

VALUES



SIVA AND PARVATI, WITH SIX-HEADED SUBRAHMANYA, AND ELEPHANT-HEADED GANESHA, WITH THEIR VEHICLES, THE BULL, PEACOCK AND MOUSE.

THE WISDOM OF SOUTH INDIA

EDITORIAL

257

THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE DIVINE FAMILY
OF SIVA

by Nataraja Guru

261

WORLD GOVERNMENT NEWSLETTER

267

TAMIL CLASSICAL LITERATURE
by Dharmu

271

THE TANTRA OF SOUTH INDIA

by Theyagu

277

VALUES is devoted to integrating human understanding unitively, impartially and globally in the interests of the general good.

NEXT MONTH'S TOPIC
MORE WISDOM FROM
SOUTH INDIA

Published monthly for the Gurukula Publishing House,
Kaggalipura P. O., Bangalore District (South), India, and
Edited by John Spiers. Printed by Kalyan Printers (Private) Ltd.,
12, Jayachamaraja Road, Bangalore 2.

Rates (Yearly) by International Postal Money Orders :
Australia 25/-; Austria 75 Sch.; Belgium 140 francs;
Canada \$3.75; Denmark 20 kroner; France 1000 francs;
Germany 12 Dmk; India Rs. 6; Italy 1800 lire; Malaya \$6;
Mexico 28 pesos; Netherlands 10 guilders; New Zealand 18/-;
Norway 20 kroner; Sweden 15 kroner; Switzerland 12
francs; United Kingdom 18/-; U.S.A. \$3.75.

Editorial

WHILE East and West are merely relative terms, and wisdom a universal value, we cannot say that wisdom is spread equally everywhere, like the icing on a cake. We must inquire why wisdom seems to have survived in certain places and not elsewhere.

South India happens to be one such place. It is the home of about eighty million human beings. It is maybe astonishing to remember how big the world is, and that perhaps the majority of people in the world have never heard of Madras or Madura. But there must be very few who have not heard of curry and rice, or pepper and ginger, for these words, derived from Tamil, the chief language of South India, have been current coin since the time of the ancient Greeks and Romans who traded with the kings of South India.

Hub and Rim Cultures: Several conditions have conspired to make South India a settled home of culture and wisdom. Nature there is kindly, and if man's blood temperature indicates the best climate for his survival, we can understand why wisdom has flowered there. South India, alone of the ancient civilizations of the past, while just open enough on her seaboard for the more adventurous of traders, has been sheltered geographically from the storms of outright invasion by heavy jungle and mountains, many of which even today are still untrodden.

We need to imagine a contemplative map of the world. On such a chart, South India would be a central hub, a focal centre. Beyond the hub the wheel of life radiates and circles with increasing speed. But at the core it settles down negatively or neutrally. Life at the rim, however, tends to throw life off its bearings completely.

This image of the life-wheel is found in the *Upanishads*¹ and it corresponds also to the absolutist vision of man who "rests in the nine-gated city" from which all

1. *Brihadaranyaka* I, v, 15; II, v, 15; *Chandogya* VII, xv, 1; *Prasna* VI, 6; *Svetasvatara* I, 4-6; VI, 1.

the life-functions and organs radiate like the spokes of the wheel.

On this psycho-physical map, even New Delhi is nearer to the rim than the hub. Prime Minister Nehru admits in his *Discovery of India* that "It is action and the thought of action that fills me²."

When we reach the marginal regions on the contemplative map whose centre is stillness and whose circumference is noise and movement, we find as might be expected, that they are all characterised by a peripheral intoxication of activity, ambition and power, whether it is America, Europe, Russia, China, Japan or Australia. At the roaring rim's edge, the human psyche is open to an invasion of dynamic stimulants. In key-words the advertisements reveal the urge to action; everything is *compelling, exciting, moving, thrilling, fascinating, entralling, stirring and challenging*.

The Pace that Kills : While there are deaths from tigers and cobras in India, can their number compare with the murder on the roads of progressive, civilized countries? During the last Christmas holidays, in four days over the week-end, the *New York Times* reported the death of 705 persons in highway accidents. Again, most psychiatrists agree that at least 70 per cent. of crime is due either to mental defects or to emotional disturbances. According to an F. B. I. report, major crimes in 1956 in the U.S.A. reached a peak of 2,534,000.

This might be called a flight off the rim of life. And what is the explosion of the atomic bomb but the centrifugal dispersal of energy from its safe nuclear core? The excesses of lowbrow rock'n roll and highbrow refinements also reflect the same off-the-handle madness, or abnormality.

Whatever aids men of action in their quest for power they encourage; they plump for science and call it progress when it fulfils their ambitions. But side by side with this there is spiritual and cultural petrifaction, and a despotic contempt for wisdom values.

The Survival of the Yogi : Long before the invasion of "the Aryan birds of prey" to use Jung's expressive phrase, it is clear from archaeological evidence on the seals found in the Indus Valley sites, that the indigenous people of India worshipped a Siva-like deity in typical yogi fashion. While the cities were overrun, their ways of life disrupted, their contemporaneous cultures of the same stock of the same religious approach, and of the same mode of life survived, for the climatic and geographic reasons we have already given, in the deep Asian south. The Aryans were not all "men of action." Their seers (*rishis*) found the indigenous yogis at their retreats in the forests, and from them were only too willing to learn of the contemplative ecstatic forms of religious life.

2. Calcutta Edition, p. 9.

It is this fusion which gives rich value to the Upanishads, and to the Bhagavad Gita. But without the contemplative contribution due to the wisdom of the indigenous people of India, these works in Sanskrit would never have appeared.

Nor is Sanskrit the ancient language it is supposed to be. Its age is probably not more than 1500 years in its finished state. Its very name means "put together", an artificial language constructed for the usage of a closed priestly group, built up out of the *prakrits* or "natural" languages. English, French and German are *prakrits*. Esperanto is a *sanskrit*. The non-perception of this fact has befuddled historians and even philologists who have been misled by Sanskrit histories and legends (*puranas*). Whether in India, Germany, Britain or elsewhere, the Aryans as active ideologists and imperialists, have always been excellent propagandists. We say all this, not in order to damn Sanskrit which has its beauty and its own virtues, but to correct wrong linguistic notions still firmly held by experts at home and abroad, in the fair name of justice to the forgotten people of India.

The Pariah and the Coolie: The indigenous yogi was also a lover of drumming. The drum or the *parai* gives us the clue to the name pariah or *paraiyar* in Tamil, which just means "the drummer." We can imagine the Aryan priests being as upset as the British were with "the infernal din" of the unceasing drums pounding, cracking and thumping throughout the tropical nights.

If the pariah is the "rejected of men" then the coolie is the "most despised". Coolie is also a Tamil word and means "hired worker."

Thus pariah, coolie and yogi indicate a certain temperament which belongs to the true India, both of the prehistoric and pre-Aryan past, as well as today. The peaceful casteless India society before the coming of the Asian hordes, traded with ancient Sumeria and Akkad, and the Tamils as traders and settlers gave the name to Malaya, which means Land of Mountains. The Tamil *Pura Nanuru* says :

"To us all towns are one, all men are kin;
Life's good comes not from other's gift, nor ill;
Man's pains and pain's relief are from within."

They had an open society, and this deep-rooted attitude still survives in the very nature of the people. The group of languages called Dravidian to which Tamil, Telegu, Kannada, Malayalam and Tulu belong, have a reflexive or subjective, introverted construction whereby the speaker always returns to the *subject*. For example, "I am in this room" in Tamil, literally would be "I this room in, being, am I," (*nan inth areiyil irukiren*); and "She was here" would be, "She, there, being, was she," (*aval ange irunthal*). When a Tamilian takes leave instead of just saying, "I am going," he says "To go, I am coming" (*poi varukiren*). This subjective-reflexive is an important psychological feature which indicates the introversion so alien to objective-turned languages such as English.

The gentleness of the coolie, the vigour of the drummer, and the ecstatic detachment of the yogi, come together in the character of the South Indian. He is not refined, and even crude, but at the same time has a true dignity and open honesty. He is never in a hurry, never

restless, never anxious to go recklessly forward, negative in his ways, retiring, will even be pushed aside, feels no need for pride. It is on such a soil that contemplative wisdom flourishes. From this soil, a wisdom has emerged, from plain, simple sources, which has enabled this coolie-pariah-yogi to survive the waves of invasion, bending before the storms like the tender grass, remaining at the insignificant tail-end of world-life and avoiding the roaring at the dominant dragon's head.

Wisdom and Action : We believe our readers will be interested in this vision of an unknown India, where the spirituality of which India is so proud has its native home. The essay on South Indian Tantra will evoke special interest. Two points need perhaps some clarification. While it is true that speech and words do not enter into final self-understanding, and that on whole "mere philosophical chatter about Brahman and truth leads nowhere," we should not take this to mean that therefore actions (*karma*), which includes all disciplines, prayers practices, etc., are going to lead to an understanding of the Absolute and to Self-Realization.

The second point concerns ends and means. The peculiarity of wisdom is that means must coincide with end, i.e. that wisdom is the means to wisdom. The raising of the value-level of action, sometimes called a process of purification or sublimation, has as its end the cleansing of the mind and the stilling of the senses, so that relativistic interests can be reduced. As we have shown, the South Indian is by temperament geared neutrally, and therefore takes easily to the way of withdrawal from action (*nivritti marga*) as opposed to the Aryan path of outward activity (*pravritti marga*). Wisdom should never be identified with action, as this leads to endless confusions.

This is a difficult point to make clear. The actual demonstration of a wisdom principle is not necessary. *My Experiments with Truth* was the title of Gandhi's autobiography. It is a mistake. Objects such as bricks and oranges are not needed at all to know that two and two make four. Wisdom is an *a priori* fact, prior to the objective world of experiment and demonstration. The wisdom principles of World Government are true whether they are demonstrated or not. No action has ever made anybody wise. On the contrary, as we have noted, the acceleration of action leads to insanity and death. It is inimical to nature and life, which for the most part, outside human disorderliness, is calm and still. Active temperaments will continue to add to the world's burden of problems and anxieties, while the humble coolie and unwanted pariah, quietly watching the disgraceful spectacle, turns out to be the really wise man close to nature, the darling of the Absolute, the yogi and the saviour of life.

[END]

A TYPICAL TAMIL GESTURE

DURING the Siege of Arcot, in 1751, when the young Clive, with 300 Tamil and 200 English soldiers, held out for seven weeks against a force of 10,000 French troops, the Tamils magnanimously told their commander that they would give the rice to the English and themselves manage on the rice-water (*kanji*).

The Philosophy of the Divine Family of Siva.

By NATARAJA GURU.

South India is still very much the land of worship of the joyous Siva family of deities. During 1956 and the early months of 1957, the author was asked by the workers on two adjoining tea estates situated on hilltops rising to 4,000 ft. in very beautiful country at Devarshola, which lies between the High Nilgiri plateau and the Malabar plains, to install two images of the God Subrahmanya, known as the younger son of Siva. Nataraja Guru's teacher, Narayana Guru, had himself written several compositions to this deity, wherein he had revised and revalued certain notions of the Absolute already familiar to South Indians through popular legends. Following on his preceptor's example, the present Guru complied with the devotees' request and, on April 14, consecrated the temple. His contribution provides a clear philosophical account of the absolutist principles behind this "stone-language" and may help to bridge the apparent gap between antique and modern philosophy.

THIS article is intended to throw some light on a subject which for both the modern man to whom legendary gods may be without intelligible meaning, and for large numbers of our fellow men and women of South India and South-East Asia generally, whose sympathetic understanding in such matters is highly valued and sought after. The scholar or the professor has to meet the peasant in the task of evolving a common language wherein man can share his highest ideas with his brother without reserve, and across the barriers of time, clime and culture.

The One Absolute has been conceived, not only as the Most High God or *Purushottama*, but also under the names of various divine personalities, presences or entities. Such divinities have belonged either to the formal world of ideas or have been actualities worshipped in sanctified places such as temples. Each tabernacle is dedicated to one or other of such presences or divinities. Based on the values that human nature places on such factors, life is filled with activities.

Sometimes instead of a single divinity, the demiurge or *Ishvara* is placed on a single pedestal or niche, and we have divine families, angelic hierarchies or numinous galaxies of graded importance filling the various sacred spots which human nature seeks and provides for the godly hosts who fill earth or sky.

The worlds of holy activity have many ramifications or knotted networks of value-action links which sometimes range hypostatically upwards and at other times bend hierophantically down to the lower reaches of common human life-interests.

Myth and Philosophy : Whether good, evil or indifferent, these entities which claim various degrees of holiness, thickly populate the spiritual consciousness of man. They thrive now as strongly as ever before, in spite of man's vaunted modernism. Their place in human affairs increases in importance as 'progress' takes forward strides. The old wine is put into ever newer bottles. New gods emerge when the debris gets filled with discarded ones which the slow moving flux of time rejects or leaves behind on its glacier-bed.

In a few cases such integrated groups of divine factors get formulation according to an implied subtle dialectics. The myth-making instinct in man works hand in hand with the search into the mystery of the Unknowable Absolute. We then have the case of holy families as in the Christian Trinity where the three Persons together are meant to throw light on the notion of the Absolute. Such integrated groups constitute a challenge, generation after generation. Their subtle wisdom prevails millenia beyond their initial presentation. They come to live perennially in the imagination of the masses with more than a merely religious creed implicit in them.

In some of them, philosophy and religion meet inseparably. Through them, myth lends support to the perennial philosophy. What was but closed or static becomes open and dynamic. By them, the *lingua mystica* gets enriched and much sustained human interest and scholarship grows around them. Thus it was with the Olympian, the Dionysian, the Hermetic and the Kabalistic mysteries which have engaged the attention of scholars for

long periods in the West. And in India we have the Vasudeva cult with its holy family.

The Siva Family : The Holy Family of Siva as known in the spiritual life of the teeming millions of South-East Asia offers to the modern wisdom-seeker much interesting and challenging material. A precious streak of contemplative content is found here which could be the fertile basis for the discussion and clarification of many esoteric doctrines. We referred to this in the last number of *VALUES*, under the title of 'Temple Exoterics.'

The Divine Family of Siva consists mainly of the Father who is Siva himself, an ancient hunter lost in mystic frenzy and dance reaching out from the limitations of the here and now to the freedom and radiance of the Absolute. His feminine counterpart is a daughter of the mountain (parvata) and hence is called Parvati. No earthly love was involved in their union and the Indian Eros (Kama) was burnt to ashes before they were united. They had two strange children, the first-born being heavy and elephant-headed and known as Ganesha, the second-born, on the other hand, being so light and luminous that he rode the peacock in his glory and is known as Subrahmanya.

Between the ponderous Ganesha and the buoyant Subrahmanya there is a dialectical interplay of contemplative value-factors which the votary or the hierophant has to understand through the myth associated with the two Gods. Stone images, ritual, legend and fable interlace in this fine antique fabric woven by the popular mind. New flourishes and ornamental touches are added to the antique pattern from time to time by wise men who see through the outer motifs and can discern its inner contemplative and timeless content. Temple esoterics thus transmits wisdom values from one generation to another.

In such a task of transmitting common-sense wisdom not only scholars or wise men but all men, women and children, not excluding grannies, have their full share. The claim of the human species as a wisdom-seeking animal is thus kept justified through the ages.

Siva Legend and Wisdom: The highest Member of the Divine Family, Siva, is strangely the least conventional, conformist or respectable of them all. Like Bacchus, the intoxication of drink is part and parcel of His make-up. Frenzy, ecstasy, even sheer madness are meant to be compliments to His character. His potent middle eye spits fire and burns all dross away. No poison can pass His blue neck which can absorb and nullify all evil. Eternal time plays about Him in the form of snakes big or small, single or many-headed, as the nature of the dialectical tradition or value involved requires.

His feminine counterpart can be seated beside Him or better still be one half of His own Person as in the Half-Woman-God (Ardha-nariswara) which is a very popular representation in stone language expressing the androgynous Siva Principle of the Absolute. All goodness sometimes flows as a celestial river (the Ganges) from the matted crowning locks of this ancient hunter. Beyond the reaches of the highest peaks of the Himalaya His matted crown is adorned by the sun and the crescent moon which are His highest and brightest ornaments. The gods of the Olympic

regions of hypostatic values reside here.

Destruction, which follows the wake of the forward process of Time's becoming is often depicted as a garland of skulls round the neck of Siva and the ashes with which His whole body is covered as He dances in the burial ground, gives the final touch of austerity or severity to the contemplative image of the Absolute which the Siva imagery is meant to evoke in the votary.

Between the simple *Lingam*, the phallic symbol, virile masculine principle representing the urge and necessity of imperative becoming, implied in the living notion of the Absolute, and the figure of the Dancing Siva standing in His glory on the recumbent or crouching form of an evil spirit which represents the background merely of contemplative values, we have the interplay of ascending and descending contemplative or dialectical movements. The searching inner eye brings to its vision many pearls of price and leavening potent factors of power. These potent value-factors may be attributes to the worshipper or the worshipped. Subject and object have an interchangability which is one of the first secrets of the *lingua mystica* which we should note here at the very start of this review of the divine Members of the Siva Family.

The Parvati Set of Values : The second Member of the Siva Family is Parvati. As a daughter of the Mountain Himalaya Her origins are rooted in the earth. In Her however, the earthy element has nothing inert or gross about it, but, as stated already, is a potent and fecund value-principle from which all goodness emanates.

She is also in a state of ecstasy or dance; only Her dance is not the transcendental one known as *tandava*, but is *lasya*, a radiance which shines dim or bright, here and now. Her horizontal expression could be the whole visible universe, but the principle which runs vertically through the different levels of Her personality which cover the five elements (*bhutas*) and the three modalities (*gunas*) of nature knows no difference between the relative and the Absolute. All vestige of duality is abolished in Her when conceived as the pure representative of the Absolute. Thus Her status can soar above that of Siva when the latter is conceived as a God who is worshipped as a mere member of the Indian pantheon. Vishnu and Brahma have then only an inferior status to Her.

When each God is given primacy as the Absolute, the others who come into the picture incidentally at least recede and fade into the relativist background. This may be said to be the second of the secrets of the *lingua mystica* which we have touched upon so far. In the androgynous representation of Siva divided bi-laterally into male and female, the left being the female, we have the same scheme as in Genesis where Eve is created out of the left rib of Adam. A vertical series of values ranging from the most earthy to the most celestial, and a horizontal division of the plus and minus aspects of the Absolute are implied in the *lingua mystica* of Indian and especially of South Indian, iconography.

Secrets of Stone Language : Every icon worshipped as representing the Absolute is taken to be locally fixed by the eight principal points of the compass. When fixing the idol one has to relate it three-dimensionally to Space at the meeting of these eight directions. "Binding the eight directions" (*ashtabandha*) and basing it on "the six nodes or

levels of contemplative value" (*shad-adhara*) are two other of the secrets of stone language understood in temple exoterics to which we have also made allusion last month.

The implicit dialectics becomes still more subtle and elaborate when we pass on to the two Sons of the Divine Family of Siva. The two Sons themselves could be treated as counterparts and there is a delicate interplay of spiritual values as we enter into the esoterics of what each of them represents. Besides what is evident in the muscular and cerebral disparity of types, the Brothers could be compared and contrasted in many other respects also.

Ganapati or Ganesha the elder is the continuator of the tradition of the father Siva who was known as Pasupati, "Lord of all Beasts" that ever came forth. Ganapati means "Lord of *Ganas* or ranks of beings" and is a slightly revised representation of the same principle.

The rat or mouse is portrayed as the vehicle of this elephant-headed Deity, and taking the elephant to represent the Alpha or the biggest of animals that entered human life and the field mouse as coming up in the rear as the Omega, we have in between all animals appearing in nature. The Elephant-Headed God thus comes to represent all beings anterior to man's emergence. The vertical series of living beings when contemplated upon telescopically and collectively together gives us a depth of vision which is retrospective and precedes the fully prospective contemplative vision which it is the share of the younger Brother to supply to the situation.

When treated globally both Sons of Siva together are meant to yield the full notion of the Absolute in terms of a contemplative human Value. The foundation for the knowledge of the revalued Absolute is thus laid by the elder of the two Sons of the Siva family. Kumara (another name of Subrahmanya), meaning the younger, represents the glorious superstructure of contemplative values.

Subrahmanya : The younger Brother has many significant names and attributes. Traditions about Him abound in South India and His supremacy spreads over the vast area of Greater India which includes the islands of the Indian Ocean and the Pacific where temples dedicated to Him thrive to the present day. At Tiruchendur on the extreme South and at Palni further north and in Tiruttani on the way to Bombay and at all intermediate places, there are thousands of shrines where daily offerings are made to Subrahmanya. The varied epithets and appellations by which He is known will give us a sufficiently interesting idea of what He represents.

In the first place His insignia is the cock. He is therefore called *Kukkuta-dhvaja*, "One of the Cock-Flag." However, He rides on the peacock, which is a glorified cock, perhaps pointing to the fact that a certain prehistoric deity which had the cock insignia or emblem became revalued in historic times into a more glorified God who rode the peacock instead. The legend indicates also that a prehistoric demon divided himself up into these two aspects of the cock and the peacock when he was vanquished by the War-God (one of the names of Subrahmanya), the former serving as emblem and the latter as His *vahana* or vehicle.

An element of immaculateness of conception is associated with the

birth of this War-God. The central eye of Siva emitted fire which fell into the marshes of the Gangetic Valley where six infant forms were produced from the six sparks that thus fell. These had the six *Karthika* (Pleiades) mothers for nurses. The six male infants got fused into one body with six distinct heads and twelve shoulders by the loving embrace of Parvati who became their foster-Mother. This combination probably represents the five senses and the mind which were sometimes called Gods or Devas in Vedic literature. They were all derivatives of the principle of light and were therefore celestial in status.

Guru-Aspect : The War-God has the epithet Saktidhara which points to his lance-shaped weapon, a revalued form of trident which his Father Siva wielded. Potency and power were lodged in this weapon.

On the Palni Hills in South India where millions of pilgrims gather year after year, the War-God is represented as a recluse in loin-cloth and ashes. He received the status of Guru to His own Father Siva. Brahma (masculine deity) himself was once punished by him for not repeating the lesson on the principles of the Absolute when questioned by the Guru Subrahmanyam. Agastya, a Rishi (Seer) or Muni (Silent Recluse) of the Aryan context who came to the South, recognized the Guru status of Subrahmanyam, and the Vedic Gods were merely the camp followers of Subrahmanyam thus known as Skanda, the General of the Gods of heaven. He was also referred to as the mature fruit of all wisdom. The secret of the mystic syllable AUM was supposed to be held by Him.

Aryan-Dravidian Fusion : Somewhat in contradiction with this picture of Subrahmanyam or Skanda as an ascetic and celibate there is the rather intriguing legend in which He is known to have wedded two wives, one called Devayani, daughter of Indra (Vedic chief deity), and the other called Valli, a dark girl from Tiruttani who was the daughter of a nomadic tribesman or hunter, said to be of the Kurava tribe. Evidently the fair Devayani represented Aryan culture and the dark Valli represented the ancient culture of the South, which was the heritage of the common man, who was often the humblest of individuals living an open air life in nature.

Mythology had its way of expressing the fact that the God Subrahmanyam represented the blending of the Aryan and non-Aryan cultures and that He represented the Most High principle of the Absolute above the world of the luminaries or the intelligibles. Both poles of the Absolute found in Him a dialectically revalued synthesis. He was neither this nor that, here or in the hereafter. He touched both heaven and earth at once. Born of fire, and thus named *Agnija*, He was of a scarlet hue and His six eyes at the middle of the six bright foreheads, each as radiant as the moon, represented the Absolute as far as popular imagination could visualize it through the help of myth, legend or traditional lore.

There is a strange blending and intermixture of earthy and celestial factors in this Deity Who is perhaps one of the most popular Gods of South India even to the present day. His popularity is not on the wane either, but is rather one which is growing and gathering momentum.

[END]

World Government Newsletter

How Garry Davis Reached New York

We are glad to be able to give at last the facts about World Government Coordinator Garry Davis, the Absolutist who travels with his own World Passport. To preserve their face, U.S. officials gave out that he had been "permitted" to enter U.S. "on parole." Both statements are false.

The Amsterdam Episode : When Davis was taken forcibly by K.L.M. plane from Abadan, Iran to Amsterdam, Holland on New Year's eve, the Dutch Immigration Police locked him in a cell. On Jan. 2, 1957, the Legion of World Citizens in the Netherlands sent a representative to Amsterdam who was allowed to speak to Davis and issued news reports twice daily to the press which duly splashed the news. Being labelled a "guest" of the Court of Justice, his case could not come before a judge. The Dutch Government resorted to the old gag of appealing to the U.S. Government.

On Jan. 9 (after Garry had refused to comply with U.S. Government requests to apply for a visa), the police took him to Schipol Airport, where, despite secrecy, they were met by pressmen, radio reporters and film and T-V cameras. Davis tore up his ticket and walked twice to the exit to show he was being removed against his wishes. Finally the plane left, and next day he entered U.S.A.

No Parole Given : The only travel document Garry Davis had was his World Passport signed by Guru Natarajan in the name of the Absolute, bearing Indian, Afghanistan and Iranian visas on it, plus police stamps of these countries and of West Germany. He categorically states :

"Contrary to Immigration Officials' statements that I am here as a parolee, I refused this status, signed no papers, made no commitments, and conform to no requirements obligated by a parolee status."

In a letter to Mrs. Crosby, President of the

Commonwealth of World Citizens, London, Davis adds : " You know of Dr. Boone's U.S. Immigration entry stamp and you have your own experience I believe in this regard. Also my mother received a U.S. Immigration stamp on her World Passport upon her return from Nassau in February. All this experience leads inevitably to the conclusion that World Citizenship *practice* elicits support from the powers-that-be, contrary to the supposition that support must first be garnered on the theory of such practice."

In passing we can note how the official brainwave of pretending that a parolee status had been accepted arose. The formula had already been used for over 20,000 refugees from Hungary who had been allowed entry into U.S. " on their word." The press swallowed the handout and the lie went around the world. It is here refuted.

Importance of Global Attitude : Regarding the World Passport, a new issue of which will be available as soon as the printing is done and distributed by appointed agents, Garry Davis writes :

" I was never under the illusion that national governments would or could ever support something truly global *before* it was actually achieved. What national government can officially endorse a concept by definition beyond its legal powers? It is foolish to think it can, and only implies a less than global attitude on the part of those who seek a cart-before-the-horse support. Businessmen don't ask the public to support a product before they manufacture it. They recognize a *need*, then go ahead and fulfil that need as fast as they can without asking anyone, *then* ask for support and in terms of hard cash. Idealism must be no less practical."

He continues : " The intrinsic difference between all relative organizations connected with World Citizenship, etc. and the World Government I declared is that the latter *includes* all by sheer definition of the universal principles on which it is based. Thus the main aspect of it is not the outward form which will adapt itself to changing circumstances, but the inner *attitude*.

" This inner attitude must be open, universal, clear-sighted, seeing things-as-they-are, based on common-sense, inner perception and a sound set of values, and *method of evaluating* which is educational in nature. Whatever stems from such a reasonable attitude will be consistent, humane and kind.

" We are all fighting forces of ignorance which give rise to war and human misery. The ignorance is however inside us and when replaced by understanding itself, outward conflicts magically disappear. World Passports, World Citizen Cards, Commonwealth of World Citizens, and even World Government are only symbols of the universal absolute understanding within us for which we are all striving and which alone can bring us peace . . . A man is certainly foolish if he considers

being the head of a World Government anything more than a terrible burden. But the choice is not a personal one, but thrust upon one by sheer necessity with which one deals as reasonably as possible, giving no essential heed to the consequences."

The Garry Davis Story : Garry's book, the title not yet finalised, is on the way, and printing is expected to begin soon so that the book can be marketed in September. Meanwhile Garry has been appearing on T-V, and lecturing at universities, etc. He is again back at the Gurukula, New Jersey, working with his friend and teacher, Mr. H. Jacobsen.

Peeved Orthodoxy in World Citizenship

As a further sample of slanted reportage, an unsigned article *The Wanderings of Garry Davis*, appeared in *Toward World Democracy* (News Bulletin of the World Council for the People's World Convention, 55 Rue Lacepede, Paris) last December. In part, it said:

"It is our unpleasant and depressing duty to report about the 'World Government' of Garry Davis. He, who ten years ago was the symbol of world citizenship, might today discredit it, if any confusion between his initiatives and the organizations working for the establishment of democratic world institutions were allowed to arise: there is not now and there has not been for years anything in common between them, despite all our efforts to get Garry Davis to work for our cause with modesty and realism. His past, his courage, his abilities could have helped a great deal."

Then the article went on to sneer gently at the supporters of World Government "who have probably not been consulted," and to refer to "the grandiloquence, which is often comic" in the *Memorandum on World Government* which appeared in *VALUES*. Yet it stated that "actually . . . there are in *VALUES* a number of sound statements." The article concluded with a postscript dishing up the old cup of tea that Garry Davis "was permitted to enter American territory but 'on parole' since his World Passport was not accepted."

To all this Garry replies:

Garry Davis' Reply

New York, U.S.A., April 8, 1957

EDITOR: *VALUES*

I have just read with interest the unsigned piece entitled "The Wanderings of Garry Davis." I am not usually inclined to make comment on such derogatory pieces since the very nature of their divisive tactics exposes them as such contrary to the universal principles to which they claim dedication.

In this particular piece however, the name of my teacher and close friend, Dr. Natarajan has been mentioned in a negative sense as also the magazine *VALUES* to which I have been a contributor and

guest editor. Moreover, by implication, my co-workers and Regional Co-ordinators, Alex Franke, Peter Troost, Guy Marchand and Dr. Ilsley Boone have been deemed alone in their support of my activities over the past four years. Then finally - and it is my considered judgment that the entire piece strove to make this one point - the World Passport went unrecognized though my "wanderings" were accompanied by this one document even to my return to the United States January 9th, 1957.

For myself, I am not concerned, nor indeed for my Guru, Dr. Natarajan, for to defend him would be to insult him, wisdom being its own defense. John Spiers may have something to say in these pages concerning the piece in so far as it applies to **VALUES**, and my good friends and co-workers in Europe and the USA are men of proven judgment, devotion and capability.

It is only the silent public with which I am concerned, which must be defended, the open community of humans whose daily problems go unsolved except by those who actually solve them.

I am perfectly willing that the authoress of this piece represent Man alongside her criticism of my efforts at such representation. It is of no matter who represents Man so long as someone or each one does. No disagreement is possible between such spokesmen because of the very nature of the laws of unity.

So to the authoress of this piece, I say: "You have my unqualified support when you dare to represent humanity. Otherwise, have the courage to be silent."

GARRY DAVIS

EDITORIAL COMMENT

[Our only comment is that the Paris writer is airing the emotional frustration common to many world citizenship orthodoxies. We want to underline the fact that in **VALUES** we are concerned with principles. We would therefore like to know which statements were sound and which were not in the Memorandum and elsewhere. Garry Davis surely needs some recognition not only for inventing the technique but for proving the *efficacy of the World Passport*. It took him through whole battalions of officials in half a dozen countries, including the United States. In fact his strongest asset is the weakness of the United States Government which has to treat him outside all their laws with a special status of his own. Don't let us have petty jealousies standing in the way of the realization of these facts, however much peeved we may feel towards Garry Davis personally. Our emotional antipathy towards a person should not blind us towards the victory for the general good which that person has accomplished. His personality is his own private concern. Bertrand Russell detests the personalities of Socrates and Pythagoras, and *therefore* discredits their contributions to philosophy and social wisdom. Because Garry Davis behaves in an unorthodox way, is his pioneering for a global humanity to be treated as worthless? We would ask the writer to reconsider her views in this light.]

Tamil Classical Literature

By DHARMU

We present a survey of the ancient literature of one of the oldest living languages. Tamil is spoken by over fifty millions, mostly in Madras State, but also in Ceylon, Malaya and Singapore, and in far-off places such as the islands of Mauritius, Fiji, and even in parts of the West Indies. The viewpoint of the author who has laboured for justice for Tamils for many years, is that of a modern who is yet keen to defend a treasured outlook and way of life which has often been endangered by outside political and religious intrusions.

TAMIL as the principal and oldest of the Dravidian languages independent of and co-equal with Sanskrit, enshrines the wisdom of South India. To arrive at the true culture of the Tamils, one has to look to its classical literature developed to its full height practically uninfluenced by other languages and cultures. When scholars and Indologists stand to admire Tamil and the Tamil people, they have in mind only this ancient literature now nearly 2000 years old. This is because Tamil had attained to perfection about the time of the beginning of the Christian era, and braving the later assaults and infiltrations by alien languages and cultures, the language has come down to the present time still in its pristine beauty and simplicity, thus making its further rejuvenation at the hands of the youth of modern independent India all the more easy.

To emphasize the truth of the above, a few quotations would be useful. "It is not perhaps extravagant to say that in its poetic form the Tamil is more polished and exact than the Greek," says Dr. Winslow and adds, "and in both dialects, with its borrowed treasures, more copious than Latin. In its fulness and power, it more resembles English and German than any other living language."

The Rev. P. Percival has said: "Perhaps no language combines greater force with equal brevity; and it may be asserted that no human speech is more close and philosophic in its expression as an exponent of the mind. The sequence of things — of thought, action, and its results — is always maintained inviolate."

Relation to Sanskrit: Of the independence of Tamil from Sanskrit which was for long supposed to have mothered it, we have the independent researches of European scholars for testimony. Indeed, till Dr. Bishop Caldwell published his *Comparative Grammar of the Dravidian Languages* the question was in doubt. The assertions made by the indigenous Tamil scholars, though few and far between, were being brushed aside as partisan. It was therefore left to Dr. Caldwell to first assert for the information of the world that "Tamil can readily dispense with the greater part or the whole of Sanskrit, and by dispensing with it, rises to a purer and more refined style." He further said that "Tamil is the only vernacular in India which has not been content with imitating the Sanskrit but has honourably attempted to emulate and outshine it. In one department at least, that of ethical epigrams, it is generally maintained, and I think it must be admitted, that the Sanskrit has been outdone by the Tamil."

Since the larger Aryan infiltrations into the South started from about the fourth or fifth century, particularly in the nature of small Brahmin settlements, bringing with them the Sanskrit lore and culture, Tamil has not been totally free from its impact in the nature of things. But it has been admitted that Tamil borrowed some words from Sanskrit not because it needed any, or could not coin words of its own, but only to serve as 'mere luxuries or delicacies of the language.'

Dr. Filliozat, a keen student of Indian History and culture, and who became the first director of the French Institute of Indology at Pondicherry in 1954, concludes an article with these words.—"We may conclude by saying that Sanskrit came into great vogue in Tamilnad after the full development of Tamil literature. When it arrived, it was welcomed and it gave Tamil literature new wealth without supplanting it. Thanks to Sanskrit influence, while preserving its own genius and enriching Sanskrit literature itself, Tamilnad (Tamil country) was able to permit two great cultures to flourish at the same time." (*Tamil Culture*—October 1955).

The Early Academies: As I said at the outset, the true and correct picture of Tamil culture and civilisation, is to be obtained from the earliest but least tainted of the people's literature. The robust rationalism, built on an admiration of the natural environment of man, and a polity free from superstition and supernaturalism, are evident from a study of the Tamil classical age.

The Tamil classical age commonly known as the Sangam Age covers the period from about 100 B. C. to about 200 A.D. The Sangam or Academy was the assembly of literary critics functioning under the patronage of the King to censor and pass all literary productions. Legend and stray references in classical literature mention the existence of two earlier Sangams or Academies extending to over 10,000 years, the first one existing in the lost Lemuria continent. As no work of those earlier Sangams are extant, the suppositions about those Sangams have to be dismissed as of not much value. However, as the oldest literature of the Tamils belonging to the now known Third Sangam, are of a highly developed and perfected order, it has to be admitted that the art of writing, the art of composing poetry, and the perfection of grammar should have had a very long period of development, for no language

could have started under any culture all of a sudden in a perfected manner. The script should have undergone many changes from the earliest crude picture types to the Sangam period script. It is for this reason that many scholars have sought to connect the Mohenjo-daro script with that of the pre-Dravidian Tamil script. It is now being asserted that the buried Indus Valley civilisation was that of the Dravidians who peopled the whole of India, that it was destroyed first by the invading Aryans and later by the forces of nature, and that the Dravidians forced to retreat from the north concentrated their culture in the far south, thus giving rise to the great early Tamil literature and civilisation.

The Tolkappiyam Grammar: Sir Mortimer Wheeler, former Director General of Archaeology of India and now in Pakistan has said, "It is now, therefore, generally accepted that the Indus cities were, in fact, those referred to in the Rigveda, and that they were destroyed by Aryan invaders in or about the fifteenth century B.C.". It has therefore to be admitted that something like three or four thousand years of development should have preceded the Classical Tamil stage of 100 B.C. which produced the great Tamil grammar,—the *Tolkappiyam*.

The *Tolkappiyam*, which means 'Ancient book', not only deals with grammar, but also all aspects of Tamil language and literature. It treats in a clear and orderly manner of the three divisions of Tamil Speech. Tamil literature is first divided into *Iyal* (natural speech), *Isai* (music) and *Natakam* (Drama). The three parts of *Iyal* or natural speech are *Eluthu* (Orthography) *Sol* (Etymology), and *Porul* (matter).

How closely this ancient and first book of the Tamils is related to their culture would be evident from a brief analysis of the third part of the *Tolkappiyam*, the first two parts dealing mainly with grammar. The third part, *porul*, matter or substance, deals with nine subjects. These are:

1. *Aha-thinai Iyal* or subjective matter, deals with love,—its various emotions and incidents.
2. *Pura-thinai Iyal* or objective matter, dealing with life in general and in particular about war and affairs of state.
3. *Kalavu Iyal* or furtive love. Pre-marital courtship was well established and recognised by the community. It came to be looked down upon only in the later ages with the advent of Aryan culture. *Kalavu Iyal* therefore proves that post puberty marriage was the order of the day and that the young men and women had a voice in the choice of their partners. The other extant classical literature shows ample evidence of the courtship and furtive love before marriage being in vogue. With the later impact of Aryanism from the North not only was the freedom of youth destroyed, but child marriage came into fashion.
4. *Karpu Iyal* or chaste love or wedded love. This subject is treated elaborately under five aspects, viz., union, separation, suspended animation in separation, woes of singleness, and the pleasures and utility of coquetry. These five aspects of love are compared with of the traditional fivefold Tamil physiographical divisions of the country, viz., the mountainland,

the desert wastes, the jungle abode of the beasts, the lovely coastlands, and the fertile plains. Love is again shown as interwoven with the six divisions of the seasons and the different parts of the day. The natural peculiarities of the divisions in physiography of the land and in the seasons are made to bear upon the various aspects of love.

To emphasize the supreme importance of love, furtive love is led to wedlock or the grave.

5. *Porul Iyal* is an elaboration of item 2 above: and deals with the seven stages of war, viz., cattle raiding, invasion, seige, battle, victory, diplomacy, and encomium.
6. *Meippattu Iyal* or psychology
7. *Uvama Iyal* or figures of rhetoric from simile to metaphor.
8. *Seyyul Iyal* or the construction of poetry. It must be noted that classical Tamil literature is in poetry. Prose writing is a modern development as a result of contact with western culture. Ancient poetry is not easily understandable and even now requires the help of a Pandit to get the meanings. As in the *Kural* (to be mentioned below), big ideas are contracted and put into short but terse verse.
9. *Marabu Iyal* or idioms of the language.

The Ten Idyls : It will be seen from the above that the *Tolkappiyam* which has dealt elaborately with the life, language, and habits of the people, has practically nothing to say about god or religion. Even so, the *Kural* that appeared some two centuries later about 100 A.D. ignores the supernatural altogether. This is not to suggest that the ancient Tamils were godless or atheistic. Their theism was simple and monotheistic. The influence of Jainism, Buddhism, and Brahmanism, had all begun to affect the simple rationalist beliefs of the ancient Tamils, based on early Saivism whose gods were Siva and Muruga.

A large part of classical Tamil literature owes its origin to the Jains and the Buddhists, who however, had little to do either with god or the soul. Their stress was all on correct human conduct.

Pattup-pattu or the Ten Idyls of classical Tamil are pictures of the Tamil people and their lands. Much of ancient Tamil culture and history are deduced from these poems. The divisions of the country into the traditional five kinds, — mountain, desert, jungle, coast, and plains — are described in great detail, dovetailing into their natures the character of the people — their loves and travails. The bounteous nature of the Tamil kings, the patronage they extended to the fine arts, — music, dancing, sculpture, — and the good government they maintained, are conspicuous by the absence of the religious practices or spiritual pretence of the rulers of the later ages brought under the Brahmanic ritual and dogma. All the same, influenced as they were by the philosophies of the Jains and the Buddhists, they were not ignorant of the 'slippery evanescence of all temporal enjoyments and the utter vanity of all earthly empires'. In the graphic description of the city life in the Capital town of Madura, we are told of the peaceful co-existence of Buddhist monasteries, Jain shrines, and the native Muruga temples and in consequence of the religious tolerance of the Kings of old in the Tamil land.

Love and Romance : The conflict between duty and love in a hero's bosom is brought out in one of the Idyls. How closely the Tamils were associated with the sister race of Nagas, probably of Bengal, is portrayed in another Idyl. In the Idyl — *Malai-padu-kadam* or Mountain Echo — the poet describes the grand mountain scenery, the small Siva temple built on its top, the whirl of the fast flowing rivulet down the slopes of the mountain and alongside of it, the roar of the waterfalls, and the shrill voices of the singing women. In another Idyl — *Kurinjip-pattu* or the Mountain Song, love at first sight between a hill-chieftain and a virgin of the plains, their escapades, the joys of their meetings and pains of their separation, are all beautifully pictured. The maid who knows all about her mistress's love, gently and artfully conveys the news to the parents who appreciate the worth of true love and see to its consummation. The ancient Tamil poets have taken particular delight in delineating the subtleties of love. In *Mullaip-pattu* or the Jungle Song, the patient longing of the dutiful wife for her lord gone on a military expedition, the heart-break of the lady when incorrect bad despatches arrive, and her unlimited joy when the victorious husband is finally heralded by beat of drums, are portrayed in a manner no modern can excel.

The *Ettuth-thokai* or Eight Collections of minor poems are again mines of information on the history and sociology of the South Indian sovereigns and their peoples.

The Famous Tirukkural : The world famous *Tirukkural* and the *Naladiyar* form part of the *Pathi-nen-keel-kanakku* or the Eighteen Minor Didactics. These two works have been translated into English by the Rev. G. U. Pope. While the *Naladiyar* or the Four Hundred Quatrains is definitely known to be a Jain work and has been put down as cynical although they are excellent maxims for the conduct of man, the *Tirukkural* presents pictures of the six ideal men,—the householder, the ascetic, the sovereign, the statesman, the citizen, and the lover. To this is added the ideal State. The *Kural* is so non-committal as to any creed or god, that it has been claimed by all sects. The eclectic philosophy expounded, the ideals laid down, are of universal application. The first chapter, although incorrectly titled as Worship of God, really explains what makes for godliness in man. Free from supernaturalism, religious ritual, or a dogmatic creed, the *Kural* is the outstanding secular rationalist composition serving as a moral guide to men of all the world and for all time.

The Lay of the Anklet : The three great epics of the *Sangam* period are again rationalist literature. The *Silappadikaram* or the Lay of the Anklet is a story of a wealthy merchant and his two loves, one wedded and the other furtive. Though the epic bears evidence of the influence of Brahmanism and Buddhism, the spirit and culture of the story are essentially Tamil. The *Manimekalai*, the next epic, is a continuation story of the *Silappadikaram*. Buddhism is expounded in the epic which is a store of information on this new faith which had begun to command the admiration of many kings and citizens in the South.

The third great Epic of the Tamil Golden Age is the *Jivaka Chintamani* which though treating of the love adventures of a talented libertine prince, contains an exposition of Jain doctrines and beliefs.

All the poets of the Sangam period were keen observers of nature and drew their inspiration from it. They laid patterns for human life and conduct based on the phenomena and characteristics of nature, depending little on supernatural or metaphysical material. As the course of life in those distant, pure, and simple ages mainly depended on the natural environment, the people's poets were also guided by bountiful nature. They looked to nature for the godhead and in worshipping it, they tried to weave the lives of men and women into the inherent tendencies of nature. This was very much unlike the outlook of the poets of later ages when the land came more and more under the Aryan Brahmanic influence which essentially built its polity on differences in birth, ritual, superstition and supernaturalism.

One World—2000 Yrs. Ago: Very much like the Stoics of ancient Greece, the classical Tamils built their polity on reason and rationalism conforming to nature. The Tamil society was no doubt divided into the various guilds, but the Aryan rigidity of caste based on birth was alien to their culture. The Aryan caste was invented to exploit the masses for the benefit of the classes on top, whereas the Tamil divisions based on craft and calling was a natural phenomenon raised for the general welfare of the community. There was no stigma or glory attached to birth and intermarriage between the members of the different guilds or callings was common. Even the few Brahmins of the Sangam age did not hesitate to marry the native women and become fused into the Tamil population.

The idea of one world was voiced 2000 years ago by a great Tamil poet. *Yadum voore, yavarum kelir* (every country is my country and every one is my kinsman) is the maxim propounded by him. This was possible only because the Tamil sages of the Sangam Age had no superiority complex either by way of caste, race or religion to maintain and preserve for themselves and had no self to impose their hegemony over other peoples. Their democratic outlook made them bestow equality on all people and this prevented them from hoodwinking the credulous masses into servitude in the name of God and religion. The Brahmanic *Manu Dharma Sastra* pinned caste and ignominy on man at birth in the name of God. This subterfuge was unknown to the democratic Tamil. The cosmopolitan nature of the Tamil people and their language is manifest in classical literature.

Conciseness of expression, pregnancy of meaning, purity of diction and unity of thought are the main characteristics of Sangam poetry. The simplicity of the Tamil taste has been compared by Oriental scholars to that of the ancient Greeks. The frigid conceits and the pedantic exercises of grammarians which characterise the Tamil literature of the later ages polluted by the Aryan undemocratic and non-rationalistic culture, are absent in Sangam expositions. Simple humanity is mirrored in the crystal clear utterances of the Sangam poets. The ancient Tamils can take credit not only for some of the loveliest utterances on erotic themes but also for their secular rationalism in their general attitude to man's life in this world.

The dark ages that followed the Classical Sangam period under the alien Aryan impact can easily be compared to the blight that Christianity

The Tantra of South India

By THEYAGU

While a considerable amount of publicity has been given to Tantric works in Sanskrit and Tibetan, notably by writers like Sir John Woodroffe and Dr. Evans Wentz, comparatively little is heard of the older works found in the Tamil texts of South India. Here is a preliminary survey by a deep student of the subject who is also a qualified surgeon and psychologist.

IN the fabric of its culture and wisdom, one of the most important features of South Indian spirituality is the Tantra. While Tantra today is spread all over India, the South is still as in ancient times, its home. There is much misunderstanding, however, about the whole subject. On one side we find, especially among unsympathetic critics, the prevalence of many wrong opinions, petty prejudices and intolerant false views. On the other side, many adherents suffer from deep-rooted irrational beliefs, gross and silly exaggerations and mis-directed enthusiasm over trivialities and non-essentials.

Such misconceptions are due mostly to ignorance of or superficial acquaintance with Tantra, as well as to many emotional factors which block affinity to a system of practice

cast on Europe on the passing of the glorious Greek-Roman age. It took several centuries of struggle for the Renaissance and the Reformation to rescue Europe from the papal Christian shroud. Our survey cannot be ended better than by quoting a few lines from the mouth of *Bhadragiriar*, a great Tamil poet of the 10th century A.D. who laments on the depths of degradation into which Tamil society had descended. The Kapila mentioned in the lines was a great poet of the Sangam Age. Speaking of the social and religious corruptions introduced by the Aryans, the poet lamented (*pulambal*)

“When may I know the hidden things of life
And thus attain perfection? I would show
How false the Vedas are with errors rife?
And burn the Sastras, so the truths might know?
When shall our race be one great brotherhood
Unbroken by the tyranny of caste
Which Kapila in early days withstood
And taught that men were one in times now past?”*

[END]

*Translation by C. E. Gover.

and philosophy aiming at a deeper comprehension of reality. It is most unfortunate that the nature of Tantra which is wholly a systematic exposition of an all-inclusive realization of high spiritual values leading on ultimately to the Absolute, is woefully missed or wilfully ignored.

True meaning of Tantra : Some confuse Tantra with necromancy and black magic. Many others, again, always associate it with sensual indulgence and sexual excesses. A few scholars feel that Tantra is mainly concerned with visions, voices, hallucinations and such-like phenomena of the "fertile middle region" of spirituality. These assumptions are far from a correct appreciation and representation of the main trend of Tantra which is essentially the science of the Absolute. Tirumular in the First Tantra says the object of Tantra is :

"Being, to become Siva ; to be one with all everywhere,
Being, to observe all action and inaction as Siva-will,
Being, to note the nature of time, transcending past, present,
future."

Its purpose is for the spiritual aspirant or disciple (the *sadhaka*) to gain liberation. As the *Prabancha Tantra* says :

"All this is surely Brahman ; and the realization of this as the supreme state is the end and aim of Tantra."

Literally the word Tantra means injunction or regulation in a secular sense, but it also denotes the scripture by which the saving wisdom or *Jnana* is spread. The *Kamika Agama* has the definition :

"It is called Tantra because it propounds and promulgates great knowledge, profound insight concerning *tattva* (principles) and *mantra* (science of evocative sounds), and also because it confers liberation."

The basis of the Tantra is *Sruti* (literally, what is heard, or authoritative scripture) which, according to the Tantric interpretation means experience. The authority for Tantra is once again the realization of the Real, and not just any revelation to be unquestionably accepted.

Pre-Aryan Origins : From a historical standpoint, many of the teachings of Tantra are very ancient indeed. Some are pre-Vedic and others later. The Tantra is the scripture of the Agamas (specialized teachings) which are distinct from the Vedas. A great number of the Agamas are non-Aryan and represent the philosophical practice of Indian people before the coming of the Vedic Aryans. Thus the source of Tantra is the Agamas which has imbibed much ancient prehistoric wisdom. Tirumular enumerates nine Tantra works in Tamil, which he describes thus :

" Of the great good Agamas are Karana, Kamiaga,
The beneficial Vira, the high Sindham and Vadulam,
The others, Viyamalam, Kalutiram,
The useful Chupiram and the noteworthy Makudam."

In fact, deep experienced understanding of the subtle laws of nature and a thorough knowledge of the human mind and aspirations, characterize the Tantric teachings.

The Tantra philosophy is profound, direct and reasonable. The lucid presentation of great spiritual teachings applied with depth of understanding in a ritual of psychological worth, makes its philosophy remarkably fascinating. It has cogent reasoning based on intuitive discoveries. Its doctrine of divine power is one of the greatest principles evolved through intuition into the human mind. In the Fourth Tantra, Tirumular states :

" The different, different deities will be known
Like various, various ornaments of the one element, gold ;
God Siva, Brahma and Vishnu (Mayan)
Are only the supreme Mother, the first Cause."

Harmony of Doctrines : Tantra accepts the principle of the Absolute and also harmonizes Vedantic non-dualism and dualism by evolving and teaching a method through which non-dualist truth is realized in and through the dualist world. As the Mahanirvana Tantra says,

" Brahmin is that which pervades the universe, as oil the sesame seed."

The philosophy of the Tantra lays great emphasis on the principle stated in the Kularnava Tantra :

" Some desire dualism, others non-dualism, but the truth of the Tantra is beyond both."

Herman Keyserling, a modern philosopher, describing the Tantra, writes,

" However extravagant some of its sayings may sound, their meaning is clear and their fundamental ideas are in accordance with reason. I am personally convinced that the teachings of Tantra are correct, on the whole."

This estimate from a modern is fairly accurate because the Tantra claims to base its doctrines and teachings on experience, while its exposition is scientific and factual provided the symbolism used is well understood. Founded on experimental and demonstrable principles of human psychology, and imbued with the vital breath of personal devotion, the Tantra thus makes religion philosophical and philosophy religious. The practical application in daily life of the high philosophical principles are enjoined without losing sight of the relative world and relative knowledge, though at the same time the Absolute is the aim and goal.

Influence on Indian Life : Being thus eminently " practical " in its philosophical attitude, the Tantric teachings have influenced the religious life of the people of India through all the centuries. All over India, religious practice in both temple and household is mainly Tantric. The Tantra forms an important vital portion of this ancient civilization. Although the South and Bengal and Assam are still considered to be

mainly under the sway of Tantra, yet no portion of the Indian sub-continent is free from its beneficial spiritual influence. The general nominal acquiescence of Vedic lore (portions of which carry the imprint of Agamic interaction, just as some of the Tantric works convey the influence of the Upanishadic teaching) does not detract from the importance of the Tantra in the religious and social life of India. The Tantra does not accept caste distinctions and differences in religion. As the Tantric knowledge is held open to all, irrespective of birth and sex, the orthodox Vedic restrictions are not respected. Although the Tantra Shastras (textbooks) are many in number (28 major and 207 minor), both Tamil and Sanskrit traditions give importance to nine. Also, the Tantric system is held in great esteem by all the different sects, the Saiva, Sakta, Buddhist and Vaishnava groups, each of which has its own Tantric authority. Whatever the differences in symbols, forms and external methods, all are alike in motive, aim and attitude.

The spirit of the Tantra is well portrayed in the Kularnava Tantra :

“I torture not my body with penances; I lame not my feet in pilgrimage to holy places; I spend not my time in reading scriptural texts, but I strive to attain Thy Sacred Feet.”

Disciplines : In short, Tantra is a practical method of spiritual realization. It is a *sadhana shashtra* (manual of spiritual directions) of *advaitic* (non-dualist) experience. Holding to the view that the human being can realise the divine in himself and outside of himself, it has elaborated methods of disciplining the aspirant, qualifying him for knowledge. It has varied processes of training and developing the latent faculties and qualities in the individual, so that interest in the highest and desire for wisdom arises unhindered in him. Sublimation of the binding, instinctual drags is made possible and understanding becomes deeper, wider and greater. Until an aspirant becomes fully a knower of Brahman (the Absolute) some spiritual discipline (*sadhana*) towards that end is essential.

Mere philosophical chatter about Brahman and truth leads nowhere. It becomes only a form of high entertainment and an intellectual pastime. Tantra therefore prescribes different *sadhana*s (spiritual disciplines) to suit the temperament and capacity of the individual. Sadhana gradually helps to sharpen the intellect and rouse the intuition which is led on into higher and greater possibilities, marking the unfolding of the spirit. A Tantra Master says in order to stress the need for *sadhana* :

“It is as impossible to hold the firmament with a pair of tongs as it is to worship an attributeless Brahman by a mind with attributes.”

Tantra describes four forms of *sadhana* : *Brahma Bhavana*, where the aspirant tries to be continuously conscious that all that is, is Brahman (the Absolute) or *Sakti* (the willed energy of the One); *Dhyana Bhavana* in which there is meditation (*dhyana*) on the attributes of the Absolute; thirdly *japa* (repetition) and concentration; while the last and lowest are external worship, prayer and chanting praises.

Saleti and Siddhi : Tantra also classifies the spiritual aspirant into three grades according to the predominance in him of certain necessary qualities to suit which the particular *sadhana* is chosen. The

main principle of the Tantric sadhana is to develop *sakti*, the power of understanding, in the individual. The development of *sakti* leads to *siddhi* or fulfilment. *Sakti* basically is pure consciousness just as *Atman* (Self) is; for *Atman* and *Sakti* are one and the same according to Tantra. The highest *siddhi* (attainment) in Tantra is the realization that the whole universe is pervaded by *Siva Sakti* (pure Consciousness-Power) and this is attainment of *moksha* or liberation. The mode of gaining *siddhi* is based on the fundamental principle, which the *Gandharva Tantra* asserts thus: "By meditating on anything as oneself, man becomes that."

Tantra is deeply rooted and built upon a very profound knowledge of the principles of the working of the human psyche. The mind is first fully prepared to receive and imbibe and then realise the truth. Such preparation is achieved by continually placing before the mind the idea that everything that exists is *Sakti*. Even matter is not considered as something wholly apart from spirit, but only as an aspect assumed by spirit. Thus it is realized that there is no place in the universe where *Mahamaya* (the great magic power) is not.

Emphasis on Wholeness: Tantra stands for a high principle of great value. The truth of the great philosophy is not made to depend either on tradition, antiquity, book or person. Personal experience and realization form the foundation and support for the philosophy. The person not only talks of wisdom but in fact becomes a wise person, knowing that wisdom is his. In other words, he is a *Siddha*, One who is Attained. No more is there *maya* (principle or power of error) for him. Duality is absent from his mind. He feels convinced, with the *Sammohana Tantra* that

"Without *Prakriti* (matter) *samsara* (the whirling world of relativistic changes) does not exist; without *Purusha* (spirit) true knowledge is not attained; therefore both should be worshipped, with *Mahakali* (the Great Female-principle) *Mahakala* (the Great Male-principle).

Every aspect of life is touched by the Tantra teachings which declare that *nirvana* (final extinction of ignorance and attainment of the great peace) has to be experienced even in *samsara* (the relative world) and that ultimately there is no distinction between *nirvana* and *samsara*. Thus the Tantra embraces the whole range of human activity and, by linking every phase of conduct with religious consciousness, endeavours to lift conduct and motive stage by stage and, in this way gradually and imperceptibly tries to increase mindfulness and awareness which, in turn, affects the whole of human life and purpose. Nothing is vehemently condemned, but an attempt to give an affinity to religious mindfulness for every action is made.

This attitude of an all-embracing wholeness in regard to religion and spiritual endeavour upsets many people who thus easily misunderstand the Tantric teachings. Worship is connected with every type of human activity, and all kinds of actions of human beings are also allowed as a form of worship. One thing that is insisted upon is sincerity of motive and purpose, continuous consciousness of the aim and goal of human life, the realization that "when the Mother seats herself in the heart, then

everything, be it stained or stainless, becomes but an ornament to Her Feet."

Variety of Means: The complete transformation of the human personality is not an easy task and therefore the Tantra attempts the training and perfecting of all aspects of man — body, mind, emotion and other higher, latent factors of the mind. It does not leave out of account the various influences and effects of the external environmental factors on the human mind, and it fully utilises this knowledge for its own purposes. In itself nothing is either good or bad, and Tantra uses all types of things as means to its own end, which is only the attainment of wisdom. Great care about the mental state which may be induced is insisted upon, depending upon the temperament and development of the individual disciple in the application of the different means.

For example, to conquer fear, one man may be asked to meditate in the middle of the night in a burning ground for the dead, while another may be required to meditate in a closed room, decorated with flowers and incense, on a benign deity with protecting qualities. The motive in both cases is the same, though the form and method varies in each. Some may be socially acceptable while others may be condemned from the standpoint of society. But as long as a particular method serves the spiritual end in view of a particular aspirant, the Tantra does not hesitate to use that method.

The superficial observer often confuses the issue of ends and means in Tantra. Certain means used are criticised without any thought ever being given to the aim for which the means are used, or without consideration for the individual for whom the prescription is meant. Even the adherents of the Tantra often fall an easy prey to this mistake of only bothering about the means and giving all-importance merely to the form, with the goal and aim often not even remembered. But that is no fault of the Tantra which never tires of affirming unequivocally what Tirumular has said in the Eighth Tantra :

"The seed of liberation is knowledge of the One;

The seed of adoration (*bhakti*) is intense, one-pointed worshipful devotion;

The seed of attainment (*siddhi*) is to attain the Siva-state;

The seed of supreme power (*sakti*) is peace indescribable."

Guru and Disciple: To prevent error and to indicate the path to the supreme goal, the Tantra insists on the essentiality of a Guru or an adept who, "like the philosopher's stone, transmuting permanently the baser metal into gold," induces the process of the rebirth, the complete changeover, in the disciple.

There is no secrecy in Tantra, but the Guru-disciple relationship being an intimate affair, others not affiliated have no access to the teaching, except when they become disciples. There is no closed ring, as many suspect. Anybody can read the books on Tantra, but the intricate things cannot be got from books alone; they have to be born out of the Guru-disciple relationship. This being in the nature of all spiritual knowledge, the charge of secrecy (as if secrecy is there for its own sake) does not carry any weight. Though the necessity for the Guru is one of the most important features of Tantra, yet it teaches that, in reality, there is only one Guru and that is truth itself. The Yogini Tantra says :

"It is the Lord Himself who is in and speaks with the voice of the earthly Guru."

The principles and practices of Tantra are broad-based and are meant to help all types of people, but at the same time Tantra also defines the qualifications of discipleship. When the suitable method is followed by a qualified disciple, then there is nothing but progress for the disciple. And for the various grades of disciples the necessary qualifications for each type of disciple are considered vitally essential. The Gandharva Tantra describes this as follows :

"The sadhaka (disciple) is self-controlled ; he is pure-minded, always engaged in doing good to others ; he is free from false notions of dualism ; he is attached to the speaking about, taking shelter with and ever living in the consciousness of the supreme Absolute (Brahman)."

The Sixth Tantra of the Tirumantiram briefly states :

"Good qualities, love of truth, compassion, discrimination, devotion to the Guru, intense yearning and attachment to wisdom, are present in the sincere, good disciple." (278-14)

Psychic Devices : For the development of personality and the spiritual growth of the qualified disciple, the Tantra applies certain characteristic psychic devices such as *mantra* (sound evocation), *yantra* (mechanism), *mudra* (gesture), *nyasa* (surrendering), *bhuta-suddhi* (purification of elements), *kundali yoga* (unification of psychic energy) and so on.

The central object of all these devices is to develop the capacity and fitness of the disciple for *bhavanagamya* or pure spiritual feeling for realization of truth. The Mahanirvana Tantra says :

"Brahman (the Absolute) is *sat-chit-ananda* (reality-intelligence-joy), eternal, changeless, partless, untouched by *maya* (principle of error or illusion), attributeless, formless, all-pervading, self-illuminating reality, which is beyond mind and to be approached through *bhavanagamya* (pure exalted spiritual feeling alone).

This purpose is achieved by subtly training the faculties of the psyche at all the different levels. Deliberately applied, intelligently inspired, purposeful imagination with accompanying feeling, is scientifically used in the Tantric teachings. Symbols have an important place in Tantra and are used to give concrete form to abstract truths and qualities. Symbols often give illumination to the mind where abstract conceptions leave it cold and unconvinced. The symbols are correctly chosen and used to give the necessary psychological conditioning. Even mythology to suit the particular culture of the individual is not completely neglected and, in addition, idea, sound, colour, forms, expression, physical attitude, emotion and imagination are all made use of to produce the desired mental state. It is to be emphasized that all these are only means and these means are for the attainment of the object—wisdom. Means must never be confused with the end. The Tantra employs many special features for the training of the aspirant and these may be usefully employed for the attainment of the goal.

Mantra : One of the important methods of Tantric discipline is

Mantra. There is nothing mystical about it. Mantra is a power in the form of idea, clothed with a sound symbol. Idea and sound symbol are inseparable. Mantra represents in sound-form an idea or a set of qualities denoted by the beautiful symbol of a deity or spiritual entity containing certain desirable attributes. Mantra sadhana is a method of setting in motion and of directing powerful thoughts by appropriate means. It is a process of continuous suggestion to the conscious and unconscious mind. Tirumular in the Fifth Tantra speaks thus of the principle of mantra:

“There are mantras, many thousands in number ;
The real mantra is not of this counted variety ;
The real mantra is the form of Siva ;
This is the nature of the real mantra.”

Mantra is a natural method of developing intensity of concentration. The mind becomes quietened and distractions are gradually conquered, making the mind fit to receive higher truths. With mantras are combined mudras, which are but appropriate bodily postures or gestures by which thoughts are intensified. It helps concentration.

So also in nyasa (giving up), the imaginative emotion of the disciple is utilized gradually to convince him in an almost reflex manner that a change and transformation of his entire being is taking place. When practised properly it really helps to fix the mind on the ideal and the pull of the body is very much lessened since its forces are slowly sublimated.

Deliberate Techniques: The process of bhuta-suddhi (elements-cleansing) is unique in Tantra. Instead of saying “Neti! neti!” (Not this, not this!—the Sanskrit *via negativa* of mysticism), here the component elements of body and mind are analysed and acknowledged and the practice undertaken of absorbing the gross components in the less gross, from earth, through water, air, fire and akash (ether-space), the heavy in the subtle, through a science of *tattvas* or principles of nature, until all are merged in the supreme Power of cosmic consciousness of which man is but a limited manifestation.

In the same manner, the meditation with the yantra (mechanical device) is also useful. The yantra is usually a pictorial diagram representing the principles of the philosophy in a graphic fashion. It is a device also for helping concentration and fixing the attention.

None of the above methods is peculiar to Tantra alone. The principles are of universal application in every religion which in some form or other makes use of them, knowingly or unknowingly. For example, the kneeling of a Christian in prayer is as much a mudra as is the *namaz* of the Muslim which contains elements of nyasa. The difference is that Tantra deliberately and consciously uses all these methods for attaining the goal, and yet holds that these are not obligatory either, for a person may meditate and gain *siddhi* or attainment, without any of these helpful adjuncts.

Kundalini Yoga: In addition to these methods, Tantra teaches kundalini yoga as the climax and the most important of disciplines. All the other methods are aids to the rising of the kundalini sakti. On this subject there is much confusion and misunderstanding, as a result of the misinterpretation of the very fertile symbolism employed in its exposition.

The name given for the cosmic energy in the human being is kundalini sakti. It is the vital life-force in the individual. Normally, this life-force is spent in the fulfilment of instinctual drives and in the gratification of the senses and the mind. But by the practice of the kundalini yoga, the latent power in man is said to rise, piercing through the six *chakras* (wheels or nerve plexuses) till it reaches the topmost portion of the head.

The *chakras* are given anatomical location more to fix the mind, though in fact they are really symbolical expressions, in terms of the living body, of certain psychic processes occurring in the individual. There is nothing gross or physical about them. It is a grievous misunderstanding to imagine these centres or *chakras* existing as physical entities in the body. No such centres can be identified by dissection of the human body.

The *chakras* are also described with a wealth of meaningful imagery and psychological symbolism with indications in the form of diagrams, lotuses, representative animals and appropriate deities having significant ornaments and weapons, etc. To try to grasp them literally is the way to confusion and mental breakdown. Though the descriptions are correct in every way, they are not meant to be taken in a gross mechanical sense, but as sincere attempts at giving figurative expression to certain subtle psycho-spiritual processes occurring in the disciple. The *chakras* or planes of consciousness represent a method of exposition of a rising awareness of vertical values, from the lower *muladhara* (the root-bearing) representing merely basic instinctual life, to the highest, *sahasrara* (the thousand-petalled), the seventh state where the spiritual consciousness of oneness or unity becomes manifest.

The Chakras: When the individual develops spiritual insight, when the sense of values has undergone a change in the vertical direction, with deep conviction becoming well-established, then the kundalini is said to be awakened and rising towards the *sahasrara* chakra. In other words, the rise of the kundalini sakti is the measure of spiritual development in the disciple. The life interest, the vital force in its day to-day application, slowly moves away from mere instinctual drives, passions, desires, hatreds, fears and ideational misconceptions and irrationality, towards the goal of enlightenment and peace. This uplifting change transforms the individual. A new birth has occurred in him. Psychic powers develop and manifest themselves. Kundalini is fully awake. At will, the sakti rises to the highest level and the individual is in *nitvanic* bliss, ever aware of *Sat-chit-ananda* (the Absolute as real, intelligence, happiness).

Even the body undergoes a change since the personality and attitude to life have also become transformed. Such changes are spoken of in hyperbolic style and exaggerated descriptions are given with colourful symbolism, as, for instance, the body becoming like gold, the overcoming of decay and death for such a yogi, etc. Kundalini is depicted as a snake with three coils. The snake stands for infinity, wisdom and life-activity. The three circles enumerate the great bonds, desire, hatred and ignorance, or perhaps the bondage of the three *gunas* (nature modes, the dulling, the forceful and the brightening). The kundalini snake of wisdom awakes, straightens itself out of ignorance, passion and ill-will, and arises in the

positive values of energy, compassion, knowledge, till it gets united in the thousand petalled lotus centre with the multi-values of the higher life of peace, bliss and awareness.

The six chakras are indicative of different levels of values in the aspiration and upward development of the individual.

On Sakti, Tirumular in the Fourth Tantra says :

"Those who know, they describe Sakti as bliss,
Those who know, state knowledge-form She is,
Those who know say all action (karma) is Her will,
Those who know, know That is She."

Of chakras, the same exponent says, in the Seventh Tantra :

Higher and lower, if without distinction known,
'You' and 'I' and attributes six,
And the Cosmic One, as universal outspread Energy,
All remain as the wish-fulfilling One alone!"

Psychic Powers : And in the course of this higher development, many psychic powers accrue. Though their manifestation may be a rare phenomenon, these powers are according to the laws of nature only. The aspirant intent on the aim and goal of wisdom, pays little or no attention to such phenomena. On the other hand, he feels and understands that the manifesting powers are a great hindrance and obstacle to his progress and so, the pursuit of them is deliberately and definitely abandoned.

But many who do not understand the goal of Tantra as ultimate wisdom, get themselves entangled in the development of these occult powers. They go to the extent of mixing up the means for the end, their aim being the attainment of some petty worldly advantage through Tantric discipline. The reason for this misunderstanding is due to the lack of fitness of the individual. Moreover the Tantra text, like all ancient religious literature, contains much other interesting information on medicine, alchemy, psychology and a variety of other subjects also. Occultism is one such topic dealt with, and many people, drawn by the lure of power, miss the essential teaching of Tantra, spending their lives in the pursuit of these lower values.

Sex and Tantra : The same reasons are also responsible for people confusing Tantra with certain limited practices only. Popular attention is generally focussed on some of the observances of a small sect known as Vamacharins, and even they, with a number of qualifying conditions, and for a particular type of discipline only, prescribe worship with *pancha tatvas* (five principles) represented by meat, fish, food, wine and the sex act. Misunderstanding people, not caring to know the underlying principle, condemn Tantra as being immoral and encouraging sexuality. They forget that the Tantric methods of the Dakshinachara are free from these practices and that the greater number of adherents belong to the Dakshinachara.

Even in Vamachara ritual, really, there is only the proper application of the principles of yoga to the sexual function in the so-called *maithuna karma* which can be performed also with simple offerings of flowers or meditation on the feet of the Mother, and it is quite in the spirit of the Tantra which insists on transforming every

aspect and action of the individual life. Sex-life, instead of being merely an animal function or a biological necessity, becomes thus an act of worship, a *yajna* or sacrifice. In the same way, wine may be represented by simple coconut water or merely by the bliss of knowledge and faith. The great mistake arises as a result of taking what is merely permissive as obligatory. In addition symbols and figures of speech are confused with literal accuracy and definitive reality. Hence the truth and direction of the Tantra are missed. Below, two stanzas illustrating symbolic language as well as the underlying principle in Maithuna Karma in Dakshinachara are given. Tirumular in the third Tantra has this:

“The Beauteous Maiden who is all Quality —

United with Her, in bliss, if one is,

As result, the wealth of subtle wisdom

Accrues as his; he realizes himself.” (136-18)

Another instance, in the Fourth Tantra, is as follows:

“When about to sleep, Manomani (Sophia) came.

With her bangled arms round my neck entwined,

Smiling sweetly, my mouth she kissed,

Did the Tantra, saying, won’t you sleep, Beloved!” (182-33)

The sexual symbolism employed in the above verses, depict very powerfully and impressively, the dawn of spiritual realization. The awakening consciousness of oneness, the attainment of wisdom.

And thus, to properly appreciate, fully understand, and correctly utilise Tantric knowledge, the earnest student has to pierce through the veil of symbols, the art of figures of speech, and the cloud of mythology; he has also to cut out the covering layers of culture, and the crust of customs of the historical context to get at the core, the centre of the Tantric teachings, which is essentially a method of gaining Knowledge and winning experience of Reality.

Briefly, Tantra belongs to the Science of the Absolute, a Science of disciplines and processes for the attainment of wisdom. It is an ancient way, a rational path, avoiding austerities and mortifications, and it treats reality as one whole. Its main and only goal is wisdom and its siddhi or attainment, in the words of Tirumular in the Fifth Tantra being

“Not one, two, not either, but taking stand in

One, avoiding religious creeds,

Fixed, firm-fixed and steady in gaining through love

and devotion the grace of *Parapraya*

And ultimately become one as Siva is the real attainment”

(234-II)

[END]

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