh Lord, who dons the crescent in Thy fiery locks,  
Take me'neath thy sway, lest I faint and fall.**

**Can those great seers who by self have realised the Self,  
Suffer the illusion of heaven, and evolutes of matter?  
Oh who ridest on the bull, with locks bedecked by Konrai blooms  
Here and now, for ever, do Thou take me 'neath thy sway.**

**Oh Wealth, whose bounty fills the hearts of the devout!  
Oh matchless Gem celestial! Oh guardian and Support!  
Am I not thy eternal serf? Then bespeak my Lord,  
Is it meet that Thou ignore me as if I were a stranger?**

**Will the hearts of those who laud Thee know any fear?  
Oh Peerless Lord, forlorn have I become! In this world,  
Is there another God than Thou to sustain me?  
Is there another refuge here--thy response I await.**

**Oh Effulgence that lights the hearts of thy devotees!  
Oh thou of whom thy Sakti forms thy other half!  
I've extolled thy glory inconceivable in the Vedic paean.  
My faults forbear--Am I not thy faithful serf?**

**Oh Beloved! Oh Lord of all existence!  
The partner of the sweet voiced Sakti, Oh Thou  
Of luminous flame that eludes the perplexed Vishnu!  
Grant thy Grace to me who for e'er ponders on Thee!**

**Oh Thou Who art the consummation of all wisdom!  
Oh Thou in whom the sages dwell and know no separation!  
This debased cur knows not the art of magnifying Thee.  
Yet speak Thou Oh Lord, I pray, the one word fitting me.**

**My frailty apprehends not the sweet import of that word.  
And night and day, here in this hoary world, I prattle.  
Will Thou not come to me and appease my penury?  
Reveal Thou Oh Lord thy gracious reply.**

**Oh Siva, how can I utter the ecstasy of thy bondsmen  
Who in Thee art merged like salt in water?  
Here on earth, if Thou willeth to commingle with me  
Who can prevent Thee? Thy grace I yearn.**

*--Natchintanai. 50-51.*

## **SIVAYAVE**

**Worship thou the fragrant lotus Feet  
Of the Lord who has no origin or end,  
Who from His devotees can never part.  
All thy sinister deeds will pass away--*Sivayavé.***

**He who donned the snakes dances in the void  
Paraparan's healing grace be mine in adoration.  
He dwells within the hearts of all who seek Him  
Cleave to Him, and ease thy anguish--*Sivayavé.***

**Our Lord who is from everlasting to everlasting.  
The gracious One who bestows His boundless grace  
Even on wrong-doers who deceive and steal.**

**He lives in harmony within thy heart--*Sivayavé.***

**The Father of us all whose locks betoken grace,  
His Being is proof of abundant grace,  
Who, with His retinue dances in cremation ground,  
'Tis He indeed who stands before me--*Sivayavé.***

**The Goodly Being, Maker of all the worlds,  
Lord of matter playing countless games,  
Teacher of gnostic arts manifold,  
Not for a moment doth He part from me--*Sivayavé.***

**He who is the Life of my life in the body  
He doth know full well my misery,  
Gleaming as the lotus with the deer in His hand,  
In my heart is His dwelling--*Sivayavé.***

**Like gingly and its oil, so is the Lord  
Who dons the konrai blooms that honey yield,  
He bides within the hearts of the loved ones,  
And those who love Him, He Himself will seek--*Sivayavé.***

**He who rides on the bull, Gracious Supporter  
Of those sages who care not for the morrow,  
And who practise tapas reclining on His Feet,  
He doth rule o'er me, lowly me--*Sivayavé.***

**He bides within the hearts of adepts true,  
He it is who in my-self doth abide.  
Saved, Oh saved are we with nothing lacking.  
The whole world adores Him--*Sivayavé.***

**All the world has come out of One,  
All the world is sustained by One,  
All the world will merge into One--  
That One is my succour--*Sivayavé.***

**All the world has come out of Aum  
All the world is sustained by Aum  
All the world will merge into Aum  
That Aum is my succour too--*Sivayavé.***

Thus it is, that in the embodied state of our lives on earth, we have but one choice. It is the consecration of all the energies of body, mind and soul to the Lord. The adoration that He takes unto Himself is the service of all created forms, as forms of the Lord. Speech becomes the service of the Lord, when this power is offered to chant the Divine Name, and we become fully immersed in the Lord's praise.

The Lord who is Immanent as well as Transcendent is not apart from our inmost being. Many songs and psalms eventually merge in the redeeming word, the word proper to me, to which my tongue clings, effecting by unceasing pronouncement inwardly, a vital purification. It is the excellence of meditation, which Swami extols in these odes of great beauty--the efficacy of the Divine Name becoming a constant inward speech, until it conquers the heart--the Abode of the Indweller.

### **HAVE YOU SEEN?**

**That Light that mingles with the seeing eye,  
That Lord, have you seen?  
That which is not male or female and yet both,  
Have you not perceived that?**

**He who pervades earth and heaven  
Have you not beheld Him?  
He who is Beauty and Excellence,  
Have you not experienced yet?**

**He comes as mother and father,  
Did'st thou know Him as Siva?  
He who animates in you and me,  
Can you not realise Him?**

**That which nourishes the fruits to mature  
Can you not relish It?  
That which pulsates air and fire,  
Can you not discern It?**

**That tonic that makes mortals immortal,  
Have you tasted It and rejoiced?  
The Lord who danceth in cremation grounds,**

**Can you not see without distinction?**

*--Natchintanai. 140.*

In this soulful lyric, Swami brings out the absolute Truth of the Supremacy of God, His omniscience, His omnipresence, and that of His aeviternity. His timeless nature is that of the *now* without duration, and we, who can think only in terms of time and eternity or in terms of the past and future, cannot ever apprehend nor experience. We sing this song and meditate that from Him all things proceed, and in Him all are unified at last.

### **SIVA DHYANAM**

**He is my Lord  
Who evokes the cherished love of  
Father, mother and teacher in one.  
He came and made me His own  
The passing vanities vanished\  
I came into my own true being  
And realised my eternal self.  
Oh beauteous one, as tender as a cuckoo  
Everything Thou seest is Siva's immanence  
Immeasurable is his infinity.  
Keep straight in the path without faltering.  
Join the paean of Thou art That.**

**Thanathaam Thanathaam.**

**Oh blessed one, lithe as a parrot,  
Be not rocked in the pool of greed and lust,  
And come to your doom.  
Let us with one accord tune our will  
To do His will, and meditate on Siva.  
Oh comely songster, stray not here nor there  
But come unto me, my beloved  
I'll unfold the non-dual vision  
The glory of the One supreme Godhead,  
In whom is embedded  
All that thou seest and experienceth.  
He is all pervasive my dear,  
From Him emanates everything.**

**“Enkum Avanadi Enkum Avanadi  
Ellaam Avanadi Ellaam Avanadi.**

**Let's not waste our energy in idle talk,  
But offer the oblation of Love  
To the luminous One with flowers.  
Ah lovely one, as lively as the parrot.  
Listen my dear! They are beatific saints  
Who doeth His bidding.  
Guard thou thy tongue  
And chasten the inimical ego-self.  
For we are That, my dear, We are That.  
“Naam athuvedi Naam athuvedi.”**

*--Natchintani. 21.*

### **THE LIGHT OF GRACE**

Swami holds the Lamp of Grace and bids us turn our gaze from the evanescent joys of the world to the light of Sivam:

**Fleeting is life.  
Fleeting are the delights of youth and wealth.  
Uphold the way of righteousness,  
'ere the forbidding day of death dawns.  
Recall to the sessions of sweet silent thought,  
The name of the Lord, ever and anon,  
And view with equanimity the good and the bad;  
For the *Anma* is eternal, aye ever the same.  
Thus did sage Yogar perceive the truth  
And become a realised seer. In this world  
Laudable is the aim to attain equable vision.**

In this Natchintanai song, he muses on the snares of the world and makes an impassioned plea to give up the false and espouse the true. *“Attain equable vision and live in harmony”--*

### **THE RENEWAL OF FAITH**

**“I know not the full import of the inspiring saying of the seers  
that Love ineffable is Sivam. Day and night I was lured  
by the desire of wealth and enjoyment. Be thou my refuge.**

**Thy grace I crave, oh Wise One! Thou inscrutable One!  
Take me to the shelter of thy Feet. Father majestic, beloved  
of my life! Oh great cosmic Dancer!”**

*--Natchintanai. 24.*

In response to this stirring call for His refreshing grace, we hear the Guru's voice in a softened mood of tenderness, urging us to know the art of life's renewal. It is so simple that it evades analysis.

**“Subdue anger and shun falsehood and cruelty. Avoid evil habits and hold fast to Truth, whereby the seed of Saivam\ may flourish in you.”**

**Do thy duty well and offer homage to His Feet. Resolve\ and act: whatever you do, do it with all your might. Uphold the devotees of God and look upon women as mothers. Live faithfully in the light of Siva and chant His name *Namasivaya* with fervent piety and devotion.”**

*--Natchintanai. 24.*

Here we note the stress on surrender as the starting point of new experience, which marks a new phase of spiritual existence. The “Feet of God”--*adi*, betokens the act of surrender.

**“I gave myself, and lo, on giving, the gladness of my soul was great.  
Deep draughts of joy I drank, deep droughts insatiate.”**

### **VEL VEL MURUGA**

In the Way of Truth, --*Unmai Villakam*, St. Umaphy Sivachariar attributes the “Face of God--*Mugam* as signifying *Sugam*.” Swami invokes the symbol of the gnosis of Muruga--the *Vêl*, (lance) for the experience of serene felicity--*Sugam*:

**“Constant repetition of His name, the remembrance of the might of His Lance, and the insignia of the Holy Ash will surely lead an aspirant to the awareness that the bloom of Siva shall blossom in self--chant *Vêl*, *Vêl*.\**

**Recall to your consciousness, the holy Feet of the Guru,  
and you will lack nothing, but enjoy sweet content.\**  
**He is a true devotee who fills the fountain of his heart with  
love and selfless service, and seeks the company of the just\**  
**and faithful, who are noted for their virtuosity and integrity--**  
**chant Vêl Vêl.**

**Thus shall one attain the delectable fulfilment of a life of firm  
resolve and resolute action. It is the experience of serene  
felicity at the Feet of God--chant Vêl Vêl.**

*--Natchintanai. 25.*

The *Vêl*, the symbol of wisdom, is the eternal witness to the ascent of the *Anma* to its goal of tranquil bliss. It is Muruga's weapon of victory over the forces of darkness.

### **WHO KNOWS THE WONDER OF HIS GRACE?**

Fortified with the wisdom of the *Vêl*, Swami surveys the universe of Experience:

**“The beauty of love, who can know?  
Who doth know the wonder of Grace  
In this big, wide and wonderful world?  
It gleams in all objects of the universe.**

**The macrocosm displays His cosmic activity.  
The whole existence vibrates to the rhythm of Letters Five.  
Creation and maintenance are sustained by Letters Five.  
The wonder of the Letters Five, who doth know?**

**Love is God; Love permeates the world.  
Life moves to the harmony of Love.  
Love is fulfilling; Love is effacing.  
The beauty of Love, who doth know?**

**He who is transcendent,  
He becomes immanent too.  
Unveil the Primal Cause by Grace alone  
And not by inquiry which eludes.**

**He animates all existence  
He is the Self of all selves,  
Unknown to celestials and twice born.  
Who can know the wonder of His Grace?**

*--Natchintanai. 27.*

## **OH LOVE THAT ART SIVA**

The Guru gives us an exhilarating tonic to safeguard us from dejection, as a result of the pangs of change and decay that we see all around us, and guides us to accentuate the quality of our living. He invigorates our dormant self with love, so that in turn we learn to express our love to all God's beings. Love is reciprocal. We can never know the potent efficacy of His Grace unto us, without first loving our neighbours, friends and enemies, in an act of surrender at the Feet of the Beloved, who filleth the whole existence.

**“Ah the wonder of His Grace that kindles in us such wondrous Love for Him and His manifestations!”**

**“Who can fathom the unfathomable light of His Grace requiting our oblation of Love at His Feet--the seat of Grace?”**

**Shall not our insight relish seeing everything, everywhere, within and without, in all states of pure consciousness, as the ever-present, ever knowing Sivam?”**

**The Love of Siva leads to *Siva Yogam*  
The Love of Siva leads to *Sivajnanam*  
The Love of Siva leads to *Sivabhogam*  
The Love of Siva leads to *Sivamayam*.**

*--Natchintanai. 28.*

We recall here St. Manicavasagar's *Temple Lyric* where he experiences the majestic splendour of Siva from the pinnacle of Love:

*“Oh Supreme Splendour that rises within me!  
Oh Ambrosia that wells up and blocks  
The outlets of my deluding senses five!*

*Show thyself to me in Grace as Thou art--  
Essence of Purity, Lord Siva,  
Dweller in the great and holy shrine,  
Thou who transcends all happy states without end,  
My Love sublime, Oh Bliss ineffable.”*

*--Tiruvacagam. 22.1.*

## THY GLEAMING FEET

In plaintive strains of indomitable faith in the Grace of the Guru, Swami sings in praise of the Indwelling Siva:

“May we inherit a virtuous life  
By seeking refuge against fearful ills,  
At the omnipotent Feet of the God-Guru,  
And realise the truth of His Plenum.

Procreator of life with Grace at Thy side!  
Protector art Thou, Oh wielder of Grace!  
If Thy gleaming Feet be the rendezvous of Souls,  
Doth not all gain and loss accrue from Thy Will?

*--Natchintanai. 29-30.*

Swami's songs on the efficacy of a life of consecration makes us ponder lingeringly on the many psalms of the *Nayanmar*, who lived this life of selfless dedication: Sang St. Manicavasagar:

*“Thou art my all--my fluent tongue and organs of thought,  
My comfort Thou and trepidation; my power for good  
and ill;  
No other goal have I in life. Truly in adoring Thee  
Lies the way to liberation. In shaking gloom,  
Oh Sivaloka, wilt thou not lend Thy solace?”*

*--Tiruvacagam. 33. 5.*

Swami realises like the bard of Vathavur, that man is for ever multiplying his desires and becoming more and more disconsolate, only to cry at last, that all is '*vanitas vanitatum.*' Therefore he urges that all motives of action that overpower the body and soul should be surrendered to the Lord, not in

a note of bitterness, not reluctantly, not even rebelliously, but joyfully. the profundity of his purity, detachment and renunciation is revealed in his early Odes of *Natchintanai*. The beauty of this vision of Grace is described vividly by Swami:

**“Oh Mind! Follow me to worship at the altar of grace of the  
Peerless Lord who dons the holy Ash.  
He is the One who became manifest as Two and Three.  
Come after me to adore the Lord as the beloved mother.”**

*--Natchintanai. 30.*

He apprehends the nature of the God-Guru as a manifold source of Grace, and in an absolute abandonment of all attachments, he makes a grand offering of himself. **“He stood before me like my mother. Henceforth I claim no prerogative over myself, except the sovereignty of His sheltering Grace.”**

**“Oh Mind, follow me in my quest of Grace;  
It fills my eyes and gushes in my heart.  
I see by Grace His manifold form,  
My eyes rain love when like me He stood.  
Day and night on that alone I ponder.  
Swiftly do thou join me, Oh mind!**

*--Natchintanai. 30.*

## TIRUVUNTHIAR ODES

*Tiruvunthiar* is a popular mode of poetic expression to celebrate the triumphs of Siva's Grace, adopted by the Tamil mystic poets. *Unthiar* is supposed to refer to a folk game, where the players gather in a circle with a centre player tossing the ball aloft, and the ball is sent flying aloft from player to player. As the game is played, the gracious, renowned deeds of Siva celebrated in the Puranas are recounted, so as not to miss the mark. In the same way as the ball flies up on the force of a hit, so also the Lord hits at man's ignorance, and the bondage of the triple *malas*, and sends them flying away, thereby freeing man to enjoy the magnitude of His Grace:

### HIT THE BALL

**He who cannot be affirmed or denied,**

**He is our Lord--Hit the ball and so declare,  
He is in all--Toss again and let go.**

**The seer, seen and sight are His play.  
Unseen power of Grace is He--Hit the ball and chime  
That He is the Beloved of Sakti--Toss again and let go.**

**He who burnt the Tripura by his smile,  
He came and enslaved me--Hit the ball and sing  
Nothing do I lack--Toss again and let go.**

**My Lord of ineffable grace,  
He's of Nallur--Hit the ball and join in  
His refrain 'we know not'--Toss again and let go.**

**He was the bangle seller at Madurai,  
Somasunderam by name--Hit the ball and sing  
In the void is He the light--Toss again and let go.**

**He came as a Guru under the Kurunthe tree.  
He Is as He ever Is--Toss the ball and laud  
He's the God of celestials--Toss again and let go.**

**He came as an uncle with a law suit,  
He was known as Somasunderam--Hit the ball and sing  
He is the splendour of light--Toss again and let go.**

**Caned while lifting sand loads for a dame,  
He vouchsafed Grace unto Pânini--Toss the ball and sing,"  
That He is the Absolute Reality--Toss again and let go.**

**He routed the sacrifice of Daksha,  
Sokanathan of Madurai is He--Toss the ball and sing,  
That He's the embodiment of felicity. Toss again and let go.**

**An emissary to Sundarar on behalf of Paravaiyar.  
He bequeathed the gift of Kandan--Hit the ball and sing  
That He's the sea of Grace, toss again and let go.**

*--Natchintanai. 293.*

**TOSS AND LET GO**

**That which is Formless assumed the form of Guru  
At Nallur to shower His Grace--Toss the ball and chime  
That Siva is the Self, Toss and let go.**

**He cut asunder the cluster of desires  
Praise the Peerless One and toss the ball and chime  
That there's no birth nor death, toss and let go.**

**That He is or is not, none can tell,  
But He did come to Nallur, so toss the ball and chime  
That I am He--Toss and let go.**

**He o'er-powered and made me His at Nallur  
And succoured me--Toss the ball and chime  
He's the ocean of grace--Toss and let go.**

**Freed from delusion, they who bide by His will  
Enjoy limitless bliss--Toss the ball and chime  
That desire hath no charm--Toss and let go.**

**He who has no fixed abode nor name, came  
Of his own accord to entice me--Toss the ball and chime  
That sorrows have fled--Toss and let go.**

**The Supreme Being who pervades the whole world,  
He came to Nallur--Toss the ball for thus  
Said He, 'that we know not'--Toss and let go.**

**He cannot be eulogised in definite script,  
He's acclaimed as Guru in this land--Toss the ball  
That we lack nothing--Toss and let go.**

**He's the lord who can subdue my senses five.  
The beloved of Nallur also is he--Toss the ball  
That doubts there are none--Toss and let go.**

**Sublime is He and full of sweetness  
Is this sage of Nallur--Toss the ball and chime  
That anxiety is dispelled--Toss and let go.**

**He who is the essence of the mystic Aum  
Hast eradicated the I-ness--Toss the ball and chime**

**That delusion's spell is over--Toss and let go.**

**Incomprehensible to the envious, He showers  
The bequest of Grace, Toss the ball and chime  
That He is Guru-Chellappa--Toss and let go.**

*--Natchintanai. 193-194.*

## THE MEDIATION

Salutation to the fragrant Feet of Siva YogaSwami, the Gurunathan who appeared in human form in Columbuturai's pleasant groves! He sang the lyrics of sublime beauty on His Guru, Sage Chellappa Swami of Nallur, as did St. Manicavasagar on his Guru:

*“They who seek to apprehend the reality of the One  
Luminous Essence do not know Thee as male, female or  
neuter.*

*Thou did'st appear to me thy devotee truly as thou'rt--  
I saw Thee, yet I see Thee not! Ah what illusion!”*

*--Tiruvacagam. V. 42.*

St. Tirumular extols the immanence of the Lord of Saivam, who manifests as the Guru and points the unique Way of Truth--*Sanmarga*.

*“The Supreme Lord of Saivam, the sovereign Sivaparam has blazoned  
a unique way for the upliftment of the world.  
It is the felicitous way of the Guru--GuruNeri. It is the goal to the  
divine Siva--SivaNeri. It is the way of Truth--  
Sanmarga. This lofty way is for the whole world.”*

*--Tirumantram: 1478.*

In the hermitage of Swami, sitting before his loving Presence, there would break on the shores of the heart, wave upon wave of irresistible yearning to *know* and *experience* the “*Self within the self.*” The Natchintanai psalms on the Knowledge of the Self are some of the fascinating songs, which Swami made us sing on many an occasion:

How can one *Know the self and Realise Thyself?* This was the quest of the devotees who sought the Guru's Grace so ardently day and night. He made all negative factors float into the clouds of unknowing, and having made the

heart clean, imprinted the truth of the *Anma*, that its abiding place is in the pure void within.

**“Not the body, not the mind art Thou;  
Not the inner faculties and not even the life breath--  
but Eternal art Thou.”**

--*Natchintanai. 381.*

**“This is the Truth in all its totality.'  
So said my Gurunathan.”**

--*Natchintanai. 155.*

Such was the testimony of Swami. *The Truth of the One Absolute Reality-- 'Muluthum Unmai'*--was an experienced Truth for our Guru. Those who strove with other eyes to see could not understand Swami and failure often lead to frustration. Yet there was the indomitable faith in the heart of every devotee, that the light of Grace from the Seeing Eye of the Guru will some day illumine the sight of even the lowliest and most unworthy of the devotees with the experience of Truth:

*“Who can behold the All-Seeing One  
If He doth not kindle my sight.”*

--*St. Appar. VI, 95. 3.*

**“Dear One, All that we perceive are His manifestations;  
Who can see Him if He doth not illumine our sight?”**

--*Natchintanai. 180.*

**“The true devotees of Siva hail Him as the light of wisdom!”**

--*Natchintanai. 205.*

St. Manicavasagar too alludes to the work of enlightenment effected by the Guru:

*“How far will I and my mind be from my Beloved,  
If He with His Grace had not made me His own?”*

--*Tiruvacagam, 10. 15.*

In the spiritual combat that every one of us wage against the unseen enemies, that hold the real Self in us captive, the relevance and significance of a *Jnana-Guru* has been amply demonstrated by our Gurunathan. In the *Jnana-Yagjnas* that he bade us perform at the *Sivathondan* Home, by the spiritual discourses in his ashram, and the *Yatras*--pilgrimages organized on various occasions, he made it possible for us to sit together, to meditate together, to sing together and work together as the servitors of Siva, under the banner of the illustrious *Siva-Thondan* of Lanka, owing allegiance to none else, but His Holy Feet.

**“With minds tuned to meditate on Thee,  
And eyes ever watchful to behold Thee,  
Our heads in obeisance bow in Thy worship.  
We're not subject to alien allegiance.  
Morn and eve, we shall praise and adore Thee,  
And meekly cherish Lanka thy abode.**

*--Natchintanai. 315.*

By concerted action and persistent *sadhana*, Swami inspired his devotees with the love surpassing that of an endearing mother, to take the leap from the rugged plateau of earthly toil and attachments to the peak of *Tiruvadi--Jnanam*, the sublime height of Truth, whence the egoity of man dissolves in the unity of the One Eternal Effulgence.

**“The Form of Siva is Refulgence: Know that as beyond  
perception.  
Look not down my dear, disheartened that It's beyond Thy  
grasp.”**

*--Natchintanai. 246.*

Truly it is a leap from the plane of relativity and duality to the realm of the Absolute Truth!

This was the goal which the searching glow of the camphor light in his august Presence made clear to those gathered around him. His penetrating eyes that commerged with infinity, shed a ray of serene peace on all who beheld him in silent adoration, with intense faith and piety. Those luminous eyes radiated the brilliance of the felicitous path-way of his Guru, Sage Chellappa Swami. Purity in thought, word and deed, righteous living, blessedness of love, meekness, fearlessness, desirelessness and commingling

of the self with Truth--*Sivanubhuti*--these were held out by SWAMI as the steps to the Realisation of Siva. He bade his devotees chant ceaselessly the encantation of *Sivayanama*, and follow the light of Grace in the foot-steps of the Guru.

**“Pursue the path of Grace and march onward.  
Chant the name of Siva--Sivayanama.”**

--*Natchintanai. 149.*

**“Sing ye all that we are the legion of Siva and we lack nothing  
as we swing in the aura of perfection.”**

--*Natchintanai. 370.*

Thus would Swami impart the accents of Truth, stroking his silvery beard, facing the eastern horizon in the early hours of the dawn; and thus would he, the Siva-Guru kindle the sunrise in our hearts.

The practical discipline he enforced, and the experiential import of his teachings came to be fused with new meanings in the hours of meditation, and set a perfect pattern of a life in Siva-Thondu. A month before Swami's *Samadhi*, a devotee was singing the Pilgrim song--*Yatrai Pattu*--from *Tiruvacagam* before the Master. It was St. Manicavasagar's psalm of the Up-going, where he sets forth the soul's pilgrimage through the world of sense to the celestial City of *Sivanagar*, mystically the union with Siva.

*“come ye with one accord; Behold the time hath come,*

*That we rally as one team and go, abiding in His will,*

*Even we, in Siva's City shall refuge find.”*

--*Tiruvacagam. 45.1 3.5.*

Swami rejoined in his own inimitable way at the close of the *Tiruvacagam* refrain: 'Shed all your pollution and come unto me. I shall lead you to the City of *Sivanagar*. But when will you loosen the adamant chains?' 'When Swami wills it,' came the prompt response of the Singer.

*“Thou art the Mid-point of all things. There is no doer  
but thou.”*

His insistence was on Purity first and foremost, and Purity was also his last watchword, He commanded a perfection which was so difficult to emulate without in the first place casting off the veils of inherent darkness of the soul. The enlightened Guru that Swami is, can be testified from the fact that not only did he reveal the path way to God-realisation, while yet dwelling in the habitation of this human body, and leading the normal life of a full human being, without resorting to external symbols of renunciation; but he also led his devotees step by step in the 'up going,' as a benign father and mother would do to a helpless child to come into its own true inheritance.

**“The Kingdom of Sivapuram was not up above the blue sky where the stars twinkle, or here or there, but within each one of you. Seek ye and find it,”** would be Swami's oft-repeated injunction.

**“Thy home Thou chooseth  
Within the hearts of Saints.”**

At the sunset hour when the fugitive evening rays embraced the shades of darkness, the young aspirants seated before him would be singing in unison the *Taittireya Upanishad*, followed by the songs from *Natchintanai*, and culminating in the choral incantation of *Sivapuranam*, when Swami who would be seated upright, cross-legged, and in meditative silence, would impregnate our frail tremulous hearts with the surging radiance of His Grace, and make the exalted spiritual heritage of the Saiva saints, a reality.

With what joy did we then sing the songs of Swami's *Tiruvunthiar*, leaning against the Rock of his Feet, in fulfilment of worship unceasing:

### **TOSS THE BALL AND SING**

**“That He came with the insignia of the deer and battle axe,  
Down to earth that all may see--Hit the ball and chime,  
Lo, the gloom of sorrow hath receded--Toss again and let go.**

**That my dire distress may flee  
He gave me a formula--Toss the ball and sing  
That the snares of delusion have dissolved--Toss and let go.**

**My sovereign Lord did rule as King of Madurai  
Known also as Ponnambalavan, Hit the ball and sing  
That fruition is mine, Toss and let go.**

**Place and space hath no power to prison  
His Presence within me, Hit the ball and sing  
That unbounded Anma am I, Toss and let go.**

**That in the letters Five He revealed life's mystery  
And in my heart did He abide--Toss the ball and chime  
That Thyself in mySelf hath commingled, Toss and let go.**

**The crescent and Ganga on His crown,  
He's the Lover of Uma, Toss the ball and sing  
That from toils of birth I've attained, Toss and let go.**

**He showed the sway of matter as inert  
|And in my heart did bide, Toss the ball and sing  
That He's the Supreme God, Toss and let go.**

**From the gross layers to the subtle sheaths we move,  
And reach the rock of Thy Feet--Hit the ball and sing  
That our worship is fulfilled--Toss and let go.**

**He illumined us with the light of wisdom  
By the potent Word--Toss the ball and laud  
That He's our invisible friend--Toss again and let go.**

**No peril shall e'er betake those  
Who realise the Self as Sivam--Hit the ball and sing  
That in truth Love is Sivam--Toss again and let go.**

**Those who hear and sing the ten verses  
Enlightened art--Toss the ball and sing  
That the Home of Heaven is ours, Toss and let go.**

*--Natchintanai. 45-46.*

# JNANA YAGJNA

## THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE SELF

JNANA YAGJNA is a form of sacrifice by which we try to live in the light of Truth and realise the bliss of Quiescence. He who has coalesced his separate self in the Supreme Paraparam, he has come into his own, the realisation of the Truth that is Peace and Bliss. Sang St. Tirumular:

*“The seed of liberation lies in the knowledge of the self  
The urge to divine love is to hold fast in earnest worship.  
The goal of grace is self-forgetting consciousness in Siva.  
The way to awareness is to sink in peace serene.*

*Beyond subtle matter embodying sevenfold efficient cause,  
Beyond immense space of the sevenfold instrumental cause  
Freed from the limitation of cause and effect, pervades  
The serene beatitude of peace divine.”*

The *Sanatana Dharma* makes every act, feeling and thought of our life a *yagjna*, an offering to the Devas. *Deva* in the Vedic language means the power giving life and light to different faculties, and the *deva* or *devata* of a faculty, *indriya* or sense taken cosmically - *Adhyatmik* and *Adhidaivik*. The *devata* of *chakshu* or sight is the sight of all beings called *Aditya*, and only symbolized by the material sun or the world's eye. The *devata* of feet is the power in all feet styled Vishnu.

Thus true *Yagjna* or sacrifice to the devas means offering or dedicating one's own individual faculties and senses to the corresponding cosmic powers. An offering to *Indra* would mean realising the presence of God in all eyes; honouring and respecting all eyes; offending no eyes by unworthy conduct; presenting smiles, blessings, love and kindness to whatsoever eyes may turn upon you; and offering one's eyes to the All-Sight with such a devotion, that the egoistic claim will entirely be given up; the All-Light Himself may shine through one's eyes. Sacrifice to *Brihaspati* is dedicating one's intellect to all the intellects in the land or thinking for the good of the land, as if oneself were none else than one's countrymen, merging his interests in the interests of the people and exulting in their joy. This is styled *Atma-Yagjna*.

According to Rama Tirtha, *Yagjna* implies realising in active practice, 'my neighbour to be my own self, feeling myself as one or identical with all.' 'losing my little self to become the Self of all.' *Yagjna* implies a crucifixion of selfishness and the resurrection of the All-Self. In this sense of total dedication, Our Swami signified that true action was not separable from true love and true wisdom:

**“If you perform Jnana-Yoga,  
You'll realise the bliss of quiescence.  
Eternal is Truth.”**

*--Natchintanai. 261.*

The Swami's *Jnana-Yoga* is suggestive of a sacrifice of self-knowledge as a Way to coalesce in Siva, and attain the perfect state of quiescence. The great mystic Tirumular throws light on the Wisdom of the Self as revealed in the Saiva Agamas. In the section on *Upa-Santam* of the Eighth *Tantram* of *Tirumantram*, St. Tirumular describes this state of quiescence as a station of the soul, when it enjoys tranquillity.

*“Transcending the Ego and the thirty six categories,  
The liberated soul comes to know the Self.  
In the purified state of vigilant awareness,  
Guruparan's grace pervades in radiant peace.*

*Steeped in the realised experience of peace,  
In union with Siva in bliss divine,  
Immersed in ethereal felicity of silence,  
The manifest self is in tune with eternal beatitude.*

*--Tirumantram. 2509-2510.*

We now wish to undertake a significant *JNANA YAGJNA*, and recall to the sessions of remembrance, the teachings of the great Saint of Columbuturai. “The Lord who has no defined name or form, quality or nature, action or will, assumes the countenance of Grace, His own attribute of Power, so as to rescue humanity to their highest freedom of Being.” So sang St. Tayumanavar (24.30) in praise of the Siva-Guru. The Guru abides in the hearts of sincere devotees who have self abnegated, as the Life of their life, the Light of wisdom pure and inseparable and hidden deep within. He shows them the Path. He guides them step by step to the goal of Oneness with the God head.

Such a potent form of Grace is *SWAMI*. Natchintanai is the Word of Grace.

His code for life is based on vigilant discipline in the path of righteous living--*Sanmarga*, and the subjugation of the sinister power of the Ego. Discipline of the body--senses and sensations and, of the will and character, takes into account both the subduing of the desires, (that motivation which leads to evil), and the cultivation of the good. The beginning of *Jnanam* or wisdom is the knowledge of the self--“*Ennai Enakarivithaan Enkal Gurunathan*. The summum bonum of wisdom is the quiescence, the *Upa-Santam* that floods the realised soul, in communion with the ParaSivam. **This is the import of Swami's utterance to Realise the Self by the self, and that Sivam art All;**

**“All that we are bides His Will, He is All in All.**

**So why grieve thou, ignorant man?**

**--Natchintanai. 61.**

## **THE WAY TO SELF-REALISATION**

It was the year 1932.

After the childhood communication with Swami, there was a break of about five years, which were spent fruitfully in India. After obtaining the Master of Arts degree, my father took me to Swami and even as we entered his Ashram, He asked with the query, how the time and years had been spent. My father hastened to unroll the record of gold medals and degrees and this and that in music and arts, when Swami interrupted his 'Pulugu,' by remarking that these were loads of fragmented knowledge which could only beget its own dark future. He smiled his sweet smile and said that he would give a new title by adding another letter to the coveted M.A. and pronounced clearly *M.A.D.!*

It was a cry of the GodGuru for enfranchising the self, to shed the rubbish of book learning and study *Tirukural*, *Bhagavad Gita* and the *Tirumurais*, and to graduate in *Atma-Vidya*--the knowledge of the Self--from the University of the world, his GuruKula. 'Find Me and turn thy back to Heaven,' as Emerson declared. The intensity of the mood of negativeness, and the shock treatment to the ego that was experienced, cannot be conveyed in words now. I felt the "Blank misgivings of a creature moving about in worlds not realised." It marked the purgative stage in the inward journey of the self, from the Net-Post of the Unreal to the netless Post of the Real.

The voice, was it from outside or inside kept on whispering to break, break on the cold craggy rock of the threefold ignorance, the shell that covered the *reality* of the inner self. Would the breaking of a hundred coconuts at Nallur temple effect the transformation? That was the dilemma. The intellect or the heart, it was found, could not carry on any commerce with things relating to the light that was ne'er on sea or land. Outside the domain of objective relations, the intellect would involve the subject in nonsense, but how to get rid of all this hard earned rubbish, the assets of laborious toil?

Sophocles, Virgil, Shakespeare, Goethe, Kant or Spinoza were found inadequate to effect the escape from the experience of relational outlook, and to commune with the Truth of the Self. Therefore other avenues to promote Self-Knowledge were tried, in quick succession. The approaches by Plotinus and Eckhart, Sri Ramakrishna and Sri Ramana were found more appealing in this exploration of Reality and held more conviction, than the practice of the *Dhyana Yoga* in the Gita or the impersonal track of Tiruvalluvar whom Swami bade to study. While moving in these realms of attainable consciousness, Swami remained in the region of the *unknowable* till May 1939, with the passing away of the 'Pater Noster' from the scene of earthly activity.

Then began the exploration into the terra incognita which took a turn, where one felt equipped with new and delicate sensibilities; when Swami became the vortex of all *sadhana* to unveil the Self by the self. The study of *Natchintanai* became an all-absorbing quest. Swami's conversations, discourses, teachings and songs and interpretations that threw light step by step in the soul's confrontation, began to be faithfully recorded, and if and when He Wills, these would see the light of day as a compendium to this Testament of Truth.

Meanwhile, Swami's penetrating glimpses into the domain of the *Anma* delineated first hand in some of the most beautiful psalms in *Natchintanai* gripped our attention. Here He affirmed that the peerless *Anma* was not a concept but the attainable Real, and not a substance to be attained in a time process, *but known here and now*. The psalm on 'The Temple of the Heart'--*Killi-Kanni* which he made us sing so often exults in the truth of the Immortality of the *Anma*-- and affirms in undertones of ecstasy, that to *know the Truth is to inhere in Truth, Bliss and Consciousness*.

The best equipment to meditate on the *Self* is found in the study of the songs of *Natchintanai*, as they convey the revelations of the Guru's perennial experience of Truth. Swami's gems on the *Self* are so simple and so few, that they have the power to 'stab awaken' us into an intuitive perception of Truth, however faint or feeble their dart be, to percolate our impervious layers of falsehood. They contain the glimmer of something vast and real. This is the true justification for our translating *Natchintanai* Songs into English, and of our intention not to labour hard with metaphysical commentaries on this great subject of the *Anma-Lapa*. Swami speaks directly to the God in us. Let the whole world realize the God in the self.

*Natchintanai* has the certitude of the Guru's indwelling in the bosom of the Silence of Being. It was the year 1964. On a cold dewy morning in February, Swami came to *Tiruvadi*, our home, as was his wont, wheeled by Iswaran; Tiru and Ma greeted him in the porch with offerings of flowers. As that day was a 'very special day,' the overwhelming presence of the Guru lit up an ecstasy of joy immeasurable, and when he turned to go, Ma unfurled the red carpet in the traditional manner while the Master's Feet touched the cloth of honour (Nilapaavaadai). The Guru's wheel chair was wheeled on it, and the outer gate engraved with AUM was reached. Swami halted. He spoke. "*In the beginning was the Word--The word was Truth.*" So saying, he took the flowers from the tray on his lap, raised his hands aloft and thundered aloud--"*I am Truth,*" and showered the flowers on his head. The seven worlds reverberated, *I AM TRUTH*.

In the mighty explosion, the vividness of the time-space continuum receded, and in the morning shaft of sunlight was revealed the *glory of the God-Guru*. In the Guru's Supreme Awareness, the *other* did not exist. Then dawned on us that in the realisation of Being alone can the tangle of the other be ever solved. This is Swami's Way, and this is how he touched us! This is how he tapped the Ambrosia of the Sivam within each one of his devotees.

Truly, we must seek the *support of Self* first and last. When the mind is stilled, our actions, thoughts and feelings too become purified and selfless, and our desires lose their hold on us. Our self-love weakened thus, we begin to see ourselves as we truly are; love blossoms into an abiding love of Siva, Love for Siva and Love as Siva. It becomes the ruling power of human life. Such intense love begins to pervade one's thoughts and actions, that it blossoms in Siva Thondu.

The profound significance of service to Siva is that one learns to lose oneself in service, in order to find the *Real Self*. When life itself is offered in service to the inmost Lord, his shaft of light shall pierce the abyss. Then shall we realise the blissful, Ever Present Siva in the valley of pain and in the peaks of joy. It is to reach the Kingdom of *Sivanagar*. It is to attain the serene Awareness; Truth is its own proof. Expression fails us as we begin to falter with words, but the experience is a mystical one, and not an act of knowledge. It is our inalienable sovereignty. It is everlasting. It is intrinsic, pure consciousness; *Sivam Is*. That is the Testament of Truth, as testified by our Gurunathan--Siva YogaSwami --*Muluthum Unmai*.

In these ways did Swami share the sunshine of the Truth of the Self, with one and all who sought the solace of His Feet. *Mukti Nalhume* at the close of His Psalm on Good Living, signifies the embrace of serene Peace, as the supreme goal of Self-realisation.

## THE PEERLESS ANMA

**The Anma is the rarest of the rare.  
It is expansive in its vastness, undifferentiated.  
It blends with the colours, black, red and white.  
Inseparable not knowing the tempo of before or after.  
It is the life of the virtuous who're free from bonds.  
It is the Way that surpasseth all other ways.  
It is the core of wisdom, from where emanates joy.  
Divest of symbols and attributes, It pulsates with energy.  
Immaculately pure in the exalted state of bliss,  
The excellence of immortality doth It reflect.  
The triple centres of Tripuram consumed, It freed the Devas.  
It delights in transforming the jackals into horses.  
It bides with those who have neither desire nor aversion.  
It safeguards me from taking endless birth.**

*--Natchintanai. 287.*

Swami glorifies the infinitude of the *Anma* as eternal luminousness, the incomprehensible wonder. In *Samsara* it becomes veiled and loses its pristine dignity. It wanders in chains that have had no beginning. Realisation of the Self is its communion with Infinite

*ParaSivam*. This is the eternal meaning of its existence.

The impediment to the realisation of the self is the dark inhibiting power, the *Karma* of evil works. It is the power which binds all beings. The emphasis is on the overcoming of the (evil results of former works) effect and cause of good and evil acts, and on the incapacity for *jnana* (wisdom) as the greatest of all evils. Thus the *Anma* labours from this binding power, and the idea of release from such enchainment involves the need to worship a personal God, whose eternal Grace can be sought by blessed service to His Gracious Feet.

'Meditate,' exhorts Swami; 'Worship. See convincingly that everything pertaining to God and the faith of man is based on the edifice of Truth--*Muluthum Unmai*.' It is an appeal to a higher revelation which remains a secret--*Naam ariyom*. It demands the keen intuition of a Seer, self luminous and non-rational, and above all logical deductions. Swami is in the line of renowned Hindu Seers before whom, the numinous majesty and absolute transcendentality of the *Anma* unveiled Itself. His songs communicate his direct experience of the Truth of the *Anma* enjoying the bliss of Siva.

## THE TREMULOUS AWARENESS

**This is bliss indeed to melt in love  
And realise for ever the Being true.  
To rest in the calm of felicity--bereft of grief,  
And live always without fear of birth or death.  
Thou art not the five elements, nor the five senses:  
Thou art not the five sensations: Thou art Anma.  
May your life be an endless ecstasy of Being, illumined  
By the Truth that Anma is inseparable from Siva.  
Being is harmony, with mind subdued and serene.  
Restrain desire, anger and arrogance on earth.  
Be unattached like drops of water on the lotus leaf,  
Thus enlightened, may you live in tremulous Awareness.**

*--Natchintanai. 303.*

## THE SPENDOUR THAT IS ANMA

In *Saiva Siddhanta*, *Anma* equated by Swami with *Atma* is known as *Pasu* and connotes the immortal Soul. *Anma* by nature is infinite, all-knowing and all-pervading. It appears finite and ignorant, because of its leanings with impurities or *malam*. These are three in number known as *anavam*, *karmam* and *mayai*, and constitute the bonds of the *Anma* and are known as *paasam*.

*Anavam* is beginningless and is a connate impurity of darkness, which deludes the *Anma*.

*Karma malam* is the bond brought about by the deeds of the embodied *Anma*. In the course of its repeated births, the *Anma* gathers merit and demerit, which in turn conditions its birth and action. *Maayaa malam* is the impurity which is responsible for the cosmic evolution, and is its material cause. It makes out man's objects of experience. These three malas thus limit the freedom of man during his life on earth.

There are three categories of *Anma*. The *Sakala jiva* is endowed with all three malas and from the stage of empirical existence, it moves through the *pralayaakala* stage, where it is freed from *Maya*; and again by spiritual discipline is gained the *vijnanakala* state, where the *Anma* is only conditioned by the *Anavam*. Thus it is made mature for the working of Siva's Grace.

The *Anma* is said to take on the nature of that with which it is associated. When it is in contact with *malam*, it becomes *asat* (evil); when it faces the light of Siva, it becomes *sat* (good). During its countless births, it is poised between these two ends and is therefore termed *Sad-asat*. The true nature of *Anma* is to be in inseparable union with Sivam. It is non-separateness, sharing the nature of Siva; The goal of life is to regain the soul's liberation from the triple impurities.

Swami enunciates that liberation from bonds can be effected through any one of the enjoined Saiva disciplines, which are found efficacious by an individual in the course of his spiritual progress. Some will find temple worship and external rituals conducive to spiritual progress.

Some others will offer their heartfelt adoration and intimate acts of service such as a son would do to the father:

**“Adore Him morn and eve,  
And get rid of grievous errors.”**

**--Natchintanai. 98.**

These disciplines called *Sariya* and *Kriya* in Saiva literature, follow the paths known as the *dasa-marga*, the path of service, and the *satputra-marga*, the path of filial affiliation. Nevertheless these stages may not appeal to some aspirants, who yearn for contemplation and remembrance of Siva, leading to union with Him--*Siva Yoga*. This is termed the *saka-marga*, which is the path-way of friendship.

Then comes the last discipline of *Jnanam*, which is wisdom, and this is the path of *Sanmarga* delineated by Tirumular as the *Unmai Neri*, the path of Truth, because it takes the *Anma* straight to *Sat* which is Sivam.

Swami depicts the progress of the *Anma* from *paasa-jnanam*, which is attachment to the knowledge of the world, to *pasu-jnanam*, with its inquiry into the knowledge of the self. Finally the soul attains the *Pathi-Jnanam*, the goal of the wisdom of Siva. At first the

individual enjoys the bounty of the world and learns to equate empirical good and evil, merit and demerit. In the terminology of the *Saiva Siddhantin*, it is known as *Iruvinai oppu*.

Repetition of the sacred letters Five, the Siva mantra of *Namasivaya-Sivayanama*, and the contemplation of the Lord transforms one's life, by purifying the external and internal instruments of thought and action. The seeker after *Siva-jnanam*, the wisdom of God, gets rid of all attachments and aversions, and filled with a benevolent attitude towards the world, exposes himself to receive the Grace of the Lord. then appears the Siva-Guru who enlightens the *Anma* with the serene felicity of well Being:

This illumination is the descent of Grace--*Saktinipata*, when the Anma sees with the luminous Eye of God. It knows through Siva, and experiences the light of His Wisdom. This is release. This is *Mukti* acclaimed by all saints and seers.

The *Anma-Jnana* which is Self-Knowledge, is one of the fundamental themes of Swami in His Natchintanai songs. Self Knowledge differs from any empirical knowledge of an object, in as much as the self is always the subject, and can never become the object of knowledge. By *Anma*, Swami conveys the luminous principle, the ultimate essence in all things; *anma* also acquires the secondary sense of self which may be either corporeal, psychic or spiritual. Therefore *Anma* connotes the *Real Self*. Swami's Natchintanai deals with the immortal Self as 'the dewdrop on the lotus leaf, tangent but not adherent.'

The Indweller of all beings, the Supreme *Paraparam*, whom Swami endearingly addresses as *Avane-Thaane* is the Divine Truth, the ultimate Reality and the Absolute Siva.

*“All you have been, seen, done and thought,  
Not you but I have seen been and wrought...  
Come, you lost atoms, to your Centre draw...  
Rays that have wandered into darkness wide,  
Return, and back into your Sun subside.”*

*--Montigu't--Tair (tr: Fitzgerald)*

## **THE GLORIOUS ANMA**

**It is the greatest of the great,  
Yet 'tis the smallest of the small.  
It is the rarest of the rare,  
That is the Anma rare.  
It is not one, neither can it be said  
That It is dual as well.  
It is neither beneficent nor can you deem  
It as solely malevolent.**

**It is the perpetual infinite Being,  
Never separate and apart from us.  
It brings forth endless ecstasy and in all,  
It wipes out temporal grief.  
It procreates not the seeds of duality,  
'Tis verily Truth devoid of birth and death.  
The Devas and Sages sought and failed  
To apprehend that which is, yet  
In the depth of my heart is the abode of the Real,  
Amidst seeming fetters of Immanence.**

*--Natchintanai. 135.*

### **ANMA DHARSAN**

*"If at all you should desire for anything, desire for Truth.  
You will attain that by cherishing desirelessness."*

*--Kural. 37.2.*

In *Tirukural*, Sage Tiruvalluvar urges the necessity for man to apprehend the Real--'Mei Unarthal':

*"Whatever be the nature of whatsoever an object,  
Wisdom lies in seeing the subtle essence hidden in it."*

He follows this chapter with the section on weeding out desires, because desire appears to be the root of all misery on earth, and the cause of man's failure to apprehend the Real. Tiruvalluvar assures us that unending bliss is the reward of the wise, who are blessed with the virtue of desirelessness:

*"What is called purity is only desirelessness;  
It will be gained by those who follow the path of Truth."*

*--Kural 27.4.*

St. Tirumular in the section on works and right behaviour, exhorts man to eradicate all seeds of desire in a well known *Tirumantram*:

*"Cast out desire, Cast out desire!  
Even for the love of God, root out desire.  
Desire breeds desire and begets suffering.  
Bereft of desire you attain undying bliss."*

*--Tirumantram. 2615.*

The virtue of non-covetousness hailed in the Isa Upanishad is vividly reiterated by Swami in this song”

**“If ye should desire anything desire for desirelessness.”--15.**

When the heart of a devout votary of Truth swings to the rhythm of the Guru, in an intense yearning for the wisdom to apprehend the Real, then it is that the Gurunathan unfolds the secret of desirelessness and the fruits of detachment. List to Swami's song, which we have rendered for clarity sake in a simple prose:

### **NATGURU PARA PUNKAVA SINGAME**

**“Aspire for desirelessness and that alone.**

**The company of virtuous persons will certainly prove helpful to cultivate detachment in life.**

**Do you yearn for the refuge of His Feet in meek submission?**

**Do you take up the incantation of the divine**

**Name, the Letters**

**Five--Aum Sivayanama?**

**Recollection of the Grace of my majestic Gurupara, who enlightened me with One Word, overwhelms me.”**

**“Do thou long to give up attachments in the world, and practise contemplation to gain the harmony of yogic union?**

**Understand thou the voiceless vibration of the spheres, and what it is to be in inseparable union with the resplendent One?**

**Do Thou long to sing in praise of the Lord, who is a sweet blend of the cadence and melody of music?**

**Oh beatific Guru-para, who fills my soul with gracious love!”**

**“Tune me to desire that my craft and cunning be transformed to the cosmic vision of strength, so that mySelf in thySelf can mingle in unison.**

**Let me pray for the limitations of relativity, delusion and egoity to be consumed, so that I can behold the Lord God in an unchanging infinitude.**

**Do I not long to serve in fealty all preceptors great, in servitude so that I may realise the goal of my life?**

**Lo, the bounty of His Grace wiped the penury of my life!**

**Salutation to Thee, my illustrious Guru-Para.**

**“My desire soars up to contact the radiance of Thy Immanence, when I can ignore the company of ignoble friends.**

**Is it not meet that I enjoy the quiescence of contemplation  
in all the yogic centres within me, and learn to restrain  
the power of desire?**

**When can I apprehend the truth of Reality?**

**That I may gain clarity of vision, Thou did'st bestow grace,  
Oh Kingly Gurupara adored by the Gods!"**

**"Intense is my yearning to pass my days in austere penance,  
so that my innate desires of lust can be wiped out.**

**Girt with intrinsic purity and renunciation, I long to generate  
the current of power to flow from my crown to mingle with  
the cosmic powers outside in pulsating activity.**

**Ah! Bliss it is to chant the primordial mantra,  
that leads to  
the goal of liberation.**

**Salutation to my exalted Guru, whose divinity  
the world doth  
praise.**

*--Natchintanai. 15-16.*

## **THE DASA-KARYA**

In these Natchintanai lyrics, Swami brings out most lucidly, the discipline elaborated as ten stages called *Dasa-Karya* in the Siddhanta Sastras. Umaphathi Sivacharya in *Sivapragasam* says that 'Knowing the true nature of the *anma*, its purification, and its supreme gain of being face to face with God, are the three results of attaining Divine Wisdom." *Unmaineri Vilakkam* by Sirkali Tattuvanathar also describes succinctly the three results of winning the Divine Grace:

*"Great ignorance removed, one sees Jnana and it is atma-rupam.  
It is darsan when you alone stand of all actions shorn of agency;  
Losing self and its nature and merging in truth,  
It is atmasuddhi. Arulnool (Agamas) say so."*

*--Unmaineri Vilakkam. 2.*

When once the *anma* detaches itself from the evolutes of matter, (Tattvas), it begins to be aware that it is not bound by their modes of matter. Then will dawn the light of wisdom when it realises its own nature and gets purified from the grip of the *tattvas*. This is called *Atma-rupa* and *Atma-darsan*. When after detachment from the *tattvas*, the *anma* identifies itself with the Supreme God, it is known as *Atma-Suddhi*, and then the *anma* takes shelter in the Grace of God, as has been conveyed in these two songs of Swami on *EN GURUPARA* and *NATGURUPARA PUNKAVA SINGAME*--Natchintanai 5-6; 15-16.

“The *Atma Suddhi* stage is a turning point when the *anma* leaves off identifying itself with the *tattvas*, and realises its own true nature. It gets established in its union with God. It is then that the *anma* sees God within itself and in everything. This is known as *Sivarupa*. When it sheds off the sway of *Ahankara* or Ego-hood, everything appears *Sivamaya*. This perception is granted by the God-Guru, whose grace floods the purified soul, bereft of all desires. This is termed *Siva-darsana*.”--*Sivapragasam*. V.4.

From this stage onward, the *anma* looks upon all experiences as accruing from God's grace. In lowly surrender, it abides in the shelter of God's Feet, in an attitude of 'Not as I will, but as Thou willest.' *Sivapragasam* calls this stage as *Siva Yoga*:

*“Realising that all knowledge and sense experience  
flows from God's grace, and that nothing  
moves without it, the anma becomes a willing  
instrument of its operation. This is Siva Yoga. V. 5.*

How exquisitely has Swami worked out in these songs, the supremacy of Grace bestowed by the God-Guru. Beaming with self-knowledge, and armed with purity and continence, the *anma* gets infused with the light of God's Grace:

**“My peerless Gurupara!  
Pre-eminent, and majestic  
Lion in the lines of Gurus!”**

**--Natchintanai. 15.**

St. Umapathi Sivacharya propounds this experience in a lucid way:

*“The highest state of pure consciousness in waking moments is attained, when the anma is not affected by any of the senses and instruments of perception and when it does not sink into unconsciousness. When submitting itself fully to the control of the highest wisdom realised, it gives up its egoistic efforts, identifying itself with the Supreme Being whose vision it then commands.”*

The realised man, being aware that God who is inconceivable even by the highest contemplation, can only be experienced by His Grace, and because of the potency of the egoity inherent in him, supplicates for perpetual remembrance of *Aum Sivayanama*--His Name, and remains in praise of Siva:

St. Manicavasagar conveys a similar experience in the *Tiru-Tellenam Ode*:

*“When He and His spouse whose eyes shine bright,  
Illumined my soul and made me His,  
Deeds and environment faded out;  
Upon this earth confusion vanished.*

*All other memories ceased, and my doings ceased.  
Sing we His Praise and play Tellenam.”*

*--Tiruvacagam. 11*

Swami gloats in the joy of the realised saints of God, who rejoice in the felicity of the God-Guru's Grace.

He pays an undying homage of love to his Guru, who by one word had revealed to him the priceless treasure of bliss infinite.

St. Tayumanavar in a picturesque canzone has expressed this ineffable experience of Grace, embodied in the power of the single word of the Guru to effect an exalted transformation in the soul of man:

*“Deeming this false and fleeting frame to last,  
Hugging as truest bliss the joys of sex,  
Of woman's charming eyes and lightning form,  
Taking his mansion-house for heaven itself  
And gold and treasure for unfailing wealth,  
Indulging in this false bombastic show,  
Allowing patience, wisdom, abstinence,  
Bounty and virtues all to go their way--  
Thus lives the godless worldling, here on earth,  
Obsessed by greed, accursed beyond compare,  
Oh Teacher that did'st warn me 'gainst this creed  
With but a Word and in thy love tunes me  
To realise the All-embracing Love,  
The end of all Vedanta and Siddhant!  
Oh Teacher of Truth! Oh Master of Yoga's lore!  
Oh Thou my silent sage of Moola's line!”*

*--St. Tayumanavar-Guru Vanakam IV.*

## **ANMA SUDDHI**

Gurunathan's voice steals into the stillness of the heart, and trumpets there the melody of man's aspiration. Wonderful is the garland of plaintive yearnings, which is offered at the kingly Feet of the mighty lion of the *Guru Paramparai*. He revealed the knowledge of the Lord as the knowledge of our Being, freed from the seeming cords of body and mind. We are one in essence with the Lord. We are inseparable in the actuality of living. We dwell in the heart of His being, even as He inheres in the core of our inmost soul. List to Swami's symphony on the Truth of Being, which clearly transcends all embraces of experiences:

## EN GURUPARA

To know the Self by mySelf, to become  
One with ThySelf, all pervading and immanent.  
I yearn, aye I yearn.  
To reject the lure of wealth and charm of women,  
And ignore the enticing wordly gains,  
I yearn, aye I yearn.  
To follow righteous code and worship Thy Feet,  
Restraining all thoughts, I yearn, aye I yearn,  
Oh Guru, valiant like a lion!  
To pursue the noble arts eschewing doubts,  
And reap the fruits of ripe scholarship,  
I yearn, aye I yearn.  
To give up friendship with the unworthy,  
And worship at Thy Feet morn and eve,  
I yearn, aye I yearn.  
To know my true nature, my inmost self  
Ever in inseparable union with Thee,  
I yearn, aye I yearn.  
My Gurupara who disclaimed all duality,  
Most valiant and wondrous Lion of Gurus.  
To link the Three in One and open the gate  
Of inner vision and slumber at Thy Feet,  
I yearn, aye I yearn.  
To surge with the deluge of bliss,  
And mingle in thy refulgence,  
I yearn, aye I yearn.  
Sweet Guru who gave Thy wondrous Feet,  
And made me Thine, Beloved lion of Gurus!  
To perceive Thy immanence everywhere,  
And dwell in Light with darkness receding,  
I yearn, aye I yearn.  
To know the Truth and pay my homage,  
To cast aside all falsehood and envy  
I yearn, aye I yearn.  
Shelter me from vain deluding joys,  
And bestow Thy Grace, my benign Guru.  
I yearn to know the spell of five and three  
To subdue the pride of Ego, I yearn.  
Thou primal One adored by Ravana of Lanka.  
Oh Thou who held the poison in thy throat.  
Our peerless Protector of infinite love

**Thy perpetual Grace I need, I need.  
Oh divine Guru with tender soft Feet,  
Oh valiant One who enslaved me so unworthy.**

*--Natchintanai. 5-6.*

## **GOOD COUNSEL**

In the hour of meditation, the voice of the Guru from within is heard. The morning air breathes of exhilaration, as all living things greet the Dawn, the harbinger of light and activity. The chorus of a mighty music of adoration resounds from Swami's hermitage, following his Good Counsel;

**My sweet one, dear as a parrot,  
Arise awake, for 'tis dawn.  
With fresh flowers come thou  
To worship at the Guru's Feet.  
Adhere not to lust, anger or desire;  
Search not, pursue not.  
We are That my dear, We are That.  
Naamathu Edi--Naamathu Edi.  
My sweet one, dear as a parrot,  
Gird up your loins to overcome  
The wiles of the capricious mind.  
Then shall all darkness flee.  
Fear not, beg not,  
Chase not here nor there.  
We pervade everywhere my dear,  
And in all art we; we art in all.  
Ellaam naamedu, Ellaam naamedu.  
My sweet one, dear as a parrot  
If you know thySelf, who you are,  
There's none to equal thee.  
It's the end of charity and penance.  
Close up thy commerce with finitude  
And come here, my Thangam Dear.  
He is all-pervading--Doubt not,  
He is That, yea He is This.  
Chime the refrain ever and anon.**

**Thanathaam, Thanathaam.**

## **LOOK WITHIN**

Swami gives a remarkable key to destroy the kingdoms of separations, by meditating on God as the sole doer of all our actions. He is the Mid-point of all things. When the soul merges in the realisation of Siva, there is no return to divided life. All embraces of experience are ignited by Him. Every act is perceived as His act--*Oru Pollappumillai*. It is true wisdom to turn inward to the crucial centre of action, which is the intrinsic Truth--*Muluthum Unmai*. God Is. The seed thought of I, the ego-self that makes up the sad texture of our lives, dissolves in this Illumination of all forms. *Verily in Truth, there is nothing to be known. It is the serene awareness of thySelf in HimSelf.*

**Ye learn and chant--'Tis thySelf you experience.**

**Ye deal with justice--'Tis thySelf you recall.**

**Ye discuss castes--'Tis thySelf you alienate.**

**Ye seek the Primal One--'Tis thySelf you search.**

**In tranquillity--'Tis thySelf you become aware.**

**In discernment--'Tis thySelf you realise.**

**In thought unceasing--'Tis thySelf you reflect.**

**In conversation--'Tis thySelf you discover.**

**Ye ponder on Siva--'Tis thySelf you reveal**

**Ye abandon evil--'Tis thySelf you venerate.**

**Ye perform penance--'Tis thySelf you know.**

**Ye quell likes and dislikes, 'Tis thySelf that equates.**

**In disputation--'Tis thySelf you judge.**

**In wanderings far--'Tis thySelf you perceive.**

**In the elements five--'Tis thySelf you adore.**

**In the axis of nada-bindu--'Tis thySelf that yearns.**

**Ever hastening-- it is thySelf that delights.**

**Ever searching--it is thySelf that discerns.**

**Ever seeking--it is thySelf that eludes.**

**Ever uniting--it is thySelf that attains.**

*--Natchintanai. 17.*

## **BEYOND FETTER AND FREEDOM**

The incandescence by which Swami unveils tremulously the transcendence of ParaSivam in *Natchintanai*, is so strikingly similar to the setting of the transcendental Splendour reflected in the *Upanishads*, that we shall give parallel versions where Truth speaks in different voices, and the Eternal Truth becomes self-evident. It is equally true that in Truth, there is nothing to be known.

In the *Katha Upanishad* occurs a famous passage which extols the glory of the transcendental Splendour of Being:

*“He who cannot even be heard of by many, whom many, even hearing, do not know, wondrous is he who can teach (Him) and skillful is he who finds (Him) and wondrous is he who knows, even when instructed by the wise. 1.2.7*

*Not by reasoning is this apprehension attainable, but dearest, taught by another, is it well understood. Thou hast obtained it, holding fast to truth. May we find, Naciketas, an inquirer like thee. 1.2.9.*

*Realising through self-contemplation that primal God difficult to be seen, deeply hidden, set in the cave (of the heart), dwelling in the deep, the wise man leaves behind both joy and sorrow. 1.2.12*

*The knowing self is never born; nor does he die at any time. He sprang from nothing and nothing sprang from him. He is unborn, eternal, abiding and primeval. He is not slain when the body is slain. 1.2.18.*

*Smaller than the small, greater than the great, the self is set in the heart of every creature. The unstriving man beholds Him, freed from sorrow. Through tranquility of the mind and the senses (he sees) the greatness of the self. 1.2.20.*

*The one eternal amid the transient, the conscious amid the unconscious, the one amid many, who grants their desires, to the wise who perceive Him as abiding in the soul, to them is eternal peace and to no others. 11.2.12--13.*

*The sun shines not there, nor the moon and the stars, these lightnings shine not, where then could this fire be? Everything shines only after that shining light. His shining illumines all this world.” 11.2.12--15.*

***Kena Upanishad adores the Brahman thus:***

*“There the eye goes not, speech goes not, nor the mind; we know not, we understand not how one can teach this.*

*“Other, indeed, is it than the known; and also it is above the unknown. Thus have we heard from the ancients who have explained it to us.*

*That which is not expressed through speech but that by which speech is expressed; that, verily know thou, is Brahman, not what (people) here adore.*

*That which is not thought by the mind but by which, they say, the mind is thought (thinks); that, verily, know thou, is Brahman and not what (people) here adore.*

*That which is not seen by the eye but by which the eyes are seen (see); that, verily, know thou, is Brahman and not what (people) here adore.*

*That which is not heard by the ear but by which the ears are heard (hear); that, verily, know thou, is Brahman and not what (people) here adore.*

*That which is not breathed by life, but by which life breathes; that verily, know thou, is Brahman and not what (people) here adore.”*

1.3-9.

The *Mandukya Upanishad* further elucidates the changeless *Atman*.

*“All living beings are spontaneous, steadfast peacemakers  
Uncreated, immortal Self, evenminded and undivided.  
The Self is unborn, endowed with equanimity and purity.  
They are the renowned seers--those few who realise the  
Self thus--  
The world does not comprehend their way.  
As far as our intelligence can comprehend,  
We knowingly pay homage to that state,  
Which cannot be apprehended by the eyes or through othersenses,  
A state where reigns peace and serenity.”*

--*Mandukya Upanishad--Gaudapada Karika. 4.93.95.*

Swami reverberates the incomprehensible nature of the Supreme Reality in many an Ode in *Natchintanai*. He uses the means of the empirical world to cross it, and attain to the trans-empirical. this view reminds us of a verse in *Blake's Auguries of Innocence*:

*“To see a world in a grain of sand,  
And a heaven in a wild flower;  
Hold infinity in the palm of your hand,*

*And eternity in an hour.”*

In Swami's poem on the transcendence of Sivam, the axle of stainless sound rests on the tranquil dance of Silence. He extols the Supreme who is the source of all light as the master light of all our seeing.

the wise man who knows that the *Anma* though embodied, is the seat of the Imperishable Omnipresent Siva, has no cause for grief. He goes beyond all fear and sorrow.

The Supreme is the plenitude of Truth. Absolute Truth--*Muluthum Umnai*, according to Swami, transcends the concepts both of fetter and freedom. The endless ecstasy of being is the theme of his canzone on the *Luminous ParaSivam*.

### **BETWEEN GOOD AND EVIL**

**“It cannot be seen by the eye  
And yet it is the eye that illumines.  
It cannot be heard by the ear,  
And yet it is the ear that activates sound.  
It cannot be clasped by the hand,  
And yet it is that which moves the hand to grasp.  
It cannot be reached by the feet,  
And yet it is that which moves the feet to action.  
It cannot be uttered by the mouth,  
And yet it is speechless speech.  
It cannot be conceived by the mind,  
And yet it is the impelling thought,  
It cannot be smelt by the nose,  
And yet it is that which makes the nose smell.  
It is Primal One without past or future.  
It is free from age and sickenss.  
It takes the form of father and mother;  
And yet is pre-eminently the unique one.  
It cannot be praised as one or two:  
And no artist can delineate it.  
It lies betwixt good and evil.  
It dwells for ever in the hearts of the wise.  
It distinguishes not 'twixt Vedanta and Siddhanta.  
The axle of sound rests on the tranquil dance of silence.**

*--Natchintanai. 292.*

# THE LYRIC OF SWAMI'S PRESENCE

## THE ADVENT

“If ye truly yearn to Know Him,  
Know Him as thySelf.”

--*Tirumantram. 1788.*

“Who doth know the luminosity of His Grace,  
That spreads its radiance everywhere?  
Who can fathom the grandeur of His gracious Feet?”

--*Tirumantram. 1798.*

“I am not the mind or the intellect,  
Nor am I the self nor the cognising power;  
Thy sky is not I, nor the land,  
Neither am I the ear, the tongue, the nose, the eyes;  
Neither light nor wind am I;  
For, I am Bliss-Consciousness,  
Siva is in me and I am Siva.”

--*Nirvanashatka.--Sankaracharya.*

*Siva YogaSwami* of Yalpanam in Ceylon belonged to a brilliant succession of saintly Gurus who have enlightened Hindu culture from the Vedic era to the modern times.

His early life and history are shrouded in mystery. Tradition avows that he was born on Wednesday, 29th May 1872, on the asterism of Aviddam. The last decade of the nineteenth century was the age of spiritual renaissance when saints like the Paramahansa Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda, Shirdi Sai Baba, Sri Ramalinga Swamigal were blazing a trail of religious fervour and piety among the masses. This was also the era when the custodians of Hindu monasticism flourished in the Sri Sankaracharya Mutts and the illustrious Saiva Adhinams, especially the Dharmapuram and Tiruvavaduturai Mutts. In Ceylon, the lion hearted awakener of spirituality, *Kadai Swami* was striding the four directions of Yalpanam and igniting the flame of yogic illumination among the people of North Ceylon.

The sage of Columbuturai belonged to this group of religious seers, who

alone can command a total vision of humanity and its destiny. In the footprints of the *Guru Paramparai of Kadai Swami and Chellappa Swami* came *Siva Yoga Swami*, as the expression of life itself, the life of a new seed bursting forth on the arid yet aromatic soil of Yalpanam--the torchbearer of the ancient and honoured heritage of the Saiva religion in the fair Isle of Lanka.

Born in the historically famed village of Mavidapuram off the Northern coast of Yalpanam, with sacred associations of the Kandaswamy temple, and the healing springs of Keerimalai with hoary traditions, Swami spent most of his years in the paternal precincts of Columbuturai in the South West coast of the Jaffna Peninsula. Columbuturai at one time was a busy port plying a brisk trade with the neighbouring countries of India, Arabia, the islands scattered in the Indian Ocean, and the mainland of Lanka with its fertile hinterland of Poonakari, the northern Wannu and Mannar and Mantai areas.

*Columbuturai* is an orthodox suburb skirted by the Jaffna lagoon, and can be justly proud of her many schools and temples. Many distinguished visitors have paid glowing tributes to the munificence and piety of the people who are mostly Hindus, and who are engaged in the cultivation of highland crops, dairy farming, business pursuits and the marine trade. Many of the inhabitants own coconut plantations and paddy fields in the Poonakari and Vettukadu areas, and are noted as a contented yet conservative community. Swami rarely spoke of his early life or of his family, as he had ceased to be identified with the physical body locus and time, and had freed himself from the nostalgia of environmental forces.

Little is known of his parentage except that Ambalavanar, his father who hailed from Columbuturai, was engaged in business in the Kandyan region, and his mother Chinnachi Ammayar, who was from a family of pious Saivites from Mavidapuram, died when Swami was yet an infant. Thereafter Yoganathan was brought up by his paternal aunt Muttupillai Ammayar, who lived at Columbuturai near the *Kerniady* where there was then a small temple for Vyravar. Nallar Ganapathy, her father-in-law, and a well reputed astrologer in Columbuturai was his guardian.

His early schooling was in a Tamil school in the neighbourhood, and records indicate that he finished his school studies at St. Patrick's College, reputed to be one of the leading schools in Ceylon. It was the general practice in those days that christian names were attached to pupils who

studied in the christian missionary institutions like Ford Duraiswamy, and Mark Chelliah. Yoganathan too came to be called as Johnpillai in school.

His school days had been inconspicuous, except that he studied up to the 8th Standard or so, and felt no special attraction for book learning. In pursuance of the colonial policy of opening up the Dry Zone areas for the cultivation of paddy, and the persistent efforts of Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan who represented the Tamil community in the Legislative Council of Colonial Ceylon, the Iranamadu Tank project was mooted out in the Kilinochi area in the last decade of the nineteenth century.

Yoganathan joined the Irrigation Department in Kilinochi about forty five miles from Jaffna. He worked as a storekeeper at the newly opened Iranaimadu Tank Scheme, under Engineer Mr. Browne, whom Swami described as an honest Englishman with a high sense of duty. He served in this capacity for about seven or eight years. Yoganathan spent most of his leisure in reading the *Saiva Puranas*, *Sastras* and *Tirumurais*, and found himself drawn more and more to the spiritual magnetism of Chellappa Swami, who lived ever so austerely at Nallur; he was known as one of the foremost though eccentric disciples of Kadai Swami. Swami would often recount the great spiritual experience of his Guru:

*“Lo, with a silver rupee coin did Kadai Swami infuse his grace on Chellappar! The world looked upon him as a 'madman.'*

*From his empyrean height, he stood aloof, far from the madding crowds' ignoble strife.”*

At about this time, the triumphant return of Swami Vivekananda from the World Parliament of Religions at Chicago, created a stir in the hearts of the people enticed by alien culture, and his visit to Ceylon was acclaimed as a happy augury for the renewal of faith in Hinduism. The prophet of the New Age came to Yalpanam in 1897, and his elevating lectures at Hindu College, The Esplanade, and the Saiva Padasalai at Columbuturai made an undying impression on Swami.

It is reported that when Swami Vivekananda was ceremoniously brought in a carriage drawn by the leading Hindu citizens, to address the public at the present Hindu Maha Vidyalaya at Columbuturai, he got down from the carriage at the junction where stands the Illuppai tree and walked up to the school. In his lecture, he reported that he was impelled to get down from

the carriage, as he felt he was treading on sanctified soil and called it prophetically an *oasis*. This was the *Illuppai Tree* under whose shade Swami had sat in sun and rain during his sadhana years. Columbuturai was singled out as an attractive oasis, when Swami in later years too hallowed this spot as his religious centre and asharam.

## THE CALL OF THERADI

It is believed that at the beginning of this century, Swami experienced spells of spiritual insights and felt powerfully drawn to his Guru. During this time, a select coterie from Columbuturai including the Vidhane TirujnanaSambandar, Kadirithamby Vettivelu, Ponniah Upadiyayar, Sivagurunathar Thuraiappah and Thiagar Ponniah would visit Chellappar at Nallur quite frequently. Swami would join them whenever he came down from his sphere of work. He would at times recall how vigorously he used to walk all the forty-five miles from Kilinochi to Nallur to meet Chellappar, for so great was his urge to be in the living presence of his Guru.

We can see to this day, the mango tree that Swami planted at Kilinochi with its fruitful branches embracing the wide sky above, while its hardy roots are deeply rooted in the soil. This tree would have witnessed in silence his long hours of meditative communion with his Guru, till finally the call of *Theradi* proved irresistible.

**“My Guru--My Peerless Chellappar--Him I saw at Nallur,  
'neath the foot of the Chariot of Murugan. My wise Teacher,  
He looked at me in grace.”**

**Ah! In Nallur, at the foot of the Chariot,  
I saw Him and praised Him--What bliss was mine!”**

Sage Chellappar was drawing Swami to commune with the light of Truth; and in this mood of detachment from worldly wants and cares, he found it increasingly irksome to discharge his duties faithfully, when at last he gave up his work at Kilinochi. He had enjoyed the favour of Mr. Browne who was extremely appreciative of his integrity and devotion to work, that he appointed his cousin in his place. Freed from the shackles of work, Yoganathan stayed with his aunt at Columbuturai, and revolved in the spiritual orbit of His Guru. He invokes the remembrance of his gracious love, in many a Natchintanai lyric:

**“There at the ancient abode of Nallur,  
I saw Him; bowed to Him. Lo! I entered into a trance.  
In speechless silence, He bade me relish *who I am*.  
Distinctions fade. I imbibe His Grace and instantly,  
I gain the clarity of wisdom and become immersed in joy.”**

Thiagar Ponniah, aged ninety two years and father-in-law of Sri Somasundara Udayar related that he was an associate neighbour of Yoganathan at Columbuturai and was also a devotee of Chellappa Swami. One day, in the company of Ponniah Upadiyayar, he witnessed Chellappar greeting Yoganathan under the shade of the Vilvam tree near the *Theradi*, with the significant words:

**“Come, Come! Thine be Lankapuri. I give, I give,  
The crown of Kingship to Thee, to Thee,  
As long as the universe endures  
And the waters of the oceans perish not.”**

Can it be that this auspicious day might have been the second Monday of March 1910? Who can know? Did this great event synchronise with the propitious *Pankuni Thinkal* celebrated at the Pandathalachy Amman temple at Madduvil, when Chellappar and Swami commingled in the luminosity of the *Tiruvadi Dikshai*? We do not know? It was all so accomplished in beginningless time. That the second Monday in the month of Pankuni had been observed by Swami as the day of his initiation--*Tiruvadi Dikshai*--is itself an irrefutable evidence for this holy day to be observed as a significant day by his devotees in the years to come. Truly it marked the descent of divine grace on Swami, and the ascent of *Kundalini* to the *Sahasrara* in a glorious consummation of oneness!

St. Manicavasagar under the Kuruntha tree had experienced a similar wondrous transformation. 'He made me His own--even me,' were the words of the author of Tiruvacagam, while Swami gave expression to his profound illumination at *Theradi* in some of the moving odes in Natchintanai:

**“At Theradi, I saw Him, the crescent jewel of grace.”  
“He made me His own  
And showed me the way of bliss.”**

St. Tirumular too depicts the upsurge of the consciousness of Oneness in the

section on the *Light of Grace* in the seventh canto of *Tirumantram*:

*“The great lover of my soul wooed me, courted me,  
And came to dwell in the core of my heart.”*

Subsequently by about the middle of 1910, Swami left on a solitary sojourn by foot along the Island's coastal belt eastward, and met many ascetics on the way. He moved freely with certain muslim Sufi saints, Buddhist monks, and Veddha chiefs. He communed with Murugan in Kathirgamam, the Holy of Holies skirted by the Manica Ganga, and the seven hills around this sylvan sanctuary would have replenished his aspiration for Truth, and accentuated his solitary musings with the cosmic consciousness. He came back to his old haunts by 1911 or so and was recognised as a *Raja Rishi* by the people.

They began to revere him as a King of Yogis, and called him *YogaSwamigal*. Meanwhile Chellappa Swami was preparing to shed his mortal coils. St. Chellappar developed cold and consequent inflammation of the joints, and his relatives treated him with herbal baths. Swami went to see his ailing Guru. “What have you come to see from outside?” was the response of Chellappar. Thus did he sternly admonish Swami to Seek Within. Swami would musingly recount that the farewell on the external plane was only a drawing up of the veil in the interior chambers of his heart, in a supreme ecstasy of realisation.

**'It is what It is'  
Thou in me and I in Thee  
Chant Aum TAT SAT**

When all distinctions of duality ceased to oppress the soul, the bliss of luminous awareness, the peace perfect peace of Sivam shall fill to the brim, the illumined Anma! So testified Swami.

The inexplicable Maha Rishi, Sage Chellappa Swami who successfully eluded the world of delusion by his cloak of *madness*, steeped as he was in a perennial trance of Reality, for three score years and ten, so they say, attained Maha Samadhi on the waxing lunar asterism of Aswini, in the month of March, 1915.

**HAIL HOLY FEET!**

From 1915 onwards, Swami led the life of a renounced recluse; he would be seen frequenting the Illuppai Tree at the School junction in Columbuturai, the Nallur Theradi, the Arialai hermitage, the Thundi Crematorium, the Esplanade and the byways of Grand Bazaar. These were the years of gestation and Samadhi experiences. It was in December 1934 that he chose to reveal to the world at large, his *Tiruvadijnanam*--Guru--illumination, when he started the religious journal called *SivaThondan*, and continued to radiate his effulgence far and wide, till the very end of his earthly sojourn on March 24th, 1964. He stayed for the most part at the ashram in the compound of Sri Tirunavukarasu, whose mother was instrumental in establishing Swami's abode there, and looking after his bodily needs, with meticulous and adorable devotion.

In this connection, Swami would relate amidst peals of laughter the disconcerting action of Nanni, a pious devotee of Chellappa Swami. He had a boutique in the very compound on which his ashram was to be located later. Oneday, when Chellappar passed his boutique, Nanni managed to get hold of the Master forcibly, and tied him to a pole in front of his shop. He got Chellappar's head shaved and with a burning zeal offered lighted camphor in a frenzy of devotion, imploring thereby the Master's grace! Chellappar shouted and appealed to be extricated and when set free, he fled from the place. Swami alluded to this incident of the camphor offering by Nanni, as having ignited holy vibrations whereby Chellappar had bound him (Swami) to this spot in response to Nanni's behest. Ever after, it has remained the consecrated abode of Swami where his devotees in turn perpetuated the act of oblation by lighting camphor before the Guru! This continuous offering of lighted camphor had been enkindled by Nanni! Inscrutable is the dynamic power of Grace that emanates from a Guru!

For about ninety two years, Swami was like a luminous ray reflecting the radiance of the Saiva Saints down the ages. The Jaffna community in whose midst he lived and moved had grown imperceptibly to accept his presence as naturally as the beneficent sunlight, so that his Maha Samadhi on March 24th 1964 created an unusual stir and sorrow among all ranks of people who had basked in his lustre from generation to generation. Swami was venerated as an illumined seer of the twentieth century, one who was God's witness on earth--a Saint in whom the sacred was secret; he was like the Triveni, a confluence where met the streams of past, present and future. He seemed to have held the whole world in the kinship of the Supreme Will of Siva. The Master *Sivathondan* blazoned the trail of service and

renunciation, by his universal gospel of *Sivathondu*--Service unto Siva. To live every split second as servitors of Siva was his clarion call to the modern Man:

**“We'll wear the badge of service in humility,  
And shall never forget the Feet of the SatGuru.  
The Law of the land shall we not violate,  
Nor will we waste our moments idly.....”**

*--Natchintanai. 255.*

Swami's effulgent face, penetrating eyes, the white flowing beard, and the spreading forehead with the gleaming holy ash, his waist cloth of white cotton, and the hair knot on the crown of his regal head, altogether struck awe and majesty in the hearts of those who approached him with infinite reverence and humility. People of all faiths, men and women from different walks of life, Seekers from all parts of the globe, east and west, north and south, the rich and poor, old and young thronged to him for succour, for they realised that they were in the presence of a great Master in whom conflicts and contradictions did not exist, and who radiated an abiding inward Peace--*Santam Upasantam*.

Swami lived in the midst of the common people of Jaffna in an Satraordinarily simple manner, without assuming the garb of a exnnyasin. He evaded the lime-light till but three years before his final Samadhi, when on 22nd February 1961, he met with an accident in the cow shed of his abode at Columbuturai. The accident which incapacitated his left leg coincided with the peak period of the Satyagraha movement by the Tamils of the Jaffna District; they were campaigning against the Sinhalese major community for their fundamental rights by staging non-violent demonstrations against the recognised administrative machinery. As did Bhishmacharya, the renowned preceptor of the Kurus and Pandavas in the epoch of the Maha Bharata War, so did Swami reconcile to lie in his bed of thorns, and vindicate the everlasting supremacy of love and dharma over the invincible forces of aggression and evil.

It was during this period that he became accessible to all, being confined to his ashram. Devotees sought him in large numbers and with infinite patience and love, he meted out inconspicuously his sanctifying grace. he extended his healing touch in his own peculiar technique of hot and cold compresses, and took upon himself the still sad music of humanity. He

generated a force that never was on sea or land, and electrified all those who for one reason or other flocked to him, by his soul-stirring Natchintanai songs and homely discourses. Thus his accident was looked upon by his devotees as an outlet for the outpouring of God's grace. In the last phase of his earthly life, Swami taught the supreme sovereignty of the Lord's Will. "His Will prevails within and without. Abide in His Will," was his insistent plea.

Swami had been illuminated by the illustrious Chellappa Swami, of whom the Saivites of Jaffna knew very little, except that he was a 'madman,' who haunted the famous chariot tower of Murugan at Nallur. His Guru had admonished him to veil his divinity even as he had done it, so as to escape deification by the masses. '*Nothing gained, nothing lost. Be still,*' was the MahaGuru's injunction. Yet it became increasingly difficult for our gracious Gurunathan to hide his divinity and to withhold his benign grace. His denuding love swept over insuperable barriers, and released the floodgates of compassion. His stirring call to serve Siva by serving man has been enshrined in his immortal *Natchintanai*, The Testament of Truth. It was indeed his dedicatory work of oblation unto his God-Guru. It was Swami who enhanced the *Atma Sâksât-kâra* of Sri Chellappa Swami by his moving songs of adoration on his Guru.

Swami attracted a great number of people from all walks of life and to each one, he revealed according to his own measure of understanding, the fringe of his destiny. He was not an occultist nor a clairvoyant *siddha* who could prophecy a man's future; Neither was he a supramental being who lived in the solitude of his powers. He was a man of God whose yogic wisdom made him touch some hidden chord in each one, so that he wielded a wondrous power to change people's inner nature by bringing up the secret chambers of their hearts to the surface, and exposing to their gaze, the bewildering reactions and hidden motives underlying their actions.

This was perhaps the reason why many people would shiver inwardly in his presence, or keep away from his penetrative eyes. They were afraid of exposure. Yet so irresistible was his humanity that even his scorching onslaughts would act like the monsoonal showers of grace, and devotees would seek him in hours of tribulation and tensions. In countless ways he alleviated their aches and pains, so that the faith of the multitude of people who sat at his Feet towered as high as Mount Kailas, from where he brought forth the healing waters of the Grace of Siva. Truly it was the descent of

the divine Ganga!

## AT THE FEET OF GURUNATHAN

Whenever Swami was approached by his close devotees to unravel something of his early life, he would often prove most elusive. He would convey by means of the songs he would so tunefully sing at that time, that he had little to remember of his childhood days. His consciousness was never associated with the temporary body. He would often infer that before he came to this earth, he was the same. As a little boy too, he was the same. He grew into manhood but still he was the same. “In front of you now, I am the same. Even though the dance of creation changes around me in the hall of eternity, ever afterwards too, I shall be the same.” A poignant verse in his Natchintanai conveys the import of this image of Swami:

Salutations to AUM, undifferentiated Brahman and yet primal and blissful Cause, the transcendental Consciousness! The One undifferentiated Brahman signified by AUM polarises as Sat-Chit-Ananda, manifesting as Parasakti--Divine Mother, who in Her crystal purity displays the variegated phenomena which gyrate in equipoise within her. Neutral Brahman and the polarised Brahman are thus interchangeable. The idea of the transcendental Consciousness shining as shafts of light in this wonderful universe implies non-separateness of the object from the subject.

That expanse of Grace radiating from Sivam, here is incarnate as our Guru, Siva Yoga Swamigal, endearingly called by all as *Swami*. The Guru being Siva is Grace incarnate, and requires no incentive to show grace. He is ParaSivam and has no attributes whatsoever, as extolled by St. Tayumanavar:

*“If one knows and realises the divine Grace in the heart,  
He will understand the seat of the Guru.”*

*--Auvaikural.*

“The Guru's grace gained, one has attained all,” was my father's edict of faith. He would cite the authority of St. Auvaiyar:

The sanctified *prasad* from Swami, be it a pomagranate, a plantain or a flower, signified to our father the vista-vision of then glory of divine Grace. He would affectionately address his children as his Guru's gifts of grace--

*Prasadam*, and in the even tenor of his life, joy and sorrow, vicissitudes and fulfilment were all considered as sacrificial *Yagjnas*. He would make his children commit to memory the songs of Natchintanai written by Swami. It was only in later years, that these acts of oblation unveiled their mystery to us. He made us read the lives of the sixty three Saiva Saints, immortalised in the Epic of Saivism called Periya Puranam, and thereby nurtured devotion to the God-Guru.

When *Ma* accosted her Guru in early childhood, she found him to be an ocean of mystery and mercy. Learning from him what had to be known, she thought she could cross the ocean of doubts after boarding the boat of his teachings. This was one of her very first impressions of the Guru. Then her mind registered many other responses. Can anyone immersed in the Guru's benign grace ever be afflicted by sorrows even if destiny so decree? Freed from desires that throned the avenues of the senses, let that desire to remain in unbroken contact with his holy Feet take root. These were also some of the earliest memories on Gurunathan:

The meaning of St. Manicavasagar's famous plea,

*“Thou gavest Thyself to me, and takest myself to Thee  
Oh Sankara, who hast gained more?”*

*--The Temple Lyric*

dawned on us faintly, as we saw our parents revolve in the orbit of the Guru's light. It was in the early Thirties that at our father's bidding, we took to the serious study of Tiruvacagam, which in turn served to illuminate the profound significance of the God-Guru in our spiritual quest.

## **THE LUMINOUS EYE**

In all these early associations, Swami continued to be a distant star in the firmament of our lives, till the last week of May 1939, when he blazoned a shaft of immense magnitude. Our father stumbled over a stone heap at the gate of his newly built house--'Chelliam Pathi'--and had a fall, but escaped any serious injury, except a sprain and strain of the ankle which confined him indoors during the month of April, 1939. After the observance of the Chitra-Puranami fast, he developed fever with slight digestive upsets and after a fortnight, his condition remained static. It did not improve nor deteriorate.

Late in the evening of the 28th May, our father called for mother and all his children, and asked us to switch on all the electric lights, and spread a white cloth on the chair near his bed, and bade us sing. He also indicated that we should worship *Him* who shall come, by prostrating at His Feet. We did not understand the subject of his discourse. Though it seemed so enigmatic we obeyed his injunction mechanically and awaited.

At the Sandhya hour, with the waxing moon of Vaikasi shedding its translucent light, He came with his umbrella tucked under his arm pit, and opened the garden gate. Swami's voice reverberated as he called out my father's pet name--Sinna Thamby, and walked right up to his bedroom, ignoring midway my mother's prostrations amidst tears. Then was enacted a tuneful communion too sacred for communication. At the sight of Swami, my father tried to rise up from his bed, but the Guru took both his frail yet cooped hands and held them against his chest and sang. It was a song that conveyed the bliss which awaits the bondsment of Siva! His voice resounded from time to eternity. Then he took the holy ash out of the conch shell on the bed-table and placed it tenderly on my father's forehead. We saw our father's face gleaming in sweet communion.

It was not a parting. It was a promise fulfilled, an assurance of the certitude of Siva's beatific bliss! He arose and left us bewildered. It seemed to us passing strange that Swami had not offered a word of comfort to any of the distressed inmates. It was his way. "Oru Pollappumillai!" It was his will that we simply be--*Summa Iru*. We were merely spectators in this magnificent spectacle of the play of Guru's Grace! My father attained Samadhi on the night of 30th May 1939 at the auspicious hour of the ascendancy of the *Vaikasi Chaturtursi* merging into the full moon of Wesak.

Tirumantram describes the *Anma's* wondrous experience of Siva's Grace at the crucial moment of dying unto self, in the blessedness of supreme surrender, in a stanza that tugs at our heart strings:

In the state of perfect surrender, when the zest for realising Truth becomes intense, the light of Siva's Grace manifests as the *Guru*. He *comes* and cleanses the soul of all external dross and pangs of duality. He illumines it in the pathway of wisdom, what is known as the gift of the Holy Feet--and extinguishes the potency of the Ego. Thus freed from the fetters of deluding forces, desire, and sinister actions, the *Anma* attains the bliss of Siva."

## TIRUVADI CHIMES

Here was an introduction to increase our faith and clear all wavering doubts in the Guru, whose *Siva Jnanam*--God-illumination--was a source of mystery as well as perennial attraction. It was the beginning of a new phase when little by little, we learnt to draw from the Guru's Bank of Grace. All resistance faded away. The magnet proved irresistible; and the realisation dawned on us that the *Guru art all*, after the agonising parting from a priceless treasure in our lives! How exquisitely has St. Tayumanavar delineated the supreme surrender of a soul brought to bay!

The hound of heaven pants and flees, till at last it halts and offers itself before the Pursuer:

*“Nought is mine for I am Thine.  
Lo, I give myself, my all to Thee.”*

The consecration was irrevocable; The bond of the bondsman was in the custody of the Guru.

It was a long journey from the citadel of youthful aspirations and rejections to the domain of the Guru's kingdom of Grace. How many way side halts and dubious cross roads had *ma* to overcome? Lessons learnt would soon be forgotten. Desire and fears assailed her at every turn. Prayers to the Guru were only selfish in the beginning, yet they not only fulfilled one's desires, but also purified the mind; so that as devotion to the Guru grew in intensity, accentuated by the example of Thiru, her life partner, the devotee desired nothing more than His *Tiruvadi*.

The pageant of life thus kept on constantly changing in the Forties. What fruits have been reaped as the result of these changes have not been so easy to decipher. Since there has been no abiding satisfaction in the gains, it is not worth pondering over the past. Everywhere she saw the bondage of man; having gained one purpose, why should one look for another? The feeling of a need to yoke oneself to work, to love, to serve in order to enjoy happiness was also found to be a cause of misery.

The Guru returned from a pilgrimage to the sacred shrines of India including Kasi and Thillai, and taught the unitive experience that Kasi and Thillai were within one's self. She sought the symphony of his Grace and learnt to sit in quietude at his Feet. Something clicked. All doubts and

desires had a way of drifting away from the centre. Deep within the dark chambers of the heart penetrated the faint flicker of his light. By a slow, very slow process of opening out the chinks was transformed the inner nature--The density of I-ness was subjected to vivisection. The fragrance of *Santam* wafted by the Guru's discourses, songs, and dharsan was imprinted in the core of her heart:

**“The Guru's sight leads to insight.  
What beatitude! Prostration to His Feet!”**

*--Natchintanai.*

The call for dedicated service was sounded by the Master Sivathondan in the early Fifties. Study and inquiry, Yoga and Dhyana, Work and Worship unfolded new pages in the book of Knowledge of the Self. the challenge of *Arul Aham* for the women was held out by the Guru, and his knocking at the Moon Door never ceased. The Siva Guru is the goal and the way-- Commander in chief and the servant, the Awakener of the forces of Shakti-- Eternal Vigilance in quest of Anma-Lapa. What heightened joy it was to behold the Guru's pageant of grace and the consummation of his revelations to us in the Sixties, culminating in our global Pilgrimage! At his bidding did *the Five* commence an East-West dialogue on April 29th, 1963. We set sail on the SS. Chusan to the United Kindom and Malaysia to meet 'His Friends, and share the noble thoughts on Saiva Siddhanta.' The panorama of the Divine Child, His christening of *Ma*, the Pada Yatrais, Yagams and community farming at Chenkalady, with the interminable readings from the *Upanishads*, *Bagavad Gita*, *Devi Bhagavatam* and the *Kandapuramam*, and the penetrating explorations into the *Saiva Tirumurais and Sastras*, opened out ever expanding avenues of divine consciousness. It was all His infinite Leila!

**“The almighty Siva and Guru art One.  
No more birth and no more death!  
He's endowed me with grace sublime.”**

*--Natchintanai. 346.*

We learnt to see with his lens of Grace that Intrinsic Evil there is not, and that misery is not absence of happiness, but limited happiness in a world of duality and impermanence. *Sivathondu* implied devotional practices and *yajnas*, pilgrimages and worship which were all essential disciplines in the

spiritual quest of discovering the God within us. Swami's sacrificial illness from 1961 to 1964 lit an unquenchable flame of devotion amongst his devotees, whence came the realisation that even *Bhakti* could be just as imperfect as *Karma* or *Dhyana*. We learnt to be silent in his presence and awaited the manna that fell from his lips. Day was indistinguishable from night, and the play of opposites preyed less and less on our captive minds, released to enjoy serene peace.

Swami would take us backwards and forwards. He would recall many illuminating reminiscences of Chellappa Swami, his peerless Gurunathan. Sage Chellappar was completely free from any sense of obligation to act and its disastrous results. He would laugh at the ways of the world, 'a madman' who walked unconcerned up the road of the domain of Truth like a majestic elephant. Devotees would often find him at the Theradi in Nallur engaged in a monologue, blissful in the realisation of the Eternal Self, in the perfection of Truth Absolute.

The resonant voice of the Guru became softened with love in his last days on earth. He would call upon the Divine Mother, Devi Thyalnayaki, and avow that She abides in the conscious core of each one's heart, and would therefore know each one's pain and pleasure intimately, and would swiftly respond to the call of Her unswerving children. He would make us sing the four lines on Thyalnayaki for hours together. Was She no other than the Beloved Guru, the Healer of all life's ills and forebodings? Can it be the Supreme Identity hailed by the sacred Scriptures?

**“It is the divine panacea for all earthly ills.....  
He nurtured me and He doth abide in me.”**

*--Natchintanai. 343.*

## **THE CONCORD OF MOTHER THYALNAYAKI**

In these manifold ways would Swami put everyone in the proper perspective, and guide them in the knowledge of the Self. 'Proper deliberation and discrimination, truthfulness in thought, word and deed', were his simple exercises, and he set no home-work for his devotees. “Adore the God within you and sing His Praise”, was his bidding at all times during his last phase. *Natchintanai* Songs and the refrain of Thyalnayaki resounded day and night in his ashram:

**“Oh Mother Thyalnayaki in renowned Vannai,  
Source of gnosis and divine grace, SivaKami  
Who bestowed the gift of Kandasamy.  
This is the right moment, Mother Mine.”**

It became significantly clear that his words carried profound meanings, and were like the pole star, a pointer to expose oneself to his Grace. The Guru's boat was fast approaching the haven--sunset and evening star and after that--who can know? “I have not left anyone of my loved ones by the wayside. I prepare to go, having done what could be done--to each according to his needs”, was the Master's affirmation on the eve of his great illumination.

The Saiva Puranas recount that in the Hall of Thillai, Siva materialised the sea of milk and fed the child Upamanyu with the compassion of a Mother. He sang the song with this allusion.

**“Indweller in the hearts of lovers,  
Oh, luminous insight 'neath the seeing eye!  
Thou did'st conjure up the sea of milk  
And pervadeth both heaven and earth.”**

*--Natchintanai. 119.*

He punctuated it with the query as to when the devotee seated before him would eliminate the shroud of gloom. Silently was relayed the reply to the guru, that both the battle with the unseen forces and the act of surrender to his Will were the accomplished acts of long ago. She sang,

**“In homage meek, thy hallowed ones implore thy Grace,  
AUM.”**

*--146.*

It was her indomitable faith that the elimination of weakness depended on his Grace! Did not Siva as Neelakantan quaff the poison first, so that His devotees could sip the nectar of bliss without fear of the deadly poison of the triple malas? Was not the Guru a Neelakantan? She took up the melody of Swami's favourite Natchintanai,

**“Thine are we, Oh Siva Aum!  
Thy faithful devotees are we who seek thy solace.”**

to ward off the fear of frailty. The elixir of servitude --*Sivathondu*, which He had fully enjoyed and communicated in the *Natchintanai* psalms was the antidote--*Guru marunthu*, against life's pollution. The Physician chimes,

**“The tonic that makes mortals immortal,  
Have you tasted It and rejoiced?”**

--*Natchintanai. 140.*

It was given by Swami for the last time on the night of the 24th March, 1964 to the sorrowful Ma's choking query, *whither Swami?* His healing balm was enshrined in the code of *Elzaam Sari*--His last utterance--“All's right with God's Grace--In His Will lies the harmony of Perfection.” “*Elzaam Sari* is the resonance of *Muluthum Unmai*--*God Is.*” The *Mantra* connotes God as the undisputed, unchallengeable Reality of Everything in the microcosm and macrocosm; It instills unshakable faith in His Perfection and in His manifestations. It conveys the idea of complete surrender to God, since He pervades every fibre of my being and all beings. The *Mantra* communicates the quintessence of a life of perfect dedication, and reflects the beauty of *God-Realisation*.

It is the testimony of the Eternal Vedas:

*“Purnam adah, purnam idam, purnat purnam udacyate  
purnasya purnam adaya purnam evavasisyate.  
That is full; this is full. The full comes out of the full.  
Taking the full from the full, the full itself remains.  
Aum peace, peace, peace.”*

--*Isa Upanishad--Invocation.*

*Elzaam Sari* marked the close of the Swami--Ma dialogue on this temporal plane of relativity. In the divine harmony of voiceless Silence, it continues to vibrate and ever shall reverberate.

*“He moved amidst us as Sivam--all pervasive,  
He beheld every thing as the Divine will of Siva.  
He gauged the true nature of time and space,  
And is One with the Supreme in serene Santam.*

Who can measure the infinite glory of the Jnana-Guru? The hymn of Self-realisation, *Nirvanashatka* by Sri Sankaracharya unfolds the noblest conception of the Guru as the Way and the Goal.

*“I am not made of breath, or of the five-fold moving wind,  
Nor of the seven biles, nor of the five sheaths;  
Speech is not me, nor hands nor feet am I;  
For I am Bliss-Consciousness,  
Siva is in me and I am Siva.*

*I know no hatred, nor love;  
I covet not, nor does illusion shroud my eyes;  
I have no pride, nor the touch of anger;  
I belong neither to Dharma nor to wealth;  
I am Bliss-Consciousness,  
Siva is in me and I am Siva.”*

**AUM TAT SAT.**

# OUR BEAUTEOUS LAND

## OUR FAIR ISLE OF LANKA

Our fair and beautiful Isle of Lanka is acclaimed to be the pearl of the Indian Ocean. It has an eventful history. In the Age of the Ramayana Epic, Ravana was the most powerful King of Lankapuri, and his pleasure gardens where Sita was kept in captivity under the Asoka trees, and the fortresses, air chariots and weapons of the Rakshasa armies delineate his greatness as a monarch of illustrious stature. He was a renowned devotee of Siva, who was pleased with his severe penances and austerities, granted him the boons of earthly fame and worldly might.

In the height of his sovereignty, imbued with the desire to have the Lord of Kailas, his tutelary Deity installed in Lanka, he exceeded the limits of disciplined discrimination, and attempted by his invincible strength to transfix Mount Kailas, the traditional abode of Siva from the Himalayan region to that of Lanka. He was foiled in this feat by the Lord crushing him under His Feet; and finally it was his astounding act of penance that saved him from the wrath of Siva. Ravana ripped into his left thigh, removed the nerve fibres and turned it into a lyre, and sang praise of Siva. Then it was that Siva released him, pleased with his mortification. This episode of Ravana was constantly alluded to by the Saiva psalmists to signify that piety and devotion alone without purity and humility, could not redeem man or give him peace. Ravana was a great Hindu Bhakta; yet his code of life violated the Hindu Dharma and he had to pay for it dearly.

Again in the life of Ravana, his insatiable pride and lust made him carry off Sita, the chaste wife of Rama of the powerful dynasty of Raghu at Ayodhya, when they were living in the forest in exile. Rama marched with his army to Lanka and conquered the valiant Ravana and handed the Kingdom to his saintly brother, Vibeeshana. Allusions and references to the downfall of Ravana caused about by his vanity, pride and inordinate desires, and Siva's transforming grace on him abound in the Saiva religious literature and puranic lore. The downfall of Ravana was an act of oblation. The Epic of Ramayana, universal in its appeal only helped to emphasise the triumph of the forces of good over evil.

The Lanka of the Ramayanic age was predominately inhabited by the indigenous tribes who worshipped Siva and His *Sakti*, with Skanda and *Ganesha*. "That Hinduism and Hindu temples existed at Anuradhapura, (the then capital of Ceylon) before the advent of Buddhism" has been referred to by Chapman, C.R.A.S.C.B. Transactions III, P. 478 who quotes Rajaratnacari, page 41. "The earliest inscriptions too bear testimony to the presence of the Brahmanas in Ceylon which is evidence of the prevalence of their religious beliefs" -- Paranavitana--JRAS.--CB. Vol. 31 No. 84, 1929. The legendary stories of Kandapuram and Dakshina Kailaya Puranam also support the view that temples at Mavidapuram, Tiruketheswaram, Koneswaram, Muneeswaram and Katirgamam, Teerthas or holy bathing ghats, together with the popular mandrams for feeding and venerating the religious

worship, which had continued in certain places unabated from the dim past to the modern times. As heir to this hoary tradition appeared Swami in the land of Yalpanam, the conservative citadel of Saivism, and his songs on Lanka form a moving symphony of love and devotion.

After his initiation by Sage Chellappa Swami, Swami was in the habit of undertaking yaatrai to distant shrines in Lanka. In the course of his pilgrimages in the early decade of the twentieth century, Swami had the opportunity to traverse the length and breadth of this fair Island. From Murugan's sanctum at Nallur to Punakari Amman across the lagoon, and from Kandavanakadavai in Point Pedro to his own birth place of Mavidapuram, and from Manipay Maruthady Pillayar to Pandathalaichi Amman at Madduvil, he had walked with unerring steps in the company of his Guru, Sage Chellappa Swami; and from 1910, he had taken solitary long distance pilgrimages to Tiruketheswaram, and on to Wattapallai and *Koneswaram* at Trincomlee, and skirting the east coast by the foot path, he had spent his recluse days at Sittankudi, Batticaloa and Tirukoil.

### No Coming--No Going

Many a time, he had related incidents when he trekked the Veddha tracts of Moneragala and Bibile to reach the abode of Murugan at Kathirgamam, skirted by the Manica Ganga and the seven hills of *Kathiramalai*. His itinerary took him across the hilly regions of Kandy, Haputale and Bandarawella, Balangoda and Ratnapura, when nature was his soul companion. The *Namunakula* and Piduratalagala ranges and glades of Haputale, the Dunhinda and the *Diyaluma* falls would have greeted him during many summers, and the city of Colombo and its suburbs too would have registered his periodic visits to meet his friends there. Then again, Muneeswaram, Kurunegalla and Anuradapura and his old haunts of Murikandy and Kilinochi too were his favorite targets in his Paada-Yatrai, as also the many islands across the Jaffna Peninsula.

He would often recount tales of his sojourn with people of diverse creeds and castes, and in his reminiscences, he would always stress the unitive experience of the one world and One God.

Wherever he went, and whomsoever he met, Islamic friends and moulavis, Buddhist villagers and their high priests, the Kandyan peasants and veddhas in South-East Ceylon, Christian clergy and laymen, as well as Hindus from every strata of society, appeared to him as members of one another.

He shared with them the words of the Guru, in his unquenchable thirst to make known his Guru's four great utterances known as the 'Mahavaakiam'. He experienced the truth of the One Universal Being moving in the world outside, as well as in the heart of every man he met in the highways of life, and saw the the glory of the Grace of Siva irradiating in every particle of being in this beauteous isle of Lanka.

Thus the Odes of Lanka pulsate with an aerial spontaneity and rhythm of unity with the One, all pervading spirit of God, and the truth of His immanence in the world of multiplicity, where there can be no divisive barriers or man made artificial boundaries to keep man separate from man, without facing each other in an endless dialogue. When one has fully consecrated the energies of his heart and will to the Lord, there can be no enmity, no evil, no discord, and no disunity. When the whole world is filled with His radiant Presence, our Sivathondu is but to pour our heart-melting worship at the altar of His gracious Feet. Bhagavan Sri Ramana puts it succinctly in his Thirty Verses:

*“And Body's service is Ritual  
the wealth of its adoration.  
And the service of Speech is prayer and praise,  
clinging to the Word that redeems.  
And the service of Mind is Meditation  
So is each excellent above the other.*

*And the Ritual the Lord loves,  
the Adoration that he takes unto Himself,  
is the service of all created forms  
as, verily, forms of the Lord.  
This is the best Adoration.”*

Swami urges upon everyone to serve the Lord by serving one another, as all form part of Himself. We cannot know the totality of this Immense Reality that moves the world of objective phenomena and empirical experiences, as well as the heart of man. He Is: That Is: What we know is only fragmentary experiences on the objective plane, and we have to penetrate the veils of perception with the seeing Eye of his Grace, to discover the unity of the self within each one, and with the Self in the Cosmos. “The Truth of the Absolute Reality--'Muluthum Unmai,' is the essence of Godhead.”

Swami persistently reminds us to know the self: “Seek to know ThySelf by thySelf,” is Swami's great utterance--Maha-Vakiam.”

In the vision of Swami therefore, Lanka is the land of Experience of the blessed Seers. who have walked in righteousness and love. It is the land that has nurtured noble sages like KadaiSwami and Chellachi Amma. It is the land of the combined might of Rama and Ravana, virtue and vice, love and hatred, peace and discord, where the play of opposites hold sway on the surface. Swami sees underlying the external contours, the sacramental layers of revelation of Truth and Wisdom; and the *Visvarupa*-Universal vision of manifestation, merging into the luminous light of Oneness. In a state of ecstatic rapture, he triumphantly acclaim formless worship. “That One is without form or attributes. Let us worship for ever the Formless Transcendental Being.

Again and again in many a gem of purest ray serene, Swami's clarion call to meditate on

Siva at all times and in all places is heard. "Take up the shield of Gnosis and realise the Supreme One, as the rock of wisdom."

**"In the harmony of universal Oneness, realise that You and I--myself and Thyself--are knit in indissoluble union with the infinite Reality":**

**"There is nothing wonderful nor irrelevant nor even discordant":**

**"In bliss of harmony, in the supreme felicity of His will lies our Peace"**

*--Natchintanai. 347.*

## **LORD OF LANKA! BE THOU OUR REFUGE**

**Oh Father, Life of life, My Love and Support!**

**Matchless One, Eternal being, Source of Serenity!**

**Universally acclaimed lord of illustrious Lanka!**

**Oh Supreme Siva whose might and beauty are manifest in the universe, and at whose Feet the wavering Ravana lies oppressed, Thou Ruler over Lanka's plains, Be Thou our Refuge.**

**Thou Primal Being, pervading all elemental forces, Guru and Sishya, Light divine that radiates in sunny land of Lanka, Thou art our Refuge.**

**Siva with all thy significant emblems of immanent diversity, Nectar sweet who ruleth over the shares of the goodly blessed Lanka, Be Thou our Refuge.**

**Soul of my soul and yet beyond the conciousness of man and celestials, all consuming Effulgence, Infinite Truth! Thou precious Gem of enchanting Lanka with peacocks and cuckoos, Thy Refuge we seek.**

**Far beyond relationships and associations, art thou the imperceptible Power, that art everything and nothing. Majestic Spendour that dazzles aloft! Father who supports**

**the vehicle of righteous strength, Lord of invigorating Lanka,  
Thou art our Refuge.**

**The infinite Will holds sway over all beings ; my Guru, whom  
the adepts in obeisance pay homage. Jewel of Wisdom,  
adorable Reality evoked by the saintly devotees, bounteous  
Lanka's sovereign Ruler, Thy Refuge we resort.**

**The One and the Many art Thou Lord, whose abode is the  
Himalayas. Thou who vanquished Dakkan and art the  
consort of the alluring Sakti--Oh Lanka's divine Teacher  
recovered by Yoganathan! Thy Refuge we seek.**

**Sternly did Thou destroy the pride of doubting ascetics.  
The eternal Feminine constitutes part of Thy Form. Thy  
fiery Eye did burn the deluding Cupid. Oh Lord Siva who  
reigns over Lanka, Thine are we in Refuge meek.**

**Day and night I toil to ease my worldly wants. Will Thou  
not pity my weakness so abject? What shall I do? My Guru!  
To whom shall I turn? Resplendent Light of the jewelled  
Isle of Lanka, Thine in Refuge are we.”**

*--Natchintanai. 99-100*

Blessed indeed is the bounty of such intense devotion, evoking Siva as intimately as the protecting Ruler over Lanka's fair and pleasant lands! The devotee who sings this canzone enriches his own experience of Siva (*Sivanubhuti*), and uplifts the hearts of those who hear these plaintive strains of sweet surrender to the Lord's Will. “Conquer thy own Ego-self and pray unto Him, and there is no one to equal you.”

This is the promise of our Gurunathan.

Eternal is the Lord of Lanka. All-powerful is His law and infinite Love is His Language. This Eternal Himself is in all. Adoration to Him, the immaculate source of all Wisdom, Truth and Love. Lanka's mansions of beauty are saturated with the love of the majestic infinite power of Siva. “Therefore the remembrance of the divine Name is the panacea of life's weal and woe. Chant the letters five without ceasing, untroubled by other thoughts, and live without envy in the purity of heart.”

## **HAIL SOUL OF LANKA**

**His is the Land of beauteous Lanka.  
From the thralldom of desire doth He save**

**Those who ponder on Him at sunrise and sunset.  
He has neither beginning nor an end.**

**Gracious is He, who danceth in sacred Thillai.  
Entwined with serpents and ganga flowing down.  
They who sing His glory find relief from anguish.  
He's drawn to Eelam, the land of chaste Tamil.**

**Grant Oh Lord bracing Eelam, Thy Grace  
That I be not oppressed by Life's burdens,  
But control my faculties gross and subtle,  
And pour my heart's oblation of love for Thee.**

**Grant that I enjoy the boon of liberality always  
And the ideal virtue of not hurting anyone.  
That I hold fast to Truth even at the price of life,  
Oh Lord of Lanka, worshipped by celestial devas.**

**Grant that I share with my kindred whate'er I have,  
And not cause friction in the company of the vicious,  
That I may pass my days in discreet prudence,  
Oh Lord of Lanka, adored by the whole universe.**

**Beauteous Lord of Lanka, King of Thillai !  
Who am I to fathom Thee, Essence of all forms?  
Life of life art Thou and soul of existence,  
Guru and Sishya and overlord of all art Thou.**

**Ever present in Iyaru, Oh Blissful Dancer  
Inseparably knit with Sakti, Oh Siva  
Who reduced to ashes the god of lust!  
Thou'rt the God of lovely isle of Eelam too.**

**Incomparable source of Life,  
Lord of ascetics rare.  
And comely Parwathi's adorable Wealth.**

**Thou art God of Eelam's verdant pastures.  
Thou with the insignia of Grace and consort Uma,  
Who heals the woes of worshippers true,  
Protect us Oh custodian of the seven worlds!  
And bestow Thy Grace, Oh Lord of Lanka.**

**Grant us purity devoid of meanness,  
And a will to praise Thy devotees true.**

**Oh Nataraj who exalts the fawn like Gowri!  
Thou'rt the God of fragrant Lanka.**

*--Natchintanai. 91.*

Swami floats in the perennial stream of translucent Wisdom, Love and Goodness, that flows the Blessed Abode of Bliss. In the ecstasy of joy, He bids us offer the petals of love and praise the Lord's Golden Feet incessantly, and chant the mystic Letters Five:

“It is the incomparable Lord who came to me in the majestic form of Guru and captivated my heart.”

**“Infinitely glorious in His Transcendence  
And yet unsurpassing in the beauty of Immanence,  
Those who see Him thus in gracious forms  
As their Beloved, they triumph in bliss eternal.”**

*--Natchintanai. 93.*

### **LANKA OUR ABODE**

In this mellifluous song, Swami speaks of Lanka as the land blessed with the immanence of Siva. It is the land where we see in all the phenomena, the beauty of Siva.

**“In this, our Land of Lanka  
All, All art Sivam, my dear.”**

*--Natchintanai. 143.*

We hear his plaintive address to all young children:

**“Experience Sivam as Love,  
And realise that we are That  
Cultivate Love in the heart, Oh Son!  
Arise and awake.  
Do thy duty, do it well.  
Be fearless, my boy.  
Lanka is our dear, dear land.”**

*--Natchintanai. 143.*

Again, Swami chimes sweetly in praise of Nallur, the beauty spot in Lanka, where his beloved Guru showed him the road to Freedom by the avenue of self-knowledge and self-conquest:

**“Know the Self by thySelf.  
Being is, ever is.  
He came like my mother  
To beauteous Nallur, my dear.”**

*--Natchintanai. 143.*

Down the ages, the Guru's call to the devotees of Siva in Lanka can be heard:

**“No evil shall ever befall those devotees  
Who know their own true self,  
And discern Sivam within their inner self.”**

*--Natchintanai. 142--143.*

Our fair Isle of Lanka is lapped on all sides by the blue waters of the ocean; hills and dales, lovely cities and green paddy fields, swift flowings rivers and luxuriant vegetation, waterfalls and golden domes add to the beauty of this land of Lanka. **“Who endows this land with such charm? The Lord who is unknown even by the Devas; the God who has been extolled by the scriptures and worshipped in all ages in the towering temples of Madurai and Thillai: He who abides in my heart as Life of my Life, and who is the prime remover of all that we see around us and within us, and by whose infinite, infinite grace, we enjoy all that is good and blissful: the invisible guide who dispels all terrifying and inauspicious forces: He indeed is the Lord revealed to me in lovely Lanka, watered by many streams.** His fragrant Feet are for ever my constant protection.

*--Natchintanai. 97.*

NALLUR--The Goodly City of Muruga!

Speed to the hermitage of Swami, to ponder and brood over the holy Feet of Murugan, who wields the cock banner! Nallur! It is the charmed city of the Guru who enacted many a moving pageant with his faithful yet stalwart disciple. It is the sanctum of the beloved Son of Siva, Skanda, the Commander of the armies of the Devas in their fight against the asuric demonic forces of evil. He is KandaSwamy, in whose temple in this hamlet of Nallur, is enshrined the *Vel*, the symbol of *Jnanam* or wisdom of the Godhead. *Mavidapuram!* It is famous in history as the link between India and Ceylon, a place of many miracles and healing springs; and the temple of Murugan towers above all else, as the guardian deity. Yoga Swami, as the gift of Divine Grace. There is yet another Lanka, that has been extolled by Swami in Natchintanai. It is the renowned city of *Kathirgamam*, the hamlet of Valli, the eternal beloved of Murugan.

*Kathirgamam* is the sanctum where Murugan in his formless state holds his mystic union with his devotees. He is the eternal Lover of Valli, the entrancing veddha damsel, typifying

the consummation of Love in the human soul. The *Anma* is for ever pursued by the God-Lover, Kandavel--who is Muruga.

**“Why do you search for the Lover  
Who has taken his abode in your heart?  
He is the Light of Kathirgamam!”**

*--Natchintanai. 191.*

## **YE SONS OF LANKA!**

**“Ponder, meditate and worship hopfully all the days of your life, ye who dwell in the pleasant vales of Lanka, on the sacred Feet of Murugan, who bears the cock banner, and be free from perilous dangers and pollutions in this world.**

**Remember and pay your homage wholeheartedly to the sweet Feet, full of fragrance and elixir, and get rid of your load of human ills; find ye the balm to transmute your lives, all ye who live in the golden isle of Lanka.**

**Evanescient are the pleasures that surround us, encaged as we are in the human body that decays with time. Why wast our precious hours in sad tidings so fleeting? Magnify the Feet of the six-faced Arumuga with steadfast love, and realise thy true essence, Oh Lanka-born!**

**Know that transient is youth and impermanent in Life. Hence hold fast to the Feet of Velan, so ancient and yet so young; offer Him thy earnest love, and be requited with lasting joy, Oh ye who dwell in fair Lanka.**

**Oh citizens of Lanka, cling with steadfast zeal to the radiant Feet of Murugan, surpassing the wisdom of the wisest and beyond human perception, and gain the ends of victorious living.**

**Renounce all unworthy desires and persist in praising the holy Feet of Murugan, and then shall ceaseless showers of grace rain upon you most opportunity ; and of this be certain,**

my comrades of Lanka.”

*--Natchintanai. 97.*

“Ye beloved of Lanka! In the world, ye shall have tribulation,  
but fear not! Pledge your undying loyalty to the gracious Feet of  
Veylan: and spend the wealth acquired by righteous means, in befitting  
ways,  
and always help the helpless. Can there be anything amiss or lacking to  
those,  
who worship Him with fervant and sincere devotion, in this ancient Land  
of  
Lanka?”

“Lanka, His Temple! He is not only my Beloved, but also the distilled  
sweetness of every-one in this world. This matchless One has His fixed  
abode in the fertile graves of Lanka. Futile had been the efforts of  
Brahma and Vishnu to know the majestic splendour of Siva who  
cherishes the Sakti at His side, and who has made Lanka, His temple.”

*--Natchintanai. 103-104.*

### THE CALL OF LANKA!

'He who would praise Siva's lustrous Feet with insatiable Love,  
can never suffer on earth from pangs of sorrows. Take in and  
ponder on the words of Master. His nativity is in the sweet  
and spiced Lanka.”

“They who worship with flowers and invoke the Almighty  
Lord's sacred Feet shall attain bliss, even though untutored in  
other lore. Brood on these words of the Son of Lanka and assuage the  
grief.”

“Let the Name, the letters-Five of Siva be thy strength, as  
also His Feet so compassionately tender. 'Tis joyful to chant  
His Praise. Listen to this edict of the Son of Lanka.”

“Do not fear; Do not ask alms or beg.  
Chant intimately the letters Five.  
Let its rhythm kiss thy heart.”

*--Natchintanai. 270.*

**“Oh Sons of Lanka! The Guru divine speaks further on the righteous way of life in a detectable manner.”**

He bids me one and all to cast off lethargy and depression with the unerring guidance of the *Siva Guru*, and to follow His lead:

**“Do all actions in conformity with His Will.”**

**“Then and only then shall dawn the truth of knowing one's eternal Self.”**

**“The knowledge of the self is the highest wisdom. It leads to the perception of the integral communion with Sivam, when there is neither you nor I”--**

**“He is the Lord who dons the young crescent on His crown,  
Who from Thillai bestows grace on the weak and infirm.  
Before His lotus Feet, morn and eve they prostrate.  
Ever bounteous is my blessed land of Lanka.”**

*--Natchintanai. 105.*

Swami makes us recollect in tranquillity, the poignant words of the Son of Lanka, which point at the play of opposites and the multiple ties of kith and kin, getting dissolved by singing thrice a day, the constant refrain in praise of the Feet of Siva in order to attain liberation:

**“Sing in exultation of the Beatific Feet of the Eternal Beloved, without sorrowing over missed opportunities and sinister acts of past yesterdays. Steep thyself in deep contemplation of the words of the Son of Lanka, and attain the serene peace of perfect harmony”**

*--Natchintanai. 107.*

## **MY HOLY LAND**

**He searched for me in the coconut groved Lanka and made me**

**His own--He who none can ever apprehend; He it was who made me know mySelf, in and through myself.**

**He is more endearing in tender love than the dear love of my**

**mother.**

**To one and all is He the Tambiran, the matchless Supreme Lord.**

**He came on His own accord to liberate me, even me. Never**

**shall I commit violence, nor will I utter falsehood, remembering**

**always the words of my Guru. Assured am I of the impermanance**

**of this body. Oh Lanka, my holy land where cloud messengers enrich her  
groves !**

**Will I ever forget Him who leaves me not for a split second?**

**Greater love hath no mother for this bondsman.**

**He indeed showed severity in crushing the ten-headed**

**Ravana in days gone by. Oh Lanka, fringed with palmyrah**

**and coconut palms, the home Land of this humble devotee !**

**The All-pervader, unseen and unknown by Brahman and**

**Vishnu cannot endure the separation from His humble**

**devotee, even for the twinkling of an eye: He activates the**

**mind of the holy seers.**

**Behold, my beauteous Lord of Lanka blessed with God's**

**plenty !**

**His benign Grace saved me from life's tribulations.**

**Incomprehensible to the Gods Brahman and Vishnu, is He who**

**is the essence of Wisdom. Let us revere and worship the One**

**who is beyond Form and attributes. Oh Lanka with lucious**

**groves, the sacred land of this lowly devotee !”**

*--Natchintanai. 105.*

## **LANKA, OUR MOTHER LAND!**

**“Thou art the witness, our motherland dear  
That no evil can ever befall us.”**

**The sun of splendour rose in luminosity**

**O're this ancient earth and captivated us**

**By His rays of love; subject are we of none.**

**Fled of the deeds of yore, superceded by bliss divine.**

**Moral excellence marks our motherland of Lanka.**

**He who is beyond desire and desirelessness,**

**Of His own accord came and made me His captive.**

**Subjects are we of none.**

**No more will we wallow in falsehood or slander.**

**Our home is Lanka with verdant rice fields.**

**We'll not feel restrained to withhold from giving,**

**But evince love to no one and all alike.**

**Inheritors are we of endless bliss.**

**To none are we subject.**

**The Lord of Thillai's Feet shall we reflect,**

**And pine we for Lanka, our motherland.**

**When others harm us, we shall not be moved.**

**Like a tortoise shall we subdue our vagrant senses.**

**Subjects are we of none.**

**“Tis joyful to worship Siva and sing sweet psalms.**

**We shall do well in Lanka, our motherland.**

**The foes of fear and wrath shall we repel.  
And desist from multiplying desires manifold.  
To none are we subject.  
The vibrant Letters Five shall resound in our hearts,  
As we chant it with fervant devotion.  
Beauteous Lanka is our happy abode.  
Our eternity has neither a beginning nor an end.  
This mystic experience is ours by Guru's grace.  
No one can wield sway over us.  
The land of dales and glades with lakes and rivers  
That is Lanka, our lovely motherland.  
With minds tuned to meditate on Thee.  
And eyes ever watchful to behold Thee.  
Our heads in obeisance bow in Thy worship.  
We're not subject to alien allegiance.  
Morn and eve, we shall praise and worship Thee  
And meekly cherish the Feet of Lanka.  
We'll acclaim that there's but one God for all  
No evil shall we commit  
To none do we owe allegiance.  
Violence, avarice, and anger shall we eschew  
And steadfastly reflect ever and anon  
That Lanka is our stable homeland.  
Attuned in yogic quiescence,**

**We'll remain immortal, illumined in wisdom.  
We owe not allegiance to others.  
We've renounced kith and kin;  
We've espoused the unborn, ancient Beloved.  
Blessed are we in Lanka for certain.  
Conscious are we of fleeting joys,  
Ne'er shall we forget the Feet of Sivaperuman.  
Nor shall we live under sufferance.  
Sorrows shall not assail us nor shall we  
be enticed by mundane esteem.  
Irrestible is the expanse of Lanka.  
Lo, the God of Lanka is the supreme Lord.  
He'll not forsake us, for guardian Lord is He.  
Who'll guide us from the wiles of the world  
He is the sovereign lord of the devas.  
Adorable is our God, so full of benevolence.  
He's the Lord who grants us whate'er we seek  
And in His sacrificial love do we thrive.  
Immanent in all is our Lord, all pervading.  
His fiery locks streaming with Ganga;  
Immortal is our Lord-God of Five Letters.  
He permeates earth, air, and water  
And ether too He pervades, scanning darkness.  
Spirits of the dark revolve around His orbit,**

And He dwells in stately Lanka,  
The land of magnificent mansions.

*--Natchintanai. 315-316.*

## SIVA--THE LORD OF LANKA

Mother mine,  
Father fine,  
Guru great,  
All these in one--  
That is the God that entranced me!  
His ambrosia is relished by mindful lovers;  
He who prevades nowhere and everywhere,  
He made me know who I am,  
Expiated are my past deeds of yore.  
The God of my forefathers is my Lord too.  
Siva is His name,  
And He dwelleth in palm-girt Lanka.  
He rejoiceth with the learned and the untutored.  
Hidden mysteries, He makes known.  
His knotted locks uphold the flow of ganga.  
His forehead glows with the luminous Eye.  
He who is the universal God is my Lord too,  
And they are gods who experience this truth in life.  
Siva is His name.  
And attractive Lanka enjoys His access.

**He bestows grace on those who trust Him.  
The embodiment of wisdom praised by the worthy.  
He is the Healer of afflictions sore.  
The Supreme One lauded by Vedanta and Siddhanta.  
He is in unison with the chosen goal,  
Adored by elephant-Ganesh and the sixfaced Murugan.  
The Lord is He who dwells in the glades of Lanka.  
He is the unfailing guide in this birth and next.  
The Lord whose gleaming hair adorns the crescent.  
All-embracing, steadfast like parental love is He,  
Manifesting on earth in human form like myself,  
Abhorring all delusive arrogance and vanity.  
He is the God adored by fresh opened flowers.  
In Lanka's beauteous lands He loves to dwell,  
Our Lord who's the sweetest of the heart.  
In communion with the disciplined aspirants,  
He is the Lord who is eternal and changeless,  
He is the rock of gnosis to the knowers;  
The Elder who came on earth to sue a just cause,  
The Lord who rejoices in the divine Child with Vel,  
The Lord who transcends likes and dislikes,  
He's the Lord who dwells in Lanka's sylvan groves.**

*--Natchintanai. 31.*

This is the magnificat of Swami on the formless Absolute taking the form of the Lord of

Yogis, the power of manifestation, whom he experienced as the Immutable Parasivam; and whom he perceived with the gnostic sight given by His Guru, Sage Chellappa. Swami hailed Siva as the Supreme Being, Imperishable, the great Refuge of the universe, the undying Guardian of Dharma, the One Reality to be known, felt and experienced. He is infinite in power and yet out of His immeasurable grace, this radiant consciousness, this germinal light of the immanent principle manifest, took His meek abode in the fair Isle of Lanka's beautiful groves and glades.

It is a kaleidosopic display of the static aspect of the ultimate Reality, embracing the inherent kinetic energy containing all polarities and potentialities, the ultimate point of power; and this great Power is sung as the indwelling Soul of Lanka by Swami, who acclaims that all manifestation revolves round the Sun of Truth. "From everlasting, to everlasting, It is what it is."--

When one fuses the separate elements of one's being, one realises the unity with the universal Being. When all duality ceases, the soul is in union with the transcendental Consciousness. St. Tirumalar states it in his own inimitable way:

*"The shades of darkness were dispelled by His rays of Grace, When He imprinted the coral of Sivam on the crystalline Anna."*

*--Tirumantram. 114.*

In his songs on Lanka, Swami brings to the fore the glory of the One without a second - "To realise the formless within one's living form is to **reach the basis of all forms**. All finite forms of experience are **inseparable from the infinite**. In a rapt synthesis of pure consciousness, rising above and beyond space-time relationship, **only one single moment is actual**; the whole universe evolves in that one single moment."

In this Ode on the Lord of Lanka, Swami integrates all forms and enables us to gain intuition of the endless play of the Power of Siva:

**"He alone sees, who sees all beings as himself.  
The unknown is within, in every atom of our being.  
Who art Thou, who when known, all is known?  
I am He; He am I; we are That."**

If one fully enters into the experience of 'Thou art mine and I am thine,' **Reality is apprehended**. It compels one to empty one's mind of images and preconceptions. With a mind so emptied, one truly feels the impact of the Guru most forcefully. Its force is accessible to one who can see and assimilate its impact.

Our Guru bids us take up the mantra of Siva as our shield, and to reflect on the One who is present everywhere. He beckons us to be untouched by worldliness like the lotus in water,

and to lead a pure life and free from enmity: “Be kind to all living things and see God in all, and let your actions be performed to a **spirit of reverence and affection.**” We arise from the sense of slumber of unreality and seek to follow in his footprints; we give up egoism and pride to become the dust of all feet. In the poems that follow, he infuses us with an abiding love for the gnosis of God. It includes the idea of love as well as knowledge, the union of which is true wisdom:

**“Adored by the Seers, Thou Truth imperishable,  
Siva of golden effulgence, Thou art the Lord God.”**

*--Natchintanai. 31.*

## **ENKAL VALA NAADU**

On the winged melody of grace, the Guru speaks of the blessed land, the abode of the satisfied saints and servitors of Siva. It is the realm of the liberated souls and into this domain of '*Mukti*' which is within each one of us, the Guru opens up vistas of glorious vision. “Behold the **mansion which is within you! Thou shall have the key from me.** Open and enter **into its everlasting heritage.**” His voice rings clear and elevated.

The Guru has watered the desert sands of our barren hearts and an oasis has sprung up therein. He has showered the waters of grace, and 'neath the shelter of its soothing shade. we have come into our own true being. Eternal are we, the progenitors of Truth divine. He beckons us to join the band of the inheritors of this blessed Land, where existence absolute, consciousness supreme and perfect bliss, sat chit anandam--hold sovereign sway.

We'll arise and go, and follow him right now to the haven of our quest,--Enkal Vala Naadu--and pledge at his hallowed Feet in an upsurge of love the eternal servitude, our offering of Sivathondu in speechless silence. List too his Ode on the *Blessed nature of His Abode--The Isle of Experience* revealed by His Guru-Gem.

## **OUR BLESSED LAND**

**This indeed is our blessed abode**

**Where love's ministralsy prevails.**

**Where Siva favours to dwell,**

**Where tares of grief are weeded out,**

**Where falls the pure rains of grace,**

**Where abundant crops of joy do flourish**

**Where wayward senses cannot deceive,  
Where my invincible Guru won me in pinning love,  
And revealed to me this benign land so blest.  
This indeed is our blessed terrain  
Which has neither beginning nor end,  
Which is all pervasive like the sky,  
Which is encircled by the pure sea of grace,  
Which full of promise expands on all eight directions.  
In this noble land so full of luminous light,  
And acclaimed high by sacred scriptures.  
Our Lord who's life of our life revealed to me,  
His radiant feet divine--Blessed land of ours.  
This is indeed our blessed country,  
Where the harbinger of death doth not approach,  
Where the fever and fret of the mind ceases,  
Where flows the translucent stream of clear void,  
Where towers the peaks of high mountains  
Where scintillates the sparkling sunshine fore'er,  
In this bounteous land, He Captured me in love,  
And saved me from the snare of delusions.  
His roseate Feet He showed, in this land so blest.  
This indeed is our blessed domain.  
Herein the scorching worldly outlook withers,  
And a sublime sense of harmony prevails.**

**The calm of wisdom in rapt synthesis holds sway,  
Where currents of pure bliss well up on all sides.  
The animating dance of energy thrills our hearts,  
In this beauteous land cherished by tranquil minds,  
My Father overwhelmed me, while yet a novice.  
Ah sweet seat of benevolence beautiful!  
This indeed is our blessed realm  
Where chains of birth and death are reft asunder,  
Where in truth the Lord is nurtured in the soul of man,  
Where spreads the gracious shield of moon-lit rays,  
That reflect serenity like the calm deep blue.  
My path bedimmed, I faint with fear and fall.  
My aching heart distraught, tears torrential gush forth,  
In weary anguish do I languish for his solace  
And He lightens me of my mortal fears.  
Blessed Land which doth manifest the illumed Guru.**

*--Natchintanai. 22-23.*

This Ode gives the very essence of sublime spiritual wisdom, and the key to transcendental realisation. Eternal Bliss wells up from the springs of perennial Love, deep within the consciousness of each one of us. wami's clarion call to the Sivathondar is to realise the Self and enter into the heritage of this Blessed Land--*Enkal Vala Naadu*.

# GURU AMRTATTVAM

## THE TRADITION OF GURU PARAMPARAI

The meditation on *Natchintanai* by the *NatGuru* constrains us to recall the songs of salutation on the Guru by illustrious sages from our Holy scriptures. The living tradition connected with a Religion is as significant as the scriptures, and a great teacher is a living scripture, because he maintains in an unbroken succession, the purity of the tradition. His realisation of perfect freedom and peace helps to preserve what is vital in the original revelation.

Hinduism lays great stress on the sanctity of a Guru, and the teaching imparted by the living voice of a Guru. He is the oracle of God who is eternal, and who never ceases to function in the dimension of time and space. The lamp of Truth has been kept burning brightly from the Vedic age, right down to the modern age by this *Guru Param-parai* in Hinduism. Every Guru is the lamp post on the WAY to the true goal of man's liberation. It revolves upon the Guru that he should enable the votary to reach the summit of God-realisation without lingering on the wayside nor at the signpost.

In Sanskrit *Guru* means the remover of darkness.

*“Guha ramandhakaram ca rukaram te ja ucyate  
Ajnana grasakam brahma gurureva na samsayah.”*

--*Guru Gita.*

In Saiva scriptures, the Teacher is known as *Aasaan--*

He is one who guides an aspirant to the Holy Feet of God, where I-ness and mine are annihilated. To quicken the *Anma*, book knowledge is inadequate and the impulse must come from another realised soul. The enlightened Teacher from whom such an impulse comes is called the *Guru-Paran*, the path-finder, the dispeller of ignorance and the illumined Guide.

## THE ROLE OF THE SATGURU.

### **Natchintanai**

**“Transcending all mutations of form and attribute,**

**Surpassing all finite measure is the GURU,  
An embodiment of the highest wisdom.”**

## **Taittireya Upanishad**

In *Sikshavalli* is an illustrious passage where the Guru bids his disciple farewell and delivers his last *upadesh*: “Speak the truth; Practise virtue. Let there be no neglect of your daily reading. Give unto the teacher what is pleasing to him.”

*“Satyam vada, dharmam cara.....  
Svadyayan ma pramadah,  
Acaryaya priyam dhanam ahrtiya.”*

1.11.1

Then follows the exhortation to treat the Guru reverentially as a God--

*“Acarya devo bhava'--'Be one to whom the teacher is a god.”*

Swami bade everyone of us to read and digest the above text and the commentary in Sanskrit, English and Tamil. It embodies the essence of the teachings of the different teachers like Satyavacas, Bhrigu, Paurusisti, and Trisanku, to their disciples, each pointing to a particular pathway as being efficacious to make life full of brilliance:

*“Satyam--Pursue Truth as the goal of life.  
Through Tapas or penance, one can achieve enlightenment.  
By Detachment can you reach the goal of life.  
Jnanam or Wisdom can illumine your life.  
Purity in thought, word and act shall surely lead you to the  
goal.  
In selfless service lies the secret of liberation.”*

Thus do these Seers declare that the elixir of ineffable bliss flows from any or all of these pathways, which the seeker of God is urged to pursue steadfastly under the guidance of a Guru--the enlightened Teacher.

## **Mundaka Upanishad**

Let him approach a teacher who is learned in the Scriptures and established in Brahman. Unto him who has approached in due form, whose mind is

tranquil, let the teacher teach in its very truth that knowledge about Brahman by which one knows the Imperishable person, the true.

1.2.13.

## **Bhagavad Gita**

The Gita brings out the glory of the Guru as a divine Teacher and reveals the beauty of the relationship between Krishna and Arjuna. Though a friend and charioteer, Krishna shows his divine stature to Arjuna as a *Supreme Guru*, who is ever pure and clear, more extensive than space, and subtler than the subtlest. *He is omniscient. He animates all yet remains inactive; He holds everything, Himself being unsupported; all depend on Him but He is independent; all forms are His, but He is formless; all belong to Him but He is unattached; though illumining all, He has not been easily understood by the common people among whom he lived and moved.*

In the Gita, Krishna proclaims that *Sraddha*, Sacrifice and Surrender alone can lead man to the supreme sovereignty of the Self. Therin man enjoys infinite Peace--*Santam--Upa Santam*. The last message of Krishna to Arjuna in [chapter 18](#), (verses 62, 65 and 66) of the Bhagavad Gita conveys this ideal of supreme surrender at the Feet of the Parama Guru:

*“In Him alone seek thy refuge with all thy heart, O Bharata. By His grace shalt thou win the eternal heaven of supreme peace.”*

--62.

*“On Me fix thy mind, to Me bring thy devotion, to Me offer thy sacrifice, to Me make thy obeisance; to Me indeed shalt thou come--Solemn in my promise to thee; thou art dear to me.”*

--65.

*“Abandon all duties and come to Me, the only refuge. I will release thee from all sins; grieve not!”*

--66.

## **Vivekachudamani**

There is a sloka which describes the three objects which are very difficult to obtain.

“Durlabham Trayamevaitat Daiva-nugraha-hetukam;  
Manushyatvam Mumukshutvam Mahapurushsamsrayae.”

*Only through the Grace of God can man obtain them.*

“To be born as a human being is a boon. Having got this precious gift of human birth from God, the next hurdle is to have the urge and aspiration for liberation, and blessed is he who has secured these two factors of being born a human being, and who has the thirst to *know* the truth. If after knowing that, you do not know the *way*, your joy is incomplete. Therefore if you get the shelter of a *MahaPurusha*, one who has known what has to be attained, and one who is enlightened enough to *show you the way*, you can count yourself thrice blessed. This unique blessing is enjoyed by only a few who have to remember it, lest they waste not the precious opportunity of human birth.”

### **Viswasara Tantra**

*“Guru Brahma Guru Vishnu Guru Devo Mahesvara:  
Gurusakshat ParaBrahma Tasmai Srigurave namaha:”*

*“The Guru is Brahma, the Guru is Vishnu, the Guru is the Lord Siva. Verily the Guru is Supreme Brahman. Salutation to the Guru.” --I.*

*“There is no higher truth than the Guru, no higher penance than service to the Guru, and there is nothing higher than Realisation. Salutation to that Guru.” Hymn to the Guru. II.*

### **Guru Ashtakam of Sri Sankara**

*“Of what avail is the ripe scholarship in spiritual lore!  
Oh what gain is the consummation of poetry and prose of a  
keen intellect, if the mind does not follow the lotus Feet of the  
Guru?”*

### **St. Matthew**

*“Behold my servant whom I have chosen;  
My beloved in whom my soul is well pleased:”*

XII.18.

*“The Father in me doeth the works.”*

XIII.23.

*“Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.”*

XXIII.39.

## **Kularnava**

*“The Intelligent one would proclaim the master but carefully conceal his counsel.”*

## **Bhaskaraya**

“The master, looking with his eyes into the eyes of the disciple, brings out by the glory of his yoga through his eyes, his consciousness from his body, and himself entering through the disciple's eyes in the form of that consciousness, pierces the mind of the disciple.”

## **Tirumantram**

In the *Upadesh* section of *Tirumantram*, Tirumular delineates lucidly the Lord who is transcendent becoming immanent in the world, in order to show the way to the souls who are ready to receive the light of Grace. The Lord reveals the Truth through the form of Guru. If Lord Siva does not vouchsafe to bestow his grace thus to human souls, they cannot attain liberation.

*“He who is beyond the worlds, He dwells  
In the hearts of the saints in benign grace  
So that all may attain liberation.  
He is the speechless Guru, the immaculate Sivam.”*

*“The Beauteous boon of 'Siddhi and Mukti,'  
The upright way of Grace and Truth,  
The wealth of Wisdom and Bliss divine,  
Can be attained by Grace of God with Form.”*

The Formless takes a finite form, moved by grace, in order that the souls

may be freed from the bondage of ignorance. It assumes the form in consonance with the degree of awareness of the human souls for liberation. He places His balmy Feet on the heads of those who are ready for His grace, so that they may be saved from delusion's perils. He becomes the Life of their lives and entrances them with His peerless grace, and points the way to final Release in silence. He thus saves them from ever limiting bondage.

The subdued mind of man in all its purity must be tuned aright, for the soul to turn its gaze to the Lord. That is the right moment for the Guru to come and cause the sunrise of the Soul. The three-eyed Siva detaches the Soul from bonds of attachment by awakening the Sun of Grace. He illumines the eye of man, so that he may no longer be embedded in the darkness of ignorance. In the crystal clear soul is imprinted the luminous coral of Sivam.

It is clear that the souls which have the inherent power of limitless vision of the *Oeness* of God, can with the light of Grace attain the sight universal, but normally all manifest forms are veiled by the limitations of name and form and the bondage of the triple *malas*.

The utterance that “the luminous coral of Sivam is imprinted in the translucent crystal of the soul,” is another way of expressing Swami's maxim of 'HimSelf in ThySelf.'

The souls finally attain the bliss of Siva. The place, the signal where the souls seek repose is known as the Lord's Feet. The worship of the Guru, chanting the holy mantras, performing puja and rituals endow a seeker with the clarity of wisdom. Tirumular testifies that a Guru leads a seeker of Truth to know Him who is omniscient, and Him who is the object of all knowledge.

We give below significant translations gleaned from St. Tirumular's classic on the *Sivayoga* and *Siva-jnana* pathways of Realisation, with the aid of an illumined Guru:

## **Tirumantram**

### **The Guru.**

127. In Siva was he rooted: Sivam did he see everywhere.  
In the will of Siva did he discern all things,  
Transcending consciousness of past present and future,  
And duality ceasing did he realise sweet serenity.

1576. He who's beyond the visible universe, came down on earth  
As a *Guru* to abide in the hearts of the virtuous,  
And illumined them by His grace and made them His own.  
The peerless Siva is the priceless *NatGuru*.

1581. The *Guru* indeed is Siva,  
He is the kingly splendour too;  
He is beyond the wisdom of the Vedas.  
He is beyond all finite consciousness.

1584. If not for the grace of Siva who came as the *Guru*,  
The import of the scripture,  
The way leading to liberation,  
The reality of Truth cannot be understood by man.

1527. Endowing me with equanimity, the power of Grace  
Descended as the *Guru* and purged my dross,  
And enlightened me from the sway of my ego.  
Thus freed did I commingle with Siva.

2959. When you meditate on the form of thy *Guru*  
Then all the bonds that bind you  
To this prison house of the body  
Shall give way and make you free in Siva.

2971. SivaPeruman did I invoke and adore whence,  
He came down as my *Guru* in the form of a sage.  
The majestic Lord did overpower me as my *Guru*,  
And I pay my homage to this Lord of the universe.

1590. Sternly did my *Guru* chastise my ignorance;  
He placed his holy hands on my head,  
And his beauteous Feet lit up  
The secret chambers of my heart.”

St. Manicavacagar exults in ecstatic adoration on the Siva Guru:

*“Verily have I seen Him with my own eyes--Behold!  
The ambrosial source yielding bountiful grace, Behold!  
The splendour of His Grace, I beheld. Ye too Behold!  
On earth, His blessed Feet did tread, Behold!  
And realising Him as Siva beloved, I felt the peace,  
When in Grace, He made me His--Behold!  
He who is the Lord of the blue-eyed Sakti.  
Behold! The eternal Feminine and Him!*

*--Tiruvandapaguthi 58-63:*

*“In grace, He came in humble human form to me,  
That I may be rescued from fleeting pursuits.  
Hail Luminous One who came down,  
To dwell with me in meekness fine.”*

*--Tiruvandapaguthi 117-119.*

*“The hiding player--There I have seen you..... 142:  
A sage He came and showed Himself to me.....  
Mercy's distilled sweetness mingled in me,  
And He fed me with the nectar of Grace!  
He who is elusive to Brahma and Mal.”*

*--182.*

## **Guru Nanak**

“The Guru's touch of Grace opens the soul's eyes to God's light which is always there, and enables one to see the Lord. In reality it is God who gives the knowledge of Himself, and to that end He takes the form of the Guru. Really the 'Enlightener' is the inner Self, who recognises truth and embraces it when found in a human form or voice. The Guru is the voice of God arousing the soul to true spiritual effort.”

## **Tirukalitrupadiyar**

*“The transcendent one who at Thillai's Hall doth dance  
In grace did come on earth as the Guru,  
And wiped out my encrusted egoity.*

*He communes within me in bliss divine.”*

## **SivaJnana Botham**

St. Meikanda Devar in his classic on Saiva Siddhanta Philosophy has embodied the role of the God-Guru: *“The Supreme Lord becomes a Guru to the mature aspirant, in order to guide him to his divine destiny of God-realisation.”*

*--VIII Sutra.*

## **Tiruvartupayan**

St. Umapathi Sivacharyar extols the role of the Guru: *“The grace of God which is ever with us and which enlightens us from within, unseen, manifests itself externally in the visible form of the Guru.”*

*--V. I.*

## **Auvai Kural**

*“The Sat Guru shows the true way and his presence is your saving grace.”*

*“The SatGuru alone can show you the direct way to Siva, who is ever inseparable and yet veiled to others.”*

*III. 5.*

*“But if one knows and realises the Divine Grace, he will understand the seat of the Guru.”*

*II. 9.*

## **Nishtanubhuti**

“That cannot be known by any of the above paths. Then how can it be known?”

“The grace of the *Jnanacharya*, and that Word of Truth he utters will unfold the riches of the Kingdom of God within you.”

“*Nishkâma Puja to ParaSivam* is the offering of worship to the *SatGuru*, who is in direct communion with *ParaSivam*, and whose Grace flows through him. He is the master of the body, mind, and soul of the *sishya*, and he pursues relentlessly those who are ready to receive the *Grace* of Siva. He showers on them the blissful Grace and makes them his own.

*Sivanubhuti* can only be revealed through the Grace of a *SatGuru*, who instils it into his being, and blessed he becomes. His body trembles, his eyes flow with tears, his mind is listless, and in that state dawns the grace of the Silent Guru in his Fullness as *Sat-Chit-Anandam*. This is the highest role of the *SatGuru* who turns his gracious look on his disciple, and from then on, the *Sishya* does him humble service in obedience to the Guru's will, and then 'I and You' separateness vanishes; and forgetfulness and remembrance recede, and wisdom's light too recedes, till there exists just Oneness. This is *Mukti*. The Guru in the form of *Dhakshinamurti* reveals the speechless word by his '*Chinmudra*'. This is the *mounam*, the serene peace, that leads to liberation.”

## **Pattinattar**

“*Oh Purna! I know not the truth of the Guru, the Eternal One, Divine grace, the Primeval Light and Sound, the One with Form and the Formless.*”

“The speechless thought form (mantra), the thought--free-mind, and the heart's ineffable worship are the choice endowments of the Gurunathan.”

--*Purna Mâlai. 42.*

## **Oluvilodukam**

“*The Sat Guru* is invested with Divine Grace and appears in the horizon of time and space in this world like a mighty lion, and looks upon with grace and compassion on the disciple, who like the elephant becomes subdued of all passions; by and by, his 'I-self' too gets impotent. The potency of I-ness ceases or retreats before that Sun of wisdom. A Guru is truly a *Jnana-Acharya*. He is *Guru-vanjiam*, the kingly lion.”

“*The Parama Guru* is not affected by the diversity of Knower, Knowledge and Known. He is Grace and his gracious look inflames the *sishya*, who does not find words to praise him or meditate on him. The True Guru is

full of *Parajnanam*-experiential wisdom.”

“The *Mouna Guru* is the embodiment of Grace, and he alone can make the *sishya*, the novice seeker-student, mingle in oneness with Sivam, who is above the thirty-six categories. He alone can set the *sishya* at rest in blissful silence. He alone can confer '*Sivanandanubhavam*', the bliss of experiencing Sivam, as he himself is immersed in it.”

“The *Jnana Guru* is beyond the sway of the ruling passions, sentiments and the thirty-six avenues of enjoyments. By his self enquiry, and the knowledge of his true self, he experiences the bliss of divine communion. In this state of oneness, he discerns the true nature of his pupil's yearning and measures his compassionate grace, without in any way disturbing his pupil's equilibrium.”

“My Guru bade me leave my lower station of the lower self, and led me to my true self. He revealed that in all the acts we see around, the highest common factor is the grace which fills one with felicity completely. '*That is our capital. We are that,*' So declared our Guru.”

--43.

“The *SivaGuru* is the walking expression of grace.”

--53.

“The *SatGurus* are unaffected by praise and blame, and move where they will and are the manifestations of Grace.”

--55.

“They are lighted to lighten.”

--*Oluvilodukam. 61.*

## **St. Tayumanavar**

St. Tayumanavar extols in language of inimitable beauty, the high import and the glory of the GURU, in his Psalms on *Mouna Guru*:

*“To those who have been duly initiated  
into the icon, temple and holy waters,*

*(of the Ishta devata) the real Guru who utters the unique Word (mantram) will also appear.”*

*“One Word, a wondrous Word, there is which in itself contains All other words; by it is cleansed The soul of all its stains. It is the Word the Guru gave, One Word, unmoving goal.”*

*“Fixed as a mountain top is firm, Towards which moves the soul. All other words beside it are As vain devoid of aim, As are the pawns at random moved, moved in aimless game.”*

*“Thou camest as the Silent Teacher mine, Ready to grant all boons however rare, And with a mother's love Thou didst unfold Decking my head with those Blessed Feet of Thine, The Eternal Law of wisdom's ecstasy. Bereft of thought or holy word revolved The superconscious Vision beyond all thought Of Freedom's final state as one or two, As Light or Void or Form or Primal Sound. Such is Beatitude. So hast Thou taught. Grant me thy Grace, O Lord, to live that life Wherein are steeped time honoured lovers thine. O Thou Siddhanta's Goal and Prime Essence! O Dhakshinamurthi that dost shine aloft On Trichi's hill, O master of Wisdom's Bliss!”*

Thus sages and saints have sung in praise of *Dhakshinamurthi*, the manifestation of Siva, at the foot of the banyan tree in the Form of the Silent Guru. The Siva-Guru is for ever absorbed in perfect silence and He is filled with the bliss of Grace. It outflows in *upadesh*, teachings of high compassion in its own time. Till then, the *sishya* is enjoined to practise obedience and servitude to the Guru in meek devotion. He listens to the Guru's *upadesh* as the truth of the Vedas, and worships His Feet as the reward of his penance and the goal of his life:

The Guru's Light is like the morning Sun that dispels darkness. The SatGuru enables one to transcend the dark veils of egoism and his grace pervades everywhere in radiant bliss. His words are like nectar and prophetic, auspicious and without any pride. They are showers of grace. Such is the verdict of the religious scriptures down the ages.

The gems of Natchintanai declare the glory of the Absolute Sivam, *Sat-Chit-Anandam* manifesting as the Gracious Feet, and of its revelation in the world and in the hearts of the Servitors of Siva as the *SatGuru--the Master Sivathondan*.

## THE SACRAMENTAL GURU YOGAM

**“Guru Brahma, Guru Vishnu, Guru Devo Maheswara.  
Guru Shakshat, Para Brahma Tasmai Sri Gurave Namaha.”**

The fundamental role of the *SatGuru* has been outlined so far in order to enhance the readers' appreciation of the Hymns to the Guru in the *Natchintanai*. Swami affirms at all times that the Guru is the embodiment of wisdom and a manifestation of the *Supreme Para Brahmam*--He is *Brahma, Vishnu* and *Maheswara*. He is also the transcendental One, who is without form and devoid of specific attributes. He takes a form in order to bestow His Grace on each soul and to deliver it from the bondage of ignorance, desire and delusion. Therefore it is befitting that man learns to shower devotion on the Guru, as it will lead him to the goal of beatitude.

We have seen that the Saiva Scriptures have acclaimed that unless Siva manifests as the Guru, the soul cannot realise the freedom of bliss eternal. Unfailing devotion, knowledge and the surrender of the enjoyment of action on earth,--these are the seeds from which grows God's Grace. Siva's grace manifest as Sakti, the principle of supreme Consciousness, Love and Will; in other words, it is the symbol of *Tiruvadi*, the Holy Feet, and manifests itself in the Guru. Sang Tirumular in *Tirumantram*:

*“The Guru showed me the path.  
I obtained God's Grace.  
I abandoned the path trod in ignorance.  
I crossed the ocean of birth to the shore of bliss.”*

Today hundreds and thousands acclaim Swami as their Guru. He is the Guru who shows them the Path. His Grace works in many mysterious ways.

It was the third Sunday of August 1962, when under the drumstick tree at the Ashram of Markandu Swami in Kaithady was halted our car. He stretched out his hands seated in the car as if embracing the whole world, and declaimed loudly these prophetic words:

“Go, go out in all directions and plough the fields. Work in partnership with Mother Earth and Father Sun and distribute fairly the fruits of the Earth. Begin right now to till the soil. Begin at *Sittandy*. While you irrigate the fields, I shall plough your hearts and sow the seeds of love therein.” His gaze touched the evening rays of the sun, and as he stroked his hands on his chest, he sang:--

**“The whole world has come within my palm:  
With the vision of Oneness is attained the goal of life.”**

*--Natchintanai. 18.*

In a similar manner, St. Tirumular spoke of his experience of the impact of the Guru's grace:

*“My Lord Guru touched my heart  
And I found Him within me.  
He pierced the gloom of ignorance  
With His armour of wisdom.”*

All those who stood around Swami in that fugitive light that evening at Kaithadi experienced his revealing gace. In that fair moment, it expanded into immense proportions, and clouds of peace floated over them. His eyes penetrated their sight in luminosity. Their voices quivered as they sang inwardly:

*“He is Bhakti. He is Siddhi. He is Mukti. He is Siva.  
We live in Him and He in Us: Gone is the veil that hid  
the soul from His light--Oh Thou Pefection's Bliss.”!*

The scintillating songs entitled Natchintanai were sung by Swami at various times in various places, after the passing into Maha samadhi of his Guru--Sage Chellappa Swami of Nallur, and from 1935, these songs appeared in the religious journal of *Sivathondan* which was edited by Sri K. K. Natarajan directly under Swami's personal guidance. They contain the distilled essence of love, adoration, consecration and perfect surrender at the

Feet of the Great Teacher Chellapar, who saved him from the thralldom of worldly misery and fleeting enjoyments by endowing him with the wisdom of Siva. In these Songs, we follow Swami the Lamp-lighter, giving up the many allurements of the world for the prize of *Atma Lapa*, and bidding his bondsman also join in the victorious march inward, till the goal of God-realisation is attained! *“It is what it is”*

**“Bow to the sacred Feet of the Guru whose holy utterance--  
the  
Mahavakiam--points the Way to everlasting bliss.”**

*--Natchintanai. 302.*

His Reflections of Grace embody the quintessence of the Saiva Sastras on the pre-eminent role of the *Anma*. **“Realise thySelf by the Self. That is the absolute Truth”**... Whatever one experiences in this birth is the result of the past deeds, good and bad in former births. One has to bear the burdens of life cheerfully, courageously, and calmly, and engage in Sivathodu. *“Chant Sivayanama, the enchanting Name of Siva, and prostrate three times daily before the roseate feet of the Teacher, who spoke the Great Truth: “That art That”!* Thus should you wipe out the evil effects of deeds. So too would accrue beneficial deeds, if you worship the Feet of the Guru who said that ye lack nothing. Who ever can comprehend the true nature of sublime Grace in this Universe?”

**“Boundless grace He showered--  
He who in Nallur came in human form.”**

*--Natchintanai. 119.*

The four great Saints of the Saiva Faith have extolled the gracious Feet of Siva--*Tiruvadi*. In other words, they connote the Silent Teacher, the Eternal Consort of Siva, His energy known as Sakti.

**“The Lord manifests as Father, Mother and Teacher,  
This is how He has made me His own.”**

*--Natchintanai. 21.*

Swami extols the Guru as Existence, Consciousness, Bliss, Beauty, Lustre, Harmony, Charity, Mantra, and Medicine; everything Good emanates from Him. He reiterates that there were two positions--I *and* He before meeting

the Guru, but after the first encounter, *I and He* became immersed in *One*. The *I* was taken and placed at *His Feet* as a love--offering. The two merged in non-dual, eternal bliss.

In lofty moments of mystic rapture, Swami's songs on the *Jnana Guru* soared on the wingless melody of sublime poesy, as did St. Manivacagar, in *Tiruvacagam*. Swami's adoration of his Guru tugs at our heart strings:

**“My Guru, Peerless Chellappar, I saw at Nallur,  
'neath the sacred Chariot of Murugan.  
He gazed at me in grace, my wise Teacher--  
Him do I praise engulfed in bliss.”**

**“There at the ancient abode of Nallur,  
I saw Him and bowed. Lo, I got into a trance.  
In speechless silence, He bade me find who I am.  
Distinctions fade, as I imbibe His Grace,  
Instantaneous is my gain of insight and joy.”**

*--Natchintanai--102.*

**“I want to sing and dance  
And serve Him who is manifest in all.  
There is then no night nor day  
And duality yields to Oneness infinite.”**

*--Natchintanai.*

It was no wonder that Swami reaped the harvest of universal love and benevolence from his Guru's MahaVaakiam. He adored children; He loved the aged and the lonely; He cared for the sinner and the saint--His great heart embraced the universe of might and meekness. His injunction to one and all was to cultivate love with wisdom. Purity, renunciation, desirelessness, and true discrimination were the ingredients of Love.

**“Chant the Letters Five--  
In love shalt thou discover His Will.  
Realise thySelf by the Self.”**

These were his utterances. The *Letters Five* were his life-breath, his thought force, the *Ajaba Mantra*. We could hear its vibration in his Ashram in the dawn and sunset. Whenever his monologue was audible, it was *Siva, Siva*.

Thus did he extol the Name, and pay homage to the Guru by the yogic discipline of *Siva Dhyana*.

**“Aum Sivayanama! we invoke.....  
Enlightened are we with that single word  
That came from our majestic kingly Guru.”**

*--Natchintanai. 15.*

The Logos is Swami. He eludes analysis. He is everything to everyone who seeks his refuge. He penetrates the foggy gloom of hypocrisy, deceit, selfishness, miserliness and purges our dross, our doubts and fears. He casts a spell of Oneness in each one of us sitting before him by his magic cord of Love. There is only One and never twain in his presence. All seated before him are of the same age, and in felicity fragrant, he made us all forget our differences, tensions and ill-will, our aching fears and wants. We tasted fullness. Change and decay appeared unreal in the consciousness of *He in Us, and We in Him*.

We saw all in Him; In Him was enshrined the treasures of this world and next--the strength and munificence of all living beings, the truth and wisdom of the ages.

He belonged to no particular place, age, religion or race. He was universal as the zephyr, that wafts the fragrance of whatever flower beds it passes. Gifts of silver and gold he rejects. He yearns for the alms of dedicated service as testified in one of the tuneful psalms in *Natchintanai*.

**“Serve and attain wisdom,  
Serve and attain peace.  
Serve and attain benevolence  
Serve and attain the harmony of bliss.”**

*--Natchintanai. 120.*

Natchintanai, his testament of Truth was born from the molten fire of purity and detachment. **“Realise your true self and that is the highest service you can render on earth--not your father, not your mother--not your children but it is you--Lo, fellow worker--Siva thonda! It is you who needs His Grace to see yourself by your own efforts, as you truly are. Tapas--Austerity, and Thanam--Charity, should be practised**

ceaselessly. Consider any sacrificial offering to the Lord's Feet as an offering to the '*Meyadiyar*,' bondsmen of Truth. God is the indwelling self of all beings and hence this is a beautiful world, where there can be really no intrinsic harmfulness, no malignant forces, no malevolent reactions and no evil.”

**“Tis bliss to adore the Feet of the Guru.  
'Tis bliss to consecrate our service to the Guru.  
'Tis bliss to ponder on the words of the Guru.  
'Tis bliss to surrender wholly unto the Guru.”**

*--Natchintanai. 122.*

### **SAMKALPAM--CONCEPTION**

**Oh Mind, Follow me. 'En Maname! Nee Vaaraai.'**

*--Natchintanai. 62.*

**“Oh mind! Look within and meditate prayerfully. Will ye not prostrate at the holy Feet of the Guru, who has made me his own, his very own! “Where ever thou art, There will I be,” were the words of comfort which bound me to him in homage meek.”**

**“He inflamed my all-embracing love to him, when he addressed my heart directly and said, 'Thou art myself'.**

**Therefore oh mind, follow me in my adoration.”**

*--Natchintanai. 62.*

Before the sweep of divine grace, the songster becomes over-powered with intense and single minded devotion. He contemplates on the sublime grace of the Guru in steadfast and speechless wonder.

**“Oh mind! It is certain that those who sing and meditate on this paean of praise will lead a virtuous life on earth.”**

*--Natchintanai. 63.*

The response to such intense reflection on the gracious Feet is brought out so poignantly in the next song of surrender and consecration-- "*Nallai*

*Gurumani-All Hail*". It is written in sonorous viruttam metre, and recalls to our minds, the moving *Tiruthandagam--Devarams* of *St. Appar*, and the mystic songs of *St. Sundarar* and *St. Manicavasagar*. When this canzone of Swami is sung in *Ethukula-Kambodi* raga, it takes one to the domain of love and light, referred in Dante's *Divine Comedy* as the celestial region where flows the luminous river of light.

### **NALLAI GURUMANI--ALL HAIL!**

**The way of Love I know not  
The way of Grace too I know not.  
Yet Thou bade me walk the path of Bliss,  
My Father, sovereign Ruler of Nallur!  
Suffering is an enigma to me,  
So too is enjoyment and the trail of deeds.  
What lies before and after I know not  
Oh Sage, who affirms the truth of Reality.  
Thou did'st enslave this despicable and ireful self,  
Oh Supreme Lord, matchless is thy glory,  
Beloved of all the seven worlds, who abideth with me.  
Peerless Guru-Gem of Nallur, adored by the blessed Saints,  
Hail, All Hail to Thee!**

**Praise be to thy roseate Feet,  
Which illumines the immensity of the utterance--  
'Oru Pollappumillai'--That there can be no evil.  
Thy adorable Feet, all Hail!  
Thy tender grace engulfed my humble self,  
Thou, Oh Guru who appeared at comely Nallur,  
And mitigated all my past unworthy acts.  
How then can I look upon Thee, my blessed One,  
As separate from me and my inner light?**

**In this wide world, search as I may,  
Can I ever find one like Thee?  
Who can forge such ties of love in me?  
Thou art become my bosom Friend so dear, that  
None can sever the link that bind us together?  
Divine Father, inseparable art Thou from me!  
Precious Guru Gem from Nallur's verdant groves!  
Essence of harmony! Is there aught lacking to those**

**Who have beheld Thee? Like the dizzy honey bee  
I've commingled with Thee in rapturous joy.**

**Thou who eludeth the searchlight of the Vedas,  
Who can know Thee, Oh Gem of beauty most rare?  
At Nallur did Thou reveal to me as my Guru  
And saved me from delusion's snares.  
Thou did'st grant serenity with sanctity  
That I feel so blessed, and speechless I stand  
Before Thee who art the WAY OF LIFE.  
Can there be any other way to worship Thee?  
Reveal to me the Essence of Truth, Oh illimitable Giver!**

*--Natchintanai. 63-64.*

### **GURU YAGJNA**

The above is a sublime song of Experience. Herein is expressed the intangible, intense joy of God-Consciousness and communion with the Guru. When we sang this song in his presence, his gaze metamorphosed into divine ecstasy. It was not a numinous joy, but a state of transcendent wonder!

Whenever this song was sung, we saw the heart of the Guru pulsating to the rhythm of ineffable peace-the incantation of the *Ajaba* mantra. The lifetrans of love and devotion floated in the expanse of his fathomless wisdom. That was the opportune moment when we resounded the servitude of St. Sundarar in his hymn:

*“To Thee alone are we bound in loyal servitude  
And all other source of help do we despise.  
Yet like the smothering fire do we languish.  
Do Thou heed thy bondsmen's call and save us,  
Lest we perish from life's oppressive ills.*

*--Tirumurai. VII. 95. 1.*

At the close of our refrain would be heard the voice of the Guru:

*“Let your wisdom be of the Eternal.  
Your love be of the Infinite.  
Your actions bear the stamp of Divinity.”*

Thus would Swami stir his devotees to march to the goal of God-Realisation, which was within the reach of everyone, by the path of enlightened worship, ceaseless contemplation and steadfast Love.

*'Omnia vincit amor, nos et cedamus amori.'*

*'Love overcomes all things; Let us too succumb to Love'*

In this lyric, Swami delineates his impact with the Guru--the madman of Nallur--Sage Chellappa Swami. He sings of the Light Divine that flashed through mortal coils; the habitation of mortality veiled the luminosity of the Light that radiated from the great Seer of Nallur. This illumined Teacher's Grace overwhelmed SWAMI as he raised the incantation on the Gurumani of Nallur. He was the Logos. Thus it was that the voice of Siva re-echoed in the crevices of the hearts of men and in the creeks of this wide, beautiful world. The symphony of the Gurumani of Nallur vibrated in the microcosm and the macrocosm. List to the music of Nallur, wherein is suffused the revelation of the way of Love and the way of Grace. List to the heart song!

“The knowledge of the infinite I seek; If Truth art Thou, and Thou art Truth--Oh Guru, choicest gem of lustrous hue, come Thou unto me, for I shall either fall over the precipices or the terrors of the ascent and the steepness of the path will rob me of my reason.”

*He* had stood alone in the world, and his eyes of love poured forth streams of tears, much weeping that had lasted through the aeons. He had been toiling with the dual-experiences in the world of objective phenomena, and his soul was weary. It was then that he sighted the Guru of Nallur, who revealed himself to him as the interior Guru, at the canopy of Lord Murugan's sacred chariot. The delusive charioteer Chellappar did not quench his thirst with one quaff. He gave the refreshing Mahavakiam, which he stored in his heart for a number of years; It was long after, that the reflex vibration began, and the world heard it in this lyric, wherein Swami exults in the experience of unsullied Peace.

He had followed the light of wisdom ignited by his Teacher, up the great mountain of life, and the quest supreme had armed him with detachment and fearlessness. Beneath his feet was the dust of illusion, and terrible clouds of strange darkness. He saw the gloom of doubt covering the face of the universe. The glistening heights of the great peak of life seemed sombre, shining under the strange colour of the clouds in manifold

multiplicity.

He indicates in this Ode how he had lost the path by which his Guru had bidden him to tread, and precipices yawned on all sides. Then came the grand unveiling spectacle when the light of Grace hidden deep in the core of his inner being relumed at the sight of the Guru and illuminated his sight. The light within mingled with his seing eye and filled him with radiant bliss.

After enlightenment, like Lord Buddha, he heard the cry of the ages of the toiling man and before him, the world of ignorance was agitated and continued to swell the still sad music of humanity. The world of the past, the present and even of all the future accused bitterly the state of bondage.

The ascent to the goal of Realisation is essentially fraught with stupendous pitfalls; but eventually fulfillment is assured by the liberators of mankind, who have appeared on the world's stage in times of crucial need. In the crisis that faced the modern man was communicated the saving *Vâc* of Swami who had experienced the plenum of Sivam.

**“Who can know? No one knows.  
It is what it is. His Will be done.  
There can be no intrinsic evil.  
Absolute is Truth.”**

**“Hail, Holy Feet adored for ever by the earth-born.”**

*--Natchintanai. 64.*

### **THE SOLACE OF THY WORD.**

This ode on Guru Chellappa Swami dwells on Swami's initiation and realisation of the absolute Truth of Oneness. It has a halo of unfaltering faith and buoyant hope. Its mystic fervour and cadence reflect Swami's lofty exaltation and adoration of his Guru. It is sung in the pure consciousness of his Guru's dynamic illumination. Swami recollects with joy and wonder alternating, his unforgettable encounter with the Guru at Nallur, and the solace of His gracious Word.

In the agony of the soul that had found a pearl of great value and had lost it, the music of the heart's cry can be heard. This lyric is full of poignant

appeal:

**“The Guru took me into his own protection and with one word cleansed my impurities. Full of purity, I counted myself blessed. I felt endowed with the insight of divine knowledge.**

*--Natchintanai. 46.*

**Then all of a sudden, I lost sight of the blessed Guide and Guru. Where has hid the Sivapirân who wafted such fragrance in my heart?”**

**“I know not the way to praise Thee  
The Solace of thy word, I need.”**

*--51--*

**Oh Siva! Inexpressible is the beatitude enjoyed by the holy band of servitors, who have attained thy Feet in indissoluble Oneness like salt in water.**

**Do come to me on this earth and commingle with me in that manner.**

**There's none who can keep me apart from thee!**

**Wilt thou not come in this very life on earth, and join me to Thee?**

*--Natchintanai. 50-51.*

## **GURU DHARSAN**

Now we shall tune our inner wave length to relish the inspiring symphony of Swami on his first sight of the Guru, in a series of enchanting songs in *Natchintanai*.

**In the sanctified shrine of Vadivel Murugan, where gather many sincere devotees for his healing grace, I saw for the first time my Guru on the steps leading to the chariot. I greeted him. 'Who are you'? he shouted.**

*--100--*

**Before the sanctum of Arumugan, where the wise seers who meditate on the self enjoy his motherly grace, I bowed to my**

**holy Teacher at 'Theradi.' 'Deliberate within,' was his response mingled with jovial mirth.**

**In Nallur with luxuriant foliage, where the unholy are chastened of there baseness, I saluted my wise Teacher. 'Relinquish your attachments,' was his remark followed by resounding laughter.**

**In bounteous Nallur before the courtyard of Murugan, at the hallowed resort of 'Theradi,' I prostrated to my exalted Teacher, who was surrounded by fervant devotees.**

**In the abode of Nallur where the gnostic sages hold sway, I beheld him who had no taint of lust--Chellappan, the Siva-Guru.**

**'Be of good cheer my dear,' was his benign pledge.**

**Down the ages have men inquired into Truth, as one and two and three, but he was not enmeshed in this pursuit. My beauteous Guru conferred on me the award of sovereignty at Nallur.**

**The immaculate One pervades the five elements, yet remains unseen. He came directly as my Sat Guru, cleared all my doubts and made me his own. Thereafter the beatitude of spotless purity was my armour.**

**In the golden isle of Eelam abounding in water birds, at Nallur the sanctified haunt of the Son of the resplendent Siva, he came as my SatGuru to endow me with life eternal. He revealed his gracious Feet and enslaved me.**

*--Natchintanai. 100-101.*

### **BEHOLD MY GURU!**

**I beheld him at Nallur, abode of worshippers true;  
Inscrutable words he uttered; unmoved  
I stood, who are you? he chided.  
From that point his Grace did play on me.**

**Into the lighted sanctuary of Grace I soared,**

**Darkness was all I saw and understood naught.  
I heard him whisper that ill-will doth not prevail.  
His meaning was obscure and bewildered I became.**

**At my dazed self, he gazed in gladness fine,  
And raised his voice imperious at Skanda's shrine,  
With a view to dispel my delusive bonds.  
I stood entranced in speechless wonder.**

**To me so rapt, he spoke in accents of Truth  
And chased my fears with benign tenderness.  
'Look! Absolute is Truth and yet who knows it?'  
Thus uttered my peerless Seer so intently.**

**Henceforth my kith and kin, my nearest and dearest,  
E'en parental ties have receded in this wide world.  
The Guru's sublime Grace is my sole prop.  
I soar aloft with none to excel me.**

*--Natchintanai. 160.*

### **THE SHAFT OF LIGHT**

**I arise from the stagnant pool of self-centredness and as the lotus bud unfolds its petals to the rising sun, so too the sight of my Guru at Nallur thrills me with divine consciousness, and life manifests its hidden beauty, power, light and joy.**

**He is my Guru who is the destroyer of my darkness, who turns my gaze from the world of carnal desires and transience, and leads me to behold the Light of wisdom He fixed me firmly in the path of liberation by declaring that He is mySelf.**

**The exalted Guru called by many as the madman of Nallur, did I gaze intently, as he sat at the flight of the chariot steps. He regulated my conduct in life, having reduced my frenzied wants and woes with the sweep of his God Consciousness. Endowed with clarity of vision, he placed me in the midst of the devout servitors, and I saw his true glory at Nallur.**

**He is the cherished treasure of my soul..He is the Guru who consumed my delusions and egoity. He is the consort of Sakti who rained his**

grace on me at Nallur, girt with *Nagalinga* blooms.

In the Supreme Will is a look of grace at me. It manifests in my gracious Guru who came down to save me from life's bewilderment. I saw him at Nallur, 'neath the chariot step.

The Lord Siva with flaming Eye, who danceth in the dense jungle with Kali, manifested in this land as the Jnana-Guru and rescued me. His fragrant tender Feet, I beheld at the foot of the chariot dome at Nallur.

The divinity that eluded the search of the Creator and Protector--Brahma and Vishnu, came down as the gracious Teacher, and liberated me from all inimical forces within and without at illustrious Nallur, at the foot of the chariot spires.

He came of his own will to enlighten the aspirants who relentlessly examine their inner self. The light of Truth did manifest at hallowed Nallur out of boundless grace, and I saw him at the foot of the chariot step from where he conferred on me, the least worthy one, the regal honours.

'There is none other than mySelf' was his mystic dictum. He unravelled its subtle meaning with the gentle tenderness surpassing that of a mother's love. I greeted him at luxuriant Nallur, 'neath the cariot pinnacle.

The Lord came as my Guru to wipe out my oppressive gloom of duality, and chasten my consciousness to behold the One in the many. I propitiate the refuge of his roseate Feet, which he crowned on my head at the refreshing sanctum of Nallur.

*--Natchintanai. 68-69.*

### HIS CODELESS NORMS

'That intrinsic evil there is not  
And absolute is Truth  
Which none can ever comprehend--'  
So saying, he'd remain mute, my little one.

'That It is what it is,

And there is none who can know fully,  
As it is concealed in dissimulation.'  
So uttered the lofty Chellappan, Sinnathangam dear.

He'll be clad in ragged clothes,  
And haunt Kandan's frontal courtyard.  
At those who frequent that resort,  
He'll hurl abuse, my fond one.

'That is so from endless beginning,' he'd say,  
And wander hither and thither.  
'It's all illusive phenomena,' he'd add,  
From his dwelling place at *Theradi*, Sinnathangam dear.

He will not enmesh himself  
In the burrs of caste and creed.  
Neither will he impart knowledge.  
They impute to him eccentric conduct, my fond one.

He doth not adhere himself  
To codes of justice and injustice.  
Neither doth he conform to conventional norms  
But roams at will like a madman, Sinnathangam dear.

You'll not see him with holy ash,  
Nor will he adorn his forehead with a pottu,  
He'll not reiterate what has been said once.  
He's beyond all known attributes, my dear.

'Be of good comfort'--He'd not thus console.  
'Beware of the wiles of ego'--He'd not thus counsel.  
In contradiction would he revel  
And his craziness would be obvious, my dear.

In derogatory language would he, my father  
Look at those who linger in the streets,  
And rebuke them menacingly.  
They note his insanity, Sinnathangam dear.

His gait ever so stately,  
He rambles from place to place  
All those who sight him feel inclined

**To mock and jeer at him, my dear.**

**Those who sing these ten stanzas,  
Nay, those who listen heedfully,  
They shall be enlightened on earth  
And attain the goal of Liberation, my dear.**

*--Natchintanai. 201-202.*

## **THE SONENT AND SILENT VAC**

'**That there can be no intrinsic evil,**' is the Guru's oft repeated dictum. Thy mystic Formulae given by Sage Chellappa Swami affords the key to *Mukti* or liberation from countless Births. By meditating on each of these divinely inspired utterances, Swami assures us that we can realise the eternal Truth.

What nobility breathes in the saying, **We know not--Naamariyom!** Sorrows cannot assail those who ponder on the refreshing maxims of Sage Chellappa Swami. In tones so full of conviction did the Guru proclaim, '*Who knoweth*'? With strange detachment did he disdain the worship of those who approached him. '**It is what it is,**' would be his constant refrain. In these mystic words did he declare the experience of Godhead beyond comprise, absorbed as he was in blissful consciousness.

The Sage's illumined testament that '**Absolute is Truth**'--*Muluthum Unmai*--cannot be expounded but experienced only.

**“Nought is there for us to do, except worship His Holy Feet.”**

We give below the Recollections of the Sage of Arunachala, Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi on a similar experience.

*“Your Grace it was I stumbled at your feet,  
Your love that raised me up and made me yours,  
Chosen to serve, though not for service meet,  
Untutored save by grace that from you pours.  
I too have seen all creatures live and move  
Not of themselves but in Self, all living prove  
That I am nothing and can nothing do;  
So all my duties I have cast on you.*

## BLESSED NALLUR

'There is no fear of birth or death to those  
Who can see the dance of commotion enacted  
By the earthly legions and the God of celestials!  
So spake the Guru who dwelt in delectable Nallur.

The Lord of the inscrutable dance  
Whom neither Brahma nor Vishnu can measure,  
Came down in human form to this beauteous world  
And in comely Nallur made me His own.

The eminence of lineage matters little to him.  
For ever immersed is He in bliss serene.  
The onlookers would scorn him as a madman--  
For thus he played his part in blessed Nallur.

Beloved of the wise, benignly gracious in form  
Like a rock of gems unknown to wayfarers,  
The ignoramus can ne'er gauge his rich bounty.  
He's the Lord of Nallur adored by devout ones.

Disentangled from the bonds of likes and dislikes,  
He cherishes the Holy Feet in remembrance Sweet.  
'There can be no intrinsic evil,' is the maxim  
Of him who came in the form of my Guru.

'Absolute is truth,' is his constant plea,  
Soaring as he does beyond good and evil.  
He sees himself and myself as only One.  
In love did he don his Feet on my head.

Oft he repeats the question, 'who doth know?'  
He's the wisest of the seers, Chellappan his name.  
The world doth not comprehend his madness.  
His abode is the step of the chariot-canopy.

Dark in mien, his hands as pillows,  
He sleeps on earth's bosom in repose.  
His dwelling is the Nallur of verdant plenty,

**Where he passes his days in bliss.**

**'We know not That,' is the precious formula  
That he utters for general well-being.  
Desire, envy and lust can ne'er touch him.  
His name is Chellappan of Nallur hamlet.**

**'Eternal are the decrees,' he'd reiterate,  
Peerless gem, inexplicable to one and all.  
His true nature none can e'er recount  
His cosy abode is the sanctuary of Muruga.**

**In Nallur where the holy and wise meet,  
He rescued me from pangs of birth and death.  
The vigilant One is Challappamurti  
who serves in Kandan's Sanctum at Nallur.**

*--Natchintanai. 188-189.*

### **THE PEALS OF NALLUR.**

Swami was in one of his jubilant moods, and as we entered the hermitage, we heard him sing the entrancing song on the Animator of Nallur. The flower offerings and prostrations over, we sat down; He repeated the refrain changing the gender of the subject of the address in the song, to that of the feminine counterpart of Murugan:

He averred that the *Cosmic Dancer at Thillai*-- mingled imperceptibly with the *Dancer at Nallur*--and played on the euphony of *Thillai and Nallai*. The lilt, the terminal resonance of '*adi*', so endearing yet so commanding, the joyful exuberance of the song reverberated in and around the Ashram as Swami sang. All who were gathered round his holy Presence that morning enjoyed the mighty music on the *Animator of Nallur*. The bells of Murugan's sanctum pealed their vibrant chimes of *Aum Aum* in response:

**'Oh lively Mover at Nallur! Conjure a miracle (in me)  
Not to perceive day or night, nor this or that;  
Not even to discern the word and its meaning.  
Bless me with quietude and bliss infinite,  
That I enjoy the felicity of sweet speech.  
Shatter the bow and strike the drum of victory.**

**Bestow thy grace and soften my stony heart.  
Transpose the scale from negative to the positive.  
The perfection of Truth proclaimed by the Seer  
Eludes transcription. Protect Thou me, Oh Love!  
All who invoke these ten lines shall attain  
Liberation--Truth reigns Supreme.**

*--Natchintanai. 231.*

When the choral singing was over, Swami looked at Thiru who was massaging his legs, and bade him sing the sequel to this melody from St. Tayumanavar: With closed eyes and cooped hands, he sang the Ode on Bliss Supreme:

### **Oh Bliss Supreme**

Clearing the woods of ignorance dense,  
Breaking the rock of self, preparing well  
The open field of mind and sowing too  
The seeds of Peace unknown in Heav'n or earth,  
They watered it with Love till it grew.  
They guarded it from rav'nous Maya's reach;  
Thus did the Lovers Thine enjoy the crop  
Of blessed Life, *and ever upon Thy Grace*  
*The burden rests to show Thyself to me*  
*And make me Thine and fill my heart's desire.*  
Oh Thou Transcendent Form that is revealed  
In Space Supreme that passes all our wit!  
Oh Bliss Supreme that fills embracing all  
The globes near us and systems far away!

*--St. Tayumanavar. VI.*

### **THE MIGHTY SEER OF THERADI**

**In the void of Nallur he doth dance,  
Our Gurunathan, the ever resplendent One.  
He who sees everyone in himSelf,  
He tolerates not deviation from norms.**

**'Intrinsic evil there is not', is his refrain,  
Praise or blame he sees in point of oneness.**

**Chellappah is his auspicious name,  
Who bears a stately gait and gleaming smile.**

**“Who knows,” is his constant comment,  
Majestically doth he recline on the *Theradi*.  
His stature as a mighty Seer no one can gauge,  
A madman he, is the verdict of the world.**

*--Natchintanai. 132.*

### **IN THY FOOTPRINTS**

**“Will I ever forget my beloved Gurunathan  
Will I not melt in Love, recalling the testament of my Guru?  
To give alms and more alms in a sincere spirit of charity is a  
means of atoning one's many afflictions. His fragrant feet are  
our best protecting armour.**

**Thy sheltering hands embracing thy true devotees in oneness  
of love, how shall I praise? Praise the valiant Vel of Nallur in  
sea kist Lanka. In the sancturary of *Arumugan*, my Guru  
appeared to me as God divine. From this perennial fountain  
flows the bliss of wisdom.**

**My Guru endearing and more dear than a Mother, made me  
melt like wax in the majestic, universal vision of the Oneness  
of God; in his equable and tranquil form, I saw the essence of  
truth: His words made me realise that all things mean  
intensely and mean well and that ill-will, enmity, and  
disharmony have no place in his experience.**

*--Natchintanai. 155-156*

### **MY SOLE TREASURE**

**“The perfection of the whole, and the truth of the One Supreme  
Power, I saw embodied in my Guru Chellappan.**

**By his gracious look, I became enlightened.**

**My ego crumbled at his Feet, and the remembrance of his precious  
words (Upadesh), and the yearning devotion that surged within, made  
me a new being. His light of grace made me see myself in Him and  
Himself in myself.**

**“In Chellappan my Father, I saw the equation of the weal and woe of life and his utterance that intrinsically there is no evil, overpowered me completely.**

**I beheld in him the essence of the utterance that all is Truth Absolute, and became subjugated. Oh frail Mind, ignore the round of birth and death and ponder in constant remembrance.**

**My heart was transfixed in the pivot of the Real, as he addressed me on the accomplished Will of the Eternal. Alas, the clouds of delusion and other barriers cleared, I became absorbed in the folds of his motherly love.**

**He who was free from desire gazed at me smilingly and declared that 'we know not.' In sweet content I reflected on the roseate Feet as my refuge.**

**In amusement would this wise seer muse frequently that no one knows. Some judged him as a madman and some would praise him, but he remained composed.**

**Who can hold commerce with him who is immersed in bliss unending--He whom the Vedas nor the gods can scan, not even the noblest of sages.**

**He who transcends all desires cannot be known by those who are steeped in wordly joys. Can the translucent moon be hidden by the glow worm? Give up lustful attachments instantaneously.**

**Here are the stately spires of the beauteous temple that attracts men and women who worship with intense zeal. Devout singers throng here daily to sing and pray.**

**I knew not the “eight and two” of the sacred doctrine. Yet the vivacious Chellappan of Nallur asserted that he and I were one, and ignited the flame of love exceeding that of a mother.**

**He spoke without speech that there was no beginning and no**

end, at Nallur noted for its just piety. In these sacred precincts, he made me his own, his very own and liberated me. He is my treasured wealth, as tender as a dearly loved mother.”

--*Natchintanai. 156-158*

## SING CUCKOO

### KOOVU KUYILE

“Sing cuckoo, fly aloft and sing in praise  
Of Him who is the heart-beat of his loving votaries.

Fly cuckoo, fly in steadfast faith and sing  
That we are Sivam, oh mellifluous cuckoo.

Sing cuckoo that in eternity is no first and last,  
And immeasurable It is, sing cuckoo.

Oh cuckoo, sing of the way of uprightness  
And of our immortality, sing cuckoo dear.

There is neither name nor form, sing cuckoo  
That ill-will there is not, sing cuckoo.

Sing that no one hath ever known, oh cuckoo  
And that there is neither in nor out.

Sing that we are not the five elements  
And the five sensations we are not, sing cuckoo.

Sing that we are the *anma*, oh cuckoo  
And let thy voice be heard everywhere.

Fly cuckoo in mirthful glee and sing  
That there is no birth nor death.

Raise the melody that we are what we are  
And that we lack nothin, sing cuckoo.

Sing cuckoo that the sinister deeds shall flee  
And that good and evil shall balanced be, sing.

**Oh cuckoo dear, fly to the sanctuary of Nalluran  
And sing of our fealty as bondsmen true.**

*--Natchintanai. 171.*

# SARVAM GURUMAYAM

## THY GRACE ENLIGHTENS

SWAMI's Testament of Truth veritably is the testimony on his GURU.

**“He is the Sat-Guru, who is Self-luminous.  
He is beyond the plane of objective consciousness.”**

--227--

**“It is the Guru's grace, his infinite grace, his ineffable, perennial fount of grace, that alone can endow man with a deep insight into the soul of things.”**

**“He illumines everyone to see by the light of grace radiating within each being. His rays also lighten the universe which is constructed of the five elemental powers. Who can see if he Luminous One wills it not?”**

--Natchintanai. 180

**“By the grace of my Teacher, subdued is my Ego.  
By the grace of my Teacher, exhilarated is my self.  
By the grace of my Teacher, intensified is my Love.  
The grace of my Teacher betokens his veiling Power.”**

--Natchintanai. 186.

In the cantos on *Grace*, Swami unravels by stages the immense potency of the veiling power of Grace.

**“I see Him and yet I see Him not,  
This is the annunciation of our Guru,  
That wheresoever thou art, there I am--Siva, Siva.”**

--209--

**“By the grace of my Guru was overthrown my pride.  
By the grace of my Guru, showers of grace were mine.  
By the grace of my Guru, bliss infinite was mine.  
By His grace myself and Guru commingled as One.”**

--Natchintanai. 243.

## THE OMNIPOTENT MAHAVAAKIAM

'Detach, and in attachment, see detachment,  
Espouse righteous living with awareness, my dear  
Thou art myself'--Thus spoke he.  
"No intrinsic evil is there," so said he,  
'And Truth is Absolute,' he added my dear.  
Yet he behaved like a dumbman, dear.  
'Accomplished is His Will--there's neither before nor after.'  
Like thunder, he echoed these words, my dear  
What more can I speak, my dear.  
'That is: Who doth know?' so said he.  
No parallel to him can I conceive, my dear.  
Dazed and motionless I become, my dear.  
'We know not,' declared the wise teacher.  
A wholesome life bequeathed he, my dear  
Fled are all the unrighteous acts, my dear.  
In oneness did I see the universe in and out.  
Yet I see not that which seeth so, my dear.  
The link of causation too hath vanished, my dear.  
Dweller at Nallur my dear, known by the holy name  
Chellappan, so they called him, my dear.  
His abode is the canopy of the chariot.  
The devotees who adore him are selfless folks,  
Who do not see the merging of day into night,

**They claim his Feet as their sole refuge, my dear.**

*--Natchintanai. 165.*

### **MOTHER MINE**

**Oh mother mine, he came on earth in human form.**

**He whom Brama and Vishnu fail to percieve.**

**He assuaged my griefs and gave me his vision.**

**I was an ignoramus to whom he gave eminent status, and**

**assured me of the innate goodness of heaven and earth.**

**Sivayanama was the mantra He gave me to alleviate my distress**

**He bade me give up prejudices and predilections, and endowed**

**me with discrimination to apprehend Truth.**

**His great saying that *we know not*, became meaningful to me**

**by his grace, when He and I in non-dual communion experienced bliss.**

***Who knows* was his oft-quoted declaration, and yet to the**

**pious lovers, he revealed the Truth of the ultimate Reality.**

**He and I are inseparable, though infinitely great is his transcendence--**

**And my glamour for this world vanished at the vigorous life he gave me  
by the spell of his word--**

**All bespeak his glory. His form I see everywhere;**

**His will moves everything here. If every phenomom is his**

**form in the world, and everywhere we see his form, then there**

**can be no ill-will, no blemish anywhere. Is that not so mother**

**mine?**

*--Natchintanai. 52-53.*

## SARVA JNANI, MY JNANA-GURU

“Have you known my Jnana Guru? He is my beloved who has given me the support of the Mulamantra AUM, and in compassion he has taken his place in my heart.”

--*Natchintanai. 54.*

He would wander in the precincts of Nallur with a cheerful countenance, but to no house would he frequent for his meals; he disliked hypocrisy. Dark in complexion, austere in habits and clad in simple attire, he was able to eradicate my vices,

What wonder!

In renunciation, he was exemplary: his heart overwhelmed with the love of God, ever refulgent and immaculately pure, he enslaved me at Nallur. He slumbered after midnight and he

would keep away the idle and curious folks by spurious outbursts. But he was forbearing with me, though he would often test me. He set me on the right path. It is to *Be still--Summa Iru--*

Always he would speak within himself, for so indrawn was he, and yet he did grant the blessing of a good life to those who sought him sincerely. He is enshrined in the temple of my heart.

He disliked pomp and show and would repel those who feigned to worship him; Ah! He enticed me to follow his will.

He attracted me and yet would glower at me, when I drew nigh unto him. He was averse to the display of any kind of supernatural powers. Yet irresistible was his impact on me!

No apparent contact whatsoever did he vouchsafe with his devotees, and yet he exerted such wondrous control over them.

Amazement was not in his code, and hence stupefied mortals

could not have access to him. He led his own true devotees  
through bewilderment to the path of wisdom.

He is the Jnana Guru.

*--Natchintanai. 53-54.*

## HAIL OMNIFORM LIGHT OF HIS FEET

“Salutation to the Holy Feet of my SatGuru!  
He enlightened me with supra-mental conciousness,  
Beyond the avenues of sense experiences.  
He initiated me to know my inner self.  
Look inward and realise, was his benediction.  
He showered greater love than that of a mother,  
And I consecrated my all at his Feet.  
Salutation to the beauteous Feet of Grace!

He was Life of my life, Essence of Self in self.  
He granted me the beautitude of a goodly life.  
He placed his Feet on my head and protected me.  
Away with spurious doubts! Such grace was mine!  
He illumined me with one word *Aum*.  
I understood the world and myself.  
He gave me the experience of Oneness.  
He was all pervasive like the letter A  
Salutation to the feet so fragrant.

Thus did he save me from a life of allurements,  
He who was beyond the reach of the See-ers,  
He came like me in human form.  
And enticed me by love supernal,  
I learnt to walk with him on the right path.  
Hail omniform light of Nallur that captivated me!  
Salutation to the Holy Feet of my Guru!  
“Shed all your supporting ties and bonds,” so saying  
My benevolent Guru vouchsafed such grace.  
His Blessed Feet Hail. All Hail.

*--Natchintanai. 55-57.*

## THE ROSARY--In Remembrance

It is by inconspicuous and homely sayings that our Guru directed one and all to follow the path leading to the vision of the ultimate Reality. Self restraint, aspiration for the true knowledge, love and harmonious living are the commendable virtues which must be cultivated and offered unto his Feet.

Swami presents us with a rosary for meditation, which is made up of the beads of innate yearning to desire the desireless One. The moving finger rolls the beads as we reflect silently.

**“In remembrance of the name Siva--the Letters Five.**

**In remembrance to serve the servitors of Siva**

**In remembrance to walk in the path of the virtuous**

**In remembrance to cherish the love of father, mother and kin.**

**In remembrance to celebrate the fifth anniversary**

**In remembrance to give whatever I can.**

**In remembrance to make flower garlands.**

**In remembrance to greet the incoming Sivathondan.**

**In remembrance to curb the wayward mind,**

**In remembrance to worship the Guru's Feet**

**In remembrance to keep off from sinful acts,**

**In remembrance to love one and love all.**

**In remembrance to be moderate in food**

**In remembrance to take pains to gain wisdom**

**In remembrance to acquire while young, the arts**

**In remembrance to give up the friendship of the misers.**

**In remembrance to foster goodwill among relations,**

**In remembrance to rejoice in sweet content**

**In remembrance to help the kith and kin,**

**In remembrance to live without deceit.**

**In remembrance to efface the ego and live in self,**

**In remembrance to guard against doubts**

**In remembrance to glorify the Guru always**

**In remembrance to refute the reproach of madness**

**We supplicate, we implore.**

*--Natchintanai. 58-59.*

**SIVAM SPEAKS**

Speak oh sivam, speak the mantra  
Leading to the path of blessedness--  
That enmity can be vanquished,  
That there is no'other,' speak oh sivam.  
That the sway of time and duration is no more.  
That love is sivam, speak oh sivam--  
In dulcet melting poesy, speak oh sivam  
That the body is the temple, speak oh sivam.  
Speak oh sivam the mantra of *Aham Brahmasmi*  
That shall lead to liberation.  
That his beneficence extends to all alike.  
That all art Sivam's Will, speak oh sivam.  
Speak sivam that ill-will there's not.  
We are bondsmen, so old and yet so new.  
Oh sivam, speak of the virtue of nonviolence,  
That unabashed you move about amidst all.  
And enjoy the galaxy of the faithful.  
Speak that we are all-embracing, oh sivam.  
That we rejoice in being free, speak sivam,  
That Truth is absolute, speak sivam  
That He's the refuge of the weak and untutored.  
May the mind be chastened by the Will Supreme.

--*Natchintanai*. 65.

## THE PLEDGE

**Why sorrow oh Man? Reflect.**  
**Be still and in love learn to live.**  
**Take thy pledge of consecration**  
**That he is All-in-All and**  
**That All is His Will, His Will.**  
**If in His light of Wisdom**  
**You mingle your discernment,**  
**He who dons the crescent**  
**Shall save thee from Death**  
**Why fear when thou knowest**  
**The fate of Yama against Markandar?**  
**Can fear overtake those who keep**  
**Off the track of the elemental self?**  
**Is there any gain in prestige or friendship?**  
**Who cares for such measure of worth?**  
**What matters where the sun shines?**  
**Such assertion of consecration leads to felicity.**  
**Thou art beyond the ken of weal and woe.**  
**Thou art the embodiment of purity.**  
**Invoke with the symphony of love**  
**The adoration of the Lord morn and eve.**  
**Do good to all and praise the Lord.**  
**Wander not outside and rue not o'er past,**  
**Forget not righteousness but ponder on**

**The sublimity of the Guru who made thee  
His own, and get beyond the mind.  
The timeless now shall thou realise.**

*--Natchintanai. 61-62.*

## **JNANA-NERI--THE WAY TO WISDOM**

**In the sacred Nallur, the way to wisdom  
He pointed out, Chellappar by name.  
'There cannot be any evil,' he said,  
And the truth dawned on my perception.  
I saw all visable objects as fleeting,  
And in that sight, faded all shades of falsehood.  
He bade me cherish noble thoughts,  
And shun ignoble pursuits by discernment.  
Support of intellect, and sovereignty o'er earth,  
The All-knower shall bestow by His Grace  
He shall assuage the grief of devotees true  
Who learn to worship with fragrant flowers.  
So shall devotees attain and realise,  
Bide by the spoken word and experience joy.  
In pursuit of transient gains they wander not,  
But with steadfast faith shall rejoice in Truth.  
The delights of lust and wrath shall dwindle  
In the illumined mind shall recede all evils.  
Ponder at dawn and dusk on who doth know,**

**Then shall wisdom lighten your path,  
Those in whose hearts abide the revealing truth,  
That there's nothing before or after but Brahman,  
They shall enjoy peace, forbearance and kindness,  
And attain liberation--'Tis certain.**

*--Natchintanai. 325.*

## **IN THE SHADE OF THY UMBRELLA**

The Guru of Swami was essentially unique in his deportment and the mode of instruction. He could not be classified into any of the category of Gurus celebrated in the Saiva hagiology. Swami exalted his devotion to Sage Chellappa Swami to the highest pitch of excellence, and sang in praise of his Grace in liberating him from the thralldom of servitude to the tempting delights of the world.

Chellappa Swami, the towering Guru of Swami did not acclaim himself as a Guru, and did not permit others also to applaud him as a Guru. He often chided those who sought him in his haunts at Nallur.

In Swami's *Natchintanai* Odes, there are many references to his Guru's imperative commands, and his rebukes at the fervour of those who followed him in his wanderings as a mendicant.

Swami was one of the very few devotees who faithfully followed in the Master's foot prints. He submitted himself wholly at the Feet of the Guru, in spite of all the rebukes and rebuffs he received from him who was the wisest seer, and who deluded even the most learned and earnest aspirants. His eccentricities earned him the name of a madman.

**“A mystery he was to one and all,  
And adoration of none would he tolerate.”**

*--278--*

Swami hailed the hallowed Feet of his Guru as his precious protection.

## **THE AROMA OF HIS FEET**

**'There's no intrinsic evil,' was his greeting  
As he turned his loving gaze on me.**

His grace was my initiation,  
His priceless Feet, my shield.  
'Who ever doth know,' was his refrain,  
Which precious formula he gave me.  
Endowed with exquisite wisdom is he  
Whose benevolent Feet are my shield.  
'All's Truth,' was his refrain,  
That he beamed at me with radiant face.  
And unfailing was the spell of him,  
Whose lotus Feet are my shield.  
'The perceptible universe, this Cosmos  
Reflects the Form of Paraman'.  
So spake the Beauteous One  
Whose bejewelled Feet afford me protection.  
'Bethink the body as a temple of God,  
And do thou so contemplate--'  
Thus he addressed me in accents of love.  
His flawless Feet, my protection aught.  
'Birth and death revolve round  
The wheel of attachment--So give up  
Earthly ties,' was his admonition.  
His divine Feet are my amulet.

*--Natchintani. 328.*

**SLUMBER SWEETLY MY GURU**

In some beautiful, most exquisite lullaby songs, Swami rocks the divine babe, the Guru who resides in the core of his heart to slumber sweetly. His plaintive strains recalling how all his imperfections and limitations have been so completely swept off by the grace of his Guru, move us to a region beyond the vale of tears. Swami avows the pledge of *eternal servitude* at the Feet of his redeemer Guru, the divine Child of Truth, who purged him of all falsehood and I-ness, and made him spotlessly pure inside and out. “*Rock Thou my babe, so immaculate and peeless.*” When sung in *Neelampari raga*, these songs have power to melt even stony hearts:

## **GURUVE NEE KANVALARAI**

**“My lord who bequeathes the wealth of bliss  
To his loved votaries, slumber sweetly.**

**Thou who art the ocean of felicity to those  
Who see thee in their inner core, slumber sweetly.**

**Thou who showeth such benign grace at Nallur  
Yet shuns the homes of those who give not, slumber sweetly.**

**Oh unique one, essence of mercy who pours  
Ineffable grace that dispels sorrows, slumber sweetly.**

**Thou my mother, thou my father and Guru,  
Thou who showeth the path of virtue, slumber sweetly.**

*--Natchintanai. 127.*

**That I may not be born again, my jewel of Truth**

**Who saved me from anguish, slumber sweetly.**

**Oh Radiance that illumines my sight, making me**

**Bashful to own that you and I are one, slumber sweetly.**

**Oh Thou Chellappan who endowed me with grace**

**To be near and far for my daily food, slumber sweetly.**

**Who can know thee, oh priceless Guru-Gem**

**Of immeasurable height? slumber sweetly.**

**As I rock thee to sleep in the cradle of my heart,**

**No other God will I ever dream, my beloved.**

*--Natchintanai. 196-197.*

**Thou wealth of joy who sheds lustre in Lanka,**

**The Lord with the beauteous crescent, slumber sweetly.**

**Thou essence of Truth that eludes the Vedas**

**Thou with a thousand names, slumber sweetly.**

**Quintessence of thought and delight of my eyes,**

**Thou scintillating effulgence, Ninmala, slumber sweetly.**

**Thou my treasure inestimable, Thou my child, my ancient one,**

**Thou my king, my Guru, my lord, slumber sweetly.**

**My father who consumed the anguish of thy bondsman**

**With the purificatory deluge of grace, slumber sweetly.**

*--Natchintanai. 282-283.*

## **HAIL NAMASIVAYA!**

So overpowering is his unimpeachable faith in the glory of His Name, that Swami invokes this Litany on Namasivaya and infuses it with the power of the Supreme Siva.

**“Thou who art non-pareil,  
The consort of UmaDevi,  
Whose temple is thy devotee's heart.  
Hail Namasivaya.**

**'Ye art not the body', said he  
And gave me strength divine  
To purge me of my fearful bonds,  
Oh Primal One, Namasivaya**

**That Tattvas ninety six are unreal,  
I realised through thy grace,  
And transcended their barriers,  
Oh Siva, Namasivaya.**

**To those who have crossed  
The six centres of consciousness,  
Thou did'st grant thy Lotus Feet  
Thou great God, Namasivaya**

**In the void of silence, that I may  
Attain peace thou willeth.  
Thou source of Vedas and God of Devas,  
Thou sovereign ruler, Namasivaya.**

**Thou pursued me that I may turn to thee,  
Thy beauteous form I saw,  
In rapt synthesis I was thine for ever,  
Oh Source of Grace and Power! Namasivaya.**

**Those who behold the sight  
Of thy dance with raised legs-  
Will they perish in this world  
Full of toils? Namasivaya.**

**Art thou not the support  
Of those who seek thee  
In the temple of the body?  
Oh Sankara, Namasivaya.”**

*--Natchintanai. 297-298.*

## **CROSSING THE BRIDGE**

Truly all these songs tug at our heart strings. We hear the call of Swami to serve in absolute submission, not merely by a series of humble acts and selfless service, but by a perpetual state of Being, enhanced by tranquil silence, and in enjoyment of an unbroken, inward peace and perfect quiescence. He signifies his Guru as *Effulgence--Justice---Beginningless--*who bestowed on him *His gracious Feet--*343.

*“I am He whom I love and  
He is I whom He loves.*

*--179.*

*I knew mySelf and  
ThySelf I became.”*

--343.

“The transcendental Pure One came as a Guru in order to make me His own. I became His target.”

--343.

Swami's delineation of his Guru in melodious songs live for ever in our memory. He gives vivid details of Chellappa Swami's plain living and superbly noble outlook. He cooked his only rice meal for the day, and tasted it with one curry. He did not learn the arts and sciences nor the sacred books, but his wisdom transcended the wisdom of the Vedas. He did not have any external insignia of the ascetics. He did not resort to ochre robes or don holy ash.

*“He won me by love and compassion, and verily 'He is*

*Sivam, who burnt the triple cities of Tiripura.”*

--346.

He would repose at *Theradi*; he was buoyant and lively at one time and at another time, he would fret and fume in fiery wrath. None could decipher his ways, nor his great utterances. Some called him mad; some said he was possessed with evil spirit; and some acclaimed him a mystery man who worked miracles.

If anyone approached him with fervent love and with offerings meet, he was sure to rave at them furiously. He would feign and howl like a fox and wag like a dog and behave so madly that none would dream of calling him an eminent man--yet pre-eminent was he to Swami!

Like St. Tayumanavar declaring, Sage Chellappar too acclaimed that in the cosmic consciousness, there was no duality--“There was no first or second person.”

**“His greatest token of grace was to bestow on me  
This experience of Himself in Myself,  
Who can gauge his height of wisdom?”**

*--Natchintanai. 347.*

**Unto His majesty, I became a slave--347.**

**He indeed is the wisest of the wise who made me his own--None can ever discern him. He is Honey trickling within each one of us.**

**His oft repeated behest was to know the Self abiding in the self, for that was the**

**highest goal of human birth. It was the summum bonum of noble souls.**

**There is nothing in the world comparable to the excellence of devotion to the Guru. It enables man to follow the path of Dharma. It bestows the greatest solace to man, and points the way to make life ennobling. “Blessed are the worshipful devotees, for theirs is the refreshing Feet of the Lord.”**

Greater Love hath no man except that of a Guru. His pathway will open up unexplored avenues of high import in life, and 'the Lord's name will be a never failing and ever sustaining companion.'--149. In the kingdom of Siva, there reigns love serene, and so there cannot be any kind of ill-will, enmity or discord. Truth absolute and the aroma of Goodness shall pervade. Swami experienced the boon of grace, and the faithful chanting of Siva's name was the most rewarding of his Guru's benedictions:

**“ Pursue the path of grace  
And chant Sivayanama.”**

**“When you are on the right path and know the Supreme Self within your inner self, then you will experience the state of calmness, forbearance and tranquility” :**

**“The greatest benefactor to your own self is yourself: Your steadfast and single minded devotion alone can be your sure guide to know the Real Self within you. Discard all ideas of separation and distinctions and desires. Sing His name and strengthen your devotion to your Guru. That is your invincible shield” :**

**“This is the inexpressible verdict, validated by the profundity of the Vedas and the line of Seers.**

**If one contemplates with sincere devotion on the words of the Guru, then is he in sight of liberation, while still in human form” :**

**“It will lead you to the kindly light of Sivam, and take you by the entrancing path of exalted spirituality ;**

**“It will feed you with nectar divine, and crown you with the diadem of Aham Brahmasmi--'I realise God within me.' Sage Chellappar inferred that ParaBrahmam cannot be discerned by mortals. It is transcendent--'No one knows'. Who ever knows? “**

Swami refers to this query '*who can know you*'--in relation to his Guru, and ascribes an indefinable stature to Chellappa Swami. He avows that he can only be known by the avenue of Love, he who is beyond reach of finite comprehension.

**“The luminosity of His Grace can disclose many mysterious secrets and in the**

**commingling love, one would feel bashful to speak of yourself and myself as two distinct beings”:**

**'I am wherever you are,'**--so said our Gurunathan: and we pondered on this saying in the hours of meditation that wherever we are, Gurunathan will always be with us. St. Manicavacagar, in the highest transport of ecstasy sang the gem of Tiruvacagam, on the all pervading glory of the universal One, who eludes all analysis, and uttered the same great Mahavaakiam of Sage Chellapa Swami to our Siva-Guru-- "*Who knows? Who can fathom Thy greatness? Yet art Thou the Essence in all*"

Reminiscences of his Guru would invariably be recounted on the day of the car festival at Nallur; and when Gurunathan bade us sing one memorable evening, after we returned from this festival at the Nallur Murugan temple, we sang this song from *The Temple Lyric* from *Tiruvacagam* :

This day in mercy unto me, my darkness dispelled,

Thou filleth my heart as yonder morning Sun.

Thy mode of rising I comprehend not by thought.

There being naught else but Thou, atom by atom

All things great and small change and merge

Into thy Oneness, Siva, dweller in the holy Shrine.

Tho' Thou art not in this and that, yet art Thou

The essence in all--*who, oh who can know Thee?*

--22.7.

This was followed by the *Natchintanai* song on *Devotion to the Guru*, when all the devotees who were present joined in the chorus:

**“Guru Bhaktiye Perum Peru  
Kondadi Kondadi aaru.”**

--149

## **GURU-BHAKTI**

**Bliss infinite flows from devotion to the Guru**

**Rejoice therein for solace true.**  
**Climb up the path of righteousness**  
**And utter, Oh Sankara--Siva.**  
**Rest assured that there is no evil**  
**And repeat that Truth is all and all.**  
**Follow the way of divine grace,**  
**And chant the incantation of Sivayanama.**  
**If ye know yourself by yourSelf,**  
**Inborn peace will sparkle in you.**  
**Realise that you are your own guide**  
**And diminish the range of distinctions.**  
**Beware to subdue thy triple desires,**  
**Without reconciling them to past Karma.**

*--Natchintanai. 149.*

We found ourselves immersed in the awareness of our Gurunathan's silent communion with the Eternal wisdom--Bliss in gracious sport! The melody of this song on *GuruBhakti* with its peculiar cadence of undifferentiated plenum, awakened the recollection of the canzone of St. Tayumanavar, who too posed the baffling question--

“What wonder ! Who can Thy glory scan?”

*“Some faiths call Thee 'O Mother, Mother mine!"*  
*Some cry aloud 'O Father, Father, hail!"*  
*Some others still devoid of faith in aught,*  
*Beyond the grave do rant and rave in vain,*  
*Holding to this and that. Some still hail Thee,*  
*The Ineffable Light, the Boundless Space,*  
*The Primal Word, the Goal and yet besides,*  
*The Peerless Monad and the Triune Time.*  
*Thou art all these and yet beyond them all,*  
*Eternal Wisdom--Bliss in Gracious sport!*  
*What wonder! Oh who can thy glory scan?*

*Oh Soul of souls on earth and other worlds!  
Oh Thou, the All-pervading Essence True!”*

--10. 2.

In these imperceptible ways did our Gurunathan make explicable, the inexplicable glory of his undaunted Teacher, and ParamaGuru Sage Chellapa Swami, who taught him the Goal of Truth-Realisation.

## GURU JNANAM

*“The Primal One enlightens the soul as a Guru.”*

The Eighth sutra of the *SivaJnana Botham* deals with the significance of the *GURU* in the life of an individual, who has set himself on the path of self-realisation leading to God-realisation.

A virtuous life with a knowledge of Truth is absolutely essential to tread the path, and every seeker must espouse *tapas* in order to realise his inner self. Then the Lord shall grant him enlightenment through the Guru who is none other than His Grace. As long as man is under the influence of the worldly avenues of enjoyment, he will not realise his own true self. He must give up worldly attachments, and the advent of the Guru into his life will be the factor of saving grace which shall lead him to the haven of Truth, in the light of self-realisation.

Let us consider Sutra Eight of the *SivaJnana Botham*: “The Lord shall appear as Guru to the *anma* who has advanced in the paths of virtuous conduct, action and concentration (*tapas*), and has gone through the paths in the Way of Salvation as *Sariyai*, *Kriyai* and *Yoga* in previous births. He shall develop *knowledge* and *bhakti*; and God who is Love appears as Guru and imparts true knowledge (*Jnanam*). He will instruct him that he has wasted his opportunity in life, by living in the midst of alien savages, and recall his heritage and true nature. Then understanding its true self and purpose, shall the *anma* abandon its association with the ignorant forces, *asat*, and not being different from *Him*, becomes united unto His Feet--The Feet of *Sat*.”

The *anma* will join its *Jnana Guru* when by its virtuous life, the good and bad karma become perfectly balanced. The true role of the *SatGuru* is defined in this verse of *SivaJnana Botham*. It is established according to Saiva Siddhanta that the Lord *Siva* appears as Guru, and will teach the *anma* that He is not separate from it, and that he shines in the light of the *anma*. He who cannot be known by even the gods, can only be perceived by the *anma* who is mature enough to receive the word of God, when He appears in the form of the *Divine Guru*.

When the *anma* is in union with the five senses, it does not see itself as it truly is. It can

only see through the prism of the senses. But with the aid of the Guru, the *anma* reflects on the material enjoyments as fleeting and subject to decay, dualism and distress, and understands the Truth of God who is *Sat*. He becomes the servant of God. Let man contemplate on Him who is never separate from him.

This key verse in *SivaJnana Botham* illustrates the true significance of a Guru. It enunciates that the moral (*Sariyai*), ritual (*Kriyai*), and *Yoga* practices are preparatory steps of an individual, but these cannot lead him to the knowledge of Truth. It is impossible to obtain *Jnanam* except by the touch of the Guru who is none other than God. By intense devotion and love, it is easy to attract God to oneself as the Guru.

*“The ignorant think that God and Love are different.  
None thinks that God and Love are the same.  
When one knows that God and Love are identical,  
He will repose in God as Love.”*

*--Tirumantram. 270.*

“The human soul is compared to the son of a king stolen by savages at his birth, and he cannot understand his identity, until so informed and taken back by the king, his father. The soul in its pristine purity can only be recovered by the touch of the Divine Guru. The freed soul does not become co-extensive with God. It becomes imbedded in It, as the lamp loses itself completely in the zenith of the noon-day light and remains still quiet.”

*--Siva Jnana Botham--*

*Tr. J. M. Nallasamy.--89.*

It is true that even after the *Sat Guru Dharsana*--the touch of the divine Guru--the initiated devotee does not become free from infirmities and the effects of past deeds which are so firmly rooted in man. During this interval, the soul that has felt the impact of the Guru is enjoined to contemplate on God; and this is what *Natchintanai* proclaims from the first to the last as its *Upadesh Perennis*. This truth is enunciated in the ninth and tenth sutras of the *SivaJnana Botham*.

*Sutra IX.* “The *anma* perceives its true nature with the eye of knowledge and sees *God as Truth Divine*, and the world as evanescent as a mirage, and finds its rest in the Lord. It then contemplates ceaselessly on the *Holy name of Five Letters* according to the injunction of the Law.”

This is the *sadhana* of contemplation of *Sri Panchakshara*, the esoteric worship of *Dhyana Neri* or *Siva Dhyanam*. The principle is what is called '*soham bavana*.' *Sa* means *It* or *Brahmam*, and *Aham* means *I* or *me*, denoting *anma*. *Sivoham* is its equivalent and it implies “*Siva in me and myself or I am Siva*,” and intended for practice and to be taught by

the Guru to the initiate.

It is only a means to the goal of liberation.

The *anma* practicing '*Soham bavana*' should not equate itself with God. This practice of the *Jnani* is only a symbolic worship or *Bavana*, and should be confined to its proper scope. What was before non-apparent and hidden in himself becomes apparent. In the stage of the world--*Petha Nilai*--*Sivam* is within and non-apparent, while the *anma* is apparent and assertive. In the liberated stage--*Mukti Nilai*, the *anma* goes down and becomes non-apparent, and *Sivam* becomes apparent and Supreme.

*Sutra X*. "As the Lord becomes one with the *anma* in its life on earth in the human form, so let the *anma* become one with Him and perceive all its actions to be His. Then will it be free from all evil ties of *Pasam*--objective consciousness."

This verse deals with the way to destroy the bondage that ties down the *anma*. It should become one with God, as He has become one with *anma*. When this happens, it joins His Feet by losing its pride and ego-self, and accedes at all times that all actions are His actions, as it will act only with His grace; and then the Lord reveals His Real Self to it. If the *anma* attributes every work to Him, then it will not be affected by the *triple-malas*. God transforms His devotees into His own Form, and those who do not seek His refuge will be made to eat the fruits of their own Karma. These two functions, He performs according to the deserts of each.

'*Mukti*' means freed or freedom. When the *anma* attains *Mukti*, it is freed from ignorance or *pasam* and attains *Pathijnanam* or the knowledge of the Lord. The very act of breaking away from the attachments to the world unites the *anma* to the *Pathi*--"Let go the rope of *pasam* on which you swing, and reach the support of God," are the words of Swami.

The *anma* is freed of *pasam* by becoming one with God, and by considering all its actions as those of the Lord. To become one with God means attaining *advaitic* relation.

What is this *advaitic* relation? The *anma* becomes one with God in *Mukti*, as God is one with the soul in its bondage state in the world.

The relation of the *anma* and God in the *bandha* condition is that the *anma* exists and God is non-apparent. In *Mukti*, God exists and the *anma* is non-apparent. Yet in either state, God and the *anma* are existent.

In the *bandha* state, the *anma* perceives the three distinct states of knower, known and knowledge, and the differentiation is a hindrance to attain *Mukti*. So in the *advaitic* relationship of the *anma* becoming one with God, *mukti* is attained. The *anma* is therefore enjoined to consider its actions as those of the Lord. These injunctions are for the *Jnani* who attains *Mukti* even in this life. The *anma* has lost its ego-hood, *ahankara* or *Anavam*,

and this is the source of all evil, all karma and successive births. *Olluvilodukkam* says that *Veedu* or *Mukti* means freedom of a Free Being. The Lord appears as SatGuru, the victor of the savages (senses) and teaches the seeker to infer the truth of *Pathi*, *Pasu* and *Pasam*-God, soul and Bonds.

*Sutra XI.* As the *anma* enables the eye to see and itself sees, so Siva enables the *anma* to know and itself knows. And this *advaita* knowledge and undying love will unite it to His Feet.

How does the *anma* unite to the Feet of the Lord?

*Siva* feels what the *jnani* feels. The Lord knows whatever the *anma* knows as it cannot perceive anything, except with the aid of the Lord. When the *anma* unites itself to God, and feels His Grace, God fills it with supreme bliss and becomes one with it.

If the *Jnani* has unfailing love for *Siva*, he will become united to Him.

God dwells in each man inseparably and He is present in everything but is not recognised by man. It is only when the *anma* begins to love Him, that it can unite with the Feet of the Lord. Darkness can only be removed by love on the part of man, and grace on His part. The *anma* losing its *mala*, that is attachments and bonds, unites itself to His Feet, and becomes the servant of God and will be inseparable. The *anma's* intelligence is enshrouded from eternity in *mala* and brightens from its experience of the world and getting rid of the *mala* altogether, recovers its original intelligence and unites itself to the Feet of God. This is *Pathi-Jnanam* or *Sivanubhuti*, according to Saiva Siddhantam.

It is the glorious Divine Light which permeates the *anma* through and through, and diffuses all round it with its rays of grace, and then conceives the *anma's* feeling of *Ananda* or bliss. That very moment it becomes transformed into the Divine feeling or *Anubhava* itself. As the *anma* feels His grace more and more, its love of the Lord increases. So it is this undying love or true bhakti, that is the cause of the *anma's* supreme happiness, bliss and *Pathi-jnanam*. In this *advaita anubhava*, and that is the true definition of Love--the *bhakti and dasa marga* combine with true *jnana marga*.

*Sutra XII.* Let the *Jivatma* after getting rid of the three *Malas*, which beget ignorance or evil, and which separates it from the Lotus Feet of the Lord, mix with the society of devotees, whose souls are filled with Love having got rid of ignorance. Let it contemplate their forms and the forms in the temples as His Form. He shines brightly in these forms, though He is present in everything.

The Lord wills that all should understand Him, and so reveals His Form to His Bhaktas who desire to know Him, and makes them know Himself and makes Himself visible. To those entangled in bondage, He is invisible.

To the seer, God is neither different from all things, nor is He one with them, nor one and different from them: He is in the general *advaita* relation with them, and everything is His Form. Yet the last verse of *SivaJnana Botham* insists that the *advaitin* should worship the form which excites his love most--to forget the Lord who made him know himself and transformed him like unto Himself is inexcusable; and yet he continues to be only His bondsman. Hence his strength consists in ceaseless worship. This is the quintessence of *Siva Jnanam* or the Wisdom imparted by the *Siva Guru*.

The wise seer who sees the objects does not see them as such, but only God's Presence. God, though He is present in everything, is non-apparent as ghee in milk. But there are forms, in which we can feel His Presence more apparently like the butter in curds. The great light is non-apparent like the fire latent in wood, or ghee latent in milk. But with love and knowledge, one can rub the firewood or churn the milk and fire and butter will become apparent. Thus Swami declares that in the *Bhaktas* or the servitors of Siva known as *Siva-Thondar*, God's Presence becomes a living Presence, and hence it follows that the body is a temple of God. Verily Siva, the Supreme Lord is everywhere, especially in forms which excite our love most.

The recognised pattern of the Hindu spiritual life and more specifically the *Saiva* tradition, enshrined in the cultural and religious heritage of the Tamils must be fully understood, before understanding Swami, as his experiences of the illustrious sixty three Saiva Saints, that the servitors of Siva who enjoy the abiding sense of Siva's Presence live in bliss and peace in constant communion with Him.

The Presence is manifested as *SatGuru* and enjoyed as light and warmth, symbolising wisdom and love, as testified in *Siva-Jnana Botham* --Sutra XI.

The *anma* must gain insight. The Lord is within, but His Presence cannot be recognised by the *anma*; and therefore Siva must reveal Himself to it in a manner by which it can cognise Him. He effects this by His encounter in the form of *SatGuru*. His work in the visible form of a Guru is in consonance with His nature which is invisible, in so far as He is not recognised as Siva by the souls who are not mature enough to see Him thus except as a man among men. To the illumined souls called *Vijnanakalar*, He appears in His unveiled glory; to the *Pralayakalar* who are on the path and yet who still feel the impact of the *mala*, He appears as God; whereas to the *Sakalar* who are steeped in ignorance, He appears as a man. Thus the role of the *SatGuru* is a dominant feature in *Saiva Siddhanta*.

The end of liberation is to attain the perfect beatitude, and only Siva can effect the illumination of insight. The Guru alone can unfold the *Sat* by equipping the *anma* with the perfect insight, which the material means of cognition with which the *anma* equipped by *Asat (maya)* cannot reach. Thus it is the direct confrontation of a *SatGuru*, that alone can lead the *anma* to identify herself with *Siva*--the pure, perfect Insight, the luminous Eye--who abides inseparably within the *anma*.

**“Oh luminous Insight that mingles with the seeing eye!  
All-pervading and illumining like the sun ray.”**

**--Natchintanai. 119.**

The Eleventh Sutra of *SivaJnana Botham* and the above couplet from *Natchintanai* contain in a nutshell the quintessence of *Saivism* --the Way and the Goal.

The Luminous Insight of the SivaGuru alone can unfold the *Sat* by equipping the *anma* with perfect sight. As this was the theme ordained by Swami to Ma for her public address in Colombo at the Sivathondan Silver Jubilee Celebrations in 1962, it is deemed appropriate for elaborating on this text, for a truly appreciative study of Swami's Testament of Truth. Aum Tut Sat!

## **GURU VANI**

### **The Glory of His Grace**

*“I have seen the glory of His Grace! Do Thou too see it?”*

**--Tiruvacagam IV.**

Thus spake Swami:

**“My dear, He'll show you from time to time His gracious Form.”**

**--Natchintanai. 273.**

“The world will judge those that hunger for righteousness as extraordinary folks, or they will be classed as eccentric people. Their ways will always seem inexplicable to the people who live by bread alone. *Chellappar* was call a madman. He never chided anyone, nor bade him do this or that or spoke this message or that.

“He kept himself aloof, and yet he was seen in the company of the illiterate, humble folks as well as learned people. He accepted them all and their ways. There was no criticism of life, and no commendation in his code.

“Truth exists. All other phenomena are merely waves dashing and breaking on its outer shores. It remains untouched, unmoved. All religious sages attempted to speak of this ultimate Reality, but it is beyond words. It is speechless silence--*Mounam*.

**“All words and sounds rest in silence.  
All works rest in silence.  
Everything rests in the perfection of silence.”**

“All action spells reaction in the same measure and are of the same brand. Fasting and prayerful silence are good to purify oneself. Offer yourself wholly at His Feet. Then realise that you and He are from the same source. There is no need for anyone to go out with his forces and marshal them to defend the right. Thereby one generates only violence.

“Why not reflect that you and the force opposing you are from the same source? So you and It are the same. There will then be no hatred and no distinction, and no 'You'--the second person. It is the single One. It is monologue. No dialogical relationship between Our father in heaven and we on earth; no Thou and I, but “Sivam and I are one, and Sivam is in all.” Read Mundaka Upanishad. It explains everything so clearly. Bring it within the orbit of your experience.

“Serenity! Win for yourself *santam*. Let peace slumber in your heart. Let peace waken you to action. Let peace punctuate your saying and thoughts and invade your whole being. In serenity realise this 'Oneness.' None can know or experience the Reality that underlies this phenomenal world. 'Who knows? We do not know.' Manicavacagar too raised this question!--'Who doth know thee?'

“Illness, sorrows and pangs are all shadows of the mind when it sees the dual world. They are the harbingers of a divided mind, distracted by subject-object relationship, and of a soul that is a stranger to Peace-*Santam-Upasantam*. Behold the universe as reflecting His Immanence.

“The one great, big, grand Pendulum swings and all the little bells attached to it keep chiming to the rhythm and swinging to its lively measure. What a wondrous experience! Why dissect it further, when all that need be done is to sit in stillness and hear the chimes vibrating within your heart.

“Once this is experienced, 'One is and is not.' Chellappar, though called a madman and an eccentric man lived a normal life, not uttering any prophecy, nor working any miracles, and yet he was a realised Seer!

“He was like a lotus, untouched by the dirt or coolness or the water around; He did not assume the shape and the colour of the environment; he was unaffected by pain or joy and was not out to reform or serve or be served.

“He saw all as non-dual only, and his mind was always tuned to *Be Still*. We have to find the source of *Calmness*, the anchor on which our *anma* shall rest in serene unison with the Supreme Effulgence of *Siva*. His all-embracing Grace is the axis of the Luminous Eye.

“Chellappar never admonished anyone to do this and not to do that, or 'sell all thou hast and follow me.' There was no question and answer, no 'Have this' and 'have not that.'

“Play your game, your *swadharma*, honestly and sincerely and follow the dictates of your inner self, purified in the flame of *Siva-Dhyanam* daily. Question the minute articulations that arise within you and at each step, inquire intelligently--what is it? Where does it lead? What are its effects on your whole self? Then the next step will be made clearer unto you. That is the time and place for the teacher to take your hand and lead you on. Allow yourself to be led. Let go the rope. Why fear?

The *Mundaka Upanishad* was read at the sunset hour. The camphor was burning and the coconut oil lamp was lighted. At the end of the reading, Swami spoke of the Oneness of Life. “There is not *two* but One. Can you see the Unity? Look at this camphor flame. It is one but it lights up my bed, this chembu, the lota and that. The same light falls on each object and assumes differentiation by the objective vision, but it is the *One light*. 'It shines-- They shine.'

*“Everything shines only after that shining light.  
His shining illumines all this world.”*

*--Mundaka Upanishad.2.2.1*

*“Sivosarvam--Sivosarvam!  
Santam, Upasantam  
Sarvam Brahmamyam.”*

Swami repeated this refrain many times; and he sang songs from Tayumnavar and Tirumantram on the focus of serene calmness in the depth charge of our hearts. It was the determining centre and the axis of his Upadesh.

*“Mounam* is not mere silence. It is active awareness.

That which is within is the ripple of the tide surging in the heart of Eternity in its outer spheres. They all have the same origin.” Swami sings:

*“The macrocosm is found in the microcosm within me, and I pay my obeisance--Siva, Siva. Siva, Siva, Sivayave.”*

“Chellappar never distinguished between great and poor people. All were equal in his sight. The scavenger and the noble men were alike. They were only different in the work they did. Essentially, in essence, in reality, they belonged to the One unchanging, non-dual Truth. None can describe this great Self.

“Did you note the way this truth was expressed in the *Mundaka Upanishad* you read of two birds sitting on the same tree, and eventually one was absorbed in the other. The *Para Vidya* and *Apara Vidya* are two facets of “Knowing.”

*“Inquire and understand Truth in its totality.  
Give up objective experience.  
Be in close touch with Reality.  
It will speak from within.  
You be still. Be a witness.”*

*--Natchintanai. 269.*

“Chellappar never spoke in the third person. He spoke always to himself and in the present. He never did or said anything to benefit or reform others. Everyone who was present before him learnt to take in whatever suited him. It was only after many days that the truth would become apparent. There was no third person or second person that he saw in his life, for him to speak to a third party or to address another. He dwelt in *himSelf* and spoke to *HimSelf* and that Self was the Universal Self. He never played any drama, or enacted miracles.

“He was floating in this lighted world of Oneness-*Sivosarvam* --and everyone called him mad. He had no followers and kept no account of his activities--no money, no possessions, no conventional behavior. He was a spark of divine radiance. He lived and moved as an ordinary humble man with eyes, ears, hands and legs like any other passerby, and thus did he pass away into Supreme Silence.

“No harm shall ever come to him who treads the path of holiness and purity. We generate both good and ill forces, as we are subject to the play of this dual existence, where we see distinction, separation and misery. If someone harms us from outside, the origin can be traced to some cause within us.

“To him who believes in this axiom or truth, no harm can ever befall him. He does not generate any force of harmfulness and hence is shielded from evil. Love all in order to realise Love. Do good in order to attain goodness. *Oru Pollaappumillai Thamby*. Again Swami continued his reminiscence:

“Chellappar and I were walking one day as we were wont to do. He was dark skinned, thin, with a frisky beard, and always his look was upwards. He never looked down while walking; he never looked in front of him, but always with chin raised, he gazed afar, and beyond. I took care to keep pace with him, but always watching my steps carefully and looking down, and now and then...We came across an ant hill and he went forward first, not looking down or seeing what lay before him; and yet he managed to take a stride that averted his stumbling over that ant heap. And here I was following him, and consciously seeing the ant-heap I avoided it. So for him, his own Dharma was his protection. Verily He was the Sun of Truth:

“One does not need any external protection. The knowledge of the Self leads a Seer to be luminous like the sun in a clear heaven. Chellappar was fearless, because he was

established in the knowledge of Oneness with Sivam, and hence there was no need for him to be stung by those red ants!”

“All the men came from the same womb, the essence of Essence, and yet one turns out to be a criminal, another a robber, or a drunkard and another a saint. He has to go through each step, in order to reach the next step, and from there to the next and so on till he reaches the goal. Perhaps it will take longer for some than for others; the *Tamasic* lag behind, the *Rajasic* perform and revolve round their desires, and the *Sattvic* are those who are free; even when they work, they feel the experience of not working, and when they do no work, they seem as if they are working.

'Nothing gained, nothing lost.' We all trace our way back to our genesis from where we came; and here realise the blissful experience of perfect tranquillity. My friends, hear and digest.”

Swami sings:

**“Ineffable bliss was mine.  
Immaculate serenity was mine too.  
Tranquil Siva's experience was mine.  
And the norms of good and bad glided past me.”**

*--Natchintanai. 186.*

## **MATCHLESS GURUGEM**

**This is the lustrous Jewel  
That sparkles in the hearts of realised seers,  
That gleams brightly, flawless Gem so unsullied,  
That heals the pangs of those in penury.  
None can gauge the value of this Gem so rare.  
It dazzles with variegated hues on earth.  
The precious Gem that embellishes Mal of azure hue.  
Its brilliance radiates afar in the isle of Lanka.  
This matchless GuruGem has made me his bondsman.  
Those who implore with love can see this Gem,**

**A Gem so radiant with triple eyes adorned.  
Its elegance entranced me into its service.  
Neither Vishnu nor Brahma can fathom its beauty.  
It shines in the crown with the crescent and ganga.  
It glows in His form adorned by young serpents.  
It's the Gem that scintillates in Lanka--  
This divine Gem is the award of flaming love.  
The gloom of bondage is pierced by this Gem.  
It's the prize of those who sing His Praise.  
Unique and golden is the Gem untainted by time  
It radiates the charm of manifold wonders  
A matchless Gem, it is so manifold wonders.  
The Gem adored by the Triune Gods and Devas.  
It stands revealed in the bounteous isle of Lanka.  
Ah GuruGem that lure me, my own peerless Gem!**

*--Natchintanai. 258.*

When the soul longs for reunion with the Eternal Love and Wisdom of the Lord as embodied in the God-Guru, here referred as the lustrous Gem, then the soul is not conscious of its separateness. Distinctions melt away. The cry of the heart is, 'when shall I in mystic union join my peerless, perfect Gem?' Man enjoys bliss divine when he is under the spell of perfect love and wisdom. In the same mystic language of Love did St. Manicavacagar sing in the Ode on Fulfillment:

*Whether sitting, standing, lying, walking,*

*In laughter or tears, in praise or worship,*

*Whether performing in varying accents meet,*

*The soul shall submerge in dissolving love,*

*Seeing that holy Form, beauteous like sunset.*

*Steeped in serene joy, when shall I becomeThine?*

*In Oneness mingled for e'er--say when?*

*In mystic union with my peerless gem.*

*--Tiruvacagam. 27.8.*

Thus Swami's lyric on the *Matchless Guru Gem* sets afloat an irresistible yearning in the hearts of all devout seekers of Truth, for the unfailing guidance of the SatGuru. It unfolds the cry of the finite for the Infinite Love of the Supreme SivaGuru. The melody of St. Appar's symphony was heard in the silence of the heart:

*“His Name, she heard first;  
His habitat, she inquired;  
Where, Oh where was his abode?  
She pined in unquenchable love.  
Gone were her ties for father, mother or kin.  
Self-forgetful, self-effacing, she arose  
To commingle at the Feet of her Beloved.”*

*--VI 25.7.*

# ANMA JNANAM

## THE CONFLUENCE OF I AND THOU

The psalm begins with the Litany of a Good Life, leading to the goal of supreme wisdom, the Home of the Realised Seers-- "*Jnana Veedu Namaku Elithaame.*" At the close of the lyric, Swami affirms that *Mukti*, the firmament of the abode of the Self-realised Seers, that *Beyond* which is in the lotus of the heart, that locus of space in itself, is the award of a Good Life-- '*Mukti Nalhume*'

--*Natchintanai. 86.*

Man's life on earth, from beginningless births to endless deaths is a liturgy of worship of the Supreme One who is within and without, and this unique experience of self realisation can only be declared by those who have gained the Self. The Gita says, "that those who have gained the Self are illumined within, rejoice within and enjoy eternal felicity." *Bhagavad Gita* V. 24-25. Swami is one such realised Yogi, who having attained the highest wisdom points the WAY to the beatitude of God.

In recording his experience of self-realisation in the Natchintanai, Swami has reported insights which came to him in the hours of *Siva-Dhyanam*. Therefore we find that emphasis at all points is not upon parts, but upon wholes--upon brief, comprehensive and coherent yet unanalysed utterances. The study of these sacred songs of high import according to Hindu tradition requires the guidance of a Guru.

We read in the Upanishad that, "to many it is not given to hear of the Self. Many though they hear of it, do not understand it. Wonderful is he who speaks of it. Intelligent is he who learns of it. Blessed is he who taught by a good teacher is able to understand it." (Quoted from 'The Upanishads' Introduction XI. by Swami Prabhavananda). So did Christ asert in the Parable of the Sower, the selfsame truth:

*"Ye that hath ears to hear, let him hear."*

*St. Matthew, XIII.*

One of the pre-eminent traits of Swami's teachings was to have stirred the people who flocked to him in blind faith, to regain their discrimination and

understanding. He guided his aspirants to concentrate on one step at a time, and would imperceptibly lead them to master it fully, before proceeding to the next step. Significantly enough, Swami always reiterated the need to conform to established code of ethical and moral excellence, and the value of discipline as the only way to freedom at all levels of existence.

What is important to remember is the fact that he taught the meaning of *Natchintanai* Songs by his daily acts, by his most casual words, and sometimes even by his silence. Only to be near him, only to serve and obey him in humility and in reverence, was to be quickened with a vitality which not only informs the intellect, but also purifies and enriches the soul.

*“He who engages in these things gains in concentration,  
And is no longer a slave to his passions;  
Devout, self controlled, disciplined in spirit,  
He rises to fame and is a blessing to mankind.”*

Outside Swami's hermitage, his votaries were used to an individualistic approach to life, where the veiled ego asserted its authority; but once they entered his hut, everyone learnt to be quiet and listen to his inner voice. The Gurunathan invariably would reverse the pivot God-ward so effortlessly that in the axis of the Divine Will, the attention of all gathered in his presence would be focussed on the *Anma-Jnanam*, the realisation of the Self by the self; and all other problems and passing vexations that weighed on the seekers, when they entered his Ashram will flee hastily, leaving them absorbed in a conception of wholeness. Meanwhile Swami would sing that song of St. Appar and rock himself in laughter.

*“A rogue I was who wasted life's precious days in useless service,  
till I began the search; and then lo, I saw Him  
who bade me know the wisdom, that inseparable is He  
within the seeker's heart. So amazed I was that I burst  
into peals of laughter.”*

*St. Appar. IV. 75.3*

It so happened that in the tempestuous days that followed the communal riots of 1958, people who were deeply involved in the suffering of these unhappy events came to him in large numbers, seeking the solace of his Grace. The Guru who had him-Self realised the truths of that *Maha-Vaakiam*--“*Oru Pollappumillai*,” would remind all of them with great

clarity that no harm can ever befall a man of God. He would sing the song:

**“Oh Thangam dear, write out a testamentary Deed,  
That there is no intrinsic evil at all--(to a knower of Truth).**

*--Natchintanai. 273.*

Thus did Swami teach a new way of approach to realise the Self, and brought to the fore an experience of intimate relationship. It may be that his song, just that particular song that he sings as you enter his presence, will stir in you the passion for goodwill and dissolve all the pent up malignity against that 'other.' This act of “*Sitting near devotedly*”, which is the true meaning of the term *Upanishad* has been our sanctified source to unravel ever so dimly even, the quintessence of Natchintanai which contains the knowledge that destroys the bonds of ignorance; and leads to the supreme goal of Freedom--*Mukti Nalhume*, as enjoined in Swami's Psalm--86, as well as in the Jnana-Kural by the great woman-saint, St. Auvaiyar:

*“Beyond begining, beyond ending  
is the substance rare,  
That is the light of wisdom beautiful.*

*“This is the path of liberation as testified  
In the parchent by the Guru-- Behold.”*

*Auvai-Kural. VIII 9-10.*

The essence of this key Natchintanai, which happened to be one of our favourite and oft-sung song in Swami's presence was understood without any direct explanation, by our temporary absorption in the recitation of the Taittiriya Upanishad, which he made us read intensely in Sanskrit, Tamil and English.

In the Taittiriya Upanishad in the eleventh *Anuvaaka* of *Sikshavalli* is a valedictory exhortation, on the Way to a Good Life by the Guru to his disciple who is about to step out into the world. His last *Upadesh* bears a strong similarity to Swami's Psalm, and hence we cite that illustrious passage:

*“Let your conduct be marked by right action;  
by truthfulness in word, deed and thought;  
by self denial and the practice of austerity;*

*by poise and self control; by performance  
of the everyday duties of life with a cheerful  
heart and an unattached mind.*

*Speak the Truth. Do your duty. Do not neglect  
the study of the scriptures. Do not cut the thread  
of progeny. Swerve not from truth. Deviate  
not from the path of good. Revere greatness.*

*Let your mother and father be a God to you;  
Let your teacher be a God to you.....  
Do only such actions as are blameless and  
Always show reverence to the great.....*

*This is the injunction; this is the teaching;  
this is the command of the scriptures.”*

*--The Upanishads,--54.*

*Tr. Swami Prabhavananda.*

The Master SivaThondan of the twentieth century validated the teaching of the Upanishad Seer on the First Principles of Good Living at the dawn of man's history, some three thousand years ago, through the medium of his own unique experience--*Anma Jnanam*--embalmed in the *Psalm of Good Living*.

We shall now briefly recount the genesis of this song. In our childhood, Swami flashed past our lives as a phantom of delight, adored by our parents and held in profound veneration by them; and a sense of mystic fragrance surrounded his meteoric appearances at home. The wooden bench on which he sat and the chair he reclined were kept apart, cleaned, and perfumed--incense added to our mystery. The songs written by him on card boards and odd bits of paper to our devoted father were treasured by him, and committed to memory by us and sung on Fridays at home, to the accompaniment of the Harmonium before the 'Pater Noster.'

**“This body's a temple and the mind's a votary of love.”**

*--Natchintanai. 298.*

'The Invocation of *All art Thou,*' --313, and the *'Psalm of Good Living'* --

86, written in Ahaval metre and heroic couplets respectively, were some of the songs memorised by us and revered as *Mantras* or thought-forms, that evoked great devotion and awakening. In these ways, Swami became a symbol of mysterious power, protection and piety. Sometimes we would be filled with awe at his august presence, and the vibration of his voice animated our heart beat. For one score years of our life, he was but a dim reflection to our angle of vision, even though he remained the polar star in the parental firmament of love. My father revolved in the orbit of this robust luminous constellation till the very end of his days in 1939. He was *“One in whom persuasion and belief had ripened into faith, and faith become a passionate intuition.”*

This Psalm of Good Living has been sung by the Gurunathan at Haputale in the year 1930, in answer to an ardent aspirant's supplication to show him the *Way to Live*. The great hymn opens with the potency of chanting the Name of the Immanent Siva, the mantra of Namasivaya--

In this song, Swami conjures a life in perfect consonance with God's will, a life of worship and faith in His endless Grace, seeking Him through knowledge alone as the only aim in life. Man's free will consists only in a freedom not to will, a freedom to return to the centre of his being, to identify his own will with His Will--

**“Whoso hath surrendered his will wholly,  
God will protect him tenderly like a mother.”**

*V.5-86.*

The individual is responsible for what he gets in life--the good and bad that befalls him. According to man's works which are actuated by his will, good or evil, he gets his deserts in the begotten existences.

**“He only who is without desire, whose desire is God reaches Him-Self. There neither good nor evil, sorrow or happiness affects him-- V. 13--87. Wisdom lies in the knowledge that it is not I, not self that acts.” “I do not know; I do not do anything. It is all Siva's Will”.**

*V. 9--87.*

**Therefore he who is unattached and acts willingly, but not**

**from will knows me -- He is liberated from pairs of opposites, and freed from bondage; He lives in self restraint and attains everlasting felicity.**

V. 7--86.

The Will of God connoted by *Tiruvadi*, *Malaradi*, *Sevadi* and the Lotus Feet, implies the submission to His Will, which alone can lead man to God. He is the omnipotent power which rules the macrocosm and the microcosm through time and space. It is by His Supreme Will that souls are drawn to His Light. The aspirant who submits to His Will by constantly remembering and invoking his name realises his limitations and finitude, and the root of his miseries. He also becomes aware by the gift of discernment, that his own small self has no power to do anything other than prostrate before the majestic Siva. Then his conceit, vanity, pride, and egoity shall wither out of sight. The Will of God is infinite, ineffable and transcending thought.

The love of God is the safest and surest pathway to liberation. Man's sacramental rites are of little value, unless these can ignite the flame of love within his heart, and stir in him an intense devotion to His Feet. Submission to His will is his prerogative to win the Lord's grace. He is immanent in every particle of the greatest as well as the minutest of beings.

V. 53--90.

Therefore chant His Name with love and devotion. Thereby the mortal attains immortality, the mind gains power to dive into the source of true wisdom. The heart learns to penetrate the secrets of love; and resignation to His Will with love transmutes man to divine stature, and bestows on him eternal bliss.

All functions of life if undertaken with fortitude, forbearance, unselfish gains and serenity, are ways of enlightenment. **“Thou biddest me but be”** This is the victorious way to a transformation of one's life. “Ye must be born again.” In the Bhagavad Gita, Lord Krishna reiterates this truth. “Others pour out as their sacrifice all the functioning of the senses and all those of life in the fire of the discipline of self restraint which is lit by wisdom .....Better than the sacrifice of any objects (by way of works) is that of wisdom; therewith are works undone in gnosis, naught remaining over.” *Bhagavad Gita*. IV. 27, 32, & 33. St. Tayumanavar too echoes the same sentiments:

*“Nay Heaven itself is reached, the Home of Good,  
where never comes an ill.”*

--449.

*“Oh Thou that holdest all creation  
Within the hollow of thy hand!  
Thy will Thou canst perform that makest  
The smallest magnified to stand.”*

--593.

St. Appar portrays vividly the man of the world launching in the voyage of life so confidently, till he strikes against the rocks of desire and pride. Then in utter helplessness, he abandons all efforts to row the raft, and prays for the shelter of the Lord's Grace:

*“When on life's angry waves I launch,  
My heart's the raft I take with me.  
My mind's the pole I lean upon,  
Vexations freight I bear to sea.  
Alas, I strike upon the rock of desire.  
Then, I become so dazed and witless,  
That I pray to grant me, Lord of Vottiyur  
The will to pine for thy sustaining Grace.”*

*St. Appar. IV. 46.2.*

How can one praise God whose Essence far transcends our deepest perception of Him? There is nothing man can do to increase His majestic glory? He has only to bask in the radiance of His Grace and delight in meditation on His Infinity which is incommensurable with the totality of things finite.

*V. 54--90.*

**“He alone is, beyond all time and space; That is the One transcending knowing and unknowing, gnosis and ignorance.”**

*V. 60.--91.*

As Eckhart in Book of Love Says:

*“There where void shines into void,  
Deep answers unto Deep,  
Unattainable by thought  
But all contained in the Lotus of the heart--  
There is the Supreme Identity,  
The source and end of life.”*

In this Litany of *Anma-Jnanam* is conveyed the unique experience of Self-realisation that *He Is* in the innermost Empyrean, the lotus of the heart.

**“In the unimpeachable faith in the word of the Guru, dissolve all doubts, and live like a spectator in the stage of life”**--This was Swami's counsel.

Sang St. Tayumanavar in his ode on *Perfect Bliss!*

*“Let go what doth not come and come what may,  
Thy grace hath taught me live spectator-like...  
Thy grace hath set me too on wisdom's path.”*

**“The continual remembrance of His Name, even when engaged in selfless service is the secret of the joy of liberation:”**

A man may so do his duties without attachment and fulfil the obligations of earthly ties, “though never so implicated in those relations as to forget for a moment the grace of God.” It is not merely to remember God's grace at all times, but to realize its sustaining power, and such realization would exclude pleasures which vitiate the soul. Swami's counsel is simple and clear indeed:

*“Look equally on foe and friend and come by liberation.  
Enmity and opposition are removed from the heart of him  
who knows himSelf and who adores the gracious Feet.  
He is within and hence do not utter one unpleasant word.  
Forbearance, endurance, sweet speech, humility, restraint  
and equanimity are your greatest possessions. the True  
Owner is in all. Give no pain to others, for all are inheritors of  
His inner Effulgence. Give up egoistic pride and live well and  
amicably with all. Where the 'I' is not, there is He--He caresseth  
us all.”*

The ascription of human actions to Divine impulses, indeed the identification of man's deeds with God's, finds parallels in Islamic mysticism:

*“My servant draws nigh unto Me, and I love him. When I love him I am his ear so that he hears by Me; and his eyes so that he sees by Me; and his tongue so that he speaks by Me.”*

*--Nicholson's Mystics of Islam,--100.*

It is laid down by a high Islamic authority:

*“Those who inculcate the doctrine of Fana mean the passing away of regarding one's own actions and works of devotion through the continuance of regarding God as the doer of these actions on behalf of His servant.”*

*--Luma, 151 (a), Risalat, translated by Dr. Nicholson in J.R.A.S. 1913,--57, 60.*

The many acts of submission to His will point the way to a disciplined life of virtuous living.

**“Not my will, oh Lord but thine  
Prevails everywhere--Thus do I realise.”**

*V. 49--90.*

Swami, like Sri Krishna in the concluding verses of the Bhagavad Gita, bids each one of us by complete absorption in the performance of *Sivathodu*, to win perfection. by devotion to one's duty in a spirit of serenity, self restraint, austerity, purity, uprightness, discriminative knowledge and faith in God, can one attain perfection--the eternal haven of Supreme Peace.

This is the *Anma Jnanam* of this great and glorious magnificat--The Psalm of Good Living.

### **THE PSALM.**

**1. The abode of Wisdom (JnanaVeedu) shall be our gain,  
If the discipline of charity and austerity, we espouse.**

- 2. Remember the Lord who's like fragrance in the flower,  
And thy tongue shall repeat the name of Namasivaya.**
- 3. Serve Him who is Purity and Life of life  
And thou shalt realise Siva's grace.**
- 4. The ignorant know not the flowery Feet of God,  
Invoke Him aloud, before the call of Death.**
- 5. If you surrender yourself entirely at His Feet,  
He will shelter you like the sweet mother.**
- 6. 'Tis folly to speak of great men and small men,  
To apprehend the truth of non-duality is hard indeed.**
- 7. The wayward mind pursues sensual pleasures,  
'Tis bliss to chasten it by the power of wisdom.**
- 8. Those who know *That* shall be *That*.  
The ignoble ones gropingly say this or that.**
- 9. Whate'er is, is Siva's Will: So declare the Wise ones.  
Live in the light of the Indweller of every heart.**
- 10. The virtuous know the certainty of the unspoken word.  
Thus they pursue the path of liberation.**
- 11. Devas and asuras fail to know even by worship,  
But those illumined by wisdom will know ME.**
- 12. Divest the mind from bewailing o'er past events  
And anchor the heart in the calm awareness of Serenity.**
- 13. Even if heaven and earth shall perish,  
The realised Self shall not suffer pain or sorrow.**
- 14. He who is pure with peace in his heart,  
He'll not harbour lust, nor rage nor malice.**
- 15. A man of conceit is not free from debasing meanness;  
And vain are his accomplishments in arts and sciences.**
- 16. Endurance, forbearance, and sublime serenity,**

**these shall endow lasting bliss on earth.**

**17. The stealthy mind spreads its tentacles afar--  
do thou gain mastery o'er it, step by step.**

**18. None can fathom the true perspectives  
Of Him who transcends day and night.**

**19. It is sweet indeed to taste the love of God,  
Equally sweet is it to discard ire and desire.**

**20. They shall not be fettered by delusion,  
If they forget not the Feet of the eternal Lord.**

**21. He who is not moderate in the habits of food,  
He will forfeit the claim to bliss supreme.**

**22. Divinity radiates around him who has realised  
That all living beings live in him and he in them.**

**23. Truth dawns in the mind that is restrained--  
A fitting reward of those who are detached.**

**24. He who knows the secret of self mastery,  
To him is assured the sovereignty of the Gods.**

**25. He who lights the flame of constant remembrance,  
Verily such a devotee is very dear to me.**

**26. Know thou the secret of the incoming and outgoing  
breath,  
Surely will ye gain invincible strength.**

**27. The gnostics who transcend social distinctions,  
His roseate Feet shall they inherit on earth.**

**28. Those who know not the art of living in harmony,  
Though skilled in other arts shall miss the mark.**

**29. Of what avail is the mastery of the eight fold yoga,  
If ye fail to perceive that God is Love?**

**30. How futile is it to accuse and bemoan at Him**

**Who is beyond the cycle of mortality?**

**31. That absolute Being who neither comes or goes,  
He has freed me from pangs of birth and death.**

**32. Can the honied sweetness that wells up in the heart  
Be known by the confused fanatics? Oh tell me!**

**33. Day by day the hours sweep past,  
In useless toil with no ultimate gain.**

**34. In the Letters Five I beheld everything,  
Bereft of sorrows, I enjoyed peace, perfect peace.**

**35. Brahma and Vishnu failed to see by devotion  
The glory of Siva who sucked the poison.**

**36. The Indwelling One, the treasure of contemplation,  
Cannot be known by ones who commit heinous wrongs.**

**37. Meditate for ever on That art Thou  
And attain bliss like bees sipping honey.**

**38. There can be no separation from the Supreme One  
Who in diversity is unaffected by differentiation.**

**39. Let's chant the Lord's Name, Namasivaya  
Stainless is He, who eludes the Vedas and Agamas.**

**40. It's the luminous Eye that illumines the seeing eye  
It assumes male, female and neutral states of being.**

**41. 'Tis sweet to surrender at His Lotus Feet;  
He's life's excellence as well as its substratum.**

**42. In the heart that's filled with ecstatic bliss,  
The imortal Self abides in ethereal silence.**

**43. Before the body sheds its mortal coils, realise  
The priceless treasure and be illumined.**

**44. When you experience the joy of oneness with Siva,  
Then will ye know the futility of wordly enjoyments.**

- 45. Ponder and imbibe the truth of supreme sacrifice,  
Which moved the Absolute One to become the many.**
- 46. There's none who has experienced It in totality;  
Neither can any exult in having attained fullness.**
- 47. No more do they take on births on earth who have  
Relished the grace of the Lord of Thillai.**
- 48. Everything you see around of which ye are witness,  
Doubt not but know that it's His sport.**
- 49. Fully do I discern that nothing moves to my will:  
But that everything pulsates to Thy Will.**
- 50. The ill effects of past deeds have all been consumed,  
And I'm free from the genesis of any future ills.**
- 51. No longer is there any urge for acts of charity,  
For I've seen and realised the Truth.**
- 52. Oh! I've seen the universal cosmic Being,  
And all my aching cares have been cast off.**
- 53. It's all-pervading in the macrocosm and microcosm;  
Sorrow will not stain the joy of realised saints.**
- 54. I've crowned my head with His lotus Feet,  
For which e'en the Gods do pine. Oh wonder of wonders!**
- 55. Fled far and away are my dubious acts of yore,  
And now my refuge be Thy tinkling Feet!**
- 56. Arise at dawn and after ablution repair with devotion  
To the temple, and offer thy oblation at His Feet.**
- 57. 'Tis righteous conduct. 'Tis also a sacred rite;  
And everlasting will be thy award on this earth.**
- 58. Time will not taint thee nor will actions mar thee.  
It's the will of Him who sucked the poison in grace.**
- 59. Know the gross, the subtle and the causal states.**

**Then'll meek Sakti bestow Her beauteous grace.**

**60. Learned savants with keen intellects do not know.  
Even Brahma, Vishnu and other gods do not know.**

**61. Transcending birth and death art Thou oh Self!  
Meditate on this daily without ever forgetting.**

**62. This is excelsis; This is wealth most rare;  
This is virtue. This is grace.**

**63. This is love This is Truth;  
This is greatness. This is power supernal.**

**64. Ponder ponder, and meditate on the grace of Siva,  
And cherish dearly this incantation sweet.**

**65. This utterance of *Yoganathan* shall free thee from  
Delusion's snares and lead to the pleroma of Peace.**

*Natchintanai--86-91.*

## **THE BEATIFIC CALCULUS**

In this psalm, the guiding principles and practices for a Good Life of purity, desirelessness, love and harmony are denoted step by step, leading to the supreme End of Self-Realisation, in other words the citadel of illumined Wisdom.

In sweet simplicity, the Gurunathan unfolds the aura of *Good Living*, the counsel and the command.

Herein is brought to the fore, virtuosity and spontaneity in action, rather than obedience to rules externally imposed. The sun shines only because of its nature and not for any other end. Such a virtuosity and spontaneity can only be realised to the extent that man abandons desires and let the divine nature work in him. Swami's oft repeated maxim, 'Let go the rope,' must be understood in the light of this Psalm. Eckhart too refers to this attitude in 1.308. "Let go thyself and let God work in Thee," and this is the principle of *Wu Wei*, Chung Tzu's, "Do nothing and all things shall be done."

This is also the doctrine of the Bhagavad Gita in respect to *works*. It is the

resignation of the will, resulting in a grace which robs the ego of self-willing and self-thinking and substitutes His Will, who is without potentiality. It is the prerogative of the Guru's Grace that impels man to bide by the Will of Siva in willing submission, through internal renunciation of the ego in all its emotional responses and operational acts, and to invoke the pleroma of Siva's Name at all times. This in essence is the wondrous truth communicated by Swami in this *Beatific calculus*.

In *Chidambara Rahasya* canzones, St. Tayumanavar sings in a similar octave of experience, and Swami's *Jnana-Veedu* is described as the *temple of Grace* in whose sanctum sanctorum is enshrined the *Periya Param Pathi*-the Supreme Immaculate Lord who dissolves the darksome ignorance, and commingles in everything as its innermost core.

--149.

*“Freed from the bondage of the relative,  
Do thou realise luminous Felicity  
From everlasting to everlasting.”*

Swami's Psalm is fraught with the power of the Word of the Guru, who signifies in the last two forceful couplets, that it is a *mantra* of great potency and hence to be meditated upon intensely.

This utterance of Guru Yoganathan taps the centres of energy within the inner chambers of man (Mantra Sakti), and constitutes a means of reunion with the source of Pure Being; footprints to be followed on a home-ward course to transcendental consciousness.

**AUM TAT SAT.**

**SIVO SARVAM--MULUTHUM UNMAI.**

*Taittiriya Upanishad* declares in *Brahmananda-Valli*--Bliss of Brahman:--

*“Aum, brahma-vid âpnoti param, tad esâbhyuktâ, satyam  
jnânânam anantam brahma, yo veda nihitam guhâyâm  
parame vyoman so' s'nute sarvân kâmân saha brahmanâ”  
vipaßcitâ, iti.”*

*“He who realises Brahman attains the Supreme. Brahman is Existence, Intelligence and Infinitude. He who realises*

*Him treasured in the cave of the heart and in the highest heaven, fulfils all wants along with Brahman the omniscient.”*

11.2.

The significance of *Anma-Jnanam* is brought out in this *sloka*. Swami would make us read the *Sikshavalli*, *Brahmanandavalli* and *Bhrguvalli* of the *Taittiriya Upanishad* in Sanskrit, English and Tamil daily for over two years from 1959, the date of the publication of *Natchintanai*. Reflection on *Natchintanai* and *Taittiriya* lead us to perceive the close identity in thought and integral experience between these two great works on God-Realisation. *Pathi-Jnanam* and *Anma Jnanam*, *Brahma vidya* and *Atma vidya* came to be integrated in *Natchintanai*, with the central pivot on the great *Mahavaakiam* of *Tat Tvam Asi* of the ancient seers transfused into Swami's *Muluthum Unmai*. It is the symphony embodied in *Sivam art Unmai*, and *Brahman art Satyam*. “*Satyam* or *Unmai*” is used to denote True Being. Thus the **True Being is Truth**, *Satyasya Satyam*.

The reality we experience through the senses and the mind assumes the form of variety; but great seers declare that there is unity in the midst of multiplicity; and this Supreme One is called *Brahman* in the Upanishads and *Sivam* by Swami.

This is the ultimate Reality which appears as the empirical phenomena and self of man, and in Itself transcends all phenomena. This background is not subjected to the loom of time or space. It is the substratum of all consciousness, of the external universe as well as the individual self veiled by the forces of *Karma*, the outcome of good and evil deeds, deluding ignorance and the gloom of *Anavam*. Against the background of *Sivo-Sarvam*, the universal and the individual self merge in oneness. He who has realised this Truth is an *Atma-jnani* or *Jivan Muktar*.

## INTEGRAL MULTIPLICITY

In the *Natchintanai*, Swami reveals the path of liberation from the pangs of duality, from the limitations of repeated births and deaths, from the afflictions of change and decay, and from the ephemeral activities generated by ignorance and desire, to the bliss of realisation of Siva. He who has realised Siva attains supreme perfection. Knowledge of the Self leads to the goal of the attainment of Sivam.

**“You and I, He and It,  
Fire and water, air and ether,  
Corporeal and ethereal beings and all  
In dissolution become one with Him.”**

*--Natchintanai. 216.*

Siva is the Supreme One, beyond duality, beyond manifestation, and yet its knowledge through identity is the attainment of perfection--

Therefore the call is for liberation, liberation from the triple bonds of darkness, from the fiends of ignorance and desire. The realisation of Siva is a profound experience.

In many a gem in Natchintanai as in the lofty Devarams and Tiruvacagam, Tirumantram, and songs of Tayumanavar Swami, and Ramalinga Adigal, Swami reveals that man's consciousness gets purified by the grace of the Guru.

Thus the *anma* transcends the subject-object relationships in the domain of time and space, and attains the realm of everlasting bliss--

The attainment of Siva is the realisation of the Divine Unity and leads to the possession of eternal Blessedness.

The essence of Sivam cannot be known. It is the very core of the knowing subject, and so cannot be made an object of knowledge. The constitutive essence of Sivam is Existence, Consciousness and infinitude of Bliss.

Existence is the substratum of all entities, and hence never apart from consciousness. It is a conscious being that gives value to existence and the very perception of phenomena is the proof of Sivam. The existence or reality connoted by the things perceived as real by all is the Reality of Sivam. The experience of Reality is made possible by the consciousness underlying all things. Existence and Consciousness--Sat and Chit--constitute the Essence of Reality.

However Consciousness is non-material, and what is made conscious matter, which is cognised in space-time relation is material, and whatever is material is thus limited. Hence unlimited consciousness is infinitude. This is the full import of the maxim *Muluthum Unmai*--Reality denoting true being

is *Satyasya Satyam*. This Reality which is indicated as Sivam is realised in the cave of the heart, the seat of intellect where Siva is intuited as the immediate Self, the Witness of all the actions of the capricious mind.

In the most revealing poem in Natchintanai, Swami lays bare the secret of the Realisation of Siva. “*Worship the Power that is hidden within you, that which is the axis of your Life.*”-268.

**“Open wide thy eyes, my dear Thangam  
That deepen your insight into Truth Supreme.  
Give up ephemeral objects and contact the Real,  
Be a witness and attain felicity.”**

*--Natchintanai. 269.*

Swami is the fount of felicity. Fragmentary delights flee at his touch. Malignant forces lose their spell. '*Oru Pollappumillai*'; and to one who has realised his true Being in Truth--*Muluthum Unmai*--there is nothing lacking. All his wants are fulfilled--282. It is a simultaneous experience of the infinite Bliss in an eternal Now. This is the beatitude that Swami holds out as the Summum Bonum of life.

Whoever knows Him in His proximate, immanent (*apara*) aspect knows Him also in His ultimate transcendent (*para*) aspect. The Self in our heart is also the light of light in the sun, whom all see but a few only know with the mind. He is the universal Self--*Atman* from the root *an*--to breathe, and is primarily the spiritus--the luminous first Principle of Pure Consciousness, being the ultimate essence in all things. Over against our real Self, there is the self of which we speak of as I, you or he. There is an external self and an internal self in us; the first is born of woman and the second of the divine womb, the sacrificial fire. It is the import of *Guru Dikshai* or initiation by a guru according to the Hindu Tradition, and “ye must be born again,' in the words of Christ.

The fundamental question put by Chellappa Swami to Siva Yoga Swami his disciple was, '*Who art thou*' The question implied: by which self was immortality attainable? The answer of Swami demonstrated by his life being *only by that Self that is immortal*.

Thus Sivam is the background of all that we conceive and perceive, and is Pure Consciousness, Existence and Infinitude. From this Principle emanates

space embodying the subtle rudiment of matter known as ether along with time. The quality of sound is associated with spatial ether - and then is evolved air and fire and water and finally earth, the last constituent of the universe. When we say that the body of man constituted of the five elements is the Temple where *Anma* abides, it implies that It is its substratum. Swami elucidates it in a lucid poem called '*Behold The Temple of Thyself*'.

### **THIS BODY, THY TEMPLE!**

“The experience of realisation is nothing mysterious”, said Swami. It is the intense awareness that we live, move and have our being in the Will of the Lord. The sensuous experiences come to an end only through the reality of one's own self in a state of purity, love and chastened continence. The human body is the beautiful temple of Siva, more magnificent than any other temple built by man. It is through discerning contemplation that the Lord dwelling within the heart can be known, loved and realised.

This subtle Essence is to be worshipped by the petals of true knowledge--*Mey Jnanam*. Such worship implies pure contemplation. In the inmost core of the heart, the Lord abides. The mind reflects even though dimly the radiance of the heart, and the human body is the projection of the mind for the Indweller to reside. Thus the truth of the body as the sanctuary of the Lord has been sung by many a Hindu Saint.

The Self of self, the Soul of soul has to be realised by the purification of the mind which is effected by the cultivation of noble virtues, remembrance of the Divine Name kept aglow through association with virtuous and wise men, and above all through the ineffable grace of the SatGuru. This in short is the theme of Swami's song-- "*Kaayame Koil, Kadimanam adimai*."

Ever vigilant in the welfare of the devotees, our Guru shows them the efficacy of the proper *Sadhana* that will take them to the city of *Sivanagar*, which is the luminous void of the heart. "*The body is thy temple*" is a song that was written by Swami, and handed to my father in the Tea-Kiosk in the early Twenties. It is a lyric of Love, whose life-giving water can quench the thirst of the soul for a drink divine. My father meditated on it morn and night and imbibed great strength, and it was passed on to us as the Guru's *Kripavachanam*. Whenever we sang this song in the Guru's Ashram in latter years, we saw his benign countenance light up the temple of our hearts:

*“Mano Vak Kaaya Karmaanime Sudhyantaam Jyothi Aham,  
Virajaa Vipaapma Bhujahsam Svaha.”*

In purity and continence, in meditation and worship, can one gain the insight of the nearness of God abiding deep within each one, as well as pervading the whole universe. Thus did St. Appar link his thoughts to Him, in a Devaram where he hails the body as the temple of God, and offers the worship of love:

*“This body is the temple and the wayward mind a bondsman,  
Truth is the incantation and the heart chimes the peals,  
Vibrating in praise of the symbolic form in formless Lingam;  
Immersed in milk and ghee and the waters of devotion,  
Thus do we offer our soulful worship to the Lord within.”*

*St. Appar IV. 76.4.*

Swami again and again reiterates that by chanting Siva's Name, we can invoke Him who is seated in the lotus of the heart. He is sure to heed our call and guide us even as He, dwelling in the high, guides the planets and the stars. That the Indweller inspires all our righteous desires, and guides the *anma* to its plenum of realisation is the quintessence of this song.

### **BEHOLD THE TEMPLE OF THYSELF**

**The body is a temple,  
The mind is a votary,  
And love is worship.  
Know this and walk intently.  
Thou lacketh nothing. So the Vedas declare.**

**The Lord, inseparable e'en for a second,  
The crafty ones cannot see.  
Thy inmost core, His sanctum,  
And the life force is the Lamp.  
Ponder till the truth dawns within.**

**The distinction of friend and foe  
Eschew and repeat Siva-Siva,  
And be immersed in joy.  
So excellent is this goal**

**That it's worth your constant pursuit.**

**Strive steadily and know thyself  
And shed the dual consciousness by His Grace.  
This life being evanescent,  
Seek to serve thy fellow brethren.  
This indeed is virtuous conduct.**

**By service meek will evil recede,  
By service will super powers flow in,  
Sickness shall flee and fearless you become.  
Such beatific bliss inexpressible  
In felicity sweet be thine.**

**To see the soul in all as Sivam  
And do good is to seek His Feet.  
Sorrow shall not touch them,  
And joy everlasting be their reward.  
Truly shall they attain the Lord of Thillai.**

**In steadfast faith do thou consecrate  
Thy body, spirit and all thou art,  
And in that instant shall thou be blessed  
With the radiant feet of Nataraj.  
This indeed is Truth.**

**Sweep not unresisting,  
Ne'er madly insisting  
Sing not, serve not,  
Seek not, dream not.  
The Feet of the Cosmic Dancer adorns thy crown.**

**Treasure rectitude dearer than life.  
This sacred utterance do the wise affirm,  
And the deeper you press it to your heart,  
The more will you be infused with His joy.  
Live nobly adoring His fragrant Feet.**

*--Natchintanai. 298-299.*

## **THE CONJUGATION OF MINE AND THINE**

In this poem, we hear the inner voice of the Guru: 'Arise from the stupor of illusion; *Arise, Awake and See God*: Do not search for Him.' In the Chandogya Upanishad is a dialogue between the Guru and the disciple which brings out the truth of this *Natchintanai* song, that the body is the temple of the Lord:

*“Within the city of Brahman which is the body, there is the heart, and within the heart, there is a little house. This house has the shape of a lotus and within it dwells that which is to be sought after, inquired about, and realised.”*

*“What is in the macrocosm is in this microcosm. All things that exist, all beings and all desires are in the city of Brahman. When the body dissolves in death, the lotus of the heart where Brahman exists in all his glory, that and not the body, is the true city of Brahman. Brahman dwelling within is untouched by any deed and is deathless. His desires are right desires and are fulfilled. Those who have realised the Self and its right desires find permanent happiness everywhere.”*

*Chandogya Upanishad--VIII. 1.1.*

Upakosala and Svetaketu came to realise the truth of the Self from their revered teachers:

*“Lo, to him who knows It shall no evil cling, even as drops of water cling not to the leaf of the Lotus. All beings have their self in Him alone. He is the Truth. He is the subtle essence of all. He is the Self. And that, Svetaketu, That art Thou. That which is the subtle essence--in that have all beings their existence. That is the Truth. And that, Svetaketu, That art Thou.”*

In '*The Body, Thy Temple*,' Swami enjoins us to dive deep within, even to the lotus of the heart, where dwells the Lord. Though all beings live every moment in the city of Siva, yet they never find Him, because of the veil of impurity. Knowing that the Self resides within the lotus of the heart, and devoted to the Self, the sage enters daily that holy sanctuary. He is freed from identity with the body and lives in blissful consciousness.

The Self is immortal and fearless. The Self is Siva and He is THAT--the Eternal Truth. All evil shuns That. For That is free from impurity, and this world of Siva is reached by those who practise continence. The knower of eternal truth knows it through continence; and what is known as worship, that also is continence, for a man worships the Lord by continence and thus attains Him.

*“If the mind becomes spotless and pure,  
you can realise the Lord within the body.”*

*Auvaiyar-Jnana Kural. 11.4.*

Symbology only interprets the Truth. In this *void* of the heart there is everything that we see outside. The Kingdom of *Sivoham* is there--immutable and eternal. One who realises this Truth is an *Atma Jnani*. Seek inward. Do not cherish any desire or attachment. Then thou shall see God within, in purity. 'Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God.'. This is the virtue of a true *Yogi* or *Jnani*.

Swami quoted Christ's Sermon from the New Testament,

*“Seek ye first the Kingdom of God within you and all other  
treasures shall be added unto you,”*

and added that all things that man desires are in his possession and well stored in his heart. Why search for it in vain in the outer world? Once a man experiences His Presence within his self, then all other things take their places in the right perspective in his life.

*“The object of this body formed of food is to enable you to  
realise the Primeval Being within.”*

*Auvaiyar-Jnana Kural. 11.10.*

What is falsehood? It is desire and attachment. These distract us and make us seek outside of us. The beatitude of bliss usually springs from within and not from outside. Jnanis do not seek God from outside. You cannot establish the Truth of God by logical proofs and didactic means, or by the senses or inner faculties.

Swami testified that we can *hear* God's voice, if we tune our ears to hear Him. What makes us not to hear God's voice is because our senses are all

directed on outward objects and not turned within. Seek Him within. The first requirement is Purity. By and by, one learns to get rid of desire and non-desire by absolute surrender and the practice of continence. By rectitude and self-restraint, man is freed from ignorance and suffering. Thenceforth, he realises the bounty of divine Grace, and lives in quiet contemplation. It is then that he learns to behold everything with the eyes of unifying love. In order to pursue this great objective in life, Swami bids everyone to practice *Dhyanam*--meditation in silence.

Swami narrated the story of the *musk deer* who searched for the source of the fragrance of musk in hill and dale; and tired out, the deer laid down only to find that the fragrance of musk emanated from its own navel. Then it became still and did not rush here or there. In the same manner do we perform so much of spiritual practice to realise God. We fast, we mortify the body, sing and pray and worship. Yet it is not in all these aids that one can attain the goal of God-realisation. Do Siva Dhyanam.

How does God reveal Himself to an earnest seeker? By His Grace alone can we see God and live in His Light. Therefore the Guru bids everyone to surrender oneself to Him alone. "Offer yourself wholly at His Feet."

This is the true meaning of *Thy will be done*.

The various religious pathways, *Sadhanas*, are useful only up to a point in so far as they help man to get rid of all impurities. It is by His Grace alone that one can have the vision of the inner Effulgence--*Atma Jyothi*, whence divine love surges from within. Rising above physical consciousness, one rejoices and is free.

The illumined *anma* shall see Him in every being and know that He who is within each one is also moving as the matrix in everything, as Light and Wisdom too. Therefore why wander far to temples and bathing ghats? Man shall attain what he seeks and yearns for, here and now, if only he remains in perfect quietude with a pure and chastened heart.

The third Revelation of St. Julian throws light on Swami's realisation of beatific bliss:--

*"There is no doer but He  
In the eternal Now, all-thing is perfected--  
All manner of things shall be well.*

*For He willeth that the least thing shall not be forgotten.”*

St. Augustine in *Enduridon* also dwells on this truth:

*“All things that exist are supremely good.”*

We quote below the *Upadesh* from St. Tirumular's Book of Wisdom:

*“There was a time when I despised my body;  
But then I saw within the indwelling God.  
Since the Lord has made my body His temple,  
I have now learned to view it with esteem.  
When the body fails and life is extinct,  
The anma surrenders the chance of growth.  
Cherishing the body and preserving life,  
I foster the everlasting glory of the anma.*

*“The offering made to the moving temples,  
That will reach the Lord of all temples.”*

*--Tirumantram.*

Thus even the greatest of empires pale into insignificance before the lotus of the heart, that is the throne of Grace on which is seated the Supreme King of Love.

*“The only object of acquisition of a body is to realise herein The Supreme Purushothama.”*

*Auvaiyar--Jnana Kural 11.1.*

## THE PEACE CHANT

It is always springtime when the Guru is encountered. God's Grace lies hidden in the lotus Feet of the Guru. “He is my Guru who has illumined my sight to see the Lord's immanence everywhere--*Sarvam Brahma mayam.*”

This song of Swami is a propitiatory Peace Chant, intended to remove the barriers on the pathway to Self-realisation. It is a paean on peace, perfect peace--*Santam Upasantam*, set to the rippling raga of *Kamaas*. Its melody conveys the jubilation of a soul that sees *Brahmam* everywhere in the universe.

**“Oh, the harmony of Peace, poise, equanimity and serene love, that throbs deep within the bosom of the Lover, who discerns the whole universe as moving to the mighty music of the cosmic Dancer! Who will join in his concord of rapturous jubilation? List to the rhythmic measure! *“Thaam Thimi Thimi Tharikida kida Sem.....In the midst of this animation, why suffer? Chant the name of Siva-Siva. See Him and serve Him nobly. Our best protection and armour in this life is to realise *“That we are That”--“Naam athuvane arivathu kavasam.” “The glory of life is to serve Him who permeates everything.”****

**“Thothintha Thatha thathari kida  
Enintha paadu Enkum Siva, Siva.”**

*--Natchintanai. 6.*

From this pinnacle of the cosmic vision of *“Sarvam Sivamayam,”* Swami turns his gaze to the Indweller within, the Thief, and whispers to us not to forget the inseparable presence of the Lord in the consciousness of every being.

**“What an awakening is it to be perfumed with the fragrance of Siva within Us!”. The Guru beckons us to hit the goal. “The immortal anma is in eternal union with Siva. In this integral non-separateness, one becomes immersed in love. The blossoming of this invincible love of Siva in the heart of man is the most sublime manifestation of the Infinite Siva in His immanence.”**

Such is the insight of the enlightened Seers, that they outpour their surging love on the suffering humanity, that *'other,'* in selfless service. Our most excellent Guru hath expounded on the true nature of *Inpam* or Bliss, which does not undergo any change or decay, and which has no truck with fleeting diversity. *'Behold one another as thySelf and love one, love all,'* is the touchstone of Swami's song on *Inpam*. Love generates love and quells all fear. In spontaneous surrender, there is so much of sweet content, and we hear the Guru's voice echo, *“Fear not, I am in thee,”* **“Exalted in love, more precious than that of a mother's tender love, the soul rests in quiescence in speechless felicity.”**

Swami was an oracle of bliss. Full of benignity to all who sought his solace, always buoyant with fullness, steeped in inner silence so vital, he communicated the incommunicable bliss of the union of Siva and Jiva:

Swami abhors weakness in whatever form, and exhorts the young to face the challenges of life victoriously with the armour of courage and fortitude. Fear and cowardice, poverty and meanness, malignity and wrath, injustice and desire must be vanquished, if fearlessness is to thrive. To the man of undaunted bravery, the whole world appears invincible. It requires limitless courage to apprehend the Real by the wisdom of the self. The Guru's transcendental consciousness had no commerce with the enfeebled, dividing forces of the *Tattvas*. That heroic valour and brilliant display of strength at all levels of consciousness prove invaluable in the path of self-realisation, was demonstrated to us by the life of Our Gurunathan.

In the rare moments of ecstasy, we felt in his Presence, as if the ancient seers of the Upanishad Era had stepped into his hermitage to hold intimate communion with Swami. He was a shining testimony of a *Yogiswara*, a knower of the Self--who had transcended the sway of the categories--*Tattvas*, as declared by the revealed scriptures-- and testified by all knowers of Truth.

Again and again, in his inspiring utterances in Natchintanai, Swami makes one realise that each one is not separate from *That*, and the first step is to know one's own self:

**Know thySelf and --  
become ThySelf --**

**“Changing and evanescent are the deluding panorama of life” “and therefore safeguard yourself from being involved by the empirical avenues of enjoyment”**

In these songs of '*Upa Santam, Viiram, and Inpam,*' Swami formulates lucid thought-forms or mantras for meditation--*Sarvam Brahmamayam, Om Sivayanama, Love art Thou-Wisdom thy orb, and Thy will-not mine, oh Lord--*by which the consciousness can gain clear insight. He alone Is.

As we chant these mellifluous lyrics, our minds and hearts are lifted high above daily trifles, and released into the vast sphere of cosmic contemplation. In these Natchintanai Selections, Swami's deepest intuitions and experiences are crystallised and communicated as a *Way of Life*. They point the *Way to liberation*. They also invigorate the soul with intelligence, joy and sanctity.

The whole universe is a manifestation of that universal, formless, causeless Being, as celebrated in the *Purusha Suktam* by the Vedic Seers. The sun, moon and all quarters, all knowledge and the *anma* of all existing beings are parts and manifestations of that single All-Immanent Being. All life and all qualities, functions and activities--Swami lists thirty of these in his Ode to Bliss--and forms of that Divine Energy. To perceive and realise this absolute foundation of all existence, the mind must be so tuned and concentrated as an archer concentrates on his target.

*“With unruffled calm, contemplate on Him and realise  
His deathless Form of absolute Joy.”*

Swami's invocation of *Sarvam Brahmamayam* unites time and eternity, and the Guru with the devotee in refulgent glory. We recall the Peace chant of the Upanishads which our Guru would make us chant night and day:

OM! Saha Naavavathu  
Saha nau bhunaktu.  
Saha viiryam Karavaavahai;  
Tejasvi naava dhitamastu;  
Ma vidhvisha vahai.  
Om Santi, Santi, Santi!

OM! May He overshadow us both!  
May we together experience the Truth;  
May we create a channel of divine energy;  
May we be endowed with the lustre of the spirit and  
true understanding.  
May there be no discordance between us.

Om Peace, Peace, Peace.

*--Taittiriya Upanishadd 11.1.*

## **THE WAY**

How shall one *serve* the Lord who is both Immanent and Transcendent! Wherein lies happiness that is the obverse of sorrow? Our Guru taught us to free ourselves from the snare of duality with self-knowledge, self-restraint and self-purity, and embrace the cleaveless Truth. The celebration of self-illumination in these songs helps the untutored and the young aspirants to

follow in the trackless footprints of the matchless Teacher.

**“Before the kingly Guru who uttered the  
truth that self is naught,  
My fugitive I-ness vanished.”**

*--Natchintanai. 12.*

*“To those who do not fall at the feet of the Guru and do not  
unite with him, Siva will not be perceived.”*

*“If the SatGuru shows the true way,  
Inseparable will be Siva.*

*--Auvai Kural III. Guru Vazhi.*

## **THE SONG OF THE WAYFARER**

**Arise early and praise his lustrous Feet.  
Worship Him and don the holy ash.  
Chant the Letters Five ceaselessly.  
Weep and yearn for his Grace.  
Honour thy father and mother.  
Cherish all beings as you cherish yourself.  
Be as expansive as the sky.  
Foster the good virtues with zeal;  
And do thy duty, do it well.  
Let the body act in unison with the mind;  
Know thyself and become ThySelf.  
A balanced life do thou espouse,  
Not perturbed by the tide of ebb and flow.  
Sing in praise and chant His Name  
For ever with translucent clarity.  
Seek not fleeting joys and gains.  
Be a mother in abundance of Love, and repose  
In the quiescence of speechless felicity.  
Thus live for e'er in blissful serenity.**

*--Natchintanai. 8.*

## **THE PILGRIM'S SONG**

The pilgrim is on the march. The world of animation with its transient panorama ceases to trouble him any more. He extols the beauty of the wordless silence as the priceless gift endowed to him by his Guru.

In *Kandar Anubhuti* Verse 12.

*St. Arunagiri Nathar* too conveys the incommunicable bliss of perpetual awareness in the dynamism of pure Being-*Summa Iru*--as a result of the awakening experience by the God-Guru, Murugan.

*“The thief who stole the deer's offspring,  
Lord Murugan, unborn and immortal--  
'Be still, in speechless silence,' said He  
And e'en then, the great secret I knew not.”*

Swami invokes the blessings of the elemental forces to shower their benign awards on earth.

**“Will not the rains descend and enrich our parched land?  
Why not live a joyous life and let live? The Lord of Nallur  
came as my Guru and enslaved me. Inexpressible is the  
felicity of His beatitude.”**

**“If you taste the nectar of Natchintanai, is there further  
need in this world to master any other branches of learning”?**

**“How shall I dwell on the unique experience of the impact  
of my Guru on my humdrum existence? He set in motion a  
series of vibrations of ecstatic bliss.”**

*--Natchintanai. 167.*

**“The devoted Siva-Yogan claims nothing to himself. He was a man of  
penury. Yet he became intoxicated with unquenchable love as he knew  
no fear; No attachments gripped him. He was liberated from the pangs  
of dual consciousness by the invincible Guru, who came of his own  
accord and made him His own--”**

Swami delineates the Siva Yogi's spiritual experience in words quivering with feeling:

**“He does not know the skill of singing, nor does he know**

any of the fine arts. He only knows the art of alms-taking,  
and thus did he free himself from the pangs of birth.”

“Thus uplifted in the transcendental experience of Oneness, with fearlessness as his badge, and bereft of all divisive barriers of subject and predicate, *Sivayogan* was beside himself, weeping, falling, trembling, embracing and muttering, in the sublime contemplation of the Self within as the Supreme Self--

“Meditate on the Self and realise the Self.”

--*Natchintanai. 167.*

### THE GOAL

Essence of wisdom and love art *Anma*.  
Vain art deluding charms of weal and woe!  
How can these defile your nature?  
Can a mirage dissolve the solid ground?  
The gracious Feet of the illumined Guru,  
Praise with yearning love to thy utmost.  
Recall not the chain of past events.  
Invoke His grace with ardent zeal.  
Like the surge of water from a sluice,  
In continual fervour poised in Oneness,  
Enjoy in *samadhi* the nectar of sweet felicity,  
Freed from the tension of ends and means.  
Thus do thou realise the goal of *Mukti* (attainment).

--*Natchintanai. 10.*

# THE DIVINE MOTHER'S LILA

## MOTHER OF MILLIONS OF WORLD-CLUSTERS

### Devi Sukta

In the *Devi Sukta*, we get one of the earliest and finest delineation of Sakti. The Supreme in the form of the Divine Energy sings the carol of Her Glory:

“Aum! I wander with the principle of life, with the spheres of existence, the sovereign principles, and the all-pervading Gods; I am the support of Might, of Fire, of the Law of man and Gods; and of the horse-headed Gods of agriculture.

I am the support of the shaper, of the nourisher, of the Inherited-share. I am the giver of the fruit of action to the performer of the ritual sacrifice, which nourishes the Gods with offerings.

I am the Kingdom, the giver of wealth, and the Knower (of the essence of things). I come first in all rituals. The Gods have established me in various abodes. My sphere is wide. I dwell in all things.

Whoever who eats food does so through me. Whoever who sees, breathes, does so through me. Thus am I in everything. He who hears so and experience it so, he will be freed from the bonds of birth and attain release. Those who do not understand me plunge into bondage of *samsara* and go down.

Oh Lover, hear thou what I tell you, who art endowed with faith. *I am That*. So I say unto you. I am She who am worshipped by gods and men. He who is dear to me, him will I exalt above all others. I make him a wise one, a rishi and a Brahma.

I pitch the bow to the arrow of Rudra, to kill the asuras who harm the devas. I fight the battle of those who draw unto me. In heaven and earth, I am immanent yet hidden.

The Paramatma's all pervasive sky (akasha) do I create. The efficient (yonī), productive aspect of me as power, lies hidden in the oceans and water. Thenceforth I cover the whole earth and am immanent. Even the heavens do I touch with my (body) form.

When the creation of the world commenced, I sustained on my own, and like the wind was I, which bloweth where it listeth. My greatness expands beyond earth and heaven. I shine as the resplendent Atma, soul of all. I shine like the world Soul in all my glory”--*Devi Sukta*.

That nothing can exist unless there is ground for its existence, some substratum from which

it may rise, is expressed in the *Sikshavalli* of the *Taittiriya Upanishad*. “The universal substratum is known as *Para Brahman* and the potentiality of manifestation--*Sakti*, appears in the form of opposing tendencies represented as *cohesion--Vishnu*, and *disintegration--RudraSiva*, and their balance, which is the space-time creating principle, being known as *Brahma--Immense Being*.“

The tension between the opposites from which movement arises in the substratum is depicted as the first appearance of Energy (*Sakti*). It is from manifest energy that existence springs forth. Energy appears as the substance of everything, pervading everything. It can be the power of Siva, the power of Vishnu and the power of Brahma. As the power of their combined form--*ParaSivam*, it becomes the *Supreme Sakti*--the resplendent 'Mother of millions of world clusters'.

Grace is the power which is regarded as the Universal Mother, and being inseparably inherent in Siva is also called the Consort of Siva.

List to Her silent footsteps! She comes, comes, ever comes. Let us sing Her glory at all times. So declared St. Tayumanavar in a canzone of exquisite charm which bears close association with Swami's plaintive song on Guharini:

*“All-filling, Ancient, Auspicious, Independent  
Destroyer of the Triple city, Three-eyed,  
Beautiful, Excellent, Blissful causing bliss  
Narani on thousand-petalled lotus throned,  
Sovereign Lady beyond the ken of thought.  
Cosmic Force transcending quality  
Manifest there where Vibration ceaseth :  
Of Thy servants who thus chant thy names  
Am I worthy even to utter their names?  
As Mistress of the Vedas hailed by Him  
Whose locks are wreathed with attil flower,  
Mother of millions of world-clusters,  
Yet Virgin by the Vedas called !  
Oh Swan whose form is bliss, fertile Tevai's Queen,  
Praised of Ganga in whose waters maidens sport!  
Lady Uma who lovest mountain haunts and wast born  
Dear to the Mountain-king as the apple of his eye !*

--St. Tayumanavar--*Malaivalar Kathali*.

The notion of divinity which works on this basis of power is the cult of *Sakti*. It is through energy that the motionless substratum gets energised and the universe can be created, maintained and destroyed. She is the power of Siva. This primordial Goddess is

worshipped as the “*Veiled Kundalini*” in Swami's song on *Guharini* (--20). The quiescent aspect of *Siva* and the dynamic activity of *Sakti* combine to beget countless centres of energies in the macrocosm and microcosm.

*“It is in the union of Sivam and Sakti  
That true wisdom is fully revealed.”*

*--Tirumantram. 1599.*

The powerful energy cannot be distinct from the substratum from which it arises. The word *Sakti* meaning 'energy' is found in the Vedas, where its equivalent *saci* (Divine grace) represents divine energy.

*“It should be known that energy assumes various forms at the  
command of Him who is the maker of time, who is omniscient,  
who is Pure Consciousness itself, and by whom all  
this is ever enveloped.”*

*--Svetasvatara Upanishad VI 2.*

In consonance with the tradition of the earliest prehistoric Saivism, the eternal *Siva* with His Spouse is hailed and invoked in the *Tirumurai Hymns*, *Saiva Puranas* and *Siddhanta Classics*. Divine Energy or *Sakti* is lauded as the source of everything. It is the origin of the phenomenal world, and also of the conscious plan of its creation. It is the principle of knowledge and perception through which its existence can be known. *Sakti* is also signified as Consciousness. She is Action and she is the emotive Power. In order to gain liberation from the bonds, one should worship the witness of all, the transcendent Energy, whose “shape is the Self and in whom are found neither the manifest world nor its pleasures”--*Sutta Samhita*. 482.

She is *Brahma Vidya*--the knowledge of the Immensity. As the power of manifestation, *Sakti* appears at the root of the three aspects of existence, as Reality (*Sat*), Consciousness (*Chit*), and Experience (*Ananda*). As Reality, She is the power of action (*kriya*) that is, of causation. She is as well the power of multiplicity. As Consciousness, She is the power of understanding and the power of the flow of knowledge. As Experience, She is the power of enjoyment and of cognition, of realisation, of transcendent knowledge and the consort of *Siva*.

According to a plan formed in Divine Will, Energy (*Sakti*) arose from the radiance or Reality, Consciousness and Experience. From Energy was born the principle of vibration, the point-limit (*Nada Bindu*) from which the manifest world of action, knowledge, and desire begins. It is the Law that governs divinity, a law which is not distinct from divinity

itself. It is the nature of the Immensity.

Swami describes the nature of divinity as spontaneous knowledge, strength and action. Divine Energy is sometimes referred as the wrathful:

It assumes the power of Time, the power of multiplicity, and power of knowledge according to the task performed.

*“That which has become all, and which is as subtle as atom shall appear with a body.”*

*“He stands pure and immaculate within the heart of the devotee--He is the one in all lives.”*

*--Auvai-Kural. 5.9.*

In the heart of man, the veiled form of this Immense Power of *Sivam* lies dormant, and Swami awakens it from its sweet slumber. He brings out all these phases of power in his profound poem on *Guharini*, the veiled and yet dynamic *Siva-Sakti*. “She is the immensity of the cosmos as well as the atomic power in the inmost heart of man. The Vedas declare that those who perceive this power of Immensity and rejoice in its refulgence will no more be whirled on earth.” It is the word of Swami:

## **OH VEILED AND PEERLESS GUHARINI !**

**“Oh Guharini! Magnetic power so peerless!  
Thou who art hidden in the cave of my heart unknown,  
Universal Energy lying coiled and dormant within, Arise!  
Release thy cosmic power in me and in all moving objects,  
By the act of Grace divine-Ambrosial sweetness Thou!  
Oh vital Energy so feminine! Generating Beauty of Grace!  
Reveal thy liberating power so that the veiled polarity  
Inherent in manifestation is removed with thy ascent,  
And I experience the perpetual bliss in mystic Oneness.  
Awake, Arise, Oh Mother from thy slumber!  
Bestir from thy resting place of Muladhara centre;  
Move majestically to unite with the supreme Being  
In lotus of the crown, the seat of light effulgent.  
Is there anything rare, anything separate from me?  
Therefore with the nectar of thy Grace arise and come;  
Reveal the grandeur of thy increscent incandescence,  
As thou mingle in ineffable bliss with the Sun of Siva.  
Deign thy Grace to crown me with such consummation.**

## THE YOGI'S LIGHT

Swami, the illumined *Yogiswara*, invokes the release of the potent power hidden in each being, the power of *Kundalini*, to merge with the cosmic power of the eternal Reality through the heightened *Dhyana-Sadhana* of intense meditation and yogic awakening. In this poem, Swami revels in bliss as he hails the dormant, gracious Sakti to arise, awake and stop not till the goal is reached!

According to the Yoga Sastras, there runs through the spinal cord a canal called the *Sushumna*, at the base of which is a plexus called the Muladhara (basic), and at the crown in the cerebrum, the plexus called the *Sahasrara* (thousand-petalled lotus). In the basic plexus is stored the cosmic energy, an infinitesimal fraction of which is distributed throughout the body by the motor and sensory nerves, and mainly by the two columns of nerves called *Ida* and *Pingala* on either side of the *Sushumna* canal. This canal though existing in all living beings is closed except in the *Yogi*. He dispenses with motor and sensory nerves, opens the canal, sends through it all mental currents, makes the body a gigantic battery of will, and rouses the vast coiled up power called the *Kundalini* from the basic plexus to the thousand-petalled lotus in the head. As the power travels up the canal, higher and more wonderful powers of vision and knowledge are gained till the consummation of union with Siva is attained.

The transcendental experience of the commingling of the kinetic Sakti with the static power of Siva in the *Brahmarandra* is incommunicable, as the peace and bliss are beyond the experience of the phenomenal world:

**“Behold the consummation of Siva and Sakti  
And eternal life is assured, my dear.”**

--Natchintanai. 41.

It is in these moments of divine ecstasy that realised Seers like Swami feel that they are linked together with everything else they perceive in the universe. All finite forms of experience appear to them as inseparable from the infinite, and they break through the veil of form to see the relativity of both form and formless experience. The true *Maha-Yogi* alone can rise beyond the space-time relationship and see the past, present and future all at once. **“This is to see without seeing. He alone sees who sees all beings as HimSelf.”**

In the first poem on the Glory of Light and Bliss, St. Tayumanavar reveals this profound yogic insight of the Seers, in whom the *Kundalini* Sakti is for ever dynamic:

*“Be thou under the guidance of a realised Guru,  
Study the Tantric texts, and practise the control of breath;*

*Pursue the path of Yoga and purify thyself  
In pranayama and by such mastery, release  
The energy of Kundalini to reach the crown of your head,  
Wherein you taste the nectar of bliss and peace.  
Behold with the eye of wisdom ever awake and luminous,  
The harmony of the whole, without the confusion  
Of one in many and many in one, as claimed  
By religions all. Will this radiant Truth penetrate  
My enjoyment for ever, in this body?  
Oh perfect Bliss, Effulgence serene,  
Wisdom indwelling in my heart!"*

## **THE GLORY OF SAKTI**

We recall to the sessions of silent thought a *Vijaya Dasami* morn, the last day of the Navarathri season, sacred to Devi worshippers, when these songs were sung in Swami's Ashram by the devotees. The halo of serenity floated over Swami's crown and the white beard moved gently reflecting the gleam of the Dawn beyond his hermitage. It marked the dawn of the triumph of the Good over the force of evil--a day of victory for the "Mother of millions of world clusters, yet Virgin by the Vedas hailed." The magnificat of the *Mother* from the *Devi Mahatmyam* brought that unforgettable session to a close:

***"Ya Devi Sarva bhutesu chetanethia pitiathe,  
namasthasyai, namasthayai, namastasyai, namo namah:"***

*"That power perceived as consciousness, in all beings  
Praise be to her, praise, praise.*

*That power that is known as reason in all beings,  
Praise be to her praise, praise.*

*That power who exists in all beings as energy  
Praise be to her, praise, praise.*

*That power who exists in all beings as santam.  
All praise to her, praise, praise.*

*That power that animates in all as faith,  
All praise to her praise, praise.*

*That power that moves in all beings as loveliness.  
All praise to her praise, praise.*

*That power who exists in all beings as Fortune,  
Praise unto her, praise, praise.*

*That power who moves in all beings as fulfilment  
Praise be to her, praise, praise.*

*That power who exists in all beings as Mother  
Praise be to her, praise, praise.*

*That power who pulsates in all beings in the form of Illusion,  
Praise be to her, praise, praise.”*

*--Devi Mahatmyam. V. 15-76.*

## **THE YAGJNA OF WORSHIP**

“Swami, what is the significance of your bidding us to go to Sithi-Vinayagar temple, Murugan temple at Nallur and Thyalnayagi temple at Vannarponnai and do *abisheham*, *sahasranaman* and *Ashtotra Pujas*? What is the meaning and purpose of ritualistic worship?” So asked a devotee, one Friday evening, as the *prasadam* of the temple near by was brought by two elderly devotees and laid at Swami's Feet.

Swami was silent for a while and sang the song:

Then he became silent. Again he sang:

*“The mode of worship of the wise is internal.  
The intellects is the alter, pure intuition is the Sivalingam thereon.”*

*--Auvaiyar Jnana Kural. VIII. 3.*

“Our many gods and goddesses represent but so many different aspects of the one Godhead. All those who are seated before me--I see one--but in so far as they differ in their temperaments, they are inclined to follow different forms of worship. To meet the various needs of the people, the scriptures have ordained distinct modes of worship.”

In the songs of *Natchintanai*, there are invocations to *Kulanthai Vadivelan*, *Murugan*, *Kandaswamy*, *Siva*, *Rama*, *Narayana*, *Devi*, *Mother*, *Pillayar*, and *Sivalingam*; they prove the fact that various forms of worship and invocations are meant for persons in different

stages of spiritual evolution. But the underlying idea behind all these songs is the worship of the One Supreme God--"He who is without a second." Sang Swami:

**“Worship the One Supreme, Oh Mind!  
That which pervades the universe and the soul--  
'Tis the Eternal Light of Reality.”**

*--Natchintanai. 175.*

Sang St. Auvaiyar:

*“Meditate daily on the faultless One and melt in love and  
at-one yourself with Him. You will realise yourself as a  
spark of the divine flame.*

*--AuvaiKural II. Ninaipuruthal. 6.*

There are the spiritual pathways of *Sariyai, Kriyai, Yoga* and *Jnana*, so vividly portrayed by our Saiva Saints, so that whatever path we follow will lead to the goal of the Supreme Siva. There is the ritualistic worship of God embodied in an image or symbol. Higher than this is the worship of God with prayer and japa, or repetition of the divine name and meditation upon it. By this means, the aspirant sings and chants upon the form of his chosen ideal within his heart. Higher still is to realise the Immanent one within the body in quiescence.“

*--Auvai Kural. VIII. 7.*

When a devotee practices this form of worship, he keeps up a constant flow of love towards God, and becomes absorbed in the living presence of his chosen ideal.

St. Auvaiyar, the great mystic poetess describes the modes of worship thus:

*“In the six centres of the body, realise the form of Siva  
and root out the sense of separateness and that is one mode of worship.”*

*“The highest form of worship is to contemplate on Siva with unswerving, one  
pointed attention and intense love.”*

*“Within the mind, intently contemplate on the effulgent flame. That is the tranquil  
mode of worship.”;*

*--Auvai Kural. VIII. 4.5.10.*

“The individual self becomes merged in the luminous Siva.” So said our Gurunathan

In Kena Upanishad occurs a significant passage:

*“There not the eye goes, nor goes the speech, nor mind  
 How can one teach It we know not, nor understand;  
 'Other than the known It is, above the unknown'--  
 That which no speech can express through which speech  
 expresses,  
 That which no mind can think, through which mind does  
 think--  
 That which no eye can see, through which the eye does see--  
 That which no ear can hear, through which the ear does hear.  
 That which no breath can breath,  
 Through which the breath does breath,  
 That alone know you as Brahman, not what men worship.”*

*Verses 3-9.*

This stage of pure contemplation leads one directly and immediately to apprehend the Godhead, the Supreme Siva. This is termed *Anubhuti*, or spiritual experience. It is an actual realisation of the Omniscient Reality. If an aspiring seeker is instructed to meditate on the Formless, he will neither grasp the truth of it, nor be able to follow the Guru's instructions. But a novice can begin his spiritual sadhana with the worship of God with Form, with flowers, incense and other aids as fasting and study of the sacred texts.

Swami reiterated the necessity for a devotee to start his spiritual journey from *where he is*. By doing ritualistic worship, as St. Appar visualised in the Devarnam: “I'll not forget the worship with flower, water and incense etc.” our minds will gradually become concentrated and internalized; and this will increase our devotion to the performance of *japam* and the chanting of *mantras*, and meditation. Thus shall we gradually and naturally move towards the highest ideal.

Swami would say that if one was in a hurry to reach the top of the branch, he will not only break the branch, but fall down and injure himself. So is it in spiritual life. One should follow the Path of Truth--*Sanmarga*, step by step, for just as there are laws governing the physical world, there are also laws governing the spiritual domain as well.

The Supreme ideal of human life is to *Realise God*. The visible world is insignificant compared with what is invisible. There are many planes of existence different from ours. In the lower regions of the invisible world, there exist evil spirits who may influence us in a bad way, if we allow ourselves to become impure. But we need not be afraid of them so long as we remain pure in body and mind, maintaining the spiritual vibrations that keep all evil spirits away. On the higher planes of existence are good spirits, ever ready to help sincere souls struggling to overcome evil, grow spiritually and move towards the realisation of the ultimate Reality. These are the enlightened and illumined souls.

As distinct from these unseen planes, there are spiritual realms, the heavens of the various

religions; In these heavens are the various manifestations of the Supreme Godhead, in the form of divine Incarnations, or illumined Sages, Gurus, Gods and Goddesses, connoting various functions and powers. These divine manifestations may appear and be perceived by those, who have the eye to see and the mind to understand.

The Supreme Reality becomes manifest in forms familiar to the devotee. Thus a Hindu may see certain luminous forms of Muruga, Ambal, Vigneswara or the Guru, and followers of other religions may enjoy visions corresponding to their own religious forms. These spiritual visions are different manifestations of the one Godhead, which is beyond name and form, and yet manifests Itself through name and form.

The devotees pass through different stages on the way to the Supreme. The *Saiva Siddhantam* speaks of waking, dreaming, dreamless, “*Turiyam and Turiyaditam*” stations of the soul, each with its distinct disciple and degrees of awareness. In the stage of dualism, the devotee feels that God is separate from himself, and approaches Him with human feelings like that of a servant to the master, the child to the mother, a friend to a friend and a lover to his beloved.

This is followed by the next stage leading to qualified non-dualism. The devotee feels the Supreme One as the *whole*, and all his worshippers as infinitesimal parts of the *whole*. There is but one great *whole* to which all attributes cling. In the stage of non-dualism, the devotee realises that the One Infinite Being is manifesting itself in one form as the Cosmic Soul, and in another as the human soul. In the course of his spiritual evolution, the seeker realises that the cosmic and the individual are One in their essential nature. The whole and the part are both manifestation of the same infinite Sivam.

## VISVARUPA DHARSAN AND SYMBOLOGY

This was the *Visvarupa Dharsan* which Arjuna saw in the divine manifestation of Krishna, and Suran saw in Lord Muruga at the battlefield before the Sura-Sangaram. In that Infinite Effulgence, blessed with the divine Sight, these spiritual heirs see the Mighty One of the whole universe with all His tender and terrible aspects. The Universal Form could be overwhelming to most people; but the humanised form in the person of the Guru, every devotee yearns for, as then he can establish a loving human relationship regarding the Lord as the Guru in human form, who combines father, mother, friend, and beloved in one.

**“God with form is just as true as God without form.  
But hold fast to your conviction,” was Swami's injunction.**

**“God is formless, and yet He is with form. He is also that  
which transcends both form and formlessness. He alone  
knows what He is--Naamariyom-- “We do not know.”**

To some worshippers, Light appeals as the symbol of the divine Reality. To others, the

Grace of God symbolised in the “Holy Feet,” or Sakti in the form of mother Thyalnayake become significant, as the manifestation of the Supreme One. For the Maha-Yogi who has known his true Self, the Supreme Siva dwells in his own heart. Illumined Seers see It shining everywhere. They exclaim that God has become Everything. All that they perceive are so many forms of God--**Unmai Muluthum.**

An understanding of the meaning of symbols will throw a new light on the subject of Hindu Worship. The Latin *Symbolus* or *Symbolum* means a 'sign' by which one knows or infers a thing. Symbols are signs for expressing the invisible by means of the visible representations. To the Hindu, the *Tiruvadi* or *Paduka--Feet*, connote the symbol of divine grace, as the cross to the Christian means a symbol of salvation. The mystic considers the circle as a symbol of eternity.

The geometric symbols like the circles, triangles and octagon are sometimes referred to as *Yantras*. The anthropomorphic symbol is the human symbol. It may be statues of divine personalities like that of Buddha absorbed in meditation, Krishna with the flute or Vishnu with Mahalakshmi. It may at times be a human relationship such as that of a teacher, or father or mother. We need images because on the whole, man has a natural tendency to give and take, and also personalize his worship of the Supreme, Transcendent One. Man needs a visible ideal to follow in his spiritual practice in order to rise to the spiritual plane of direct communion.

The symbol is a means of remembering the Lord Absolute through the association of ideas. The divine must not be brought to the level of the image. The symbol is helpful as long as it is understood that it is a representation of the divine Truth. As long as we do this, such worship is not idolatry, but a step towards the realisation of the Absolute. Swami as aptly has sung in one of his songs thus:

**“With Him who is beyond the thirty six Tattwas,  
and who is full of unfailing grace,  
Come Oh mind, for communion divine.”**

**--Natchintanai. 185.**

The spiritual seeker moves from a lower stage to a higher one, with an ever increasing Awareness, until the soul realises its '*para mukti*' at the Feet of Siva. Just as there are personal symbols, there are impersonal ones also. Fire has been such a symbol from very ancient times. The soul is conceived as a spark of the infinite Sun. The ocean is another great symbol. The soul is thought of as a river moving towards the ocean, and merging at its mouth into the vast deep of the Godhead.

Sound is itself a symbol. With the help of sound, we try to express what is beyond all sound. Any idea may be a symbol, with which we try to express something beyond thought. As we resort to external symbols, as we pray and repeat the divine Name of Siva,

*Sivayanama*, we come to have an intuitive experience of our relationship with the eternal Soul and the eternal Siva, and attain liberation. The *Sivathondan* terms it as the yogic realisation which culminates in a sense of Integral communion with God, and experience of which transcends thought, name and form.

The most magnetic of all religious symbols is the light, the light that radiates everywhere within and without--the light that never was on land or sea. Great mystics have realised the Peerless One in the form of Light. Moses saw the burning bush and received the word of God. The Upanishad seers saw It as *Jothi Aham*--the Splendour in the self.

In many a *Devaram* and *Tiruvacagam*, and the lyrics of *Tayumanavar* and *Ramalinga Swamikal*, we have allusions to light as the symbol of the formless God; and Light also indicates goals and the radiance of Wisdom, as well as the illumination of Supreme Awareness.

*“Gleaming as the earth and all the spheres  
Oh, Thou expanse of matchless Effulgence!  
In radiant forms of Light art Thou beheld  
Oh Formless One!”*

--*Tiruvacagam. 22.8.9.*

Thus the glory of the Auspicious Siva illumines everywhere and everything, and in the hours of meditation infuses the aspirant with a vivid sense of the divine Presence. The *Saiva Siddhanta* psalms resound with the glory of the resplendant light of Siva, whose luminous Eye gives all objects their power of seeing. “The Light of all light shines in the eyes of all beings.” The light that gleams in the cosmic mind penetrates its ray within the human mind as well. Beyond the human and the cosmic is the light of the Sun of Truth and all forms whether in the outer or inner world are lighted by the splendour of its luminosity.

*“Aum Bhuh Bhuvah Svah;  
Aum Tat Saviturvarenyam--  
Bhargo Devasya Dhimahi  
Dhiyo yona pracodayat.”*

*Gayatri Mantra.*

Thus everything that the enlightened *Yogi* and *Jnani* feels, sees or thinks is illumined by the light of the Infinite. This is the highest realization. However, to apprehend this infinite existence, consciousness and bliss, Hindu tradition has built up a fine system of symbols. Finally man learns to outgrow his spiritual childhood, and discards all symbols with the insight gained through Divine Grace; and in the tranquil Awareness of Peace, Perfect Peace, the soul commingles in the infinitude of Sivam. This was the assurance of all the great ascetic mystics. St. Pattinattar describes this blissful experience in a fine song :

Also the illustrious seer Auvaiyar concludes her chapter on Modes of Worship in Jnana Kural with this memorable couplet:

*“Know well, Seek well within, See Hara and Realise Him.”*

In *Yoga Neri*, Swami rejoices in this sublime consummation of the Anma with the ParaParam:

*--Natchintanai. 178.*

## THE LETTERS FIVE

Our Gurunathan sings on the glory of the Letters Five:

In order to Realise Siva, we must understand the theory of the *Mantra Sastra*, through which by repetition of mantras (Thought-forms) and japa (rhythmic mental concentration on them), we can gain powerful range and intensity which can change our entire aspect of a word or its combination has the capacity to activate the divine forms so invoked. A mantra becomes powerful not by its meaning, but through its sound vibrations and the patter of sound waves.

Seers of ancient times composed the mantras by joining symbolic syllables to certain patterns which released energy and through which the cosmic power revealed itself. Those who can raise the incantation of the Letters Five in the innermost depth of their hearts shall live in a state of yogic serenity. This was the assurance of our Yoga Guru. (291).

**“He is from everlasting to everlasting--He is  
The Perfection of those who have subdued their senses Five.”**

*--Natchintanai. 90.*

In the Saiva Scriptures, it is enjoined that the *Letters Five--the name of Siva--*arranged either as *Na Ma Si Va Ya* or as *Si Va Ya Na Ma* --should be given to the Initiate by the Guru, whose Upadesh will unfold deeper insights.

Siva is the substance of knowledge as well as the meaning of the word. The word itself, the instrument through which we grasp the meaning is a form of energy, and is thus assimilated to the power of Siva--the active principle of his manifestation represented as His consort, Sakti.

In the spring of Natchintanai that Swami released, the devotee in the quietude of blissful love takes up the ceaseless refrain of the Siva mantra incessantly. The infused adoration of the soul is the outcome of the Guru's Grace. The *pure soul* is lit up by *pure love*, habitual contemplation and perpetual recollection by means of the chanting of the sacred letters Five--SI VA YA NA MA. Thereby it radiates the light of Sivam.

What is the secret of the pregnant letters Five? Most devout Hindus repeat the thought form (mantra) until it becomes automatic and penetrates into the core of the innermost self. “*Aum Namasivaya* or *Aum Sivayanama*” constitute the incantation of the Letters Five, also termed as the *Panchakshara* which fills the soul with an all consuming fire and purges it of all desires, and leads it to the loving contemplation of Siva.

--*St. Sambandar. III. 22. 6.*

In the sacred songs of Tirumular, the Tirumurai Saints and all the Saiva Saints down the years, the holy form of letters Five--has been the axis of Meditation, leading to the surrender of one's *All*, at the gracious Feet of Siva.

In order to help the aspirant to chant the Name of Siva effectively, certain disciplines are prescribed. The breath is controlled and the repetition is regular and rhythmic and can be done to the counting of the Rudraksha beads, either loudly or silently.

The Yogic practice demanding certain physical postures and processes as conducive to concentration and recollection, has been perscribed in the Yoga Sastras of the Hindu tradition, and should be undertaken under the guidance of a realised Teacher. The aspirant is taught to control the breath, to keep his eyes fixed on the tip of his nose, and keep his head erect and back straight. The physical balance helps the process of introversion by which the inward Eye is turned away from outward things, and directed upon the soul itself, and upon the Lord Siva who indwells in it.

Swami rightly points out the dangerof undue emphasis on yogic exercises to perceive the divine Reality. People may indulge in excess and lull themselves into a hypnotic trance. Unhealthy concentration on the body is not good. Avoid excess in any form was the warning uttered by him at all levels, even to attain God. Ascetic disciplines must be enforced in moderation. Swami asks the question, --“*Can ye who can stand on the head and body upturned, discern God?*”

Equanimity and moderation afford the key to all spiritual practices. It is true that bodily postures do affect our mental attitudes and help concentration and absorption in the Lord within and without. The body as a beautiful temple of the Lord has been reiterated by Swami, who took up the refrain from the religious saints of Saivism:

St. Tirumular has a beautiful stanza where he urges the need to foster the body as it is a Holy of Holies. He testifies that is this sacrosanct tabernacle, “he saw the Eternal Lord, Source of Primal Goodness--*Uttaman*--as the indweller.”

St. Auvaiyar also makes a plea in the same strain to discover the inmate of the inner sanctum in the temple of our body. St. Manicavacagar praises the Lord as the Father who took up His abode in his body:

Swami too glorifies the body as the temple of God, and the wayward mind as the humble

sevaka, who adores the Indweller with offerings of love. **“Those who can perceive the body as the sanctum sanctorum of Siva-Sankara, experience the shelter of Thy Grace, Namasisivaya!”**

The name of Siva should become suffused with light, and the chanting too should become internal and spontaneous. Such internal worship that is done without a conscious act of will, in course of time becomes perpetual. It is known as the vibration of the '*Ajaba*'--a state of vitality in silence. The soul in the quietude of blissful peace takes up the silent refrain of the "*Letters five*" in whose repetition is the infused adoration of a yearning soul, which is also the fruit of Grace. The perpetual chanting of the sacred *Sivayanama* becomes involuntary, spontaneous and blissful.

The grace of the Guru begins to flow in abundance, and the *anma* is lit up by light and love. Peace and bliss follow such an experience--a union of the two in One, when duality ceases and there is a genuine perceptual apprehension of That, which the eye has not seen nor the ear heard. It is to behold the Supreme Lord in His cosmic form as Arjuna saw in the Bhagavad Gita, or the Rishis of Thillai beheld in the Golden Hall at Chidambaram. This *Visvarupa Dharsan* is a permanent state of those who chant constantly the Lord's Name. These are the blessed saints like our beloved Gurunathan, who discover the infinite Siva in everything, to whom day and night offer the same delights.

The Saiva Saints have ascribed immense powers and dignity to the *Five Letters*, which embody the *mantra* of His Name. The reverence for the formula is not only peculiar to the worshippers of Siva, but also to that of Vishnu and Krishna and Sri Rama, to whom the incantation spells Divine Presence. The soul's devotion is centred not in any particular form but in the *Word of God*.

Swami would often remind us that all spiritual discipline must be practised with a sound rule of faith. He believed that the incantation of the *Letters Five* with fervour and piety had the power to evoke higher levels of consciousness and to apprehend the Feet of God:

It can lead one imperceptibly to the silent contemplation of Him who is without form and mode, and who cannot be seen by impure and deluded souls. Therefore let us all with one accord worship Him with the *Name*.

## **AUM NAMASIVAYA VIBRATES**

*“Of all the yagjas I am the Japa Yagjna.”*

*--Bhagavad Gita. X.2.*

The goal of supreme wisdom is within the reach of everyone, if only he can disentangle himself from diverse attachments. Swami's insistence was on purity within and without. He bids us offer as a sacrifice, our work, our all at the Feet of God, and turn every act into a

sacramental *yajna* by a total inward absorption in the will of God. It is a call for the perfect surrender of the purified soul.

Truth cannot be realised by outward meditation--Sakala Dhyanam, nor by ascetic penances by cutting off from the stream of life, but by an active, inner contemplation--Nishkala Dhyanam. The wise architects of the inner temples saw and enjoyed the divine Presence in their hearts. In the expanse of the mind, by the banks of the river of love, they erected the temple of God, and they showered the grace of beholding the luminous presence within the inner sanctuary to the others who were tuned to witness this experience:

**“Oh Father who never leaves even for a split second, the minds  
of thy devotees! Oh Thou gracious Existence! Wielder  
of the axe and deer, Sweet Benevolence, Hail Namasivaya.”**

*--Natchintanai. 79.*

The Guru bids us consider our body as the temple and the heart as the Siva-lingam, where is enthroned the mystic formula of *Letters Five*--

**“In the sanctum of our hearts, we shall find the  
Lord of Grace  
showering His bounty as a great Giver.  
All Hail Namasivaya!”**

**“Fix the heart on God with love, the mind on His word with  
love, the hands upon His work with love, and then will unfold  
in the heart, the radiance of the knowledge of the Self, the  
SivaSakti, the dynamic and luminous presence.  
All Hail Namasivaya!”**

*--Natchintanai. 79.*

The term *Kadavul* signifying God who is within, also connotes the way to know Him by means of turning the searchlight of wisdom within, and to see Him who is transcendent:

This is the bliss referred to as luminous radiance by St. Tayumanavar: He refers to the potent sway of the Letters Five in the hearts of the illumined seers.

Swami exhorts us to chant the Name and realise His Presence within:

**“The sense of egoity wanes as God Himself takes His seat  
within, amidst the nectar of overflowing love.  
All Hail Namasivaya!”**

*--Natchintanai. 79.*

The raging fire of egoism and passionate desire of a stricken soul shall recede, as one broods on the name of God with an act of surrender and enlightenment:

*“Knowing, Speak His name”--R.V. 1.156.3--So declared  
the Rigvedic Seer Drighatmas.  
The Tantrasara says, “Japa yields the fruit of all other  
Yagjnas.”*

**“The Blissful Sankara Siva shall pour the balmy showers  
of grace more soothing than the love of a dear mother.”  
All Hail Namasivaya!**

*--Natchintanai. 79.*

To the pure of heart, no sin can cohabit; no evil can share the heart with His holy Name, Namasivaya. In the refulgence of the heart, all stains of evil shall disappear; all fears shall vanish and all aspirations shall focus on God, as the dynamic presence and as its determining centre.

In this lyrical Ode on Namasivaya, Swami exhorts one and all to invoke incessantly the name of Siva:

**“Chant so that impurities, vexations and doubts are purged  
and by remembrance of the divine Father, transgressions too  
are destroyed. All Hail Namasivaya!”**

*--Natchintanai. 80.*

The inebriating sweetness of God's Love can be experienced only through the Guru, who carries it in the chalice to the thirsty disciple and makes his taste it to the full.

**“Wise indeed, wisest of the wise are they who feel the impact  
of the Guru, and imbibe His words which assure them of the  
ultimate goal of liberation. Hail beauteous Namasivaya!”**

*--Natchintanai. 80.*

Thus do we praise the Lord who abides in the temple of our hearts. Swami not only bids us worship the Indweller, but also worship the *Name*, the Immanent Siva who pervades in the universe as the Life of life, the Cosmic Dancer, who is the soul force of Grace. Sang St. Tirumular thus:

*“Everywhere His Form, His Sakti too  
Everywhere is Chidambaran and the Dance  
All-pervading Sivam dwells in each object*

*His grace is His sport.*

In this manner did Swami too establish a towering temple in his heart, and opened its doors for others to enter by the bridge of Love, and worship there. He demonstrated that each one can likewise erect his own inner sanctuary, and offer the oblation of love to the Supreme One dwelling in this sacro-sanct consciousness. Thereby true illumination--*Meiyarivu*, true love--*Meiyanbu*, and true realisation--*Meineri* can be attained.

In *Natchintanai*, the Name of Siva vibrates within and without. We have to realise Siva by silent brooding on Him; by meditation is egoism consumed; and virtues flower under the tender showers of His Grace. The incantation of the name of Siva is not just a mechanical repetition, but a communion of love. The Name is the manifestation of Siva, His attributes and His bounties by which we know Him.

The Letters Five--*Panchakshara*, is the link of the finite soul with the Infinite God. It is the Self-realisation of God ; it goes out from within the heart, and it is when the heart of man loves, and comes into an affectional relationship with the outer world, with God in his manifestation, that the Name of Siva manifests in man. A feeling of ecstatic unity with the whole universe of which he is a part, leads man to realise God in both his inner *Anma* and in the cosmos. In this ecstatic realisation of God in the all, dawns the wonder, beauty, and love of all creation, when ugly and beautiful and good and evil merge; and *Siva*, the *Universe* and the *Anma* too merge in a new octave of experience which is Bliss ineffable.

If a devotee sees God everywhere, he can never be resentful, nor can he be unjust or inimical. The aspirant devotes his whole energy to maintaining in his heart the presence of God, repeating His Holy Name day by day. This is the only true Religion and the essence of spirituality as communicated by Swami in his *Reflections of Grace*.

In the canzone of *The Temple of the Heart*, we witness the highest form of symbolic worship--*Maanasa Puja*--of a realised Yogi. The worship of the Lord who is within and is conducted by the petals of love, and the contemplation approach is made with the help of the Guru of Nallur, who acts as the Inner Guide and takes the devout seeker to the altar, where the worship of lights is performed by the adepts, or the accomplished seers--*anthanar*.

Swami beckons everyone to make the initial approach to the Guru, who in turn will guide him to the inner approach, to the interior courtyard of the temple of the heart, armed with the shield of the Letters Five. It is the grand thought-form, the formula which shall cure the afflictions of life, and constitutes the substratum of life.

Every Saiva Saint down the ages has sung in praise of the Lords Name. *St. Tirujnana Sambandar* in his last canto sang in praise of *Namasivaya* before commingling the flame of Truth, and he called the *mantra* as a Name of great potency. All the beautiful excellencies of life flow from the incantation *St. Appar* and *Manicavacagar* too revel in singing the

praise of this thought-formula--*the Letters Five*:

*St. Appar*

*St. Manicavacagar.*

It is the simplified approach to reach His presence, bereft of I-ness.

*St. Tirumular.*

It accentuates one's intense longing to reach His Feet, and effects the grand commingling of *Siva* and the *Anma*.

The first person is subdued before the glory of Himself, and the *Anma SEES*. It is immersed in insuperable bliss divine, welling up from the hidden springs in the heart. Swami's song on *The Temple of the Heart*, transports us to the realm of direct experience and from afar, we gaze speechless at his wondrous InSight.

HAIL NAMASIVAYA!

## THE TEMPLE OF THE HEART.

**KILIKANNI.**

**Sweet Parrot,**

**Eternal is Anma.**

**We're That.**

**Give up false hood, sweet parrot.**

**Lo, Nallur is sighted.**

**Sweet Parrot,**

**Experiencer and experience,**

**Objects experienced let go.**

**Worship in thy mind, sweet parrot**

**The glory of Vadivel.**

**Sweet Parrot,**

**Life's weal and woe**

**And world itself will end.**

**The lovely Feet so loftly, sweet parrot,**

**Thy mind shall adore.**

**Sweet Parrot,**

**The conch shells blow,**

**The drums resound,**

**Refulgence all around, sweet parrot,**

**Arise my dear and walk up.**

**Sweet Parrot,**

**Under the Champak tree,**

**The Sadhus congregate.**

**There in numbers great, sweet parrot,**

**Throng the men in multitude.**

**Sweet Parrot,**

**Pursue not the baubles,**

**And get distraught.**

**Step up in leisured ease, sweet parrot,**

**For wonders there are many.**

**Sweet Parrot,**

**In the steps of the chariot dome,**

**The majestic Chellappan reclines**

**In buoyant spirit, sweet parrot,**

**Let's go there onward !**

**Sweet Parrot,**

**Approaching forward  
We shiver and stagger.  
Unbalanced he appears, sweet parrot,  
His face gleaming dazed.  
Sweet Parrot,  
A madman, so they say  
And jeer and scoff at him.  
Their iniquity disturbs not, sweet parrot,  
The calmness of his mind.  
Sweet Parrot,  
Draw nigh with devotion,  
And be not afraid ;  
'Neath the discerning Feet, sweet parrot,  
Adoringly prostrate.  
Sweet Parrot,  
“We know not,” he'll mutter  
And greet you mockingly.  
Shirk not, funk not, sweet parrot,  
But bow with forthright ease.  
Sweet Parrot,  
With heart not desisting  
Let insistent be your worship,  
All vain desires in flight, sweet parrot,  
Triumphant you become.**

**Sweet Parrot,**

**“Who knows,” will he utter**

**And chide but fear not.**

**His insanity the world knows, sweet parrot,**

**Attune in loving meekness and go up.**

**Sweet Parrot,**

**That others will despise you**

**Do not fear, beloved.**

**It's the divine mask, sweet parrot,**

**Sing in obeisance my dear.**

**Sweet Parrot,**

**Haste thee and join,**

**The inner porch we reach,**

**Cartloads of young coconuts, sweet parrot,**

**In heaps are unloaded.**

**Sweet Parrot,**

**What variety of raw rice,**

**Plantains and coconuts--**

**Such joyful offerings galore, sweet parrot,**

**Behold and rejoice.**

**Sweet Parrot,**

**Packets of camphor**

**And piles of sugar cane,**

**Sandalpaste and golden blooms, sweet parrot,**

**Adorn the high porch-ways.**

**Sweet Parrot,**

**Lo, peacocks beauteous**

**Revel in Kandan's sports,**

**Cause tremors in the spheres, sweet parrot,**

**And chiming peals resound.**

**Sweet Parrot,**

**Tier upon tier are seated,**

**The order of the priestly class.**

**List to their chants, sweet parrot,**

**The incantation so wondrous.**

**Sweet Parrot,**

**So lithesome and lovely,**

**Did'st thou see them close**

**The doors so boldly, sweet parrot,**

**The purificatory bath is on.**

**Sweet Parrot,**

**Minds tuned in unison,**

**The adorers await.**

**With startling speed, sweet parrot,**

**The Priests open wide the doors.**

**Sweet Parrot,**

**The five tiered lights commence,**

**And the progression of lights follow,**

**Waved by the high priests, sweet parrot,**

**Do thou worship with piety.**

**Sweet Parrot,**

**Showering flowers from their palms,**

**The Antanar chant the benediction**

**With great assurance, sweet parrot,**

**Do thou supplicate Shanmuga.**

**Sweet Parrot,**

**The holy ash with sandalpaste,**

**The blest water are distributed ;**

**Oh, Lotus-beauty so sanguine,**

**Take the oblation with devout sanctity.**

**Sweet Parrot,**

**For the midnight worship,**

**We wished to stay on (Devi);**

**It'd be a long wait, sweet parrot,**

**And there's not one at home.**

**Sweet Parrot,**

**Step up apace and come down,**

**The thronging crowds agape ;**

**'Tis the rainy season, sweet parrot,**

**Mind your steps with care.**

**Sweet Parrot,**

**Run not, slip not.**

**Chant the letters Five,**

**Falter not at the portal, sweet parrot,**

**We are at Home. Open the Door.**

*--Natchintanai. 321-324.*

## **THE ANMOPANISHAD**

In this *Anmopanishad*, the *Anmanathan* directs his devotees to the temple, not built by human tools and materials, but to the temple of Grace set up in the pure consciousness, in the inner sanctuary of his heart by the *Anma-Guru*. We follow our Gurunathan to behold from afar, the rare spectacle of the *mystic worship* with lights and sounds and ritual incantations. It reveals the Divine Effulgence of Sivam illumination the darksome veils of finitude from within the deepest core of the soul. Our only passport in this sojourn is the *Letters Five--Sivayanama*.

The highest purpose in life as presented in this magnificent hymn is the realisation and union with Siva, the Indweller in each one of us. This form of internal worship by a sincere aspirant leads him by the kindly light of the Guru's grace, to commune with the divine presence within him. The significant perscription is the reflection on the thought-formula, the *mantra* of the supreme Siva--*Namasivaya*. It embodies the synthesis of Truth and contains the quintessence of the teachings of the Saiva Saints.

There are different forms of this mystic formula. They differ in the position and order of arrangement of the *Five Letters*, according to the thought-force of the devotee and his spiritual maturity. Swami's songs refer to two of the forms--*NamaSivaya* and *Sivayanama*--as generally suited to a seeker after truth.

The philosophical import of *Sivayanama* must be fully understood by those who chant it to evoke divine grace. The syllable *Ya* is in the centre, with the two syllables *Si* and *Va* on one side, and *Na* and *Ma* on the other. *Ya* connotes the self or the *anma*. Swami elucidates the first stage of the spiritual pilgrimage as the knowledge of the Self--"Know thyself."

The eternal entity known as *Anma* has a powerful tendency to lean on its adjuncts and these are the sense organs, faculties of the mind, intellect and ego and other subtle layers of consciousness that constitute the body. It is by means of this psycho-physical organism, that the self projects itself and experiences the world, with its inter-play of the *Tattvas*, and is bound up in the network of desires, actions and egoity.

The *anma*, though it identifies itself with every aspect of the objective body, sensations and organs, yet it exercises its sense of discrimination and distinguishes itself from all these objective modes of consciousness. The *anma's* intelligence can only perceive after the darkness has been removed by the Light (*Sat*) whose intelligence induces perception.

Swami in the opening verse of the Hymn to the *Temple of the Heart*, declares the eternity of the *Anma*--

**“Sweet Parrot,**

**Eternal is Anma;**

**We are That.”**

*--Natchintanai. 321.*

In the fourth and fifth verses of St. Meykandar's *SivaJnana Botham* are outlined the modes of knowing the Self, by a process of psychological introspection and elimination. In his grand symphony of worship, Swami dwells on the continence, purity of thought and action, sincere devotion to God, and meditation that will enable the seeker to rid himself from the grip of the senses and the delusion caused by them, and to march victoriously in the pathways or the stations of wisdom leading to realisation.

Each stanza works out this progress of the *Anma*, as it ascends from the plane of objective consciousness to the plane of subjective or mental consciousness, and on to the consciousness of the true subject or Anma. That is not the end of the journey. God's grace, in other words, with the aid of *Hara*, the *anma* ascends from the consciousness of the self to the True *Sat* or God. The base of the lower rests upon the higher, but not as effect and cause. In this light do we understand Swami's expression of *Sat--Siva* as Life of life and, Intelligence of intelligence which express clearly the relation of God and the anma. He addresses the Sat-Guru as the treasure house of Grace, to whom we must submit wholeheartedly Submission to God's Will, is the key to realisation.

It is God who sustains our very being and action, as He vivifies our intelligence. The power of the Lord is recognised by the wise and enlightened ones, and they try to realise and feel it by withdrawing more and more from the outer entrances and bringing themselves more and more in a rapport with Him in the interior approaches, aided by His Grace:--

It is here that the ego gets annihilated, and the sense of duality disappears in the serene light of undifferentiated unity. This light brings out the powers of consciousness which once awakened in the yogin, he realises that his actions are in reality that of the Lord. It is like the light of the star becoming indistinguishable from the light of the sun in broad daylight; the identity is lost but not itself.

Now we resume to the reflection on the Letters Five *Sivayanama*. *Ya* has been examined by us as the *Anma*, whose true nature has to be clearly understood in the first place he syllable *Si* signifies the Siva aspect, and *Va* signifies the aspect of Sakti, His gracious potency. The Lord has two aspects--*Siva*, the static bliss, and *Sakti*, the dynamic consciousness illuminating everything. The relation between the two aspects is duality in unity. The Sun

has all the planets revolving to its orbit of attraction and keeps them under its control; Even so, the changeless, infinite bliss of Siva has the *anma* and the elements of their bonds confined to its all-pervasive consciousness, and keeps them controlled.

It is now clear that the individual self or the *anma* is eternally dependent on God's grace, and has its being in His all-pervading potency called *Para-Sakti* (the great sentient power). But the self is ignorant of its own nature and its eternal dependence on the Supreme Godhead, because of the "limiting influence of a pre-existing and pre-cosmic principle called *anavam*. *Anavam* means what which limits the self to minuteness. The all-pervasive nature of the *anma* has been limited to minuteness by the principle of self-love." It is also called *Mula malam*, the root impurity or spiritual darkness. The last syllable *Ma* in the *Letters Five* signifies this darkness or impurity called *anavam*.

God in His infinite grace has bestowed on the *anma*, the psycho-physical organism and other aids, and endowed it with successive birth and death, as well as subjected it to the inexorable moral and natural laws; so that it is equipped to combat against the limitations caused by self-love. The divine impulse and guidance extended to the *anma* in its state of bondage is connoted by the syllable *Na*. This impulse works in the direction of the principle of *anavam*, with the object of annihilating in eventually. Therefore, it is called *Tirodana Sakti* or veiling power. It awakens the *anma* from its inactive state caused by the egoistic principle, and projects it to the world without being aware of the inner Presence of Siva. However, *Tirodanam* is only a phase of the divine grace signified by the syllable, *Va*.

*Tirodana Sakti* works through the positive entity known as *Mayai*. It is the unseen substratum, behind the seen universe, the substantial cause of the objective world. It is all-pervading, imperceptible, material energy capable of taking on varied manifest forms, both subtle and gross at the will of God. *Maya's* manifested forms known as *mayeyam* are classified into *Tanu--body*, *Karanam--organ*, *Bhuvanam--sphere of existence*, and *Bhogam--object of the world experienced*.

Thus *mayai* and *mayeyam* exercise a counteracting influence over the *anma* against the precosmic principle of *anavam*. *Mayai* and *anavam* act like light and darkness on the *anma*. When the *anma* is in the sole grip of *anavam* connoted by the syllable *Ma*, and identifies with it, it is said to be in the *Kevala* state. When the *anma* is under the influence of the categories of *mayai* and *mayeyam* and enjoys awareness, it is said to be in the embodied state of *Sakalam*.

The *anma*, in its successive births is subject to the dual force of the *anavam* on one side, and the divine impulse or *Tirodanam* on the other, and hence faces the conflicting forces of nature and matter. These responses are either good or evil and determine the future embodiments and its environs. This is explained as the theory of *Karma (Vinai)* or moral law. Thus the *anma* is enmeshed in the limitations of *anavam*, *mayai*, *mayeyam*, *tirodanam*, and *vinai*.

The defilement known as *anavam* is denoted by *ma* in the *Letters Five*. All others form the remedial group and are collectively represented by '*Na*.' The *anma* denoted by *Ya* is subject to the impact of these two kinds of bonds, and suffers from the stupefying effects of the opposites, like birth and death, forgetfulness and awareness, and sleep and wakefulness. These stages are clearly depicted by saint Umpathi Sivacharya in his classic work on *Divine Grace* known as *Tiruvarutpayan*.

It will thus be seen that *Na*, *Ma*, on the one side of *Ya* signify the divine guidance in darkness operating on the *anma*, in its state of bondage. In the phenomenal universe, the impulse of *Tirodanam* signified by *Na* is recognised as an initiating conscious force and intention, and is the objective aspect of the Truth which scientists seek to unravel.

As a result of successive births and the resultant conflicting experiences, the *anma* evolves spiritually with the consequent weaking of the inherent self-love. At a certain stage in this process of evolution, the *anma* reaches a neutral stage where the pull from the bonds are neutralised, and it experiences equanimity of temper and outlook on deeds good and bad. This is known as *Iruvinaiooppu*.

It is in this crucial stage that the veiling power of *Na* comes into the open and reveals the benign light of Grace--*Va*, which it is and eliminates all darkness and egoism. The *anma* is extricated from desire and attachment and is guided by the Light of Grace:

**“The five tiered lights commence,  
And the progression of lights follow,  
Waved by the High Priests, sweet parrot,  
Do thou worship with piety.”**

**--Natchintanai. 324.**

It attains super-conscious spiritual vision and is face to face with the Supreme Bliss, signified by *Si--Siva*, to whom these illumined, accomplished seers offer the oblation of light, and petals of love with sweet incantation.

What a wondrous progression, the miracle of worship in the temple of the *Anma*! At first, the bound *anma* merges in the light of Grace; It is the luminosity shed by the majestic Guru Chellappan--

Then it is guided by his grace to the inmost sanctuary, whence it merges in the Infinite Effulgence and is One with it.

The summit state of emancipation is called the *Turiyaatitam*, signifying static identity--*Summa Iru*--with the infinite Presence.

We recall St. Pattinathar who delineates this experience of supreme liberation in a singularly striking imagery of the bride forsaking all earlier associations in order to commune with her

Beloved in bliss:

So too did St. Appar use the language of Love to depict this highest consummation of bliss.

After communion comes the homeward journey, the descent! That is the other miracle in this magnificent. The illumined God-men, out of their compassionate grace for the fellow brethren, choose to come down to assuage their suffering and dispel their darkness, by pointing out the trackless pathway to the divine Presence! With the armour of God's grace, these realised seers *descend* from the state of perfect quiescence and eternal union with the Supreme Bliss, to the habitat of the body. It is from this station that they can lead their fellow *Jivan-Muktar* to engage in the service of Siva, and work for the liberation of as many earnest seekers after truth, in attuning to the will of God.

Such *Jivan-Muktar* are tuned to enjoy dynamic identity with the inner Presence, and this is known as the *Turiya state*. They are the spiritual preceptors or Gurus, having the divine authority to speak on behalf of God. They move in the spiritual planes denoted by *Si* and *Va* in the mystic formula. *Si* represents the static and blissful identity with the Supreme; and *Va* signifies the dynamic luminous identity with the inner Presence.

The *Letters Five* unfold the unified theory of existence advocated in the *Saiva Siddhanta* system of thought. It reveals the locus of the *anma* both in the state of bondage and in the state of emancipation. It is the path of realisation to be traversed by the individual self *Ya*, under divined guidance--*Na* and *Va*, from *Ma* and *Si*, from darkness to refulgence of Siva.

*Aum Si Va Ya Na Ma!*

# THE YOGI OF LANKAPURI

## THE WAY AND THE GOAL

### “The Voice Incarnate of Eelam's Soul.”

History has revealed the truth of men of eminence who are self-evidently superhuman. They are called by different designations in different countries--Sages, Rishis, Prophets, Saints, Vibhutis, Jivan Mukters, Seers and Messengers of God, and they are the manifestations of the divine power and love emanating from the supreme Godhead, who accepts human strength and weakness, though not bound by them. It is a historical fact that the twentieth century has been blessed with a line of illustrious seers who possessed the cosmic vision and intuition. The continuity of the fundamental values of the spiritual heritage of mankind has been maintained through the ages, because of the presence of such illumined seers in our midst.

The *Yogi of Lankapuri* as a manifestation of the Eternal Sivam, lived in our midst for over ninety years, and reinterpreted the primeval message of the *Sanatana Dharma*, according to the needs of the people of the twentieth century. He is a Yogi whose quest for the Truth Supreme leads eventually to the direct spiritual experience of Truth on a high plane of consciousness. The transcendent state of consciousness attained by a Yogi is described in the Yoga Sutras as the fulfilment of life. Swami is a great Siva Yogi, whose teachings rested upon his experiences which lay beyond the domain of the intellect, and he embodied them in the Reflections of Grace known as *Natchintainai*.

The Supreme ideal of *Yoga Sadhana* is analogous to what we find in the Agamic system of non-dualistic thought in ancient and medieval India. This ideal of Oneness implies an obliteration of all traces of malevolence--*Oru Pollappumillai*, and all kinds of existing differences, by a positive process of mutual interpenetration. It underlies the principle of unification. The attainment of this ideal is the supreme unity of Para Siva, where Siva and Sakti are one undivided and indivisible whole. This is the perfection of absolute Truth. It is also a unification of the *Tattwa* and the *Tattwatita*--i.e. the One and the Beyond.

The *Yoga Sadhana* outlined in Swami's song on the *Killikanni*, represents the dynamic upward motion in the direction of the Supreme Siva; and the supreme Sakti descending from the crown of Siva floods with bliss the soul in the course of its descent. In the undivided Absolute Consciousness, the upward and downward movements of the divine Sakti operate, and the conception of Tiruvadi in its esoteric meaning is the conception of the perfection of Truth--*Muluthum Unmai*-- par excellence. Swami communicates the onslaught of Divine Grace that illumines the Yogic Insight in a simple song of exquisite

beauty:

## HIS SWEEP OF GRACE.

**Divine Grace sweeps o'er  
And my soul revels in bliss.  
With none resisting  
Truth reigns supreme.**

**Is it One or is it Two;  
No more do I query.  
*Aum Sivayanama* refrain  
Floods my heart with joy.**

**Yama the terrible God of Death  
No more can sting but serve in tremor.  
Be no more fearful  
For there's nothing to fear.**

*--Natchintanai. 200.*

This song sheds a lustre all its own, on the potency of Divine Grace--*Tiru Arul*, which is none other than the *Tiruvadi*-- The Holy Feet, connoting the Divine *SatGuru*, who is none other than the *ParaSakti*. The *Tiruvadi* symbolise the state of supreme Oneness of the self-luminous Siva and His self reflecting Sakti. It is their interpenetration and integration in the supreme unity of *Parama-Sivam*.

The lyric of Divine Grace conveys the heart beat of Swami's spiritual *Sadhana*, leading to the realisation of the Supreme unity of *ParamaSivam*, and immortalised in the ideal of the Supernal Truth--*Muluthum Unmai*, communicated to him by his Guru, Sage Chellappa Swami. The great German mystic Meister Eckhart, in his own inimitable manner has expressed a similar realisation: "The essence of the soul is united with the essence of the Nothing, and the powers of the one with the activities of the Nothing."

The consummation of Oneness can only be effected with the SatGuru's grace, which in turn brings about mental quietude. The real *sadhana* according to Swami cannot begin until the mind is rendered free from doubts and fears incident on a sense of identity with the body. when the Divine Grace operates, then the mind is subdued and quietened;

Thus the experience of divine grace dawns on the soul, which is aroused from its age-old slumber. Then the sense of duality retreats from the hitherto questioning mind, before the serene Light of undifferentiated Unity. This light brings out the powers of consciousness.

The universal consciousness being once awakened produces in the Yogi a perfect knowledge of him-Self and the luminous form which is the essence of pure intelligence becomes one with the universal, uncreated light of the Supreme ParaSiva already revealed. This is effected by a continuous process of self inquiry into the real nature of the Self.

**“The Self Realised Yogis are like the Sun of glorious light.”**

That this experience should be a permanent possession and not a momentary attainment, is the theme of many a Natchintanai Ode.

**“They are Yogis who can perceive everywhere  
The essence of Truth in the temple of the Universe.”**

**“They are the Realised Seers who see Siva as the all-pervading.  
Their habitation everywhere and nowhere; their action, what  
avails?”**

They are freed from the bondage of space and time.

The difference between what is formless and what has form disappears for ever.

**“No more can sorrows cling to me for I've seen  
The co-eternal vision of the Supreme Reality.”**

*--Natchintanai. 90.*

The Self is realised as a continuum of supreme dynamism and the integral vision unfolds the stage of the Dance of Siva. It is a vision of Eternity when the One reveals itself in every point of the infinite.

**“What infinite varieties are seen as the Dance of the One,  
whose gracious Feet be my unfailing Guide, Aum.”**

Thus it is that Swami lays stress on the discipline of the body, the senses, the mind, the intellect, and the heart under the guidance of a Guru for the purification of the entire being of man. The elevation of the empirical consciousness to higher spiritual planes, makes him fit for perfect illumination by the *light of Absolute Truth*. This is the path way of the *Yogi*. Swami's response to his Guru's inspired utterance of *Who doth Know--* is “I know that I know nothing”. His experiences as transfixed in his songs depict his consciousness rising above the domain of Space, Time and Relativity, in order to be in the closest embrace of the Infinite, Eternal, Absolute Truth. This is the path followed by the Hindu Seers. It is also the path of Yoga.

Swami beckons each one of us to be a truth seeker, and that is why we keep on shunning

him for ever so long, and even when we seek his presence, we cannot remain too close to the flame for any length of time. He regarded *Tattva-reflection* as a valuable part of yogic self-discipline, and he taught us to make the individual phenomenal consciousness free from all kinds of bias and prejudice, all sorts of ignorant clouds of gloom, and to raise it to the pure supramental, supraspiritual plane.

Though Swami was labelled a *Yogi* by all, yet he never concerned himself with the exposition of the principles and practices of the *Yoga Marga*. He insisted on a systematic discipline of all the external and internal organs, functions, and vital forces of the body, with a view to the establishment of perfect control over, and harmony among all of them, and the spiritualisation of the entire psycho-physiological organism with the ultimate object of the realisation of Absolute Truth.

## THE PILGRIM AND THE ROAD

Ultimate Truth reveals itself in a plane of consciousness beyond thought and no one can comprehend it. Siva is the *Maha Yogiswara*, the eternal master of *Yogis*. The Way of *Yoga* leads to the attainment of fitness for the revelation of the Kingdom of heaven within each one of us. What is this fitness? Our consciousness must be freed from the sense of Ego as well as all attachments and proclivities of the mind. Moral and spiritual purity of the Truth-seeker are essential factors for Truth-realisation. This means the systematic practice of yoga.

The Upanishads indicate that the term *Atma* connotes the *True Self* of all existence. It includes the True Self of every individual as well as of the universe. Swami uses the term *Atma or Anma* for the True Self of an individual and the term *Sivam* for the supreme, the eternal, the True Self of the universe. The essential unity of the True Self of the Individual and the True Self of the Universe was revealed to the consciousness of Swami by Sage Chellappar's illumination of grace. Hence the significance of the Maha-Vaakiam--“All That Is, is Truth”, and the injunction to meditate and assimilate the true knowledge (*Para Vidya*) by which this Absolute Truth is realised. This *Para Vidya* is the *Yoga Vidya* enunciated by Yoga Swami in *Natchintanai*, which unfolds the spiritual approach to the perfection of Truth.

The inner spiritual experiences of Swami after enlightenment by his Guru have a fundamental appeal to all seekers of Truth, who follow his insight with faith for personal realisation of the same. The utterances in *Natchintanai* are the verbal communication of the Truth on the supra-mental and spiritual planes and hence, any attempt at non-spiritual interpretation of Swami's songs will only lead to differences of views and disputations.

The way of Yoga--*Yoga Marga*-- does not insist on the acquisition of an objective knowledge of the *Absolute Truth*, but aims at the direct insight into Truth; and all that Swami requires of an earnest truth seeker is an indomitable faith. He can only guide an

aspirant in the path of *anubhuti*-- experiences, but he cannot expound to him rationally the possibility of such Truth-realisation.

The *Yogi* who has succeeded in the way of *Yoga* and attained Truth-realisation, seeks to draw a truth seeker to the path by active *sadhana*. Truth unveils itself to the human consciousness, when it is purified and concentrated, and all the obstacles of the mind are eliminated in the way of the Self-revelation of the Truth. Hence the invocation to *Ganesha (Pillayar)* the primeval Son of Siva who can free man from all impediments, and the incantation of His sound-symbol of *Aum* assumes significance in Swami's Songs.

The true *Yogis* do not labour at expounding theories on the nature of the Siddhanta or the Vedanta concepts of the ultimate Reality and the soul's relationship to it. They direct man's attention to steady purification and concentration of his empirical consciousness and its progressive elevation to higher spiritual planes, until the veil which hides the Absolute Truth to his consciousness is rent asunder, and the *anma* is united with the Truth of *Sivam*.

What an arduous path from the world of finitude and relativity to the world of Supreme Truth, where there is neither ill-will nor goodwill--“*Oru Pollappumillai!*” Deep within man is an inherent inner urge, pining for what is not, and longing to transcend the fleeting joys of change and decay. It is this yearning that leads man to self discipline, and to abide by the teachings of his spiritual Guru--the *Yogi* who having himself realised the Truth can lead the Truth--seeker to the goal of Realisation.

Sitting at the Feet of Swami, our desires and delusions, reasonings and egoity were given a purificatory bath (*Abishekam*). He held us by the cord of love so as to make us lose temporarily even, the sense of distinction between the subject and the object, the internal and the external, the self and the not-self. The summation of quiescence would overshadow all who were gathered in the light of his Presence. In the seeming “Ordinariness” of the little hut, with the Guru seated in the Dhakshinamurti pose on a low wooden bed facing the South, and an ordinary antique lamp burning at the northern end, would be enacted the silent miracle of Swami. It is the transformation of the finite nature of each one of the devotees seated before him, into the infinitude of the immortal Self!

Swami seldom flaunted spectacular miracles, though innumerable instances of his silent healing touch to assuage the grief of the distressed are only too well known. These were done so quietly and impersonally that even the subject of the boon would not be fully aware of the magnitude of his Grace; even if they were faintly conscious of the act of Grace, it would soon be veiled. It was his way. He never spoke of his powers nor allowed others to speak on them, for his focus was not on conferring external boons, but on effecting the *change of heart*.

Once a seeker begins to enjoy even an iota of this balm of peace leading to the transformation of his inner self, then starts the epiphany! He frequents Swami's ashram

only to be chased away, and by and by, his revolt and sense of wounded pride would give place to humility and intense yearning to be near him at any sacrifice. Swami would laugh and scoff at the ebb and flow of his votaries. The Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gita, the Bible, the Puranas, and Natchintanai would echo in his Ashram night and morn. The soulful Devarams and Tiruvacagam and sacred Cantos by the Saiva Saints would be sung by him and his flock, so that imperceptibly their pollutions of anger and greed, sloth and servility, fear and doubts, pride and prejudices would be cleansed in the springs of his Love. In a state of calm, pure and egoless bliss of consciousness would dawn the meaning of his utterances.

**“The sight of the Guru grants such insight, Lo!  
In the sunrise of the self, peace pervades.”**

*--Natchintanai. 327.*

The gracious powers flowed through Swami, and often we could not see him as the object of consciousness, but as the essence of the Supreme Consciousness only. In this illumined state, no difference existed between our consciousness and the absolute soul of all existence and experience embodied in the Yogi before us. “Thou in me and I in Thee” relationship extolled in many a gem in Natchintanai became a living reality, especially on holy days like *Sivarathiri, Navarathiri Kanda-Sasthi, Purnima, Tiruvathirai, Nallur Car festival, etc.*, when the Guru's Grace beamed everywhere the light of Truth.

## MULUTHUM UNMAI

*All That Is, is Truth.*

Such experiences of the Siva Yogi, when time and space ceased to exist, when duality and relativity paled into nothingness, carried the conviction of certitude within itself, through we could not advance any proof of their validity, Outside Swami's holy Ashram, we failed to sustain the serenity of the integrated experience, as the “world proved too much with us,” but everyone who was blessed in Swami's presence felt free from fears and doubts everafter. Seeds of aspiration for Truth realisation were sown by the Guru out of his boundless grace, but some fell on the wayside, some on thorny soil and some on good ground.

Direct experience has been regarded as the basis of Swami's Yoga; and progressive stages of realisation with steady regression of self projection are possible only with the guidance of the Guru. The higher the stage of experience, the deeper is the realisation of Truth. Swami attracted varied types of votaries of Truth, some of whom were on higher steps, while others were on the intermediate or first steps of the ladder, in their search after the ideal of Absolute Truth--God Is.

What a wonderful panacea for all modern tensions and frustrations is this path of Yoga lived by Swami, and tested and tried by critics and adherents alike, and found to be wholesome for a wholesome life! Herein the consciousness rises above the plane of self-knowledge--*pasu jnanam*-- the plane of finite egohood, and becomes tranquil and illumined. In his song on *Aum Tat Sat*--318, the knower, knowable and the knowledge became perfectly united, and the plurality of existence unveiled its essential spiritual unity to the consciousness of man, as a servitor of God.

In the poems on yogic illumination that follow, Swami explodes his revealing experiences. In the world of plurality, he sees their inter-dependence and inter-relatedness, and sees through all these diversities, the harmonising Unity of the Absolute Sivam which is the Truth underlying all plurality. This is the quintessence of the Testament of Truth--*Muluthum Unmai*. He experienced at every turn and breath, the unity of the conscious subject and the objective universe, the unity of the knower and the knowable, and conversed in the language of truth with the Infinite and Eternal Mother of all Reality, the Substratum of the relations among all conscious subjects and all objects of consciousness.

Swami's Natchintanai Songs contain the *direct* knowledge of this *Unity* of all existence. In it, the serene consciousness of the Siva Yogi becomes one with the Truth of all existence. Sage Chellappar--the Parama Yogi did not merely utter the dictum. Absolute is Truth,' but he also transfused the experience of the Truth of Oneness into Swami. This is the transcendent experience which Swami conveys in the poem of *Aum Tat Sat*.

Swami was not merely a Yogi who *discovered* the ultimate Truth in the forest sanctuaries, as did the Rishis of the Upanishad era. That he attained the perfect satisfaction of the fulfilment of life, has been testified by his manifold activities of inspiring people to live nobly and well in the world by the pursuit of their *Svadharmas*, freed from all repugnance to the finite and transitory things of the world. A yogi having attained perfect freedom from all bondages of life, from all fundamental imperfections and sources of sorrow, and from the subjection to the law of Karma, outwardly appears to be the same individual as he was before, like any other individual being. Inwardly the Truth-experience illumines his consciousness, and it has a great impact upon his normal life.

The Absolute Sivam who manifests Itself in the diverse forms of relative plurality, and who sustains their existence and links them with one another into a cosmic order, also reveals Itself to the Yogi's consciousness. Such illumination permeates his intellect, the ego and the mind and even his senses. Siva pervades as the real Essence. After enlightenment, Swami's utterances reflect the self-expression of the Supreme Siva.

Siva wields the key to the ultimate explanation of man's spiritual and intellectual problems; Siva becomes the centre of his feelings and sentiments. Everything he perceives within and without is but the manifestation of the One Supreme Godhead. Thus the objective world of plurality and the experiencing ego become merged in the Absolute Truth. The macrocosm

and microcosm are pervaded by the One. so sang Swami jubilantly.

*The One--* Supreme and Absolute Siva, is the *Truth* of the Universe as well as of the individual self. *Swami sees himself in all and all in himself:*

The Siva Yogi beholds diversity and variety from the standpoint of Unity, and sees the infinite in the finite, the eternal in the temporal, and lives in the light that all are essentially non-different from himself. Hence he loves all and fears none; hates none and sings joyfully.

There is both the positive process of *going and coming*, in the orbit of his experience, as well as the negative process that there is *no going, no coming*. Swami sees the timeless Eternity manifested in the flow of time, and the infinite space pervading all parts of space, exactly as he sees in the changing world of time and space, the unveiled Beauty and the Truth of the One Sivam. Having experienced the One in Many and the Many in One, Swami's activities revolved round Siva; that is the significance of his *Sivathondu*.

Although in the plane of spiritual experience, no difference exists between one illumined yogi and another, yet when they move in the normal planes of practical life, their approaches seem different. These differences are due to their mode of life, outlooks and general psycho-physical embodiments. The *Maha Yogi, Kadai Swami* kept himself aloof from the affairs of the world and was in continuous enjoyment of the bliss of Samadhi. His initiate, *Sage Chellappa Swami* saw the density of the people to the Eternal Truth and their wanton attachments to worldly pursuits, and so he adopted the role of the "madman of Nallur," to liberate those few only who sought him out persistently. He scattered his pearls of wisdom in enigmatic language.

*Siva Yoga Swami*, his initiate, did not shun the contact with the people, as it was his wont to awaken in their dormant consciousness the yearning for the Infinite Truth of Sivam. He looked upon all men and all the affairs of the world from the spiritual plane, and on account of his expansive love, taught the people by his life and utterances, that underlying all fleeting delights of this world, the light of Sivam pervadeth, giving innermost significance to our lives and harmony to the Universe:

Moved by the still sad music of humanity, the Siva Yogi gave expression to his inner experiences in intelligible and appealing sayings and poems. Their poetic imagery, sweet diction, suggestive allusions, mystic formulae and earnest exhortation, raised the quality of living among the aspirants of his day. His words, harsh or gentle chastened the listeners and carried deep conviction, because they had the force of his inner experience. The greatest charm was his power to bring about a change of heart and outlook, and a radical transformation in the tenor of the lives of those who sat at his Feet, Swami would often vindicate that Truth was the same in whatever forms of philosophy or language *It* might be expressed, and in whatever paths, the mind might approach *It*.

In Natchintanai, the enlightened guidance of the Siva Guru stands revealed. He reiterates with a tone of an everloving Father, the need for self-discipline for the attainment of perfect self-illumination and self-fulfilment. His words carry the certitude of attaining the direct experience of the Absolute Truth in the transcendent state of consciousness by every *Sivathondan*, whom he addresses endearingly as his Son, the inheritor of Yogic Insight.

**SON! THOU ART NON-PAREIL.**

**Son! Thou art fused in all life;  
Know this and live and let live.  
Chant thou the auspicious Name  
Not forgetting e'en for a split second.  
Conquer friction caused by action;  
Than That there's no other Reality.  
E'en the Three will render you service  
If you'll o'ercome the e'er sprouting anger.  
There'll not be anyone in this wide world  
Who can measure up to thee in goodness.  
Let your acts be spontaneous and free  
And link thyself to contemplation true.  
Realise that *Anma* has no origination,  
Neither can it suffer dissolution.  
Know that devas and seers shed lustre  
Indwelling in thy consciousness.  
Son! Intrinsic evil there is not,  
Truth alone is perfection absolute.**

These are the words of *Gurunathan*,  
worship with devotion and rejoice.

--*Natchintanai*. 139.

**SON! IT IS WHAT IT IS.**

Do not live to eat and sleep,  
And wander from place to place.  
Keep free from the taint of sex, my son  
And thou shalt know *Brahmam*.  
Do thou perceive *It* directly,  
Raise the life breath inwardly,  
Speak not unnecessarily, my son.  
There is nothing other than *It*.  
Reflect within without effort,  
And learn to live in harmony,  
Not desiring earthly possessions, my son.  
Do thou worship the fragrant Feet.  
For ever shalt thou adore  
The immaculate Lord within.  
Father, mother and guru, my son  
In love shalt thou revere too.  
Do thou control the life breath  
In its circuit from right to left

**And stabilise thy strength, my son,  
In detachment shalt thou live well.  
Seek not distinction of birth or gain,  
Neither harbour resentment within.  
Step over the six seats of enjoyment, my son  
And poise thyself in solitariness.  
Be not lured into vain babble  
That it is and is not--  
Do thou realise *It* in joy, my son  
For expansive is the bliss of grace.  
The sinister deeds of yore  
Shall mitigated be on earth.  
Resolve to stand composed, my son  
In between the good and the bad.  
Eat not that from violence got;  
Forget not the word of the Guru.  
Then and now and always, my son  
*It* is what it is.  
Indulge not in carnal delight,  
Involve not in delusion's snare.  
Be as firm as a rock, my son.  
Nothing shall you lack.  
The incantation of the ten above,**

**Do thou chant day and night,  
In tuneful worship meet, my son.  
The pang of penury shall wane.**

*--Natchintanai. 329.*

### **THE GATEWAY.**

**The two gates of breath I closed and lo,  
The words of the Guru became my guide,  
To cleave the bonds of birth asunder,  
And in joy I beheld the gateway divine.  
With bated breath, I held fast to God in thought.  
In the storied house I saw the void serene.  
The excellence of eternal glory was mine.  
'Tis the secret of the conquest of Kaalan (Death).  
From the fire in the *Mulaadhara* at the base,  
The ghee from the crown did melt--alas!  
Subdued is the primacy of the invincible ego,  
And fully did I apprehend the ethics of Being.  
Golden is his mien, flowing are his locks,  
There is no one else like him in meekness.  
Oh wielder of woes! That grief may not assail,  
Come Thou as Love benign and succour me.**

*--Natchintanai. 236.*

## **REJOICE WITHIN.**

**My lord and guru, mother and father  
I begin to know, Thangam dear  
By the grace of Sat-Guru.  
Thaanathaam, thaanathaam  
Thaanathaam, thaanathaam.  
The Essence of Wisdom that utters  
'Who doth know'--I see, Thangam dear.  
Speak not, in love be rooted.  
And you shall triumph from bonds of life.  
In life here and hereafter,  
He'll not part from us, Thangam dear.  
No going and no coming,  
Sing for ever His praises  
And realise the divine propeller.  
Keep aloof from encrusted misers,  
And have no dialogue, Thangam dear.  
Be not attached to life nor be timid,  
But hold high your mind,  
And cherish not the riches of this world.  
To behold the perfection of Truth  
Open thou thy inner eye, Thangam dear**

**Give up seeing outside and contact the lens inside.**

**Be a witness and live in excelsis.**

**Life and soul of existence art He**

**The supreme, and so rejoice Thangam dear.**

**Call Him aloud and call Him oft**

**In obeisance meek and faith infinite.**

**Oh, shun the company of the unworthy.**

**In the hearts of devotees indwells the Lord,**

**Do thou experience Him thus, Thangam dear.**

**There is neither you nor I.**

**Yearn for Him and cherish Him,**

**Join in and sing His glory.**

**That He's one and many is the mantra**

**That cleft my bonds, Thangam dear.**

**Utter it in silence meet,**

**And kindle the flame within.**

**Thus shalt thou embrace His grace.**

**Thou art not the elements five,**

**Senses five art thou not, Thangam dear.**

**Dawn and dusk do thou reflect,**

**That He's the support and the source.**

**And so surrendering, do thou revere.**

**Resolve not that it is one or two,  
As good or bad, judge not.  
Aspire for the goal of *Nâdantam*,  
'Tis the luminous light and peerless pearl  
That shelter gives to stricken souls.  
Be thou still like a statue and conjure not  
The image of a sinner, Thangam dear.  
But attain liberation by selfless service,  
Ne'er forgetting to be in tune with the infinite,  
And thus shall bonds of life be consumed.  
Create not envious thoughts  
But live in sweet content, Thangam dear.  
Don the beads of meditation,  
Fear not, neither intercede.  
The kiss of letters Five shall thy heart adore.**

*--Natchintanai. 268-270.*

### **SIVABHOGA SARAM**

*Rejoice within* is a soulful lyric where the Siva Yogi has worked out the quest of man culminating in the summation of conquest. It is the answer to the man, who has attempted to elevate his life by seeking to discover the nature of the perceptible world, the nature of the individual self who perceives it, the purpose of life and the means of fulfilling his destiny. In *Sivabhoga Saram*--the essence of blissful experience, *Sri Gurujnana Sambandar* reverberates Swami's gamut of Yogic Wisdom:

*“Just as I hid myself in thine intelligence  
And stood as thou,  
If thou canst hide thyself in mine intelligence*

*And stand as I, always,  
Lo, there is nothing more to learn  
To end the round of births.*

--67.

*Having realised the grace,*

*Having realised the intelligence that is oneself,*

*Having realised the truth abiding therein,*

*Having subdued the self,*

*With the dark cognisance of self dispelled,*

*With conceit gone, with distinction lost,*

*Remaining unified,*

*To rest in peace is Joy supreme.”*

--63.

In its manifest form, divinity is multiple, and in its ultimate essence, it cannot be said to be either one or many. It cannot be defined. It is not none; not two. Hence a non-dual principle has been delineated as existing beyond all forms of manifest divinity. This doctrine of non-duality--the *Suddha Advaitam* of the *Saiva Hindus*-- is upheld by Swami as the supreme goal of man's efforts towards realisation.

In similar strains has Tirumular expressed in his great classic of *Tirumantram*, the stages whereby the ego gets subdued, whence the inner eye can behold the pinnacle of yogic beatitude. We give the translation by Sri K. R. S. Iyengar:

*“Wouldst thou desire, fools, what's beyond description?  
Wouldst thou contain the flood that o'erflows all bounds?  
Like reflection in still water, the Lord is revealed  
In His manifold splendour in the becalmed minds of men.*

*When desire is dead, whom is one to desire?  
When one has become Him, whom is one to seek  
The eye that has burnt kama, whom is it to love?  
Who can answer these with lucid clarity?*

*There's One source of attraction for the unattached;  
There's One image of meditation for the enlightened;  
There's One light of love for the World-renouncers:  
Of what use is mere chatter? Only the Bliss of Brahman matters.”*

## THOU ART TRUTH

**“Thou art Truth. Chant daily, *Aum Tat Sat*--It is what it is.”**

In this soul stirring Natchintanai, we hear Swami praising the Siva-Guru who granted him the illumination of *Aum Tat Sat--It is what it is*. St. Tayumanavar in *Chidambara Rahasyam* alludes to the glory of the inexpressible Godhead as the Supreme *That Is*.

The Hindu Psalmist never tire of recalling the incident of the Creator and Preserver, Brahma and Vishnu resolving to penetrate the mystery behind the Supreme Godhead and being foiled in the attempt. Brahma in the form of Garuda flew into the orbit of space in search of the highest pinnacle of Light that was *Sivam*. *Vishnu* in the form of a boar dug into the entrails of the earth, seeking for the deepest downward point of Light that was *Sivam*. The pillar of Light that appeared before them stretched into infinity and down into the abysmal depths, so that both the Gods who functioned in their role as Creator and Preserver could not fathom the unfathomable Immensity of *Sivam*, the Absolute and Eternal One, in whom *Everything Is*.

Swami begins his song on *Aum Tat Sat* with the popular allusion to the search of Brahma and Vishnu to establish the matchless glory of Siva--the Supreme Godhead “The transcendent *Sivam* manifested on earth as my Guru. Rejoice and adore Him--*Aum Tat Sat*.” The poem is divided into four stanzas which mark the four pathways on the pilgrim's road, and the modes by which the goal can be attained.

## AUM TAT SAT

### **Guru Dikshai--Initiation.**

**“One day He looked intently at me, with a radiant face.”**

**“The Lord who eludes the apprehension of the twain, came in human form to the sanctified resort of Nallur.**

**There he remained elusive, so that none knew who he was, though he roamed in the streets with a genial countenance.**

**One day my Guru gazed at me intently and uttered that evil there is not --“*Oru Pollappumillai Enru.*”**

**He revealed His Formless state and then His Form, and made me see beyond forms as well, through the eye of Grace.**

**Ah, I saw Him through grace. I saw. I beheld His gracious  
Precence.**

--318.

**“I perceived too the truth of the Godhead transcending the  
principles of manifestation. He endowed me with the vision of  
yogic insight, and I beheld in silence the ever-poised essence of  
Reality No more sorrows; no more joys. I was engulfed in the  
splendour of Sivam.”**

--*Natchintanai*--*Stanza. 1. 318.*

St. Tirumular too has sung in the same key of illumination in *Tirumantram*--1788 thus:  
“When the light of Siva floods the soul, One becomes immersed in that effulgence.”

In *Atputha Tiruvanthathy* is a striking verse which attributes the *three in one* to the  
Supreme Godhead:

*“The knower is Himself; the subject of knowledge too  
Himself and the wisdom of knowing also is Himself.  
He's the object and subject of the universe.  
He indeed is the goal of Absolute Reality.*

--*St. Karaikal Ammayar. Atputha*--

*Tiruvanthathy. 20.*

**Sivanubhuti--Experience of Sivam.**

**“We have been blessed with the priceless boon of nurturing  
Siva in our hearts. Sing Aum Tat Sat  
Gone is the thought that there can be any other ways of  
realisation.**

**The wayward mind that flits after earthly joys shall be subdued,  
and the objective phenomena shall no longer attract us.**

**We shall perceive the sustaining truth that the *Anma* is eternal.**

**Let us pursue faithfully the path of renunciation, upholding the  
words of the Guru**

**Know Thyself shall be our quest**

**Our cherished treasures shall henceforth be sweet content, peace,  
patience and plenitude of service.**

**Fled far away are the mortifications of fasts and vigils.**

**we lack nothing whatsoever--  
Truth Eternal art we--  
Day in and day out, shall we chant Aum Tat Sat' IT  
IS what  
It Is."**

*--Natchintanai. 2. 318.*

We recall two cantos in *Tirumantram*, where St. Tirumular extols in a similar manner, the unique experience of the *Anma* with the bliss of *Sivam*.

*"It is not one; It is not two; It is non-dual (advaitam).  
Not involved in religious disputation nor reproach,  
It follows with love the gracious Feet of Sakti.  
Thus the anma enjoys the bliss of Sivam.  
This is the goal of the Siddhanta Pathway."*

*--Tirumantram. 1437.*

*"There are two positions I and He.  
I discerned them both as one; took the 'I'  
And placed it at His Feet as my offering.  
Everafter the distinction of I and He retracted."*

*--Tirumantram. 1441.*

## **Guru Sadhana--The way to Realisation.**

**"Do thou wake up before dawn and make thyself clean; pluck the newly opened buds and weave into garlands and offer unto Him in Worship.**

**Quell thy menacing mind by checking its outward distractions. Pray for the grace of the Lord's peerless Feet. Desires shall be overcome.**

**As your understanding deepens, the truth of the Guru's injunctions will become as clear as daylight, and be validated by every seeker after truth.**

**Thus armed with yogic insight, one can attain liberation.**

**There is not an iota of doubt in this path.**

**In everything, everywhere and at all times, His will prevails.**

**Day and night raise the incantation in the core of your heart, and sing *Aum Tat Sat*."**

## Guru Upadesh--The Guru's Testimony.

**“The temple of the heart of the aspirant, who for ever contemplates on Him and does His bidding, is the abiding mansion of the Lord:**

**Therefore let us reflect and serve Him intently on all occasions. The good and the bad, vice and virtue are the effect of delusion.” The Real Self in us is not subject to mortal limitations of change and decay.**

**This truth can be experienced by His Grace alone--**

**Do not eschew reason**

**Our life on earth is veiled by the power of Mayai--The illusion of matter and energy. Only the realised sages can experience the Truth, and not the others however learned.**

**Esteem not the evanescent life on earth. We are for ever immortal, in timeless eternity. Fear not.**

**Walk in the light of God and be true to thy inner Self.**

**Ponder and do as you will.**

**At all times, Chant *Aum Tat Sat* That alone is Real.”**

--Natchintanai. 318-319.

## All is His Will

In like manner did Sri Krishna conclude his discourse to Arjuna in the Bhagavad Gita: “Thus have I declared to thee the most mysterious of all knowledge; Reflect on it fully and do as thou chooseth.”

Iti te jnanam âkhyâtam  
guhyâd guhyataram mayâ  
Vimrsyai 'tad âsesena  
Yathe cchasi tathâ Kuru. XVIII. 63.

We are also reminded here of Sri Sankara's utterance that it is by divine grace that the highest wisdom is gained. “It is by knowledge caused by God's grace that release is gained.”

*“tat-anugraha-hetukenaiva vijnanena moksa-siddhir bhavitum arhati.”*

In the two monosyllabic words *TAT SAT* is mysteriously condensed the quintessence of the Yogi's Real Being. *TAT SAT* in Swami's Vac stands for 'It is what it is,' aluding to the Reality of the Absolute Sivam. This cryptic assertion directly coming from Swami reveals the true nature of our Yoga-Guru as Siva. In whatever manner we may try to apprehend the Siva-Yogi, we can never do so in the perfecton of his real Being, rendering each of our ventures to achieve success in a way incomprehensive.

Nevertheless, our knowledge of Swami circumscribed by our individual approach is not at the same time completely false, for each one sees in him only what he can see with his own particular conditioning at a particular moment.

Swami's revelation of the Yogic illumination is contained in the lines: "*He has drawn me into the aura of silent Awareness.*" We are reminded here of the famous Biblical text: "Come unto Me...and I will give you rest," which echoes the award of serene peace. St. Augustine paraphrased it according to his understanding thus: "Stand by Him, and ye shall stand fast. Rest in Him and ye shall be at rest."

In order to enjoy inner tranquillity, Swami bids us cast our all fear in verse four of this Song, as did Lord Muruga to his votary in *Tirumurugarrupadai* by St. Arunagirinathar.

*"Fear not--thy impelling devotion in drawing nigh unto me,  
I know."*

II. 291.

Our whole being registers an intense yearning for the revealing touch of the Siva Yogi, who is our Gurunathan. So bade Krishna to Arjuna.

*"Flee unto Him with all thy being.  
By His grace shalt thou obtain eternal Peace."*

--Bhagavad Gita. 18.62

In different pathways, the seekers are lead to the goal of At-One-ment: We quote from the Koran:

*"But whosoever surrenders his purpose to Allah while doing good, his reward is with his Lord; and there shall no fear come upon him, neither shall he grieve."*

--2.112; 10.63.

In the Old Testament occurs this passage:

*“And I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away the dross, and take away all thy sin.”*

*“Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee.”*

*Is: 1.25.*

Our Gurunathan's assurance is similar to the final assurance of Lord Krishna, the great Yogiswara to his disciple Arjuna:

*“Fix thy mind on me, give thy heart's love to me, consecrate all thy actions to my service, hold thine own self as nothing before me. To me then shalt thou come; truly I promise, for thou art dear to me.”*

*18. 65.*

*“Manmanâ bhava madbhakto  
madyâji mâm namaskuru  
mâm evai, syasi satyam te  
pratijâne priyo, si me.”*

In Swami's mystic canto of *Aum Tat Sat* is worked out the truth of the inexhaustible power of Jnana-Yoga and the submission to God's will, through the euphony of *Aum Tat Sat--It is what It is*, which is the resonance of the *Guru Vaakiam--“Apadiye Ullathu.”* It contains the earnest plea to surrender as the surest way to self-transcendence. We need not have to seek God as await His touch. It is the unreserved surrender to the Supreme who raises us to the succour of His Feet. He beckons us to stir up from the langour of worldly allurements, and follow the light, the kindly and kingly light of the Siva Guru, who shall solve the riddles of life, and lead us to the blessed abode of Truth.

The incantation of *Aum Tat Sat* vibrates within and without, and it behoves all Swami's votaries to chant this paeon a thousand and eight times, and perform to His *Tiruvadi, a Sahasranaama arjanai--* the worship with thousand and eight petals of love. In the expansive firmament of their hearts, the light of *Aum Tat Sat* shall reveal the promethean flame of Truth--*All, All is His Will.*”

## **THE FLAWLESS WORSHIP.**

**Aloft on the ladder, the blooms I pluck from high,**

**And offer them in flawless worship, Thangam dear.**

**There is no before or after.**

**I give up the Yoga of eight and Yogic centres six,**

**In the symphony of Sakti, Thangam dear**

**I behold the subtle secrets all.**

**The fickle mind subdued, the life breath set flame,**

**Immersed in silence I become, Thangam dear**

**There is neither you nor I, my dear.**

**The goldsmith makes me a wedlock chain of gold,**

**I wear it without fastening, Thangam dear**

**The cause of it I do apprehend.**

**Unsupported is the stage of Nâdântam that I climb,**

**And unto the wielder yielding, Thangam dear**

**The feast of communion do I become.**

**Enwrapped in silken skirt of God, soul and matter,**

**I don the veil alluring, Thangam dear,**

**All, all is Truth my dear.**

**The favour or not of those who give and give not,**

**I fling aside in flawless worship, Thangam dear.**

**The Three hath become One my dear.**

**Ineffable bliss doth engulf me fully,**

**Yet inscrutable; so touch not, Thangam dear.**

**But listen and rejoice in its glory.**

**See without seeing the form of Siva as Effulgence.**

**Even if it eludes thee, Thangam dear**

**Look not down my dear.**

**Ambrosial honey is in the bough far above.**

**Taste it with discretion, Thangam dear.**

**There'll be none to equal thee.**

**Blessed are those who sing these verses ten,**

**Full of felicity on earth, Thangam dear,**

**Sivam art all they realise.**

*--Natchintanai. 245.*

# THIS WAY TO COLUMBUTURAI

## UNDER THE ILLUPAI TREE

*“Pilgrim, Pilgrimage and Road  
Was but Myself toward Myself; and your  
Arrival, but Myself at my own Door.”*

*Mantiqu't-Tair (tr, Fitzgerald).*

*“Come ye from Perunturai to Columbuturai?”--Swami.*

In 1962 Swami unravelled his plan of a pilgrimage to the West and Malayasia by some of his close devotees. He did not specifically give any injunction to the five Sivathondar whom he chose to go to the West, on the discourses to be delivered to the Western friends, other than to greet them in friendship without acceptance of gifts.

He bade us live in the light of *Saivism*, and make personal contacts fruitful, so that those whom we meet on our pilgrimage may feel the impact of Sivam, more by the spell of silence (*mounam*) and the spoken word, rather than by learned lectures. Passing the Suez Canal in the early hours of a June mourning in 1963 and sighting the Mediterranean sea, the hub of ancient civilisation, in the S.S. CHUSAN, the Sivathondar sat in meditation outside our cabin as was our wont. A strong inner urge impelled Thiru to sing this particular Natchintanai, and meditate on it. From thenceforth, this song became the key board on which we played the symphony of our Guru to His friends abroad.

This song *Serve Him, Serve Him* brings out the fundamental idea to Saivism, that in “the storm of the world's flow” called the *Samsara* or the Confluence, the soul of man is fatally involved:

It is so because whatever we are destined to experience in this world is the inevitable consequence of the “uninterrupted but unseen operation of mediate causes (*Karma*), “Yet, it also follows inevitably that the Lord is the only seer, hearer, thinker and knower in us, and that “whoever sees, it is by *His* ray that he sees.”

*--Sivajana Botham Sutra XI.*

The freedom that is aspired is the freedom from one's self, from “this I and its affections.” Swami makes it clearer in this poem, that *he* only *can* be free who is no longer anyone. The liberation from good and evil is only possible for the man who knows *who he is*, and who surrenders nowever, all at His Feet.

**SERVE HIM, SERVE HIM.**

**Serve Him by selfless service and attain Wisdom,  
Serve Him by selfless service and enjoy serene Peace.  
Serve Him by selfless service and aim at Magnanimity.  
Serve Him by selfless service and revel in sweet Harmony.  
Thy bondsman shall live in the hearts of all.  
Thy bondsman shall live in humility with all.  
Thy bondsman shall live as a friend of all.  
Let deeds and not words be my watchword.  
All living forms shall I behold as my form;  
The beneficence of all shall betoken my benignity,  
The strength of all shall add to my own strength.  
Then shall noble friends esteem my words  
Whate'er doth betake us, let it pass by;  
Whate'er is conceived let it remain so;  
Incomprehensibly bright are the Feet of Splendour,  
Rejoice in the gracious Feet of the Guru divine.  
The noble seers dare not define it as one or two;  
Compassion will they show to those in distress sore;  
And non-violence will be their lofty creed;  
Distinction of good and bad affects them not, Hari-Aum.  
Ever present in all beings, Oh Immaculate One!  
Entrancing beauty in all art Thou too!**

**Permeating in every pebble, rock and imposing trees  
And flourishing e'en in grass and weed as well.  
Sole refuge naught but thee, sweet solace of my soul.  
Forsake me not alone but dwell with me for ever.  
Art Thou not my father, mother and Guru!  
Oh Supreme Reality! Essence of all things true,  
All that I am, to Thee I consecrate,  
Sustain me with clarity of wisdom meet.  
Apple of my Eye Fraught with thought and word!  
Oh luminous star illuminating the azure heights.  
Essence of harmony, Thou divine songstar,  
No other Lord will I revere but Thee;  
In worship shall my lowly self sing thy glory.  
Deign to head my garland of praise to Thee.**

*--Natchintanai. 120.*

### **THY WILL OH LORD!**

Out in the West, amidst alien cultures and the dominance of the intellect, when we faced the challenges of “Now I am whom I am,” the consciousness of a limited earthly life and of a world of science, and the disenchantment by a kiss, the resonance of the Guru's song of serene surrender and sincere consecration, “*Sole refuge naught but Thee, sweet solace of my soul,*” and the verifying assurance of *Thou art That*, would transform our confusion and depression into buoyant hope and faith.

In the mornings and evenings, we would sing this moving prayer of the heart, which had the power to compose our drooping spirits with the tonic of *Santam*. The refrain, “*Serve Him by selfless service*” steeped our consciousness with a quietus, transfused us with the vitality and clarity of the higher Self, and endowed us with new insights into the work of *Sivathondu*. “Whoever would be at peace with himself must have died to himself.” Thus the

shield of dedicated service--*Sivathondu*-- became our invincible insignia, in the pilgrimage to the West.

**“Thou showeth the way to selfless service,  
By thy beauteous acts of Grace.”**

*--Natchintanai. 129.*

It is the impious mind that in conceit thinks of “I am” and “I do,” and it is the fruit of ignorance. In accordance with the thought contained in the second and third verses of this Natchintanai song, “*sat and asat*” are not only 'being' and 'non-being,' but also 'good and evil.'

There is great emphasis on the notion of correct performance of worship and action. Whatever is done amiss is done by this ignorant self and is strictly not an *act*; while whatever is correctly and rightly done, is the act of God. “*That my service is perfect freedom,*” is implied in the lines that refer to the combined powers of strength and beneficence of all as blended to one's own strength and action. Thus through *Sivathondu* done properly, one finds the Self, and having done all that there is to be done, without any residue of potentiality, one becomes a realised seer in this life, and “*in whom naught whatsoever is wanting and who wanteth nothing.*”

In varied ways too sacred for recounting, did we set about to establish the potency of the Guru's word in alien lands, enriched by Hebraic and Hellenic cultures. It was a wondrous experience to live every moment in consonance with His will. There was no fragmentation of the self, torn and dissected with fear and frustration. In every song of *Natchintanai* is this insistent appeal to follow the trail of Grace and do *Sivathondu*; Swami insists on service as it alone can effect the purity of body, mind and soul, whence the divine Grace begins to operate freely, till one gains release and realisation of Siva:

Swami's psalm on '*Serve Him,*' exhorting constancy in service and submission to the Lord's Grace, accords in essence with a hymn from St. Tayumanavar, where he beholds this sweep of space as the expanse of Grace:

*“The wide, wide world, this sweep of space,  
Are to Thy saints expanse of grace'  
By Thy one word the mystic state  
Of Yogic calm is theirs, the great  
To whom Thou grantest Lord Thine aid,  
Helper on whom their hope is stayed,  
Who love Thee best Who lovest me,  
Friend of my lowly self to be.  
O Hill of Heaven whose form of Bliss,*

*Beginningless, unending, is.  
O Lord that livest in Thy Light!  
O Life that shineth ever bright!*

*Yet with all worlds and bodies willest e'er to be,*

*And with all beings, blended joyously,*

*As full as fragrance in the half-blown flower dwells.”*

--132.

## **SIVATHONDAN AUM**

*“Salutations to Siva Guru Yoga Swami--The Thondan of Siva!”*

The history of *Sivathondan* conveys the quintessence of the *Sanatana Dharma*. It can also be said that *Sivathondan* sums up the history of all religions. It mediates religious truths within the framework of human existence. The *Sivathondan* is the manifestation in human form of Lord Siva as revealed in the Saiva Agamas, and the discipline enjoined therein is termed *Sivathondu*-- service to God. He who follows this path is known as a *Sivathondan*. Human problems and situations, and a man's work and pursuits on earth reflect the light divine, the immanence of God.

The true *Sivathondan* sees *Siva* in everyone, and everyone in *Siva*. The *Sivathondu* performed by the teacher or the *Guru* who is the perfect *Sivathondan* on earth represents truth's embodiment in life, and hence has the power to refashion man into a servitor of *Siva*. The psalms of *Natchintanai*--the holy utterances of the great Sage of Columbuturai in Ceylon--define the whole beauty of man in relation to the Lord on one side and to the whole world on the other. *Sivathondu* is the effective pointer to the realisation of the dignity of the human spirit which is the dwelling place of the Supreme *Siva*.

### **The genesis of Sivathondan.**

**“Sivathondan comes,  
In meek Humility to enrich the isle of Lanka.  
Sivathondan serves  
The needs of the mighty and the low.  
Sivathondan grows  
Without any display of pomp and show.  
Sivathondan apprehends  
The same consideration to others as unto himself.  
Sivathondan guards**

**The followers of Siva who rides the bull  
Sivathondan wills  
To work, freed from the dimensions of time.  
Sivathondan proclaims  
That ye are immortal; ponder on it alone.  
Sivathondan enshrines  
The contemplative basis of life.”**

*--Natchintanai. 136.*

The *Sivathondan* rejoices in the vision of manifestation. He beholds the macrocosm and the microcosm animating with divine grace.

**Where love's minstrelsy prevails--This is our land.**

**Where Siva favours to dwell--This is our land.**

**Where griefs are dispelled --This is our land.**

**Where rains the pure showers of grace--This is our land.**

**Where abundant crops do grow--This is our land.**

**Where deluding senses flee--This is our land.**

**Here with zest my Guru won me in melting love,**

**And revealed to me this benign land ours.”**

*--Natchintanai. 22.*

*Yalpanam* is the northern part of Ceylon, the isle of Lanka with an ancient history, the isle favoured in the Indian Ocean as its pearl, the isle where flourishes today the four great religions of the world --Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity and Islam. This *Yalpanam* is a land of barren plenty. Its fertile soil is surface deep with hard limestone rocks underneath, and meagre too is its rainfall from the northern monsoons. It is surrounded by the shallow waters of the lagoon which encircle the Jaffna peninsula.

The slender natural resources of this country are tapped to the maximum by the people who live here, and they wrest from mother nature their strengthening sustenance. The shallow lagoon waters provide fishing facilities to a small section of the people, while the rugged palmrah palms and fruitful coconut trees, a variety of green vegetables, onions and chillies and fruit trees like mangoes, jak, plantains, and scattered paddy fields and tobacco

meadows, give occupation to a section of the Tamil people who live in the north of Ceylon.

The narrow lanes and highways, with cadjaned houses and neat compounds with deep wells, schools and temples in close proximity forming the cynosure of each hamlet and town, reflect the hardy environment as well as indomitable will and faith of the people who live here. Their simplicity in food and attire and outlook is striking indeed. Here we find an industrious class of people who believe in hard work and independent means of living, and their practical nature is not bothered about reshaping patterns of nature or patterns of living. Content for the most part with their lot, they are imbued with a quiet yet deep spirituality that amazes most visitors.

*Saint Tirumular* in that classical work dating to the first century A.D. known as *Tirumantram*, which deals with the grammar of Truth, has described Lankai as *Sivabhumis*. The Saiva Saints between the fifth and twelfth centuries A.D. including the renowned St. Tirunavukarasu, St. Tirujnanasambandar, and Sundaramurthi Nayanar have sung of the sacred temples of Siva in Ceylon like *Tiruketheeswaram* in the Mannar district, and *Koneswaram* in Trincomalee district. Centres of spirituality do not come into existence by mere accidents of time and place. They are par excellence centres of worship, because of the flame of religiosity set alight in them by a succession of seekers after truth.

There are many such hallowed places in India and Ceylon, which have been sanctified by the footprints of such enlightened seers and saints. The sub-continent of India and Ceylon has been vitalised from age to age by the torch bearers of the Hindu faith and *Yalpanam* is one such hallowed spot.

There are several pathways leading to the realisation of Truth, and the Hindus who strive to realise Siva follow the Saiva Agamas--the revealed scriptures of the Saivites. They extol the significance of the Guru, the realised Teacher, as one of the fundamental modes of worship for the attainment of bliss. We do not see, even though we have eyes to see; we do not hear, having ears to hear.

It passeth our understanding that the *Jnana Guru*, the teacher endowed with the highest spiritual wisdom and extolled in the Saiva scriptures as the most effective source of man's liberation, should have manifested the glory of Siva amidst us in this blessed land of *Yalpanam*. *SivaYogaSwami*, by the shining example of his life, worked out the *Yoga* and *Jnana* pathways, leading to the blessed state of Oneness with Siva. He was the matchless *Sivathondan*, the *SatGuru* who had been the source of inspiration and solace to hundreds of devotees from the East and West, and the genesis of *Sivathondan* can be traced to His benign grace.

*Sivathondan* has many facets. It connotes the word of Siva; It is also the grace of Siva revealed as the divine mother or the *SatGuru*, and is symbolised in *Tiruvadi* or the Holy Feet; Thus *Sivathondu* denotes the immanent aspect of Siva; It signifies the harmony of

Oneness in wisdom, volition and service--*Jnanam, Ichacha and Kriya.*

In the religious Journal called the *Sivathondan* initiated by the MahaYogi of Yapanam in January 1935 is found the quintessence of the teachings of SWAMI--the dynamic voice of timeless truth. In the special psalms of *Natchintanai* sung by him and published in every issue of the *Sivathondan* magazine edited by Sri K. K. Natarajan, the quest for *Tiruvadi*, which signifies the abiding grace of Siva finds immortal expression. Herein is revealed the path of self-realisation, leading to the experience of Oneness with Siva (*Siva-anubhuti*).

The word of Siva-- '*Aum Sivayanama,*' is fraught with significance. It is embodied in the web of *Sivathondan* mainly through the medium of the *Natchintanai* songs and psalms. These are the "Reflections of Grace" of the Nat-Guru, and awaken in the Seekers of Truth the urge for spiritual illumination, by dispelling their craving for fleeting enjoyments of life. They turn the toiling humanity from the fearful pangs of ignorance to the path of service radiating the bliss of Sivam (auspiciousness). The inspiring message of true spirituality, love and tolerance, and that all are equal in the sight of Siva which the *Sivathondan* proclaims today, is an ancient message:

*"Om Isavasyam idam Sarvam Yadkincha Jagathanj jagat*

*Dhina Dhyakthena Punjitha makrutha Kasyath Vidhanam."*

--*Isa Upanishad.*

*"In beauteous disguise the primal One assumed a form,  
In majestic splendour came in grace,  
Took each one's nature unto Himself,  
Being the infinite Lord of grace, our king,  
Became a Sage as moon-light bright."*

--*Tiruvacagam.*

## **THE SIVATHONDAN AS WITNESS**

The *Sivathondan* is the twentieth century testimony of the inspired ideal of service to Lord Siva. In the service of man, men learn to serve Siva, for He and they are in inseparable union. The service to Siva leads to the discipline of self-analysis, the purification of the mind through intense concentration for the realisation of the self, and the cultivation of the equable mind whereby ignorance and egoism can be destroyed.

*Sivathondan* sees the necessity for the conquest of the self by the Self, before human desires may safely be given freedom to weave their fabrics in the world of experience. Whenever and wherever the complete realisation of Siva takes place, *mukti* or liberation is

obtained.

The Sivathondar are bidden to pursue this goal of intuitive consciousness (*anubhuti*), and to give increasing expression in social action, which is what is known as *Sivathondu*. It is the free acting of the total self. To action alone has the *Sivathondan* a right, and never at all to its fruits. *Sivathondu* is therefore a *sattvika* activity indicating the highest stage of selflessness. In this way of life enunciated by Swami, man's hold on what is eternal and immanent in all beings stands revealed, and the realm of the spirit is not cut off from the realm of life.

The fundamental basis of *Sivathondu* or righteous action is the change which takes place in the nature of a man, as a result of the particular peace which is acquired by the human self, by the direct experience of *Sivam* or *Paraparam*, the Absolute Reality. *Sivathondu* requires the *Sivathondan* to practise "*mounam*," a withdrawal at all levels from all types of activity in order to permit contemplation of the One, who is both transcendent and immanent. "This withdrawal into individual solitariness shall help man for an active return to the patterns of living."

It is there that the Satguru, the teacher of Truth helps man to keep his mind fixed on the supreme Oneness of Siva, amidst the pressure of his daily toils, so that he might do his work with purity, equanimity and love. Service to Siva enables a man to be aware of life's relationships. The true object of all human action is to serve Siva; and the individual good expands into the universal welfare of society, so as to hold together the human race in its path of *karmic* activity or evolution. Thus *Sivathondu* is the modern expression by the Siva Yogi at comprehension and cooperation.

*Sivathondan* communicates not so much doctrine as a consciousness. Self-knowledge is inseparable from self-existence. Perception of life in the perspective of the whole is what is understood to be the way of life followed by the bondsman of Siva. Man recognises the dignity and freedom of the human spirit, and proclaims that the truth of the spirit excels reason, though it does not exclude it. The tensions between the microcosm and macrocosm are thereby resolved.

The Lord knows, sees, shares man's insignificant as well as important activities. Every movement is His movement, from the first primeval stirring whence Sakti, His immanent aspect rose to create the organic and material universe, the objective and subjective worlds, to the perpetual movements pervading in this world. It is His will that prevails. It is His will that swings the pendulum between the tears and smiles of man. It is His movement that causes the cycle of samsara, for man to work out the effect of his deeds and attain equanimity.

Sivathondan creates, sustains and destroys. He purifies and stirs the currents of love in the depths of man's being. Lord Siva reveals His *Visvarupa Dharshan* in the stage of life, to

one who surrenders complete his own finitude. In order to be able to surrender oneself completely, man must possess himself completely. He must first learn to *know* himself, and then will he begin to *feel* his divinity in humanity. In this united relationship with He and It, and I and Thou, man surrenders himself completely in *love*, which is the basis of all existence. It is in the total self-giving of man that he can reach the Feet of God.

## THE MAHAVAAKIAM

*Sivathondu* is the penetration of man through the world, by means of simple, homely and common acts; it does not depend on the protective armour of doctrines, priestcraft, prayers, rituals and the like to which the religions of man have been enslaved down the centuries. It is the open sesame to all followers of all religions. In the four *maha-vaakiam* of the Guru are embodied the flame of truth and the light of love :

**Oru Pollappumillai--Intrinsic evil there is not.**

**Eppavo mudintha kariyam--Accomplished is His Will.**

**Naamariyom--We do not know.**

**Muluvathum Unmai--All that is, is Truth Absolute.**

All is Truth to a realised soul. Man cannot penetrate behind the veil of finiteness. None knows *That*. A seer lives and moves and has his being supported by the arms of love. There is no illwill. In harmlessness lies his happiness. In doing the will of Siva, he attains peace. The essence of spirituality is the sense of Oneness with God. The man of devotion has a sense of unity with himself and the Supreme Lord, and therefore with the world of men and matter.

'*Natchintanai*' which is the immortal garland of the Guru's revelations, has been the promethean anvil on which the unconquerable ego of man has been struck for the good of all mankind. All great truths, as they are repeated in the course of centuries, are coloured by the reflections of the age in which they appear, and bear the imprint of the *Seer* who restates them. Swami's reflection of Grace embodied in *Natchintanai* share the ancient heritage of the Hindu *Vedas* and *Agamas* in the setting of modernism, with its special appeal to the modern man.

*Swami* was not merely an exponent of the *Saiva Neri*. He lived It. He was initiated by His Guru in the path of *Sanmarga*, which is the realisation of the Oneness of the *Anma* with *Siva*. He sang the songs of *Natchintanai* on the keyboard of this great Path, so that the world at large may attain the eternal bliss of God-Realisation. We shall quote the testimony of our Gurunathan:

## The Sivathondar

**“God is the life of our life.  
Therefore we are His possession.  
We are His perpetual bondsmen, pledged to undying servitude.  
All our vibrations originate in His vibrations.  
We move to His rhythm always.  
We can never for a moment forget Him.  
We lack nothing  
We live in eternity.  
We dwell in everything and art everywhere.  
We are all-knowing.  
Let us ponder on these exalted sentiments always and get  
beyond the base qualities inherent in us, and attain the  
grandeur of Divinity.**

**“All deeds of mine are thine, and but for Thee  
I'm nought, and so am I nought else but Thee'  
Thus in the harmony of Thy will is reconciled  
The pathway of Vedanta and Siddhanta.”**

**These words of St. Tayumanavar bear ample testimony to the  
excellence of the tolerance advanced by the Vedanta and Siddhanta  
pathways, and testify our own spiritual insight.”**

*--Natchintanai. 367.*

These affirmations of Swami inspire in us the faith and courage to face life victoriously, and to abide in the hope that all we have willed or hoped of good shall exist, not its semblance but itself; and that this world is neither a blot nor blank, but means intensely and means well.

In the above utterance of Swami occurs the reference by him to a significant Psalm of *St. Tayumanavar* from *All-Embracing Bliss*. We give below the full poem so as to make the context more meaningful:

*“All deeds of mine are thine, and but for Thee  
I'm nought, and so am I nought else but Thee;  
Thus in the harmony of Thy Will is reconciled  
The pathway of Vedanta and Siddhanta.  
Thy Grace doth know full well, how much I pined  
And withered long to realise this state.*

*Remaining in that mood, the friendly foe  
Of ignorance doth come, possess my heart,  
And then my mind is seized with fear of sin,  
Illusion, Karma and the round of births,  
Returning one by one in close succession.  
Deign me the sword of faith to cut my bonds,  
Grant me the dauntlessness of wisdom true.  
Vouchsafe me thy protection and thy Grace.  
Oh Perfect Bliss that leaving nought, fills all!”*

*All Embracing Bliss: V. St. Tayumanavar*

List! Sivathondan knocks at the heart-door. Will ye not heed his call? Swami's song reverberates:

### **LEAD KINDLY LIGHT.**

**“The goodly Sivathondan strides in all four directions,  
And spreads the message of the lotus Feet of the Lord,  
Forget Him not in your hearts and hearths--  
He who reiterates that we are all One in Siva.  
Armed with inner purity and the heart repeating  
The Five letters in tuneful notes, He speaks out  
That no other worship is needful in the search after God;  
That there need be no setback for the devotees of Siva.**

**Who doth hail the Guru without a second, this great Peer  
The Sivathondan brings you repast of stories old and new.  
Those followers of Siva who shall meet and delight  
In his friendship, will also do good to the land.  
In their country shall the rains descend,  
Their searching hearts shall be sweetened,  
In wisdom shall they wipe out all wrongs,  
And realise that Sivam abides in the soul.**

**Thus shall Sivathondan light the way with love;  
His sound expositions of truth shall reveal  
That Vedanta and Siddhanta are not separate paths,  
But are the essential facets of the luminous One.  
Not to bind oneself the Sivathondan guides,  
To work for work's sake eschewing selfish ends,**

**And experience the bliss of selfless performance.  
Lo, the holy Feet Sivathondan adorns my head.**

*--Natchintanai. 74-81.*

Such is the message of the true *Sivathondan*. His *Sivathondu* is performed by the whole of himself in the midst of the world. The significant thing is that it is fed at every point with the world's concerns and man's needs. It is reflected in man's love and service in all parts of the world. The *Sivathondan* is endowed with the strength of silence in word, silence in thought, and silence in deed. The *Sanatana* Religion with its emphasis on the *Sanmarga Neri*--the Way of Truth needs to be restated and commended in the light of the *Sivathondan's* ideal of service, in love and humility.

The Guru is the centre and circumference of the *Sivathondan*, the servant and master in one. In the words of Swami:

**“God is our bond slave. He will carry out everything as we want.**

**It is not fair to call Him ever and anon. He is a true and faithful servant. Wherever we go, He is sure to follow us there.**

**All those who believe thus should feed Him well, and clothe Him, and generally look after His welfare.”**

*--Sivathondan. XV/1/1951.*

Sing for ever the joyful song, with the cuckoo joining in the chorus:

**“Sing Cuckoo, that we lack nothing,  
And that we are the goodly Thondar, sing Cuckoo.”**

*--Natchintanai. 171.*

### **THE BLISS OF SIVATHONDU**

**“Blessed are they who consider all their acts  
As service unto Siva.”**

*--Natchintanai. 123.*

Swami affirms that renunciation cannot be of value if it is not mingled with service. What good is it to renounce, if it does not lead to serve the needy. It is the touch of service that men remember and benefit by. To soothe, to serve, lift and liberate has been the goal of the

renounced seers. This applied aspect of renunciation is of paramount interest to humanity, and is an accepted ideal of life. In Swami's creed, Service is the very life of renunciation, and renunciation is the very soul of service.

Service is not only the fruit of renunciation. It is also the seed of renunciation. Genuine renunciation is never self-sufficient. It overflows in service. The great Rishi-Yogi that Swami was, he *realised* through renunciation. He would often feel excruciating pain for want of an opening to serve, and would pour forth the agony of his heart to the winds on the public highways, and call upon the people to serve and not be served.

Everyone is aware that renunciation produces a tremendous voltage of spirituality, but if there is no distribution of that production, of what avail is it? That renunciation which by its own urge flows out into a hundred streams of service, can alone transform life in the world by igniting new fires of renunciation with flames of service. We recall in this connection the wonderful testimony of *St. JnanaSambandar*, who at the very end of his life proved the efficacy of renunciation, by calling upon all those who had gathered for his marriage to take up the name of the Lord, and singing his last Devaram Hymn--“thus do I pine in love with streaming tears, “he embraced the Beloved in the company of the faithful.

True service, *Sivathondu* as Swami defined it, is nothing but a flame of renunciation as reflected on the necessities of the world. The service of an enlightened Seer beams forth the first intimations of higher values of life, amidst the people with whom he lives and the lives of many, is seen in the service of St. Francis of Assisi, who showed such intense love of God.

Genuine renunciation has always blazed a trail of service by its victory-giving power. “Be Good and Do Good.” It is only by being good that doing good becomes possible. True service must be preceded by genuine renunciation which connotes inner purity. Therefore renunciation and service are both necessary for a man's happiness on earth, and hereafter.

**“Blessed are those who perform all service as unto Siva.  
For they shall attain divinity.”**

*--Natchintanai. 43.*

## **SIVATHONDU DOWN THE AGES**

It is an interesting and enriching study to trace the genesis of the ideal of Service. Looking at the estuary of the Ganges, we may not believe the smallness of its source. In like manner, the Ideal of service emerging from the Vedas may not look at first as one pointed as the ideal of *Sivathondu* expounded by Swami today. But the accents and details of the ideals of service as lived and communicated by Swami, are indeed found in the Vedas in seed forms. The vastness of the estuary of that idea, is only proof of the potency and the power of the

perennial source.

The Vedic Deities are not mere personifications of the forces of nature. It will be more revealing to say, that they are objectifications of the potent yearnings of their souls and aspirations of their hearts. The presence of the gods was felt everywhere, and in that sentiment of the presence of the gods, there was a germ of religious morality, sufficiently strong to restrain people from committing before the eyes of their gods, what they were ashamed to commit before the eyes of men.

It is against this backdrop that we will view the spontaneity of the genesis of the ideal of service in the *Vedic* mind. Under the seeing eye of their breathing Gods, the Vedic Aryans had to grow and live and perform their actions. The relation of man to gods is one of dependence, but the expression of love for the gods is marked as father, mother, and son addresses. The way of devotion, *Bhakti Marga*, which some scholars imagine to be a later development of Hindu religion, is already evident in the *Rig Veda*.

The Gods being powerful rulers of the universe had to be approached for blessings to man in a pleasing way, and thus was constituted the soul of the principle of Service. Hymns, oblations, prayers and offerings to gods were the first manifestations of service--a heart link between gods and men, the earth and heaven. This indeed is the first incentive for *SivaThondu*.

*Yoga* also signifies the giving up of things in the name of Deities. This giving up of things typifies the most primitive form of both renunciation and service. Though lofty, the Vedic Gods are not beyond human intimacy. The offerings are that which, men like--milk, grain, butter, flesh of sheep and soma juice, and are conveyed to heaven by the fire God--All this constitutes *service*. In return men asked for some kind of divine service from the Gods. The Gita enjoins this practice. "Perform everything as unto a sacrifice--Actions done with beneficial merit to all do not bind one." Chapter III. 9.

Thus Service came to mean a bilateral cherishing between God and man in the free association of each other. Work done in a spirit of sacrifice, for the love of the Divine has no binding power. Sacrifice itself is interpreted in a broad sense. We have to sacrifice the lower mind to the higher. The religious duty towards the Vedic gods here becomes service of creation in the name of the Supreme.

"Cherish the Devas with this *Yagjna*, and may those Devas cherish you. Thus cherishing one another, *ye shall attain the highest good.*" (Gita III.11.).

This indeed is the keynote of Service or *SivaThondu*. Life itself becomes a *Yagjna* or sacrificial service, to a devotee of the Lord.

When we can bring ourselves to feel this idea in its essential spiritual pulsation, we stand in

awe before the creativity of this conception. Service is the only way, by which man can lift up his heart to the Gods in adoration, and they can stretch their arms to him in benediction. Man can approximate gods, and gods can be proximate to man.

Through this sovereign path, God's godliness--Siva's transcendence, and man's manhood--man's immanence, found self-expression. It was through this golden way that the Hindu Seers first went out in the expanse of their own spiritual potentialities. This pathway inevitably led to the fundamental realisation, that the *macrocosm* quivered within the very heart of *microcosm*. From this vantage point, the conception of service transcended itself and attained a higher soul as it were. Everything became a mighty play of the *Self within the self*, as testified in the Eternal Message of the *Upanishads*, and the Testimony of the Saiva Saints in *Periya Puranam*. It is the Testament of Swami, in *Natchintanai*.

## PURUSHA SUKTA

Swami would make us read in his Ashram, the *Purusha Sukta* (*Rig Veda X. 90; Yajur Veda XXXI*) which is a unique poem in marking the expansion of human consciousness. Its spiritual import is superb. As the *Sivathondar* understand it, it is a magnificent paean on Man.

“Be great. No great work can be done without sacrifice. The Purusha himself sacrificed himself to create the world. Lay down your comforts, your pleasures, your name, fame or position, nay, even your lives, and make a bridge of *human chains* over which millions will cross this ocean of life.”

“Bring all forces of good together. Do not care under what banner you march. Do not care what your colour be, green, blue, or red, but mix up all colours and produce the intense glow of white, the colour of love. Ours is to work. The results will take care of themselves.”

Total self-immolation for the good of the world is the acme of the ideals of renunciation and service, and it is effectively and symbolically expressed in *Purusha Sukta*. Thus we see that the ideal of service has been permeating the entire scheme of Hindu Life. The spiritual quality and social applicability received an effective orientation in the hands of the venerable *YogaSwami* of Lanka in the Twentieth Century, in this blessed land of *Yalpanam*.

Hindus have always been profound realists. Virtue, Plenitude, Bliss and *Moksha* are the four Ends of life, according to our *Dharma Sastras* and *Tirukural*. Neither economics nor politics determined the patterns of the Hindu social institutions. The focal point was the soul's relation to the supreme *ParaSivam*. All individual selves are fixed in this Mid-Point. *Siva* is below; *Siva* is above; behind and before--to the right and to the left. *Siva* is all that exists--one who sees thus, thinks thus, understands thus, loves *Siva*, revels in *Siva*, enjoys the presence of *Siva*, and rejoices in *Siva*. Swami's Song-- “See, see Sivaparan

everywhere,” echoes the universality of *Saivam*.

He is the innerself of all creatures--

## **The Ideal of Sivathondu Today.**

The ideal of *SivaThondu* draws its nourishment from the very core of these realisations. These age-old truths were socialised to suit the needs of the modern Hindus, and Swami worked out the integral ideal of *SivaThondu*. If all are in Siva, and Siva art all, then all men are of equal status. We recognise ever so clearly the futility of the palpable inequalities that thrive around us. Hinduism is a unique fusion of super-idealism and hyper-realism, and her Pathfinders have been great planners of life. The peculiar necessities of different men in different levels of being have been recognised in Hindu Society, and implemented by her spiritual Teachers.

Men, according to their inner make up, necessities and qualities came to have different modes of life with different duties and privileges. Every man's path connected him on the one hand with his ultimate goal of life--which was equal for all ultimately, the realisation of the divine in man and his liberation--and to the society on the other, for the welfare of which, he had to exert himself to the utmost. In this perspective and context, the *Varnashrama dharma* stands out as one of the superb Service Schemes, which form the web and woof of Hindu society, and therefore needs to be upheld even today.

All men are equal as far as the *aspiration* part of the life's quest is concerned. But according to the psycho-physical requirements of men of different levels, the *necessity* part of people's lives had to differ. Swami's *Sivathondu* helped to implement this ideal, where a group of people could discharge their duties so well, that they could progress towards their *goal of life which is liberation*, as well as *contribute in the process, a service to the society* which would help other groups of people in going a step nearer towards the common goal of all men--“To Realise Siva through Sivathondu”. Let us join the servitors of Siva and sing with Swami:

### **SERVITORS OF SIVA-AUM**

#### **The Devotees of Truth**

**Behold God in all and rejoice, AUM.**

**Free from desire, malice and lust, AUM.**

**Steadfast is their meditation so joyful, AUM.**

**Good and ill deeds they endure gladly, AUM.**

**In dire distress, are they unruffled, AUM.**

**In Oneness they perceive heaven and earth AUM.**

**They see the dance of holy Feet and praise, AUM.**

**They invoke and chant--Hail Namasivaya, AUM.**

**The First and Last shall not assail them, AUM.**

**The loving servitors of Siva, they forget not, AUM.**

**And they set aside the chains of caste and creed, AUM.**

**They do not swerve from the serenity of truth, AUM.**

**On earth they will not act ignobly, AUM.**

**Nor will they rejoice in gay youthfulness, AUM.**

**In ecstatic joy, they evoke His Praise, AUM.**

**And declare that Truth abides in All, AUM.**

**They perceive not the male, female and neuter, AUM.**

**But chant in joy Hara, Hara, Siva, Siva, AUM.**

### **The Devotees of Siva**

**Behold the light that mingles in the seeing Eye, AUM.**

**And the vision of Oneness beyond day and night, AUM.**

**They avow the impermanence of birth and death, AUM.**

**And appear like fools and lunatics, AUM.**

**They chastise the wiles that prey on goodly minds, AUM.**

**The Lord's name of Namasivaya do they extol, AUM.**

**And trust that nothing's lost nor gained, AUM.**

**They know the essence of five and three, AUM.  
And declare there's no going nor coming, AUM.  
Thus they keep in check the wayward mind, AUM.**

### **The Devotees of Truth**

**Unknown to the devas, seers and mystics, AUM.  
Yet known in their adoration of Siva-Siva, AUM.  
The Supreme Lord they do praise always, AUM.  
Yet do not despise those of evil deeds, AUM.  
Carnal delights allure them not on earth. AUM.  
The arrogance of ego do they eschew, AUM.  
And attain wisdom by subduing the Five, AUM.  
Inordinate desires can never seduce them, AUM.  
And they remember not the past or present, AUM.  
Nor do they cling to winsome worldly wiles, AUM.**

### **The Devotees of Siva**

**By soulful incantations make even Yama retreat, AUM.  
They heed not to obstacles from any quarter, AUM.  
Thus did manifest on earth the wise Sivathondan, AUM.  
Like waxing moon resplendent, Hail Sivathondan, AUM.**

### **Oh Devotees of Siva!**

**Affirm that the will of Siva prevails supreme, AUM.  
And speak with one and all in sweet simplicity, AUM.**

**Praise in cadence fine the adorable Sivathondan, AUM.**

**Who as Self of self, sees not right nor wrong, AUM.**

**Flawless and beauteous art Thou, Sivathondan, AUM.**

**Whose benign grace cleaves the bonds of birth, AUM.**

**Long live Sivathondan! AUM.**

**All Hail, All Hail, Sivathondan, AUM.**

*--Natchintanai, 204-207.*

### **PILGRIMS OF SIVA**

**“We are Sivanadiyar. We lack nothing. Our delight is to do His bidding. That is our goal of life.**

**The sun, moon and stars, devas and asuras and all sentient beings are engaged in activity, in consonance with Siva's Will.**

**They fulfil the supreme will of the Lord, through the goal of service to Siva.**

**Nothing moves except by His Will. There is no gain, neither is there any loss.**

**We are incomparable: we have transcended pain and pleasure; There is neither death nor birth for us; no desires can thwart us, neither desirelessness; Beyond the sway of the senses are we, and the convolutions of the mind affect us not. Away with barriers of Time and space!**

**We are Sivanadiyar.**

**We witness the majesty of our Lord Siva.**

**We are spectators in the stage of the Universe.”**

*--Natchintanai. 370.*

### **BELOVED ARE WE**

**'We are Sivanadiyar, the bondsman of Siva! Our meditation, our concentration, our conduct and our action--all are focussed on Him!**

**Blessed are we, for we are the beloved of Siva.  
Immersed  
in His Grace, we intensely experience His Bliss.  
We are not subject to the code of finite knowledge. We  
enjoy the freedom fo realisation. Thus do we reflect  
on the  
Mahavaakiam:**

**Intrinsci evil there is not.**

**That is what It is--from everlasting His Will prevails.**

**We know not--who knoweth?**

**All That is, is Truth absolute.**

*--Natchintanai. 371.*

## **PERIYA PURANAM AND SIVANADIYAR**

It will be significant in this context to reflect on the *Prologue* to *Periya Puranam*, where *St. Sekkilar* depicts Lord Siva as extolling the virtuous qualities of the sanctified servitors of Siva; and bidding *St. Sundarar* to sing of their glory par excellence:

*“These are my servitors,  
In matchless glory, they shed unique lustre;  
By devotion non-pareil, they attain me;  
They control the world by their integral harmony.  
They are not subject to illls nor bonds.  
In peerless stature, they are established.  
Inbued with great Love, they enjoy bliss divine,  
Duality have they transcende;  
Do thou resort to this fine galaxy.”*

*--Thaduthadkonda Puranam V. 196.*

At the bidding of Lord Siva, *St. Sudarar* sings in praise of the holy galaxy with humility and love. He tunes himself in worshipful reverence to do the Lord's injunction, and sees in it an admirable avenue, a flawless pathway to rid himself of blemish and imperfection:

T. P-197.

He takes his pledge of eternal servitude to each of the heroic bondsman of Siva:

Drawn by an irresistible bond of allegiance, he picks up the chord of inspiration from the first line uttered by the Lord:

*“To Thy devout bondsmen who in sacred Thillai Dwell, my obeisance be.”*

He sings the garland of Poesy called *Tiru Thondar Togai*-- the work on sanctified saints, which formed the source for St. Sekkilar's immortal Epic of *Tiru Thondar Puranam*-- the magnum opus on the galaxy of the faithful devotees of Siva.

*SivaJnana Botham*, the foremost authority on *Saiva Siddhanta* Metaphysics, enjoins the admission of an enlightened soul to the galaxy of the servitors of Siva, as the acme of Siva's Grace. The last sutra delineates the liberated souls, the *Jivan-muktar*, as enjoying the holy companionship and felicity of the faithful bondsmen of Siva, and adoring their wisdom with pious veneration.

St Manicavacagar in the *Temple Lyric* supplicates for admission to the assembly of Siva's bondsmen:

*“Ever grant this humble devotee the grace to dwell,  
Amidst thy holy band of servitors,  
That my soul's yearning be fulfilled.”*

In the opening stanzas of the *Prologue* to *Periyapuranam*, St. Sekkillar describes the august assembly of these *holy votaries of Siva*, in the courtyard known as “*Devasiriyam Porch*,” at the temple of Tiruvarur.

*“It was like thousand seas of milk  
Sparkling in the luminosity of the holy Ash;  
Of shining mien are these radiant votaries,  
And resounding in their chant of mystic letters Five.*

*They worship the Feet of Him, the primal Cause,  
And live as mighty rulers of this earth.  
From global corners wide are they gathered here;  
And the world lies vanquished at their feet.*

*Their resplendent countenance lights up  
Every side and their exalted glory,  
None can extol. These men are as pure inside  
As the holy ash adorning their bodies outside.”*

Thus we see the panorama of the Society of God-men, who demonstrated their deep love of

Siva by their joyous and dedicated lives. In Swami's Psalm of Praise too, we discover the cherished goal of *Saiva-Neri* as the relentless pursuit of the Beloved Siva by these God-men, who realised their own perfection and made kings and common men bow to them. These servitors are the eternal liegemen of Siva, who do not know of any other objective in life except service unto Siva.

St. Sekkilar delineates their heroic valour and fearlessness thus:

*“They lack nothing as they rest on the will of Siva.  
Their only aim in life is to serve the Lord.  
Their steadfast, undaunted courage defy all analysis.”*

*--Periyapuram IV. Tirukootachirapu. 9.*

In the Natchintanai Ode, to the rhythm of the primordial sound AUM, Swami hails these illustrious *Siva-Thondar* as moving to the Will of Siva, and from among this band of God-men, he singles out the unique role of the Master *SivaThondan*, the manifestation of the Grace of Siva, in the form of His Grace:

**“Thus did manifest on earth, the wise Sivathondan,  
Aum.  
All Hail, All Hail, Sivathondan, Aum.**

*--Natchintanai. 207.*

What a wondrous panorama of divine God-men march past us in this song! Whatever be their mode of activity or status of being, they are all linked to the Feet of the Lord. They are the chosen ones of Siva's Grace.

*“Light that dwelleth serene in thy Sweep of Grace,  
Height untouched by a craving or counsel, Lord,  
Endless births would I undergo, if through all,  
Bending knees to thy saints I could serve them well.”*

*--St. Tayumanavar. 258.*

Walking, standing, sleeping, waking, eating or fasting, in purity or impurity, in wealth or poverty, in pleasure or pain, in enjoyment or separation, they are constantly aware of the Presence of Siva, and are the inheritors of His ineffable Grace.

Before the Sat-Guru--Sivathondan, we envisage a consecration ceremony, where the pledge of eternal servitude is taken by his devout bondsmen, this centenary year of our dearly loved GURU:

*“We are the legion of servitors. We take the vow of allegiance at the Feet of the Lord, who is immanent in the cosmos and in our inner self. We do not suffer from the pangs of life's misery; no more diverstiy; no discord, no dissolution and decay shall ever touch us. We have become immortal. Ceaseless shall be our remembrance of Siva, whose name is ever on our lips. We live in Him and He in us. Harmonious and serene shall be our lives on earth under the victorious banner of Master Sivathondan.” Thy Will be done. Ellaam Sari.*

We shall follow the pledge by singing in chorus Swami's Song of “*Tondar Naangale--Sivathondar Naangale*”, with Swami leading the choir:

### **AT THY FEET**

**Servitors are we,**

**Siva's servitors are we.**

**In the whole as in the part,**

**We behold the Lord.**

**We shall not suffer from dire disease,**

**Nor travel again by the uterine path;**

**Hoary sins have from us dissolved,**

**All things on earth are linked to us.**

**He is our refuge and to Him we offer love,**

**For e'er His thrall, for e'er living in Him.**

**We see naught but unity in Sidhanta and Vedanta,**

**To the path of perfection we hold fast.**

**We chant Siva, Siva in ceaseless refrain,**

**In mind apprehending Siva as the Indweller.**

**We see everything where we are.**

**A life of sweet content is ours on earth.**

*--Natchintanai. 4.*

# SIVA JNANAM

## THE SUN OF TRUTH

*Siva Yoga Swami* bequeathed the priceless heritage of *Siva Jnanam* in his Garland of Poems called *Natchintanai*. He came into the world when the world needed him most. He was in line with the stars that had illumined the firmament of time and worked for the good of humanity. This resplendent Star of Lanka was seen by some and unseen by many. To understand Swami fully, one must understand the tradition of the saintly Gurus, and Jnanis of the East and West and more especially the tradition of the *Sanatana Dharma* which denies the existence of anything unique and peculiar to itself, apart from the local flavor and social adaptations that must be expected in this world, “where nothing can be known except in the mode of the Knower.”

He was unfettered by the discipline of the *Charya, Kriya, Yoga* and *Jnana* stages marked out by the Saiva tradition laid out in the *Agamas*, and yet he was refreshingly conservative in upholding the ancient Hindu way of life. He spoke in the simple language of the *Dharma*, the Eternal religion of the *Vedas* and *Agamas*. He was the symbol of the twentieth century shifting in the thought forms of the Hindus.

Swami is the penultimate Truth, and the experience contained in *Natchintanai* is but its temporal reflection. In it, there is concrete imagery of the Hindu tradition and mythology, with a sense of overtones of mysticism, with a call for selfless service of *Sivathondu* to the suffering humanity. *Natchintanai* is the inspired work of an immaculate *Maha Yogi* and a sanctified *Jnani*, who was endearingly known to his devotees as *Swami*. It is a term meaning Lord and master--He who is one with the Self-*Swa*.

In our Testament of Truth, we have brought to the fore his glimpses and experiences of the unknowable Beyond, the Absolute Reality, which cannot be penetrated fully, but which can be apprehended as has been revealed in the near-approaches to Truth in the Upanishads, and in our sacred Saiva *Tirumurais* and scriptures. Who can know? We know not! We have translated those selections which express aspects of divinity as manifested in the objective world of form as well as the formless and the transcendental. The *goal of life* as well as the *means* of fulfilling our destiny are given immortal expression by Swami.

In our Book, we have tried to show the predominant stages of his revelation. As a first step, Swami urges the dire need for everyone to wield an articulate knowledge of **himself** before he can meaningfully formulate a knowledge of the outer world, and then from introspection to set up an inseparable relationship between the inner life of the cosmos and the individual self.

In this mood of certitude, Swami addresses the peacock, serpent, lizard, cuckoo and the

parrot, and makes effective use of the music of the drum, conch shell, the sport of children, and also conjures the charm of the repetition of the *Letters Five* or the *Pranavam Aum*, and even the symbology of the adept yogis called *Siddhar* who speak in parables and folk imagery, in order to unfold the varied hidden aspects of the phenomenal world, through which the *Divine* may be apprehended.

A fervent aspirant can gain through these rumblings of ear-whispered utterances an insight into the destiny and objective of life, in relation to the transcendent Reality. What is important is the *relation*. Existence always implies a relation. In its ultimate Essence, the unmanifest causal aspect cannot be said to be *one* or many. It is not one; It is not two. Swami signifies in his songs of Experience, a *non-dual principle* which is said to be beyond the forms of manifest divinity; it cannot be elicited by acts of worship, forms of yoga, dhyana, or morality.

However when we envisage divinity as a personal God and we attribute to it virtues, then it cannot be one but many. The Immanent aspects of ParaSivam are celebrated in many an ode in *Natchintanai*. Therefore Swami understood both these ways, from the One to the many and from the many to the One. We perceive by his lens that it is the divine manifestation and not its unity which is the magic charm of the universe. Thus he conducts the orchestral music as well as plays the solo melody of the divine symphony of Eternal Truth. His Testament of Truth lays special emphasis on *Siva Jnanam*.

*Siva Jnanam* is the full and unmediated knowledge of the spiritual Reality that is *Sivam*. In order to be a fit receptacle, the whole personality of man must be regenerated through appropriate disciplines. Good work--*Siva Thondu*, and noble conduct--*Ollukam*, must precede before illumination is attained. In the *Psalm of Life* and other poems, Swami makes it explicit that the performance of selfless service with devotion and trust--*sraddha* will not reap the desired effect, if the agent of the act is not moral and pure. Good conduct is the sine qua non of spiritual life at all stages, and Swami enjoins inner contemplation for engendering purity of the soul.

The devout aspirants are exhorted to concentrate their entire attention on the Light of Wisdom within,--*Jyothi Aham*--in the bright space of the heart. The object of devotion and union (*yoga*) is the Eternal SWA, whose form is the infinite space, whose spirit is Truth, whose delight is the vital force, whose essence is bliss and peace consummate.

## UPADESH PERENNIS

We have endeavored to state the fundamentals of Swami's *Upadesh Perennis* from an orthodox point of view, both as to principles and their application. Our testament has drawn mainly from the perennial springs of *Natchintanai*, through we have dipped now and then at the springs of the Vedas and Agamas, the Upanishads and the Gita, and the Saiva Saints and Vaishnava mystics.

For ninety years and more, our Gurunathan was the custodian of a living, dynamic and vibrant spiritual tradition of the *Sanatana Dharma* enshrined in Hinduism. He pointed to the Man of the atomic age, the unilateral approach to *Anma-Jnanam*-- Knowledge of the Self through *Siva Thondu*. He vitalized the truth of *Sivam art all* by living a life of supreme surrender to Siva. It is only saints like him who can be termed the real stabilizers of Hindu Dharma, which is the treasure house of security in our insecure times.

Siva-Yoga Swami expounds Siva as an Essence without duality. That what is called Siva is the Entirety (*Puranam*) which is sonant and silent, (*Sabdhasabda*) *saguna* and *nirguna*, and temporal and eternal. Whoever knows Him in His immanent aspect knows Him also in His ultimate (*para*) transcendent aspect. He is within and without, mobile and immobile, and therefore a total presence, undivided in divided things.

Swami made us read *Isopanishad* and understand that life in the world and life in the spirit are not incompatible. Work or *Sivathondu* is not contrary to knowledge of Siva but is a means to it. Renunciation is not of life but of the ego. The goal of both work and renunciation is to know the Sivan within and Siva without. We have cited many allusions from *Natchintanai* to the act of self-manifestation implied in the descent from the silent level of non-duality to the finite totality in terms of subject and object, and in support of the many forms of existence in the universe as conjoint principles of One.

Swami popularized the practice of *Yajna* by various pathways. The word *Yajna* implies the submission of the outer man to the inner self, and is the basis of a return to the One Self. It promotes the vision of oneness, when the seer sees the Lord alike in all beings and all beings alike in Siva.

This is the perfect wisdom, the *SivaJnanam* of the Rishis and Seers of Ancient India, which Swami inherited and disseminated. He was a great Almsgiver. He found man divided between his essence and his nature. When man was against himself, naturally he would be against the forces outside too. In line with the great Seers, Swami helped man to know himself by bringing in unison his essence and his nature. His songs echo the truth of the ninth Sutra in *SivaJnana Botham*: “That Siva is the only seer, hearer, thinker and knower in us and that whoever sees, it is by His ray that he sees.” However owing to the limitation of the finite ego and the sense of *I and Mine*, man finds himself involved in the bondage of the *tattwas* or avenues of experiencing, without knowing the presence of Siva within him. This is the unique way in which he teaches us. He approximates the fulfillment, the realized Seer that he was, and exhorts us to follow in his pathway to the source of Truth.

Swami impressed this Truth not only in his magnificent Odes on “Know Thyself by thyself,” but also by his living example in many imperceptible ways. Whenever any devotee entered his Ashram, he would accost him, “*Who is that? From where do you come? Who are you?*” and the one facing him will answer, “It is me, Swami from X place...I am so and

so.” The fettered state of these bound individuals would be known only to him and to none other.

Yet in the light of his presence, a few learnt the answer to this question: “*We art Thou--Swami--Thyself.*” These were the occasional rays of illumination from the Sun of Truth. It was his way of breaking the bonds to freedom, in the assurance of *Thou art That.*

That this freedom could be realized here and now as in hereafter is the import of his songs in *Natchintanai.*

What is the nature of the *Jivanmukta* who has found the Self--the same as I in all beings, of whom there is none I love and none I hate? The answer is impregnated in the Guru's Upadesh: *Oru Pollappumillai.* It is bliss to realize the Truth by his Grace that there is no other, and hence nothing to be feared. There can be no ill-will, when good-will reigns supreme.

**“Divine Grace sweeps o'er and my soul revels in bliss,  
With none resisting Truth reigns supreme.**

*--Natchintanai. 200.*

Swami lived in a certain environment and had to express his utterances in words which that environment could understand. He had himself arisen from the midst of that environment, and his own early perceptions of the truth had been received within its fold. But he uttered in *Natchintanai* what had been intuited to him by His Guru, through direct experience of the Truth. It is *Siva Dhyanam.* It is *Siva Yogam.* It is *SivaJnanam.* Swami realized Siva and attained *SivaJnanam.* His mission was to make it possible for all who yearned for the light of Truth also to enjoy its luminosity, by yoking their self to Siva, through selfless service (*Sivathondu*), and by practicing the presence of Siva by singing His praise!

The *Devarams*, *Tiruvacagam* the Cantos of the Alwars, and later Saiva saints like *Pattinattar*, *Tayumanavar* and *Siva Yoga Swami*, reveal the supreme beatitude of a *Siva-Jnani* immersed in the bliss of *SivaJnanam.* The precious pearls of *SivaJnanam*-- Wisdom, found in Swami's *Natchintanai* are the affirmation of the celebrated Saiva Saints of the *Periyapuram* epoch as well, for whom the consciousness of being is valid absolutely, as is their doctrine that the *Jnanam* of the Immanent Siva can be realized *now* within each one of us.

Swami's songs breathe of the essence of the experience that *God is*, and that is the *way* followed by the illustrious saints, immortalized in the Hindu Scriptures, “Whom to know is our highest good and the highest goal.” It is the *way* and the *goal* for man today.

**ST. TIRUJNANA SAMBANDAR AND SWAMI**

Swami shared the buoyant freshness and the wise penetration of St. Sambandar, whose psalm on the gracious acts of the Supreme Siva composed for his father Sivapathahiruthayar and known as *Tiruvelukootirukai* 1.128., remained a favorite with him. This song deals with the One only who in manifestation became many. It was Siva with Sakti, His Energy who manifested as three forms, four, five, six and eight and thus endlessly magnified, till its all pervasive manifestation filled this earth, and in its subjective, microcosmic aspect took its abiding place in the *Anma*--the eternal entity of the Soul, with its habitation in the body of man. Swami's song on *Tiruvunthiar* reiterated the same truth:

**That became One and It became two--who doth know?**

**The Parâparan of five and six forms, doubt not.**

**He loves to dwell in the hearts of the devotees who for e'er**

**Meditate on Him.**

*--Natchintanai. 221-222.*

In Swami's Ashram, St. Sambandar's canticle would be sung every morning before the commencement of the *Dhyanam* at dawn. St. Sambandar whose life was one of spotless purity and wisdom, was one of the shining revivers of Saiva religion in the early seventh century A.D., and his songs tinge with the flavor of sublime wisdom. His Devarams found a significant place in Swami's discourses.

In the many poems of Swami's *Natchintanai*, we note similar tones of purity, devotional certitude and clarity of vision of the One Supreme *Pathi* who eludes analysis by reason, but who is caught in the net of love by His devotees. "Know Him first, Oh, man! Before anything Seek Him, Love Him, Bind Him and Serve Him and Him alone."

St. Sambandar's Devarams have embodied the truths of *Saivism* in psalms, the fascination of which never flags. It is not merely the elegance of language, the exquisite grace of diction, the musical inflow and the fitting of syllable into syllable, and line to line, that charm and captivate our attention. His words speak from the heart to the heart. The appeal is through the senses to the soul, from the aesthetic to the spiritual. His cantos on Siva's Name and the grandeur of the Holy Ash, and the Madura hymns, like tears spread their translucence even like dew drops on the petals of the lotus, in those shrines where he sang so mellifluously on the glory of Siva.

His Devarams are word-garlands woven in praise of Siva, the Supreme One, and are expressed in flawless poetry, only because they had been transmitted into the actualities of life's experiences and assimilated to his soul's exalted aspirations. This is the secret of the magnetic influence of these songs, among the Tamilian Hindus even today. St. Sambandar had the unique illumination of *Siva-Jnanam* at the age of three and we give the first canzone

which the Saint composed on the banks of the temple tank at Seerkazhi.

*“His ears are be-ringed, He rideth the bull;  
His head is adorned with the crescent moon's ray;  
White is He with ash from the burning-ground swept;  
And He is the lover who my heart steals away.*

*Great Brahma enthroned on the lotus full bloom  
Erstwhile bowed down and His glory extolled,  
And singing received he the grace of our Lord  
Who dwelleth in famed Bramapuram old.”*

*--St. Sambandar I.I.I.*

His Devarams allude to Siva's infinite grace, and make reference to the gracious form of Siva as *Neelakandan* with the blue throat, because out of compassion, He sucked the poison that polluted the ocean of milk when the Devas and Asuras churned it in affray. Thus He saved them from annihilation. He is also extolled as the All-Embracing One who is in good and darkness.

*“Thou art right and Thou art wrong,  
Lord of holy Alavay;  
Kinsman, I to Thee belong;  
Never fades Thy light away.  
Thou the sense of books divine,  
Thou my wealth, my bliss art Thou,  
Thou my all, and in Thy shrine  
With what praises can I bow?”*

*--St. Sambandar. III. 52.3.*

In the same manner, Swami sang in *Natchintanai*, on the glory of the One without a second, the Auspicious-Siva as his greatest protection, armor, and guide. He takes his place in our hearts like a thief and lover. He is immanent in all sentient and insentient objects of this Universe.

## **ST. TIRUNAVUKARASAR AND SWAMI**

Swami shared with St. Tirunavukarasar, also called Appar, and who also lived in the Seventh century A.D. the outstanding quality of service to humanity. St. Appar also had a long span of life like Swami, and was unabated in the pursuit of his goal which was to perform continual service unto Siva and his flock. Swami's call to do Sivathodu is as insistent as St. Appar:

**“Sivathondu leads to the summation of action, conduct and discipline on earth. It culminates in *SivaJnanam*-- the grand enlightenment.”**

*--Natchintanai. 186.*

St. Appar enjoins all to repeat the Name *Sivayanama*, and work as one team in love and fortitude, so that Siva will establish the work of their hands. His Devarams proclaim that Lord Siva came down with a begging bowl and waited outside the huts of His devotees to share the meal. “So when you till the fields, God will plough your hearts and when the time of harvesting comes, the body, mind and heart shall echo the song of liberation.”

*“The moving water He made stand unmoving in His hair;  
And He my thoughtless heart hath fixed in thought of  
Him  
alone;  
He taught me that which none can learn, what none can see  
laid bare;  
What tongue tells not He told; me He pursued and made  
His own.  
The spotless Pure, the holy One, my fell disease He healed,  
And in Punturutti to me, e'en me, Himself He revealed.*

*--St. Appar. VI.43.1.*

Swami follows his praise with a plea for service to Siva:

*“Follow Truth; speak the truth boldly and cherish the Hindu  
Dharma which sees all mankind as belonging to the  
great family of Siva and Sakti, and serve one and all in  
humility and love. This is Sivathondu.”*

The *yajna-sadhana* which Swami initiated at the Sivathondan Nilayam, was an attempt at the sacrifice of the self, a self-giving in dedicated service to ameliorate the physical, social, and spiritual needs of our fellow-brethren. If the Sivathondar meditated together in silence, they would feel the sense of belonging to a holy order which worked for the attainment of *SivaJnanam*.

*“Will ye not gather in the Sivathondan Nilayam  
And gain the peace of contemplation?”*

*--181.*

In these *jnana yagnas*, old and young, rich and poor, men and women, seekers of truth and of worldly wisdom, and those intent on the pursuit of *jnana* or *karma* or *bhakti* margas would encounter each other in mutual dialogue. They would come together to seek the wisdom of Siva, by meditating on the incantations of the Tirumurai Saints, and other sacred Texts and Natchintanai, all of which help open out the secret chambers in their hearts for the divine grace to have its full play.

**“Peerless art Thou; Divine father art Thou.  
My wealth art Thou: solace of Life art Thou.**

*--Natchintanai. 313.*

Thus would they respond to the appeal of St. Appar's *Dasa Marga*--the relationship of the seeker in the position of a servitor, and God in the role of a Supreme Teacher. They would sing this Devaram which Swami often sang:

*Thou to me art parents, Lord,  
Thou all kinsmen that I need,  
Thou to me art loved ones fair,  
Thou art treasure rich indeed.  
Family, friends, home art Thou.  
Life and joy I draw from Thee;  
False world's goods by Thee I leave.  
For gold, pearl and wealth art Thou to me.*

*--St. Appar. VI 95.1.*

Swami warns us that man cannot serve God and the world at the same time. He must at all times learn to serve God alone. His body, mind and soul must be tuned to do SivaThondu. He must be *fearless* in the pursuit of Truth. Purity, desirelessness, humility, compassion and chastity are essential before any man can claim to be the servitor of Siva. In order to prepare for the worldly vocations, man receives training for a number of years before he can enroll himself as a doctor, lawyer or teacher. How much more strenuous should be the preparation to serve the Supreme master, Siva?

**“We'll not feel restrained to withhold from giving.  
But evince love to one and all alike.  
Inheritors are we of endless bliss!  
To none are we subject!  
The Lord of Thillai's Feet shall we reflect.  
And pine we for Lanka, our motherland.**

*--Natchintanai. 315.*

Swami would also sing the song of St. Appar, that man is the inheritor of Siva's infinity, and as servitor to Siva, the Supreme, he shall not owe allegiance to any other powers on earth.

*“No man holds sway o'er us,  
Nor death nor hell fear we;  
No tremblings, griefs of mind,  
No pains nor cringings see.  
Joy, day by day, unchanged  
Is ours, for we are His,  
His ever, who doth reign,  
Our Sankara, in bliss.  
Here to His Feet we've come,  
Feet as fair as flowerets fresh;  
See how His ears divine  
Ring and white conch shells wear.*

*--St. Appar. VI.98.1.*

In this way Swami made his devotees develop the spirit of selfless service.

**“Serve Him by praise, by the action of the hand, by touch and sight, by the power of the mind and soul, and such dedicated work will take you to the supreme goal of Siva:**

**“There is one thing that man implores of Siva, if he is to serve Him unto aeons as His bondsman. His pledge of eternal servitude can only be fulfilled with His Grace, and so by ceaseless contemplation can Siva blossom in the hearts of the devotees.”**

St. Appar in the seventh century, and Swami in the twentieth century have demonstrated the efficacy of Sivathondu to attain Truth, here and now, in time and eternity.

## **ST. SUNDARAMURTHI NAYANAR AND SWAMI**

How can man tune himself to receive this fountain of Grace from Siva? Without Grace man will continue to wallow in material bondage, ignorance and desire. without freeing himself from these strong cords of attachment, man cannot become a fit receptacle to receive the Grace of the Lord. subject as man is to desire and fear, he needs the guidance of the *Guru*, who alone can make him *know* his own true Self.

Swami reiterates the need to **“Know Thyself by thyself”**. **“Let the lamp light of the**

**Guru be used to light your heart, and when you see yourself as others see you, and also see within you the light of God radiating its rays, then will you gradually begin to see the real Self in you.”**

This is the *Yoga marga* followed by *St. Sundarar*, who exemplified in his realisation, the relationship of a friend with God as his intimate friend.

In consonance with the symphony of *St. Sundaramurthy*, Swami taught a way of life that bestows discrimination, and *santham*--peace with understanding, the peace that strengthens, unifies and illumines our souls, while we are still engaged in pursuing our duties and obligations in the world. He dissuaded asceticism and flight to the forest, and use of ochre garb to proclaim the inner renunciation! He shared the affinity of seeking God as a good companion with the bard of *Tiruvarur*.

Many songs in *Natchintanai* echo *St. Sundaramurthi Nayanar's* breadth of vision, and the beauty of perfect renunciation of a man of God to the supreme Will of *ParaSivam*. Swami stirred everyone to live in the world and realize God as his *Best Friend*, exactly as *St. Sundarar* did, calling upon Him to guide and shelter him at every crucial event in his life, and to share his joys and sorrows. He would teach the young boys and girls to sing the first *Devaram* of this loving bondsman, who called *Siva* a *madman*, in the same way as *Chellappa Swami* was called a madman:

The love of God shines in this first hymn which unfolds one of *St. Sundarar's* crucial experience of divine grace.

*“O madman with the moon-crowned hair,  
Thou lord who art the fount of grace,  
How could I bear to forget?  
My soul hath a place for Thee,  
Venny-nallur, in “Grace's shrine,”  
South of the stream of Pennai, there  
My father, I became all thine;  
How could I now myself forswear?”*

*--St. Sundarar. VIII. 1.1.*

Swami would make some of the young aspirants who were drawn to the path of *Yoga* to sing the hymns of this great Saint during the evening hours at his Hermitage.

*“Ah Me! I have left the path of love and service pure!  
Now know I well the meaning of my sickness and my pain.  
I will arise and go and worship at Aarur;  
What folly! how long can I remain apart from Thee?”*

*My pearl, my diamond rare, Thou king of great Aarur.”*

*--St. Sundarar. VII. 51.1.*

St. Sundarar's most famous testament of Faith as expressed in,

*“Eternal allegiance to Thee alone  
I owe--To none else”.*

*VII. 95.1.*

was another of Swami's favorite hymns, which he would sing frequently and make his devotees join in the chorus.

Our Gurunathan would sometimes greet his devotees with the popular hymn of St. Sundarar on the magnificat of *Namasivaya*:

*“Linked to naught else in life, my mind thinks only of  
Thy Holy Feet.  
I'm born anew, from this time forth I pass the way of birth  
no more.  
In Kodumudi, Lord austere, where wise men Thee with  
praises greet,  
Even if I forget Thee, my tongue will utter adoringly  
Namasivaya.*

*--St. Sundarar. VII. 48.1.*

The songster Thuraippah would take up the refrain in his sweet voice, the song from *Natchintanai* on the remembrance of the Lord's Name:

**“Sing ye in joyful strains *Siva, Siva.*  
The felicity that generates from the Word,  
I cannot recount, except be immersed in it.  
The source of knowledge is mine without learning.  
The key of existence lies in the palm of my hand.”**

*--Natchintanai. 18.*

Filled with the fervor of the Saiva Saints, Swami would often say ‘You and I belong to the holy galaxy of the servitors of Siva.’ Seeing a pious devotee in distress, he once exclaimed, ‘Leave it at His Feet as did St. Sundarar,’ and began to sing the Shakespearean Ode, ‘Fear no more the heat of the sun,’ in order to dissociate the distress from the sufferer, in

comradeship. He would consume by the flame of his Yogic gaze, the lack of faith and purity among the doubting votaries who sought his solace. He would admonish them to quieten the mind:

**“Your friend is within. Tap at the door and keep on tapping, till He opens it. Call on Him incessantly. Chant His Name and He will respond as He did to St. Sundarar.”**

**Come Thou Oh Siva! Heed our call and come!  
Thou wondrous One in manifold forms,  
Oh pure One who doth the cosmic dance.  
Stainless art Thou with Sakti by thy side,  
Illumined rock of the Vedic seers--Come, Come unto us!**

### **ST. MANICAVASAGAR AND SWAMI**

In the exalted moments when Swami recalled the gracious acts of His Guru, and in his finest *Natchintanai* songs on Sri Chellappa Swami, he reminded us powerfully of St. Manicavasagar. We understand Swami's Guru-Gems better through *Tiruvacagam*, which reveal the Saint's all-consuming Love for His God-Guru, who made him His own at the foot of the Kuruntha tree.

*“Thou gavest Thyself to me and Thou didst take me.  
Beneficent Lord! Tell me whose gains are more?  
Everlasting Bliss have I scored on my side.  
What hast thou added from me and my largess?  
Oh Lord, who are enshrined in the essence of Man,  
Siva, dweller in the great holy shrine,  
Father mine! Thou did'st come to fortify my body.  
Naught have I to give Thee in return!*

*--Tiruvacagam. 22.10.*

Again in *Tiru Venba* (47) St. Manicavasagar sings of His Guru, as the divine panacea for all human ills and griefs:

*“He stood before me,  
Routing all my past deeds good and bad,  
The great Ruler who can exterminate births,  
Lord of South who dwells in Perunturai.  
Benevolent wielder of Grace,  
Balm of all human ills.*

Our Gurunathan would recall that *Tiruperunturai* was not something outside, but was the sanctum in the cave of the heart, where the inner Guru resides. In an intense fervor of consecration, Swami has sung adoringly on the wonder of the supreme surrender to his Guru, Sage Chellappar, whom he called fondly as the Lord of Lanka, His blessed Abode:

**“He searched for me in the coconut-groved Lanka and made me His own--He whom none can ever, ever apprehend; He it was who made me know myself, in and through myself. So entrancing was His love, more tender than the deep love of my mother.”**

*--Natchintanai. 142.*

### THE ONE IN MANY ART THOU

Man must heed the urge to free himself from finite impediments, and learn to surrender at the Feet of the SatGuru, who will revolve him in the crucible of the Lord's Grace, till finally he comes out with a new sight to experience His power divine and bliss ineffable.

Thus we hail Swami as an illumined Seer of the twentieth century in the direct tradition of the Saiva Saints. However, his universality was all comprehensive that whoever came to him for solace, he would speak in his tradition and religious perspective. He spoke the language of Christ with the Christian adherents. To a Muslim, he would utter the words of the Prophet; He greeted the Buddhist with the blessings of the Triple Gem, and the Hindus understood him as the perennial source of Siva's Grace. All of them looked up to him as the substratum of eternal truth.

On many occasions would he play the role of the Yogiswara *Krishna*, when he discoursed on the dialects of *Yoga-Marga* as enunciated in the Bhagawad Gita, and bade us work and worship steadfastly without the motive of self gratification.

Again, like *Muruga*, he would chastise the aggressive elements in us, and bid us give up violence and passion and turn to victorious living in the active service of God. Swami pursued the least of us as did Murugan with Valli, and sought our weak vessels to fill with his elixir of grace. In this process, he brought up our impure elements to the surface and external exposure, only to requite us with immeasurable love. His was the wisdom of the elephant-God who protects His own from perils known and unknown. On countless situations, he would assume the role of the ever wise Pillaiyar, who shielded the seekers from stumbling into obstacles and confusion. When he fed us with manna sweet and nourished us so tenderly in all planes of existence, he was truly the divine Mother *Thayalnayaky*, on whose lap we basked in the warmth of love.

In great moments, He sat like *Dakshinamurthi*, immersed in transcendental silence, and taught us the greatest truth of knowing the Self, and led us to experience the bliss of *Summa Iru* in serene quiescence.

The dewdrop on the lotus leaf is tangent but not adherent. So is He in mySelf. His shaft of light is switched on to enlighten us. Ultimate, unheard, unreached, unthought, unseen, unspoken--thinker, listener, seer, speaker, and fore-knower of that inner person, everyone discovered that He is himSelf, without a centre and a circumference!

Our Gurunathan embodied this unified experience of Reality as a single timeless moment of divine self-manifestation. We recall his beautiful testament:

**Dearly loved Kandan,**

**This is the message of this humble self. Know thou, the resting place of this lowly self is the shelter of each being's heart, the shade of the trees and the junctions. Heed the world of the seer:**

**“First resolve and then act. It is ignoble  
To retract after resolution.”**

**Yours--**

**YogaSwami.**

# GURU VACAGAM

These are the *Words of the Guru* translated by Ma. C. Thurairajasigham and the late T. Muttucumaru at Swami's behest. They appeared from time to time in the *Sivathondan* journal between 1949 and 1961 under the titles of *Good Thoughts*, *Grace Ambrosia*, *Upadesha Manjari*, the *Ambrosia of Divine Grace* and the *Testimony of the Guru*. We give below a revised version with new captions:

## I.

### SANMARGA. I--X

**We are the servitors of Siva.**

**No harm will befall us, if without forgetting we meditate on the holy mantram that we have neither beginning nor end, neither birth or death, neither day nor night, neither happiness nor sorrow.**

**What you contemplate, that you become.**

**Persistent spiritual effort is necessary. Do not become discouraged.**

**Those who fail to toil will not reap any reward.**

**No pains, no gains is a familiar saying in the world.**

**persevere until you succeed. Why do you constantly ponder on**

**unworthy pursuits? Banish these futile intents and worship**

**God with a full heart. Accept joyfully and carry out whatever is dispensed to you. In the end everything will lead you to success.**

**Perform cheerfully whatever work and duties are assigned**

**to you, and be convinced that everthing that happens is for**

**the best. It is so.**

**You may even ignore these things altogether. Both courses are acceptable.**

**Your liberation does not depend on action or inaction. Do not desire to be free of action. Do not become attached to action.**

**Devote yourself to that which naturally befalls you, whether it involves action or inaction.**

*--Natchintanai. 368.*

## **II.**

**Greater than life itself is good conduct. Those who conduct themselves with rectitude possess everything that is worthwhile. Non-killing, non-stealing, non-vituperation, non-covetness, truthfulness and humility--these are useful assets for virtuous living.**

**In whatever pursuits you are engaged, you should train yourself to work with zeal, keenness and delight. Such a discipline will lead you to acquire steadfastness of the mind. It is then that the mind develops the power of one pointedness, which in turn will lead you to enjoy an abundance of anma-sakti. Thenceforth everything will be bright, and you will not be disturbed by the agitations caused by seeing the difference in objects, as friends and foes, light and darkness.**

**“Everything originates in me; everything finds permanency in me; in me everything revolves in dissolution.” --So must we become suffused with such pure thoughts. Further, we must frequently meditate as follows: “Nothing do I lack; everyone loves me and I too love all.” --Meditating thus, one should endeavour to live up to this ideal. If one can practice spiritual sadhana in this way, the capacity to know everything and the power to do anything will develop spontaneously.**

*--Natchintanai. 369.*

## **Aum Tat Sat Aum**

### **III.**

**We are the servitors of Lord Siva. We lack nothing. Our duty is to serve the Lord. It is the fundamental goal of our life in this world.**

**The moon fulfils the will of Siva. The sun and other planets also carry out His bidding.**

**The gods and demons, and all other beings are also engaged in the performance of the Lord's work.**

**In everything do we see the will of Siva at work. Not an atom moves but by His will--nothing gained and nothing lost. We continue to be ever the same.**

**There is no one above us or superior to us; good and evil cannot affect us. There is no beginning and no end for us. We have no likes or dislikes; we have no desire for material goods. The spectre of the mind does not haunt us; neither are we bound by the limitations of place, time or causation. We simply bear witness to everything around us.**

## **Aum! Tat Sat Aum !**

### **IV.**

**We are the servitors of Siva;**

**Siva's servitors are we**

**We are Sivanadiyar;**

**Sivanadiyar are we.**

**This is Saryiai--moral excellence**

**This is Kriyai--service**

**This is Yoga--harmony**

**This is Jnana--wisdom.**

**This is the sacred mystery. In this Truth lies the sovereign remedy.**

**Steadfast contemplation leads to the bliss of serenity.**

**A contemplative is not swayed by rules of conduct. An ascetic life of fasting and norms of discipline have no impact on these ardent servitors of Siva.**

**These noble legion have so lived, and do live and shall continue to live in the world ever so spontaneously. No one can fathom their greatness. The sweetness of sugar-candy can only be relished by those who have tasted it.**

**1. Oru Pollappumillai--Intrinsic evil there is not.**

**2. Eppavo Mudintha Kaariyam--That is what it is--Accomplished is His Will.**

**3. Naamariyom--We know not.**

**4. Muluvathum Unmai--All That IS, is Truth Absolute.**

*--Natchintanai. 371*

**V.**

**Believe in God; Believe in Him with perfect trust. Consider Him as sweeter than the sweetest of earthly joys. Ponder that He is the incomparable One. Reflect on His glory night and day and at all times. Let the constant remembrance of Him fill the interstices of your being.**

**Meditate that, "I am naught--He alone Is."**

**Let the worship of God be the goal of your life.**

**Whatsoever you think, that you become.**

**Cherish the Lord in the recess of your heart.  
Everything, everywhere is subject to His Will.  
Ultimately it will be seen that he is All in All.**

*--372.*

**SivaPeruman is the non-dual Reality.**

**I glory in contemplating that He and I are inseparably linked in  
Oneness.**

**Whatever one yearns for, that he becomes.**

**Therefore meditate that Thou and He are in unison. Then shall  
all thy acts pulsate as His acts.**

**The Supreme Reality Is He. He is immanent everywhere.**

**The One has assumed many forms.**

**He is beyond birth and death, transcending time and  
timelessness;**

**He is eternal, and ever unchanging.**

**The perfection of Truth illumines All.**

*--Natchintanai. 373.*

## **VI.**

**The mind flits like a prancing monkey.**

**One knows not how to quell its frolics; Well said.**

**There is a fine remedy within you. Perhaps you have forgotten  
it. Listen.**

**Take in daily the medicine of 'Siva Dhyanam'--contemplation of Siva.**

**The pranks of the impish mind will be subdued.**

**When you take it, mix it with a decoction which also you possess.**

**Restraint of the tongue and control of desires are the ingredients which form the decoction. Even this will not suffice.**

**Everything depends on the correct diet. And that too is within your control.**

**This will consist of balanced diet, adequate sleep and moderate exercise. Thus fulfilment is assured.**

**Follow this prescription for the well being of your Soul.**

**If one yearns to control and subdue the mind fully, one should practise Siva Dhyanam--contemplation on Siva.**

**It is the ceaseless and constant remembrance of Siva.**

**He will then begin to concentrate step by step and focus his mind on the One Supreme Reality.**

**Peace, serenity, patience and endurance will then blossom within him.**

**His mind will be brimming with contentment. Praise or blame will not affect him; He will dwell in the light of his inner self; He will radiate benevolence and the good of others shall become his own blessedness.**

**If one takes a hand lamp at night, will he falter in the dark?**

**He will not stumble. Like-wise no evil can shadow the path of him who meditates on Siva? He will not see any imperfection. Practice is better than precept.**

**Ill-will has no place where good-will reigns.**

*--Natchintanai. 374-375.*

## **VII.**

**The Wise who have known the Self, in whose heart is enthroned the Lord, will not be deluded by the joys and sorrows of the earth, but will live benignly in the world as the drops of water floating on the lotus blooms. Those who do not cultivate discrimination will be unequal to face the challenges of life.**

**The wise man who practises dispassion and fosters self-knowledge will overcome the sway of good and bad forces, and cease to be selfish and self-centered. It is certain that he will attain the abiding felicity of the Lord's blessed Feet.**

**Those ignorant of this Path will be subject to much confusion and bewilderment.**

**As the bees rejoice in sipping the honey the flowers after a long quest, so also doth a devotee experience bliss after searching in the petals of his heart, and by ceaseless worship shall he find the honey of immortality.**

**He will no longer be tossed by shifting values.**

**Behold a farmer who tills his field, sows paddy, separates the weed from the growing plant and gathers the corn in the fullness of time.**

**Even so doth a devout worker till field of his heart where abides Siva.**

**He sows the seed of devotion, plucks out the extraneous weeds of lust, anger, desire, cruelty, and envy, and enjoys the harvest of plentitude in Sivam Sarvamayam.**

### **VIII.**

**Lo, Siva looks upon the human beings with joy, as blossoms of beauty adorning the garden of His world.**

**The goldsmith melts the gold and fashions from it many an ornament.**

**Siva, the renowned goldsmith takes the molten gold of the soul, and fashions many a jewel for diverse purposes.**

**The physician heals many an ailment by prescribing efficacious decoction, made up of different medicinal herbs.**

**So too our great Divine Physician heals many an affliction of the Soul by admonishing a blend of the gross and subtle matter and secures for it eternal bliss.**

**The mother delights in seeing her child happy and presents him with many toys. So too are we, the children of Parama-Siva, richly blessed by His manifold gifts of love.**

**The enlightened ones will not yeild to the temptations of the deluding senses, because they know the Truth, that the Atma is the Eternal Self.**

**They will not yeild to the sorrows of desire and attachment.**

**Their glory is extolled by the Vedas and Agamas.**

**Truly their presence on earth emanates an unseen power of Love.**

**This is the secret of victorious Living.**

**-376.**

## **IX.**

**Oh Man! Thou art Truth! Thou art Goodness! Can aught harm thee?**

**Thou art omnipresent! In Eternity art Thou.**

**As the lion roams about the forest with mighty main, so regally do thou too move in the domain of the world.**

**Under no circumstance should you falter.**

**There is nothing unique in this world. Truth abides in All.**

**Goodwill prevails everywhere.**

**Oh Man! Seek not to assert authority over anyone or anything in this world.**

**Always be a witness. Nobility is your heritage.**

**It cannot be inherited by any stratagem.**

**That art. It is so. All else is a mirage.**

**Thou art neither ignorance nor knowledge.**

**Thou art Paramatma. Aum Tat Sat Aum.**

**Oh Man! Practice patience.**

**It is the key to know Thyself.**

**Grieve not! Joy and sorrow are part of the phenomena of the world**

**Thou art Conciousness pure.**

**Nothing need overpower you. Be vigilant and ever wakeful.**

**Use the key of Siva-Dhyanam to open the avenue to everlasting Mukti, the beautific state of liberation.**

**Thereafter everything will be revealed to you.**

**Aum Santi, Santi, Santi.**

*--377.*

**Oh Friend! Who has the perogative to declare thee as a sinner?**

**Art thou not a facet of Siva? Has thou forgotten it?**

**Repeat ceaselessly, Aum Tat Sat and surrender yourself fully at His Feet.**

**Do not reglect meditation on Siva. Ultimately all will be well.**

**Free thyself from the bonds of effort and effortlessness.**

**Of what use is a multitude of words? A rich harvest can result only out of a fruitful soil.**

**Fear not. We are the bondsmen of Siva,**

**Even as Siva is immortal, so too are We.**

**Heat and cold, joy and sorrow, youth and age are but the concomitants of nature.**

**Why need we be afflicted by the reactions of our deeds? Let the tide of cause and effect rise and ebb in the natural process.**

**Remember that we are eternal. We are imperishable.**

**Truth cannot be negated.**

**What is not cannot be equated with what is.**

**There is naught but felicity for us who bide by Siva's Will.**

**When we have surrendered everything at Siva's Feet, we can never suffer from want or greed.**

**We are the multi-colored gems strung to the cord of Siva.**

**The cord shall never be reft asunder, nor shall we suffer any separation. Why expound futher?**

**Aum Shanti, Shanti, Shanti.**

*--Natchintanai. 378.*

## **X**

**The Soul is eternal; undifferentiated; It is Perfection.**

**The body is mortal; (differentiated) subject to separation.**

**When this is so, how then can we equate the two?**

**If we attempt to do it, can there be anything more sacrilegious?**

**The soul is everlasting. It is supreme.**

**The body has a birth and is subject to overlordship.**

**When this is so, can we compare these two? Such comparisons are odious.**

**The Soul is wisdom intrinsic? It is immaculate purity.**

**The body savours of ignorance and is impure.**

**What folly is it to compare these two?**

**--379.**

**The Soul is radiance, self luminous.**

**The body is by nature veiled in darkness. Can we draw any parallel between the two?**

**He who conceives himself as a body is like unto a man, who thinks that he is made up of the potter's clay.**

**He is an illumined man, who considers himself perfect, immortal and enlightened. Even the gods cannot equal him in stature.**

**He who tunes himself to be tranquil in the midst of discordant situations, who realises that he is changeless and is of the essence of Purity will be extolled by the sages as a Seer.**

**How can we say that the world is an entity and the body too, when the Vedas and Agamas proclaim that the Supreme One alone is immanent in this universe, and that It alone is all-pervasive, with nothing else beside it or beyond it? It is not**

**Ignorance to think that the objective phenomena and the body  
can exist independant of the Supreme One?**

**Sang the Sages of old: “Thou Art One; In many art Thou too.”**

**Thus it is clear that there is nothing apart from the Supreme  
One. His Will prevails from everlasting to everlasting.**

**The Word--It vibrates in the light of Peace--Mounam.**

**The Act--It pulsates in the light of Peace--Mounam.**

**Everything radiates the effulgence of Peace Perfect**

**Peace.**

*--Natchintanai. 380.*

*Sivathondan. Vol. XIV. 1949--*

*Vol. XXIII. 1960.*

## **GRACE AMBROSIA. I-VIII**

### **I.**

**Follow thou the precepts of the Seers in general and the utter-  
ances of the Four Saints.**

**Moral rectitude is excellent; It is the symbol of good breeding;  
It gives sweet content.**

**Worship thy ancestral preceptors.**

**Walk in the footsteps of the Great Masters.**

**Love all as thou loveth thyself.**

**Heaven in within you.**

**This world wanes and waxes in constant succession.**

**The Lord pervades in water, air, ether, sky and land.**

**There is harmony in this Universe.**

**Study Kalladam. Do not engage in argument with the sceptics.**

**Not even the minutest atom moves without His will. If ye know this, you will realise the Truth.**

**If you are true to your own self, then everything will be well.  
Thou can't make God, thy bondsman.**

**Be Thou at Peace--Attain the Freedom of Being--  
Equal may  
you be!**

**Immerse in the the Awareness of Silence. There is nothing beyond it.**

**Just as houses are useful to dwell, so are the religions useful steps in a man's life.**

**Behold the Lord in everything in the world. Abide ye in Reality;  
It abides in Thee.**

**Thou need not go in search of anyone. Distinctions  
between  
great and small shall recede to the background.  
Diverse  
are the forms that emanate from the One.**

## **II.**

**The Lord and I are inseparable. Therefore it behaves me to  
keep myself pure, and sanctify the body as a fitting  
abode  
for Him.**

**Blessed is the service to the world. Blessed are those who serve  
in the cause of Sivathondu.**

**He worships God constantly who works in a spirit of dedication.**

**Ignorance begins to wane when ye realise that God dwells within you.**

**Can the legs usurp the work of the hands? So too the function of the legs cannot be done by the hands. Hence how can we beguile ourselves into differentiating between the great and small persons?**

**All are indispensable.**

**In as much as the spirit abides in a man's body, aiding him to eat, walk and sleep, so also doth the spirit of God move in this Universe. Everything is His sport.**

**That Thou mayest realise the Beloved who rests in thy bosom, purity of mind and a wholesome body are essential.**

**There is neither gain nor loss.**

**The body is thy shelter. Thou art the Lord's abode.**

**Wander not but practise discipline.**

**The mind's fullness is the truest wealth.**

**Walk in the light thou hast; It is wrong to delude yourself merely to please others.**

**Death too is a game.**

**Illness is a sacrificial boon of grace.**

**Good conduct is dearer than life itself.**

**What thou doeth is for thine ownself. One cannot help another.**

### **III.**

**We are THAT: We do not become THAT.**

**Under no circumstance, and from no one should we beg.**

**Guru and disciple are not separate entities. All are THAT.**

**Man must endure suffering. It is the invigorating tonic.**

**Smile at thyself when sorrow befalls you. Joy and  
sorrow affect  
only the body.**

**Control thy mind step by step. Direct thy thoughts to God and  
learn to concentrate on Him**

**Free thyself from the bonds of desire and hatred for any object.**

**Discern with equanimity praise and blame.**

**In matters of spirituality, do not associate with those who have  
no devotion.**

**Speak the truth boldly in the company of persons.**

**Let not the sway of authority deviate you from acting according  
to your conscience.**

**Better than the knowledge gained from books, is the wisdom  
begot of noble men's association.**

**Justice, Discrimination, Courage and Truth are the Soul's jewels.**

**Obedience to fear is the mark of the cowards: Obeisance to  
Love is the hall-mark of the strong.**

**Whatever belongs to you should be shared with Him.**

**By pointing at evil, one cannot purge evil; by means of goodness,  
integrity, and love can evil be overcome.**

**A man who has no patience cannot be a man of justice.**

**“That I am; that I abide in every being,” are truths which  
most people cannot easily comprehend.**

#### IV.

**Better than scholarship and book knowledge is the discipline of inward reflection, concentration and remembrance.**

**True Education should lift the veil of ignorance in man.**

**Never be despondant that your progeny has not increased.**

**Think not that according to my decree or your decree, that this universe is twain.**

**He who is prompted to do good to others is innately accentuated by the desire to do good to himself.**

**Self interest is the ulterior motive.**

**Neither the world nor thy neighbor can be improved. Seek ye first to improve yourself.**

**The path of virtuous conduct is the only path of San Marga known to me.**

**It is universal. Thus I speak in Truth. It is universal. In truth I speak thus. This is the path by which ye can know yourSelf.**

**Suffice it to follow the virtuous code for righteous living. There need not be any undue effort to know God.**

**He who has the strength of mind will not falter. He who is confused will not realise the Truth.**

#### V.

**Into the world you came empty handed; Likewise empty handed will you quit when the call comes.**

**If you aspire for Mukti in this birth, make thy mind a crematorium and reduce to ashes the flaming desires that arise**

**therein.**

**Change and decay regulate all objects with form: The mind too is one with form and hence must suffer extinction.**

**Let not the effects of past deeds rise in quick succession and overpower you. Chant the Panchakshara--the mantra of the Five Letters.**

**The Lord God is not the cause of Good and Evil.**

**Those saints who have purged their minds of pollution will not be defiled even in the midst of dross, everafter.**

**One word of Grace will disentangle you from the mesh of past actions. Do not delude thy knowing self revealed to you by His Grace, with thy egoism.**

**The World is a picture.**

**Ponder on the term brother and scoundrel as of balanced connotation.**

**Look upon thy mother in her assigned role, and the dog in its role, and thy ailment in its proper perspective, and act accordingly.**

**This spacious earth is a garden of meditation.**

**Display not sweetness before the debased, and shake not the brass pot with tamarind.**

**He is beautiful who though crippled in body is not crippled in spirit.**

## **VI.**

**Mukti is Freedom of Being. Emancipation consists in sustained enjoyment of unruffled serenity.**

**Do not entangle yourself with those who sow discord.**

**The Lord's Wisdom cannot be encompassed in books.**

**Brahmacharya consists of a disciplined life and conforms to the harmonious conduct of the body, mind, and word.**

**Pronounce the Pranavam and take refuge in the Lord.**

**It is not for your wife, children or kinsmen that you should grieve for.**

**'Tis yourself that you have to sorrow most about for not knowing thySelf.**

**If one has moral excellence, grace befriends him.**

**If he has the perfection of knowledge, grace betides him.**

**If he has the aspiration for service, grace abides in him.**

**Chastity is the quality of loyalty to the Supreme Beloved.**

**Men and women should possess it.**

**If there is a slur in your divine heritage, you cannot perform your duty well.**

**Each man must perform his own assigned duty (Svadharmā), and it is for the Lord to vouchsafe grace on him.**

**My duty is to do His bidding and serve; it is His will to succour me and shower His grace.**

**Restrain thy hands: restrain thy legs; restrain thy tongue; restrain thy generative organ. Such a man is a warrior.**

**Control thy mind with the aid of 'discriminating reason', and rule over it.**

## **VII.**

**Curb the inclination for evil thoughts, and do not wait to act until it is too late. A house on fire should be extinguished at once and not left to burn down.**

**The image of illusion is the body. It helps to promote egoism. Why struggle to work out involved arithmetic mentally? It is easier to solve it with the aid of necessary tools such as paper. So also, it is easier to begin with the help of the body, and then seek the aid of the mind. Begin therefore to worship with rituals, and proceed to the worship by the mind.**

**By the daily worship in a holy sanctuary for an year, in righteous conformity to the accepted tradition, even the childless women can enjoy the boon of progeny.**

**Whether it is a consecrated life of renunciation, or any other walk of life, show deference as is meet.**

**He who is inordinately ambitious cannot do his duty well.**

**He is a man of wisdom who wanders like a seeming dead man, without undue attachments.**

**As the all-pervasive ether, so is the Lord all-pervading.**

**'Mystic Union' is the conjunction of the Jivatma with the Paramatma.**

**Know, that he who believes that God is within him, has experienced illumination.**

**Cultivate inward peace of heart, even though you are involved in the daily tasks like any ordinary man of the world.**

**By sincere devotion you can realise Iswara directly.**

## **VIII.**

**Even the ascetics who have advanced in spirituality are inclined to be dragged by the weight of the senses five, which tend to**

**break all barriers. Therefore do thou ceaselessly meditate on Siva in order to attain Self-realisation. Only he who has been blessed by His Grace, can control his senses five. Constantly pray to Siva. When a man distracts himself with the things of the world, then will attachments spring up. From attachments arise desires. Desire begets vexing impatience, and resentment leads to confusion. From the conflict of tensions commence wrong doing.**

**Therefore**

**fortify thyself by Siva Dhyanam--the contemplation of Siva.**

**When we deviate from the path of Dharma, we commit wrongs on account of our frail nature. The worship of Siva alone can save us from evil and grant us strength. Not all the**

**treasures of the world can help us to subjugate our unruly passions. Therefore invoke the divine Grace, so that thou shalt steer clear of the fleeting ambit of sensations, by a disciplined mind.**

**The enlightened ones called it the practice of Tapas or penance. Resoluteness cannot otherwise be acquired, not**

**even by profuse offering or sacrificial rituals.**

**The billows surge from the sea; so too arise the waves of thoughts from the mind.**

**Yoga means confluence. So say the Seers. Whenever we want to get at an object, our hands must work in unison. Likewise when we want to attain God-realisation, our minds**

**must work in steadfast humility and concentration.**

**Subjugation of the mind is not an easy task. It cannot be done in a day or a year. If one is always vigilant, the capricious mind may yield a little to the pressure of restraint.**

**If one knows the secret talisman to control the rebellious mind,**

**and bring it under submission to the Lord's Will, it will**

**signal a significant conquest.**

**AumTat Sat Aum--That alone is Real.**

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# THE JNANA-YATRAI

## PILGRIMAGE PAR EXCELLENCE

Hark to the holy chant of the workers of Siva--  
Trees in their trembling, stars in their circling,  
Pause as they list to the Natchintanai of Sivathondar.  
Will ye not join in their triumphal march?  
In all directions, east and west, north and south,  
The Great Guru's call 'de profundis' resounds,  
Transcending time and space, thought and word,--  
That the seen and unseen, sentient and insentient,  
All that embrace this earth are knit  
In Oneness indivisible,  
Under the banner of Siva--Our Lord.

Life is a perpetual journey. The movement of birth and death betokens but one stage in this journey of life. In the objective and subjective spheres of existence, man enacts this pilgrimage par excellence. In the goodly realms of "being and becoming," he has many mansions in which he rests, before he resumes his march. In the silence of Sivam is embedded the dynamism of Sakti; in the potency of '*Pranavam*,' the Word that was at the beginning, is sustained the movement of the five-fold activities of Siva--creation, preservation, dissolution, involution and resuscitation by Grace.

The blessed sons of Lord Siva and his counterpart, the divine Mother Parwathi,--Sri Ganesh and Sri Subramanya--demonstrated the first of such journeys, hallowed by grace. Sri Ganesh-Pillayar--who came round the Father-Mother at Mount Kailas attained the goal much more quickly than Sri Subramanya who circumambulated the earth on his peacock chariot. This puranic story brings out the significance of *Sthala Yatrai*, or worshipful journeys.

In the journey of life, man encounters manifold difficulties. Saiva Siddhantam is a way of life, dear to the devotees of Lord Siva. The holy treatises which expound this system of thought and way of life clearly enunciate the goal, the supreme end of the journey of man. The soul of man, the eternal Verity that knows no beginning, nor end, that which remains while the rest change and decay, arises from the stupor of ignorance, embedded as it is in the fetters of the *three malas*--(*anavam*, *kanmam*, and *maya*)-- and turns its gaze upon the *Pathi*, the supreme Lord of involution.

In bountiful Grace, He guides the soul of man in this journey to His Feet. The Grace of the Guru works in wondrous ways and guides man through path-ways of delusion and darkness purifying his categories of perception, cognition and conation, and helps him pursue action at *tamasic*, *rajasic* or *sattvic* levels, motivated by the urge to attain the holy

Feet of Lord Siva. The journey's End is beautifully summed up by St. Meykanda Devar in the eleventh sutra of SivaJnana Botham:--

*“In forgetting love, the soul reaches the Feet of Siva.”*

In the light of this saying, the journey so devoutly undertaken by the “Siva Thondan”--a servant of Siva--significantly connotes the attainment of self-realisation leading to God-realisation, by following the path of Dharma--*Siva Neri*-- expounded in the holy treatises of the Saiva saints, and immortalised in the heart-melting *Devarams* and Psalms of the Saiva Seers--St. TiruJnanasambandar, St. Appar, St. Sundarar, St. Manicavacagar and St. Tirumular. These Seers have enshrined in glorious poesy, the unspeakable charm and power of the shrines and temples they visited. Theirs was not a commerce with stone images and sculptured deities. In direct touch with the gracious Feet of God, whose manifold manifestations they worshipped from Mount Kailas to Cape Comorin, we see them as the pilgrims of eternity radiating love and light, wherever their holy feet trod.

### **THE SADHANA OF PADA-YATRAI**

Their Pada-Yatrai--pilgrimage to the famous temples, abodes of Lord Siva with Sakti symbolising His Grace and power, forms some of the fascinating chapters in the spiritual heritage of the Hindus, and keeps the undying flame of Hinduism burning undimmed, down the ages. The Supreme Lord Siva, transcendent and without form, assumes a form and name, and takes His abode at sanctified places in order to draw the soul of man unto Him. In grace, He opens to the soul of man the door of liberation and admits him to the bliss of “*Para-mukti*.”

*--Natchintanai. 236.*

Thus *Siva Thondu* includes the pilgrimage to holy temples and worship of His gracious manifestation in the different sanctuaries. Service to his fellowmen, acts of dedicated service and performance of rites and rituals based on the enlightened understanding and knowledge of the Guru's teachings, integrated by the overflowing love for the Lord and Guru, and seeing himself in different relationships to *Siva*-- these are the revelations contained in the Books of the consecrated Saiva Seers. The devotees of Siva today need to contemplate on these potent psalms of the Saivite Saints and emulate their hallowed acts of service.

Every Sivathondan must understand the full significance of purity and peace at all levels in the layers of his being. Standing before the shrines of Tiruvarur, Tiruvaiauru, Thillai or Kanchi, St. Appar, St. Sambandar and St. Manicavasagar poured their love offerings at the roseate Feet of the Lord of that abode, and hence it is that these temples became charged with the magnetic power of the Living Presence of the Lord.

The still small voice in the temple of man's inner being responded to the symphony of the primal sound--Aum--that pealed forth from the lofty gopuram bells of these temples and commingled in the vibration of the Lord. Ever singing His praises, these maha yogis and seers stood in serene silence of supreme surrender, as did St. Manicavasagar before the Lord of Thillar. Even in his unspeakable joy, he remembers the sad plight of the many who could not join him in his sacred pilgrimage. We hear his poignant call to all the devout lovers of Siva--*Siva Thondar*-- to join him in his triumphal entry into the holy realm of *Siva-nagar*, the city of Siva which marks the journey's end.

*“Loiter not; Arise ye and join  
The happy bank: the journey is not far,  
There's yet time; Haste ye before  
The gates of the city of Siva are closed.  
With paeans of praise, we press on, on.”*

*--Tiruvacagam: Pilgrim-Song*

*viii.45.5*

Such a tuneful voice is heard today in our land of beauteous palms and sea-girt shores.

**“This, our Land where loving devotees sing his praise,  
This, our Land where Lord Siva is pleased to take his abode,  
This, our land stands revealed in its fullest stature  
By our Guru, who melts us all in the web of his Love.**

*--Natchintanai. 22.*

The call is for all lowly servants of Siva to prepare for the great journey. Who knows? In harmlessness and acquiescence to His will lies our peace. Truth is the way and the goal, and so gird up your loins with the armour of purity and righteousness. The grace of the Guru is your best protection, as you set out on this unchartered '*yatrai*' (pilgrimage) and keep on chanting the name of the Lord.

Then will dawn on you the happy realisation that Siva not only pervades the universe, but is the indweller who reigns supreme within you. -- "*Sivam art all.*"

The true *Sivathondan* cannot be a static person. In every act of his, in every word of his and in every passing thought and feeling that surges from his mind and heart, he is serving the Lord. The Guru is forever pursuing the devotee, in as much as the devotee fills his heart with immeasurable love for his Master. “The worshipful journey cannot wait one's convenience, and hence tarry not; unite under the banner of Siva YogaSwami, the master *Siva Thondan*, and start the sacrificial march--*Pada yatrai*-- with faith and courage.”

“The *Siva Thondan* is the torch-bearer. He walks before and after the procession and alongside of *Siva Thondar*. Each one will walk according to his measure, but all will follow spontaneously the rhythm of the master Guru.” Thus is relayed the stirring chords of the peace march, not in soft strains of *Thodi* or *Mukari ragas*, but in the vibrant melodies of *Kalyani* and *Hamsathvani ragas*, by the SatGuru seated in his lowly Asharm at Columbuturai.

Thus begins the journey that has no beginning and no end, with the SivaGuru's incantation:

*“That the devotees of Siva may get beyond the grip of cognition, perception and volition, march on, march onward.*

*That the Siva Thondar may reverberate the resonance of the Truth that shall make them free, march on.*

*That the legion of Siva may enrich their experience of Sivoham and realise the Oneness of Life, march on.*

*That the servitors of Siva may learn to live together, serve together and love together in absolute surrender with mine and thine effaced, march on, march onward!”*

This in short is the significance of the worshipful journey called *Yatrai Valipaadu*. The 'foot-march' is an objective demonstration of an awakening of the servitors of Siva from the sense-slumber of unreality, from the pageant of enjoyment in life, to the higher phase of walking in the light of truth, *Jnana Naadagam*, witnessing the panorama of the soul's journey to the Lord. It has been willed so by the Grace of the Guru.

The Siva Thondar follow in the footprints of the *Siva Thondan*. In this eventful pilgrimage through life, they will encounter many perils but the Guru's Grace will guide and free the pilgrims from passing despondency, attachments and delusions. Invoke the formless form of Sri Vigneswarar, who saves the servitors from all obstacles. He is the symbol of wisdom infinite, and victory is assured to them till journey's End. This is the promise held out by Swami, when he inaugurated the series of *Pada-Yatras* by the Siva Thondar, in the last phase of his life. They moved to the music of Nalluran's Grace, invigorated by the tonic of Natchintanai:

## **THE JOURNEY'S END**

The procession thus moves on. It can never halt. In the timeless era of His Grace, the light that is once kindled can never be quenched. The forces of nature and the world's discordant notes will yield their pressure before the peaceful march of the *Siva Thondan*. Integral wisdom--*Jnana*-- will be the priceless experience of the worshipful, pure and peace loving

devotee of Siva.

He will sing and move from shrine to shrine in all four directions, as did St. Manicavasagar or St. Appar, and his beatitudes will echo far and near. He will meet people of various races and creeds and salute them as co-workers in the realm of Lord Siva. He shall part from them all, but the fund of good-will shall remain wherever his feet shall have trod. In Love, he shall abide; Love, he shall give in plenty, and Love, he shall receive too. Love will be his panoply. He will remain a witness to the beautiful Feet of Siva--Long Live *Sivathondan!*

In order to be an unfailing witness, the study of the Hindu Sastras followed by a deep contemplation of the inspired psalms and sayings of the illuminated Seers become a vital part of the preparation for the journey. The Siva Thondar need conscious initiation into the rites and rituals enjoined in the Saiva Siddhanta scriptures, and the disciplines that follow the spiritual practice vitalised by the Saiva Saints and Maha-Yogis, down the ages.

When St. Manicavasagar began his worshipful inward odyssey at the foot of the Kuruntha Tree, his route wended through ten significant landmarks as portrayed in his Tirucadagam Cento. In like manner our peerless Guru of Lanka commended the marshalling of the forces of the Santi-Sena (Tiru Padai) at Yalnagar, the Crown or Sahasram of Sri Lanka Matha, and guided his Sivathondar step by step, through the prescribed stages of self-purification (*Anma Suddhi*) to the summit of self-realisation (*Anma Siddhi*), having realised the goal himself.

**“Know the Self and be wise,  
yea, by the light of wisdom, be ye wise.  
In the undifferentiated plenum, behold  
The Supreme Brahman in thyself and myself.”**

*--Natchintanai. 137.*

# SWAMI'S LETTERS

3.11.1940.

## LETTER FROM KASI

“After wanderings far in an earnest quest, I came to Kasi and lo, I saw the Lord of Kasi--Viswanathan within my heart. Let not your hearts be troubled by wearisome pursuits. There is a fine saying that the herb that you have been searching assiduously lies at your feet within easy reach. In this place too, men live very much in the same manner as our people. There is nothing wonderful, nothing mysterious in this world. In this holy city of Benares, I have performed the rites and obsequies most solemnly for my countrymen who have lived in bygone yesterdays, and to those of today and even of the morrow. From henceforth, live in obedience to your inner spirit imbued with love for one another; and live in harmony with the world under the protecting shelter of His Feet.”

--*Nathchintanai*. 373.

Swami's mystic experience of Oneness at *Kasi* has been communicated by Bhagavat Adi Sri Sankararcharya also, in one of his well known poems called *Kasi Pancaka*, written in Benares. It describes the eminence of Kasi, the holiest of the holy cities of all Hindus. Sri Sankara identifies the *Jivatman* with the sacred city. The hymn like Swami's letter above, has a message for all pilgrims. At the journey's end, there awaits for the seeker the great discovery of realising the Lord as abiding in his inner sanctuary. Pilgrimages to sacred shrines, and purifactory baths in the sacred streams as the Ganga and Kauveri have been some of the cherished spiritual practices amongst the Hindus. *Kasi* has always been held by them in the highest veneration, from the Vedic age up to the present day.

A pilgrim is often found to create an exalted state of mind, and serves as a discipline in self denial and self-purity. The most significant award is the possession of *Santi* (peace) and *jnana* (knowledge) which alone can lead man to realise within himself the divinity of his being. St. Tirumular thus Tirumantram:

St. Pattinattar too expresses this idea in a couplet in Poornamalai:

He who gains this Awareness is considered to be the true pilgrim, and he enriches the lives of others, as did St. Appar who prompted by intense love, seeks the Lord who eludes the search of Brahma and Vishnu, till at last he finds Him in his heart.

The sacred Ganga on which is situated *Kasi*, is reputed to be a *Jnanapravaha*--the stream of wisdom, which cleanses man of all impurities. What is known as the *Manikarnika* symbolises *Santi*--peace absolute, which results from the cessation of all mental activities, as a result of an act of surrender at His Feet. The Hindu considers the goal of life as one of

self-realisation. *Annapurani* and *Viswanath*, the Lord of the entire Universe and the procreative Mother, represent in one aspect the discerning Wisdom and Conciousness, which are manifest in every individual. Thus everyone is himself *Kasi*. *Kasi* means 'to shine.'

A pilgrimage to the holy city of *Kasi* aims at directing our minds inwardly, to behold that which is the eternal Verity, and conveys to us the intimations of our own immortality. It guides us to look within and realise the Self. We give below a free rendering of the *Kasi Pancaka*, as it helps us to understand the full significance of Swami's Letter from Kasi.

## KASI PANCAKA

*“That Kasika am I of the nature of the realisation of the Self, the sacred manikarnika being supreme peace, arising from Manonivrtti; and the pure Ganga, the current of knowledge.*

*That Kasika am I of the nature of the realisation of Self which is pure existence, knowledge and bliss, which is of the nature of the Supreme Being, and on whom superimposed shines this animate and inanimate world, the product of Maya's illusion, delightful to the mind.*

*That Kasika am I of the nature of the realisation of Self which shines in all the five Kosas, where Bavani is Buddhi, residing in everybody, and where Siva, the all pervading witness is the Antaratman--the ultimate Reality. He has indeed attained Kasi, who has known Kasi, where shines the effulgent One, who lights up everything.*

*The body is Kasi. The stream of knowledge is the pervading Ganga; Bhakti and Sraddha form Gaya. The contemplation of the Feet of Guru is Prayaga. The Lord of all, the witness of the minds of everybody is the Antaratman. Thus if in my body is everything, what other place of pilgrimage is there for me?*

*--Bhagavat Adi Sri Sankaracharya.*

## Written to a devotee on 29.5.33 by Swami.

*The centre of Life and the axis of the world and yet beyond these are the endless flame of Radiance, whose gracious Feet adoring, I have a word to say; Listen to it with eagerness.*

*We are eternal; Everything is the will of Siva.*

*Do not fear on any score; The unique One is God.*

*Do not grieve yourself by seeing one as good and other as bad.*

*Send me not money from today.*

*From ages immemorial, it has been found that money brings misery.*

*Let not your mind be tossed about by thoughts of the past and the future.*

*That which is within you and within me is One only.*

*This utterance shall purify your consciousness.*

*Cherish friends and foes alike.*

*Know that there is nothing wonderful here on earth.*

*Ever remembering*

*YogaSwami.*

*From a Photo-stat in Siva Thondan--Vol. 30 No: 1 of 1966.*

# Anjalie to Yogendra

*Sivamayam*

Yogendra!

This is the New Year's Day. You will prepare various excellent sweet meals. You will wear silk verties. You will whitewash your house. You will go to the temple. You will worship and give offerings. But I shall bathe in the waters of Peace and wear Holy Ash which purifies the mind. I shall pray evermore for that great wealth known as Contentment and take up the shield of Fearlessness; and having all these, I shall dance on the bossom of Subramanya.

*Never forgetfully.*

*Yours*

# *Sivamayam*

## *The Joyful Life*

*Worship God in thought, word and deed, morning, noon and evening.*

*Keep your body and mind pure.*

*At the first sign of disturbance in the body or the mind, stop eating and engage yourself in temple-worship, or in the worship of the devotees of Siva, or seek to give alms.*

*Spend no more than your income.*

*Alone by yourself, sitting or walking, ponder on the ways and means of regulating your life.*

*Put aside all desire for excessive eating and other indulgent habits.*

*Give up fish, meat and alcohol.*

*Be active all the time.*

*Resolve in tranquillity that you are pure being, and that you do not suffer from imperfection.*

*He who practises all that is said above will be blessed with pure concentration, divine wisdom and infinite power, consummating in supreme liberation.*

# *Sivamayam*

*Avisawela*

*15.11.1933.*

Ye will not look upon me as the pedestal upon which all things that are, are founded. And because of your blindness, for blind ye are, having eyes which I have given you to see, ye see not because of your blindness,

Small are your hearts and so cramped that they will not expand in height and breadth, even to know the Peace that dwells in my clear Silence, nor the illumination that radiates in my horizon. Nor will you imbibe the joy of my greetings of wisdom, as I sing into your souls conveying a love that withereth not, nor fadeth away; neither doth it become ashes nor crumble to pieces.

List, My children! Dear unto my heart are ye, even as the ewe-lamb in its waywardness and helplessness is dear to the heart of the mature yet tender shepherd; and as the babe, the gift of first love is dear to the eager heart of the prayerful father.

## *Sivamayam*

Letter to Self who is Yogendra full of Love.

I am with you and you are with me. You are myself and I am you. What is it you fear? Look! I am you. Then what would you do? You must feel and show love. To whom? To everyone. In fact your nature is nothing but love. It is not only yourself, but the whole universe which is overflowing with love. Yet it is not any other, because you are the only one in existence. You are all things. Study well. Be obedient. Listen to and follow the advice of your father, mother elder sisters, younger brother, as well as your uncle, aunt and elder brothers. Always set an example in obedience.

Siva does all

*I am you.*

## *Sivamayam*

Yogendra!

Look everything is Sivamayam. Then who are you? Who am I? Who is your father? Who are they, and what are all others? Are they not all Sivam? Are you still in doubt? Do you fear? Look! I in you, and you in me, and all being ONE and ONE being all, remain changeless as ever before. Arise, know more and more.

All is well, all is well, all is well.

Yours,

*The birthless and deathless one.*

*Yogaswami*

# SIGHT AND INSIGHT

## NATCHINTANAI DHYANAM

**“Ever present in all beings, Oh Immaculate One!  
Entrancing Beauty in all art Thou too!  
Permeating in pebble, rock and imposing trees  
And flourishing e'en in grass and weed as well.**

**Essence of Harmony, Thou divine Songster,  
No other Lord will I revere but Thee.  
In worship meek will I sing thy glory.  
Deign to heed my garland of praise to Thee.**

*--Natchintanai. 120.*

The recognised tradition of the Hindu religious life must be fully understood before understanding *Swami*, as his experiences truly harmonise with this tradition. *Natchintanai* sets forth the tradition which has emerged from the religious life of the Hindus, from the Vedic period to the modern age. It is the science of Truth and the art of union with the Supreme One--the Truth imperishable and Light adorable.

He who meditates on *Natchintanai* will know the Great One of golden effulgence, self luminous, who dwells in the heart of all beings as the innermost Self.

Swami's written Testament called *Natchintanai* is a work of imperishable significance, as it gives profound insights that are valid for all times and for all religious life. It gives utterance to the aspirations of the devotees--*Meyadiyar*--of all sects, who seek to tread the way of Truth--*Sanmarga*. Swami leads us in his *Profound Reflections* to find out the *Sivathodu* demanded of us by the Supreme *Sivathodan*. If we learn to perform true *Sivathodu*, we can solve the riddle of life. “*If we master the wisdom enshrined in Natchintanai and taste its nectar, we need no other knowledge to attain liberation.*” This is Swami's testimony.

In his call for *Sivathodu*, the NatGuru requires us in the first instance to *know* the meaning of life before we engage in *Sivathodu*, which is derived from metaphysical realisation. Swami shines as an example of an illumined

soul, who kept up the most intimate touch with the modern man in this atomic age. Yet he draws the profundity of wisdom from the ancient fountain of Hinduism. He weaves all the complicated strands of modern life and thought into an organic unity in *Natchintanai*, which is also a confirmation of the precepts of our *Sanatana Vaidika Dharma*-- Eternal Religion.

Swami dedicated his whole life to the colossal task of the renaissance of Hindu Culture, and revival of the highest human and moral values, and enkindling of the loftiest spiritual enlightenment throughout the world. He stood for the omni-lateral progress simultaneously of both the individual and the society towards the realisation of the ideal of *Sivathondu*, the path of service unto man and God.

The gems of *Natchintanai* are the garland of reflections, where a great seer of Truth unfolds his experiences. His songs reveal the means for the realisation of the *Anma* and the realisation of God, and his penetration into the supremacy of Truth is astounding. In tune with infinity, he sees the effulgent Light which is within and without him. His utterances take us to the timeless age of the Vedas, the Upanishads, and the Saiva Agamas. His voice is prophetic. The petals that waft their fragrance from the wish fulfilling tree of Grace called *Natchintanai* are fadeless and perennially ambrosial. They help us in the path of Dharma and spiritual progress. Swami avows that this Tree of Life shall fulfil all desires and aspirations for the Eternal Good.

The self labours under misapprehension, owing to identification of itself with sufferings and pleasures. Man's suffering is due to the illusion of duality such as good and evil and is caused by ignorance, which does not exist in reality. Swami leads us to recover our normal state by illuminating us on the true nature of the self and the phenomenal universe. The ills of life caused by the potency of the triple bonds can be destroyed only by the true knowledge (*Pathi-Jnanam*), whence the Self-luminous One stands revealed.

Gurunathan directs our meditation on the great Mahavaakiam. Sivam is immutable, changeless, permanent, incomprehensible, one without a second, unattached, and non-cognizable. It is the Absolute Truth-- *Muluthum Unmai*. It is all-Bliss. The dialogue of the Guru on the Sun of Truth is a fascinating study. He communicates the ineffable experience of the soul's true relationship to God as one of Advaita, 'neither one nor two,

nor neither'; he unfolds the highest realisation of the soul which doth not think of God and the soul 'as one or twain.' In this sense, it is said that the souls exist as one with the Lord--a unity in duality, 'one with and different from,' as ascribed in *Sivajnana-Siddhiyar* 3.6.6: *Tirumantram* too brings out the cogent truth of *Advaita* in a beautiful imagery:

*“Lay the flower of anma at His Feet  
The twain 'I and He' shall no longer perplex”.--1607.*

This knowledge regarding the ultimate Reality as non-dual, and characterised by the absence of perceiver, perception and perceived is the highest Truth revealed by our Guru. From this pinnacle of perfect and perennial peace and joy, it is no wonder that Swami remained an enigma to most people. In the foregoing pages, we followed Swami in his several roles, as *ammai appan*, a teacher, a friend, a physician, a beggar, a child, a *Sivathondan*, and in every role he transfixed us. Yet he left no track behind, as he had realised himSelf in all beings, ever devoted to the welfare of all.

Swami's life on earth was perfectly natural, though his angle of vision was totally different from that of the ordinary folds. He was the proof of the solidarity between God and man and of the solidarity among men. In fact, Swami in himself was God's message to mankind. God spoke through him. He was the word of God. It was not that all his message was spoken out. A large part was not spoken, but was '*mounam*' and eloquent. What he spoke, he uttered with authority and helped people to have the vision of Eternity through a change of heart.

Our salutation to the Sage, who is the knower of the One Supreme Siva, itself implies duality, and is possible only as we behold him from our relative plane, by imagining the Supreme Reality as a person or teacher, and then adoring It by saluting It. No salutation is possible with regard to the non-dual Reality, because the knower of the Supreme Reality is one with Siva Itself. It is the One without a second. It is Effulgent and all-pervading.

In the hours of meditation, we begin to understand gradually the full import of Swami's exhortation to realise one's self as non-dual, as it is only then that a complete cessation of suffering ensues, when one can witness the appearance and disappearance of ideas, and the states, without identifying oneself with them. Such enlightened *Sivathondar* have no need to beg and pray for this and that.

The Realisation of Swami is not conditioned by cause and effect, and he attributes his illumination to the grace of the SatGuru. Swami has made it very clear that the Guru's Mahavaakiam of *Muluthum-Unmai*, *Naam Ariyom*, *Oru Pollappumillai*, and *Apadiye Ullathu* are addressed to realised souls. Their meanings will continue to baffle us, as long as we are subject to the causal state in which we do not know the Truth.

In our study, we have attempted to delve into *Natchintanai* as a profound experience which reveals the vast dimensions of God, soul and the world. It is not possible to find in the sun whose nature is to be ever-luminous, anything contrary to light, and that is darkness. Saiva Scriptures have acclaimed that the *Anma* is immortal, eternal, because it is beyond cause and effect, and above all entities of relative existence such as birth, duration, growth, change, decay and death. The *Anma* is awakened from its bondage by the touch of the Guru; it realises its true nature, that it is birthless and non-dual.

It is only a gracious Guru like Swami who has himself realised Reality indicated by, 'Thou art not this, of the nature of cause and effect, but That Thou art', who can awaken his devotees from the slumber of unreality, and enable them to realise their true nature. He alone can ward off all doubts during their period of inquiry into Truth, and finally lead them to experience Truth. From everlasting to everlasting It is what It is. Whatever is, is nothing but Siva. The manifold universe is Siva. *Natchintanai* songs vibrate with the revelation of the Guru who sees the universe as Siva and never sees any appearance or disappearance. The universe as Siva always *is*.

Swami urges the young aspirants to focus their meditation in the early stages on a Personal God, or a Cosmic Self, as they cannot think of the non-dual self yet, from their state of dual existence in a dual universe. The non-dual self is not limited by time and change, with no coming and no going. The Guru's grace works imperceptibly and one imbibes the true knowledge of the Self and becomes free from the blemish of attachment and aversion.

Thus Swami guides us at every step to cultivate a state of detachment and equilibrium, and arrive at the tranquillity of mind by discrimination, and control of its activities. His mystic poems on *Aum Tat Sat*, *The Temple of the Heart*, and *Flawless Worship* declare that by the absence of mental ideation, the mind of the Seer gets established in Siva, and becomes saturated with the thought of *Parasivam*. He who realises the knowledge of Siva does not experience any desire which implies cogniser and cognised.

His activities offered as a sacrifice to the Supreme do not bind.

*“He may be engaged in any activity but in everything, he realises Him alone.” “For him the act of offering is God, the oblation is God. By God is it offered into the fire of God. God is that which is to be attained by him who realises God in his works.”*

*--Bhagavad Gita. VI. 24*

Swami clearly enunciates in the canticles of *Natchintanai* that the knowledge of the Advaitic Reality, and the realisation of the essential nature of the Self lead to *Mukti* or the attainment of Truth. Duality cannot exist when gnosis, the highest truth (non-duality) is realised. Swami's poems on his Guru communicate the aroma of divine Grace emanating from the sunflower of Truth, and wafting its fragrance on a realised Jnani. His is the inheritance of tranquil Peace.

The sovereignty of Truth has been proclaimed by Seers in varied hues coloured by the nativity of the Gnostics. We quote from Plotinus a significant utterance which throws light on Swami's revelation of Truth, *Muluthum Unmai*, as a centrifugal force of Universal grandeur!

“Conceive it as a power of an ever-fresh infinity, a principle unfailing, inexhaustible, at no point giving out, brimming over with its own vitality. If you look to some definite spot, and seek to fasten on some definite thing, you will not find it. The contrary is your only way; you cannot pass on to where it is not; you will never halt at a dwindling point where it fails at last and can no longer give; you will always be able to move with it--better, to be in its entirety--and so seek no further; denying it, you have strayed away to something of another order and you fall; looking elsewhere you do not see what stands there before you.

“But supposing you do thus seek no further, how will you ever be convinced of attainment?

“In that you have entered into the All, no longer content with the part; you cease to think of yourself as under limit but, laying all such determination aside, you become an All. No doubt you were always that, but there has been an addition and by that addition you are diminished; for the addition was not from the realm of Being--you can add nothing to Being--but from non-Being. It is not by some admixture of non-Being that one becomes an entire, but by putting non-Being away. By the lessening of the alien in you,

you increase. Cast it aside and there is the All within you; engaged in the alien, you will not find the All. Not that it has to come and so be present to you; it is you that have turned from it. And turn though you may, you have not severed yourself; it is there; you are not in some far region: still there before it, you have faced to its contrary.

“It is so with the lesser gods; of many standing in their presence it is often one alone that sees them; that one alone was alone in the power to see. These are the gods who 'in many guises seek our cities'; but there is That Other whom the cities seek, and all the earth and heaven--Him who is everywhere self-abiding, and from whom derives Being and the Real Beings down to Soul and Life, all bound to Him and so moving to that unity which by its very lack of extension is infinite.'

--Plotinus *Enneads Vth Tractate:*

*Omnipresence of Authentic Existent.*

In the same measure of insistence, Swami bids his *Sivathondar* to see Siva the Infinite in all things finite. In this phase of God-realisation may be understood the veneration given by Hindus to sainthood as unto God--'To behold the feet of the saints is to behold the form of Grace'

In his *Guru-Vacagam*, he defines the stages for achieving this end. First, we see the things around us, as declaring the glory of Siva. These are the visible things of nature and persons. Then we begin to ponder on the glory of Siva in the cosmos as well as in the human soul, and to contemplate the form of Siva as seen by the seers and saints in the sacred texts and Puranas, so that whatever is heard and unheard, visible and invisible, within and without, reveals to us the glory of Sivam--*Sarvam Sivamayam*.

Imperceptibly dawns too the realisation that the SatGuru is also a gracious revelation of Sivam.

*Sarvam Sivamayam* strikes the chord of Swami's *Upadesh*. It is the sunrise of self-knowledge in us, with the realisation that several strands are knit together in the ideal of selfless service expounded as *Sivathondu* by the Guru, from whom, through his inimitable grace are all things, and in whom is fulfilled the Will of Siva in us.

**“He who illumined me by His Grace,  
He is none other than myself, mother dear.”**

**“Siva's will prevails; Siva's Form pervades;  
Sivam art all, mother dear.”**

*--Natchintanai. 53.*

Thus when the heart becomes pure and love invades its citadel, then the contemplation of Siva in Sakti, and Sakti in Siva becomes continuous, and the soul of the devotee is merged in God-Consciousness, “fused but not confused,” in the words of Meister Eckhart.

There is a stage beyond this consciousness. We cannot truly apprehend Siva while we cling to visible things, and hold fast to the physical form of the Guru.

**“Life of our life art Thou--  
Our father and mother art Thou--  
Thou art our Guru; most ancient is they Wisdom.”**

*--Natchintanai. 120.*

Thus even the Guru who is the matrix of the seeker, and the pivot of the Universe, whose holy Feet which in other words is the symbol of divine mother, cannot be known, if we do not go beyond his visible presence and recognise in him the Eternal Word, and begin to see the inner Guru within us--'In the beginning was the Word, the Word was with God and the word was God.' as stated in St. John's gospel 1.1., and in our scriptures as Para Brahma, Nada Brahma and Sabda Brahma.

Beginningless and timeless is the Word. The third Eye of illumination and discrimination is opened; this is the inward eye of the soul, which can see Itself as it truly is, and can rise above the individual self to see the cosmic self. It is the *Vishvarupa Dharsan*, the glorious vision of God in the universe. This leads to the supreme realisation of Oneness, a formless contemplation of Him who is without form or mode. The *anma* has attained the kingdom of Siva, and lives in the luminous wisdom of the *ParaSiva*, in the light of a perpetual awareness of Him, accompanied by an abiding bliss.

To most people who flocked to Swami for manna, He stressed the need to live up to a high code of moral living as the first step. He would reiterate the ethical gems from the classic master-piece of *Tirukural*, and the sayings of the woman saint and philosopher, Auvaiyar, in order to tune his devotees to the righteous path of ethical excellence.

**“My dear young boys, the upright and chaste conduct alone will lead you to victorious living.”**

**--Natchintanai. 82.**

He followed this stage by the contemplative way, in which he bids the followers of Siva do *Siva Dhyanam*, or meditation of Siva. Ponder on His glory: Then he shows the next stage which is the way of detachment. Let your worship be free from desires.

**Do not make any petitions, any favours when you supplicate.**

Gratification of desires breeds greed, passion and egoism. It weakens man. So let not man be dominated by this type of craving or supplication. His worship should consist of self-dedication and renunciation of the world, and he should tune the soul to the minstrelsy of Siva, *Sivathondu*. Thus bereft of egoism and armed with purity, the *Sivathondan*, the servant of Siva, dons the armour of righteousness and is immersed wholly in internal worship.

All these aspects in the spiritual path of the aspirant are delineated in the Guru-Vaakiam. This kind of exaltation cannot well be communicated in the texture of words, but it can only be conveyed in the unmoving gaze of the third Eye of Siva. This is the significance of the form of Siva as the silent Guru, the *Dhakshinamurthy* manifestation extolled in the sacred scriptures. He is the Great Teacher who manifested in Swami and revealed in *Natchintanai*.

**“Be still my dear”--Summa Iru Thangame.**

**“All is the poignant silence of divine Perfection”**

**“Ellaam Nan Mona Niraive.”**

St. Tayumanavar has a lucid psalm addressed to the “Master of Wisdom's Bliss,” which we quote here to illustrate Swami's role as the grand Teacher of the mystic experience of *Summa Iru Thangame*--“Be still, my dear.”

*“Nor Union nor Separation's there,  
Beyond duality evolution ends  
And involution too; no attribute  
Nor birth nor death, nor lasting mark nor sin,*

*Nor search nor access above, below and between.  
 Beyond creative force and still beyond  
 The Vibrant Prime Essence, the elements five,  
 And knowing Self, incapable of waste,  
 Nor one nor two, beyond both mind and speech,  
 There ends all search, in ecstasy drunk deep  
 Out of the ocean of Perfection's bliss.  
 Thus hast thou taught, Oh silent Teacher mine,  
 Oh thou Siddhanta's Goal and Prime Essence,  
 Oh Dhakshinamurthi that dost shine aloft  
 On Trichi's hill, Oh Master of wisdom's Bliss."*

*--St. Tayumanavar.*

We close this section on the whispering hope of the dawn of a New Era. The Code of the *Sanatana Dharma* has been revitalised for us by our beloved Gurunathan. It is up to us to follow in his footprints for with Truth--*Satyam*--on our side and with the highest wisdom supporting us, we need not fear anymore.

The Guru's all-powerful deluge of Grace sweeps past us, and we arise to ponder on the scintillating vibration of his great utterance: "His Supreme Will prevails. The inspired poems and utterances of our *NatGuru* need to be recollected in tranquillity. We beseech him in the strains of the bard of Varthavur who sang in ecstasy of his communion with the God-Guru.

*"Call me to thee in Grace!  
 Other than thy laudable Feet  
 I know of no other refuge."*

*--Tiruvacagam. 28.3.*

In similar strain of yearning did the author of *Ramana Guru-Vachaka Kovai* sing this consecration chant:

*"As in the ocean salt  
 Dissolves and disappears,  
 So in the body lost I lay,  
 But now I long to be absorbed  
 In the brightness of your grace,  
 Eat me as food, O Lord,  
 Digest both Me and Mine.*

*Convert my being wholly  
Into your true body, Light.”*

List to the wondrous testimony of Gurunathan:

**“The songs of Swami Yoganathan  
Shall reveal the beauteous Path.  
They'll fill thee with ambrosial bliss  
Till infinity, and crown thee  
With the truth of *Aham Brahmasmi*.**

*--Natchintanai. 172.*

## THE TESTIMONY OF GRACE

This is a personal testimony, a testimony of *Ma's* own experience of thought and life, after she had come into the orbit of the great light of Columbuturai--Saint Yoga Swami. It is not intended to be objective as it makes no claim to establish eternal truths.

The Hindu tradition is persistent in its belief that those who are touched by divine Grace, '*Tiruarul*,' the Holy Feet of God, can do impossible things. Their thoughts will break through the most impervious barriers and influence people. There are many instances of saints, who by their very silence would influence and transform the lives of people who came into contact with them. Swami was one such renowned Seer who wielded the healing touch that changed people's nature.

A saint or a prophet lives a concentrated life of thought, and the influence of that life lasts for centuries, after his exit from the arena of the world, increasing in momentum as time passes. Every titbit of the life of a saint, properly authenticated, should be recorded so that one may be able to see how divinity putting on human form acts and reacts to circumstances of earthly existence. He may bless a person. Those few words may become the source of strength throughout the life of that person. They haunt him; they strengthen him. We cannot explain its significance objectively.

When all the literature has been published on this vast subject, one would still feel that Swami was overwhelmingly greater than the earthly events that constituted his life. The love of a Guru is of a peculiar kind; while earthly love, however pure and noble, still binds; these saints shower an affection which has a liberating effect on the bonds of ignorance. This is a

subjective experience but when such experiences happen in the case of many, it is no longer subjective. It is a solid phenomenon.

Such a phenomenon was Swami. He did not live merely in a world of thought or action. His great heart took in the sufferings of all. His sympathy was for the lost, needy and the distressed. He worked hard and endured infinite pain as he touched the lives and sufferings of those who sat at His Feet. He was in close touch with the world of grim reality. His innate purity was so great that he could understand all minds and easily see through the problems and difficulties of persons belonging to diverse creeds and races. His was a perfectly tuned mind. Indeed he constituted a bridge between the past and the present, between the old and the new.

Swami had a novel method of appealing to one's own intuitive judgment, of thinking out one's own ideas and forming one's own independent judgments by simple songs, sayings and anecdotes, and perhaps expressing the ideas with clarity and spontaneity. Undoubtedly many devotees discovered in him such close affinities between ancient saints who bore witness to the Word of God, that they were drawn to him by his universality of vision, and the intimacy of his communion with each one, who approached him with love and faith.

However, in spite of his accessibility, Swami would elude analysis and remain a mystery, not to be measured by intellect or reason. He lived so close, ever so close with the toiling masses of the Jaffna Peninsula in the sylvan surroundings of that hallowed seat of Columbuturai, where his Guru had willed it. Yet he towered ever so high that those who moved with him failed to comprehend his greatness fully during his lifetime. It was only when he passed away in the quietest possible manner, that he left us all with an enormous feeling that he was all the time living for us and with us all, and that he had left behind unimpaired a mighty legacy of wisdom (*Jnanam*) and love of service--*Sivathodu*. Ever absorbed in the singleness of his soul's march, rare were the occasions when he made himself understood to the people in whose midst he lived, moved and had his being.

Swami held fast the gaze of searching souls as a somewhat mysterious mystic who was, as it were denying the world the bounty of his blessings. That, however, was probably his unique way of giving the world what he had to give. He was an austere ascetic who admonished the impurities in all those who sought him with their doubts, and that was exactly the blessings they required.

**Oh Guru Gem! Guide of my life,  
Reveal the goodly way and make me thine.  
Transform my stony heart with thy grace  
And tune my eternal self to realise Thee.  
Heal my ills with tonics effective  
And let me bask in thy radiant Presence,  
Seeing Thee in all and all in Thee.  
Grant Thou the boon of constant remembrance.**

*--Natchintanai. 73.*

He urged people from all walks of life to continue to build up the citadel of Faith in God. It was only when one learnt to walk in the presence of God, and learnt to dedicate his actions unto Him, that life too became significant. He stressed always that the *Sivathondar* should get together and examine their own true self as in a Jnana-Laboratory, in which the alchemy of a dedicated life with its emphasis on love and sacrifice would be produced. *Sivathondu* was the work of God. It was a movement and a mission. the *sanatana dharma* needed to be translated into forms of conduct. He gave such emphasis to the fundamental values of Hindu Dharma, to the ideals of good behaviour, self-restraint, respect for elders, patience, and devotion to God. He was truly a living symbol of the highest tradition of Hindu religion.

*“I am He whom I love and  
He who loves is I”--*

So said the great Sage of his Guru Chellappa Swami and added this tribute of love on the eve of his Maha Samadhi:

*“If I served my Guru and Lord as a slave for ever and ever, I  
should not have given him a return of even a thousand part of a  
thousand of what I owe him.”*

It is not enough to *know* Swami. It is not enough to *serve* Swami by this and that act of devotion, in meetings of remembrance, by retreats and

worshipful acts. His light shining as the radiance of Truth pervades everywhere; He is our father and mother, and in his strengthening, protecting ray can we seek the solace of our lives. It is enough if we can *Love* him, with all our heart and soul. 'Then alone will he abide in me, and I in him.'

**“Show me the beauty of Thyself in me,  
Link me to the truth of myself in Thee.”**

**--Natchintanai. 86.**

The Guru is our Beloved Child. He has to be nursed, nourished and cherished within the bosom of our soul. He is the light of our life, the *Atma Jyothi*, the luminous self. If we practise discrimination, we can awaken the babe of love and then shall Grace invade our hearts with the divine harmony of Peace.

Swami's predominant stress is on *Anubhuti*--Experience. It gives the true meaning of life. If *Sivam* is the goal, and *Tiruvadi*--His gracious Holy Feet the means, to Him should be directed the *Sivathondu*, which we must perform in the right spirit of love and understanding. Swami's *Natchintanai* is itself a work of love of the highest culmination, and it is also the work of Truth evoking the highest response of love.

The Guru advocates at every step that man must have singleness of aim, and trust God above all things. However the change of the inner choice from wordly interests to His service, does not lie in one's own power, and cannot be merited by one's own work; that something must precede which lies in the *will* of no man, as the final and true reason for liberation. This is the eternal election and the divine gift of Grace. Swami's Testament of *Truth* is the *Satya-Vac* which declares that He is the Way, the Door that leads to the Reality, the Truth, *Satyasya Satyam*, of that thou art. C.U.6.10.3. The knowers of Truth, the contemplatives, the Sivathondar can enter in only through the door of Grace to the *Home of Mukti--Jnana Veedu*.

Dr. Ananda Coomaraswamy illustrates in his own inimitable manner:

*“How does one attain? No act, no human means procures it. It is the 'Causeless act,' that has no cause in work of man. Only by the grace of God is it thine without a cause. It is God himself elects.”*

*“And whom He chooses, him He gives at once freedom from lust, and power to know. Thus guided, with heart and sense to Him alone, the Self of all that is, One gains the highest place, the eternal Home of God.”*

This is the way to regain one's supernal true self. The Guru beckons everyone to follow zealously the paths of *Sariyai*, *Kriyai* and *Yoga* as the means to attain *Jnana*. He bade his devotees to visit temples and make regular offerings of worship, to conform to the sacred, sacramental and ritual customs, to join the company of truth-seekers and the assembly of the pious, to read Holy Scriptures, to sing and relish the sweetness found in religious *Devarams* and psalms, to practice daily worship, meditation and reflection and thereby attain liberation.

*“Wherever you seek, dipping in sacred waters  
In ups and downs of a wanderer's world,  
Rest will ye no where find--  
And yet is rest in every place--  
To serve Him--that is rest. (Peace, Santi)  
Praise Him--Aum--Great Siva, propitiator!  
Salutations to the Holy Feet of the Master Sivathondan”!*

## **SWAMI'S TRANSMISSION**

Swami bids everyone to carry out the work of *Siva*, the Hindu term for the Auspicious, Supreme One; not to abide by man's choice but His! Man should only be a tuned instrument, and Siva the mighty musician will play whatever tune He wills, The Supreme Siva is the grand servant of man. He is the bonds-lave--*Sivathondan*. Everything in this world pulsates to His will. Therefore man cannot alienate himself from other objects and subjects, for he and everything in this universe must abide and witness the pageant of sacrificial service--*Sivathondu*, performed by Siva. When He moves we move; when He acts, we follow to the rhythm of consecrated service to the pinnacle of Wisdom, Love and Bliss. Swami's transmission can be heard in any wavelength, for so powerful is the voltage of his transmitter. He is the magnetic *Sivathondan*, who urges the aspiring *Sivathondar* to live and work in the light of Truth, and transform the whole world into a powerhouse generating spiritual light and wisdom.

His life affirming mission entails arduous preparation. He enjoins that in the first instance, Man must know himself. “Study the scriptures and see

yourself by yourself, and see yourself in others and see yourself in Siva, the Supreme One. Purity, study of the sacred scriptures, a strict disciplinary conduct, and charity are the ways by which man can experience this change of heart.”

He urges the aspirants to remember and chant incessantly the name of God--*Sivayanama*--till it becomes as involuntary as breathing. The incantation of His Name will effect absolute purification within and without, and give one the patience and forbearance so necessary for inward Peace. Once man is immersed in serenity or santam, no discord or sorrow can assail him, and he can break through the barriers of duality. He can thence strengthen himself by acts of charity.

In the last phase of his earthly life, Swami would enjoin his friends to get absorbed “in practising *Dana* or charity at all levels, at all times and to all alike. Give food, give clothing, give instruction, give labour and toil, give your riches, give any offering that you possess and build up the pinnacle of love, and thereby you cease to be troubled by differentiation and divisions, and the play of opposites.” This is the message of the gracious Guru who knows Himself, and whose sweep of Grace permeates with the supreme power of love.

There is another striking characteristic of Swami which he shared with the Rishis of the Upanishad era. He sees the power of Siva as the divine Energy who moves the world to all kinds of activities, and like the child-Saint Tirujnanasambandar places himself on the lap of the Mother to play, nestle, cherish and rear him, in order that he may become a peerless *Sivathondan*. Thus *Sivathondu* symbolises the magnificent offering of the Divine Grace of Siva in the form of Siva-Sakthi, who in turn activates the whole universe to action. The sun, the moon and the stars perform *Sivathondu* and they revolve in the orbit of His Effulgence. Man too should likewise pursue the course of *Sivathondu*. The remembrance of the Name, the letters five, *Sivayanama*, the word of Siva, the footstool of Grace, constitute the power divine which will lead man to submit himself to the sacramental work of *Sivathondu* and fulfil his destiny.

It was not in his *marga* to preach any set doctrine. He never gave any commandments. His detachment was so pronounced that even in the midst of a crowd, he would carry the peace of his seclusion unto himself. The acme of his Self-realisation became so evident when he would initiate this activity and that, but would completely dissociate himself from it and

would remain a witness. Thus his *Sivathondu* became identified with that of his *Sivathondar*, while he remained immuned to the world. It would seem that nature also had lost her power to affect him in any way. “Wherever you are, there I am,” was his refrain, and this unitive Yoga without the formalities of initiation became one of his significant service to humanity.

He remained a faithful vassal like St. Sundarar, an obedient servant of the Siva-Guru, so that his followers too may become loyal bondsmen bound by the sustaining cords of devotion and obedience to their Guru. we recall here that Sri Rama contented himself to be a student than a teacher, and Sri Krishna became a charioteer for Arjuna, and Saint Appar even after the highest realisation performed *Sivathondu* to the very end of his days in obedience to the will of the Lord.

The author of *Periya Puranam* too testifies, that the enlightened fraternity of the votaries of Siva foster goodwill and harmony, and promote benevolence in this world. In his inspired Sayings, Swami makes frequent references to the beatitude of the legion of servitors of Siva:

He compares the *Sivanadiyar* to the lotus leaf, which cannot be polluted by the water beneath or above it. We share his rippling buoyancy when he calls us, even the lowliest of us, to join this happy band. We come into his own, for are we not the inheritors of the Gurudeva's legacy of Grace? At his Feet, we consecrate our all. Thus do we raise his soulful incantation night and day:

## **OH PEERLESS GOD-GURU!**

**Oh Peerless Gurunath! Precious Teacher divine!  
Grant thy Grace that my equanimity be not dimmed.**

**That I may for ever realise thy bliss ineffable,**

**Free me from fearful ills and perfect me.**

**Will thou not melt my stony heart that I may enjoy**

**Sweet felicity untainted by karmic deeds of yore.**

**Lead me to the goal where Thou and I art One,**

**And infuse me with the madness of love infinite.**

**Wandering far and wide, listless and restless,  
Thy grace I seek to see that Thou art all.  
Oft do I pant like the ensnared deer at bay,  
And like the churned whey, baffled my mind becomes.  
Reveal the beauty of Thyself hidden deep within me,  
And so may I realise the truth that I abide in Thee.  
Illumine me with the glory of the speechless Word,  
And guide me to expunge all vicious ties.  
My closest bonds have fled far and away,  
No other links have I but thine alone.**

*--Natchintanai. 85.*

### **GOD IS ONE AND WORLD OUR KIN**

**We see the Truth that God is One,  
And behold the whole world as our kin.  
We'll not swerve from the path of Dharma,  
Nor shall we disown parental dictum.  
Whatsoe'er comes and goes affect us not,  
For no longer are we enticed by worldly gains.  
We'll wear the badge of service in humility,  
And shall never forget the Feet of the SatGuru.  
The law of the land shall we not violate,  
Nor will we waste our moments idly.**

**Fear and anger have we subdued,  
And to none shall we bow in deference,  
We'll not submit to false doctrines,  
Neither will we spurn the creed of others.  
We'll not pursue sense-enjoyments  
But keep ourselves above unrighteous acts.  
We shall master the psychic science and arts;  
And restrain anger with the mind under control.  
We shall till the soil and harbour not ill-will.  
We'll go far and wide and spread the gospel fine.  
In exaltation shall we soar from earth to heaven,  
And rejoice in the infinitude of Siva.  
Benevolent shall be our deeds without any taint,  
And equity will be our motto for all creeds.**

*--Natchintanai. 255-256.*

To these ennobling servitors of Siva who gloat in the grace of the SatGuru, the voice of the Guru is heard. It is like the music of the drum, the *thuduku*, that announces the triumphant manifestation, the Dance of Siva whose face gleams with tranquil calm.

**“It is not external acts performed with tools of the body and mind that enhance your service unto Siva.  
SivaThondu is a state of Being, a blissful state of Peace in activity and non-activity--a discipline of the soul.”**

### **His Ineffable Grace**

The essence of Grace in the form of the Guru is embodied in Swami's songs, in consonance with the Saiva doctrine of Grace. 'To behold the feet

of saints is to behold the Form of Grace.' SivaJnana-Siddhiar hails these bondsmen of Siva as indistinguishable from Siva:

*“They are God to me who mediate on Him day and night,  
drawing nigh and nigher unto Him. He indeed is the Light of eye-  
light and the innermost sense of Truth burning brightly in the  
broad heavens.”*

St. Tayumanavar glorifies the Master *Sivathondan* who shepherds the flock of *Sivanadiyar* to the realm of Realisation:

*“To class or caste he lays no claim,  
Or note of character or name;  
He knows not any need;  
No stir of passion does he feel,  
Or of possession's strong appeal,  
The lure of gain and greed;  
By ties of home he is not bound  
By child or wife, for he has found  
Rest, from all sorrow freed.  
So devoted a man deserves to be  
Deemed Siva HimSelf, whose gift is Mukti indeed.”*

The band of Sivathondar who gaze at the gracious eyes of the Guru are rapt in tranquillity, as they hear the Consecration Chant from the Vedas, sung by one of their own, at the bidding of the Master. It is a prayer for purity and for exceeding purity to perfume life with the aroma of Divine Grace!

Aum! May the vitalising incoming (Praana), out pouring

(Apaana), all pervading (Vyaana), uplifting (Udaana), nourishing

(Samaanaa)--the five life-breaths in me be purified.

Jyotir Aham. Light am I.

Stainless and sinless may I become.

Obeisance I offer--Svaahaa.

Aum! Earth, Water Fire, Air Ether in me, may they be purified. --Jyothir Aham...

Aum! Sound, Touch, Form, Taste Smell in me, may they be purified. --  
Jyotir Aham...

Aum! Speech, Body, Actions in me, may they be purified.

--Jyotir Aham...

Aum! The food (physical) vital, mental, intuitional,  
blissful natures in me, may they be purified.

--Jyotir Aham...

Aum! The Self in me, may It be purified.

--Jyotir Aham...

Aum! The Inner Self (Antaraatma) in me, may It be  
purified. --Jyotir Aham...

Aum! The Supreme Self (Paramaatmaa) in me, may It be purified.

Light am I--Jyotir Aham

Stainless and sinless may I become--

Virajaa Vipaapmaa bhū yaa sam.

Obeisance I offer--Svaahaa:

Om Santi, Santi Santi.”

In all these multitudinous ways, our Gurunathan taught the people who gathered round him, the great ideal of *Pravriti Dharma*--the Dharma of activity, though in his life, he was an expression of *Nivrtti Dharma*--the Dharma of renunciation. Swami's magnetic presence attracted both bird, beast and man. He loved everyone alike, so much so that everyone left his presence with the faith that he himself was the special object of affection. This was because he had realised his Oneness with all beings, and immortalised the Oneness by his overflowing love and grace. His advent in our midst has been the greatest blessing, and the most inspiring act of God to the gracious Land of Lanka. No power on earth can assail the land or its

people, with whom he cast his lot and lived as a witness of Divine Grace.

## **THE SAT-GURU SPEAKS**

**Oh come, all ye faithful!**

**And reflect on these living words,**

**That God is One and world too is One.**

**Joyful ye become with the earth too rejoicing.**

**This goal of excellence seek with discernment,**

**For ye are not earthy but the pleroma of wisdom.**

**Thy inexpressible greatness, who can extol?**

**Know ye that fire cannot consume you,**

**Neither can the love-laden zephyr oppress you,**

**Nor the gloom of earth, or ether afflict you.**

**The rippling waters pierce not their chill on you.**

**Ye are undying, sempiternal! Let unalloyed bliss**

**Fill the interstices of your heart.**

**Ye who've overcome the bias of caste and creed,**

**Be established in the dharma of verity (Justice).**

**And be not lured by sense perceptions false.**

**Ne'er will ye be exposed to any peril whatsoe'er,**

**But be aware of your duty and do it well.**

**The felicity of realisation is yours as ever,**

**And the world lies within the clasp of your hand.**

**Let there be no iota of doubt in what I say:**

**Reflect! The SatGuru is your sole Refuge,**

**While you remain a mere spectator.**

**The wondrous twin Feet, for ever Hail!**

*--Natchintanai. 94.*

## Epilogue

We have come to the end of our *Guru Dhyanam*. In the Eternal Now, there is no beginning and no end. Swami's word transcends the dimension of time and space.

*“Pilgrim, Pilgrimage and Road  
Was but Myself toward Myself; and your  
Arrival but Myself at my own Door.”*

**The Words of the Guru--** oh gentle reader, are passed on to reverberate in Time and Eternity!

**“The flawless Vac that 'All that is, is Truth Absolute,'  
Will show you the way to bliss.  
Meditate on it and live in felicity.**

**The matchless Vac that 'It is what It is,'  
Will inspire lucid insight.  
Worship with petals of love and live well.**

**The Guru's Vac of 'who doth know.'  
Will enhance your wisdom.  
Prosper in its unfailing light.**

**The goodly Vac that 'we know not'  
Will endow the beatitude of external life.  
Pause not but reflect on it and live.**

**The Seer's Vac that “All is His Will,”  
When enshrined in the heart will shed blessedness.  
Offer thy blooms at dawn and live nobly.**

**These dulcet words in chaste Tamil of the lowly votary,  
Who forgets not the fragrant Feet of the Guru  
Will ensue liberation from earthly pangs.”**

*--Natchintanai. 302-303.*

**AUM TAT SAT AUM**