

# A HYMN FROM THIRUVACHAKAM ANALYSED.

The author of Thiruvachakam, while he familiarizes himself with the sweetness and music and easy flow of the words by his daily recitation of the Hymns, will soon begin to notice in rather big and pretty type, just under the title of the hymn, certain phrases which for long seemed to us to have no sort of bearing on it. Teachers could either not be found to explain the meaning of these words, or if found rarely, they could not be induced to impart what they consider a holy secret. But with the study of the Siddhanta Philosophy, especially of that One Supreme book *Sivagnanabotham*, the mists slowly begin to get dispelled, and we fancy we begin to see a meaning and a connection. Following the lead of these words, which are called technically “திருவுள்ளக்கிடை,” “The hidden meaning,” the credit of adding which is assigned by tradition generally to Saint Umapathi Sivacharya, we have tried to analyze the hymns in several cases with some success. But we cannot claim to this, either absolute correctness or authority, and ours is merely an effort, and it is sincerely hoped that others who are better advanced and able to see the inner meaning will give the benefit of their knowledge to the public.

The திருவுள்ளக்கிடை prefixed to the hymn on ‘The House of God,’ so beautifully translated by Mr. P. A., and published in these pages is ‘அநுபோக இலக்கணம்,’ the ‘Lakshana of Highest experience,’ ‘Anubhuti,’ and as it will be folly to assume any such knowledge or experience, on our part, we leave this alone; but our purpose in mentioning it is solely to draw particular attention to the fact, how appropriate is the title to this foremost of Manickavachaka’s hymns. The purport of ‘Pilgrims progress,’ ‘போற்றித்திருவகவல்’ is given as ‘சகத்தின் உற்பத்தி,’ ‘Starting of the world’s creation,’ which meaning is more brought out by Mr. P. A. in his English Title, ‘Pilgrims Progress,’ than in the more mysterious Tamil title. The Morning Hymn, ‘திருப்பள்ளியெழுச்சி’ deals with ‘திரோதன சக்தி,’ the vanishing night, the night which gave us rest and recouped our strength, and the call is to the awakening soul to use his renewed energies aright, in the path of salvation, and thus realize the high purpose for which we are allowed to be born in this earth, by the extreme Grace of the Supreme Siva, “இந்தப்பூமி, சிவனுய்யக் கொள்கின்றவாறென்று,” We propose however to devote this paper more fully for an analysis of the Hymn entitled, திருப்பூவல்லி. The beautiful Lily flower. As in most of his other hymns, where the Saint throws his own words into the month of babes, young lads and lasses, who on play intent, proceed to gather flowers, roam about gardens to hear the (குயில்) Kuyil sing, and to send love messages through parrots and swans, to put up swings on trees, to pick limes for அம்மாளை, and form themselves in groups for தூம்பி, in this, one calls to his playmates to cull flowers for laying them at the Feet of the Lord. And this, as an action commended to the *Kiryavan*, (கிரியாவான்) the planting of flowers, and rearing them and gathering and making garlands for the service of the Most High,

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is in itself the most innocent, and pious and holy occupation a devout soul can aspire for, fully engaging his physical and emotional and intellectual faculties. But as everything on this earth, can be used or abused, so, do we not know, how ‘this thing of beauty and joy for ever,’ is prostituted to serve man’s grosser passions and immoral purposes. Several millions worth of the choicest flowers are sold in the market of London alone; what for? Not all for laying at the feet of God, but on the bosom of Man. Man is the divinity of the present age, and not God. He is indeed the Divinity proclaimed alike by the philosopher and the poet, and the layman, and there are no warring sects and creeds among such fraternity. A noble brotherhood indeed! To ignore, and dethrone God, and elevate Man to this Highest Pedestal, is the noble aspiration of the Present generation. With them, the notion of God is a mere myth, a figment of the Degenerate Man, or a hoax and lie invented by sharpers for their own benefit. And the sooner, Man releases himself from this bond, the sooner will he release himself from all sorrow and misery and death! We would wish them God speed, in their work, but as they have no God, we will leave them to achieve their hearts’ desire, as best as they can. But their ways are clearly not ours; though our object be the same, a thoroughly loving, and eternally happy and united and perfected brotherhood, in this life and in the life to come. Returning from this digression, we proceed to lay here the purport of this piece which is given as ‘Maya Vijia Ninguthal,’ ‘மாயாவிசய நீங்குதல்,’ ‘Release from the conquest of Maya.’ Why of all flowers, the lily should here be taken as a symbol, when there are more beautiful and more fragrant flowers, should occupy our attention first. In the lily and the lotus (they are of the same species), the Buddhist found his highest symbol, ‘Om Mami Padma Hum,’ as typical of this world’s expansion, and dissolution, ‘quest and conquest.’\* [\* See beautiful paper entitled ‘quest and conquest,’ in the January number of ‘Universal Brotherhood’ the organ of the American T. S. bringing out the meaning of the symbol புவல்லி.] But this is an older Hindu symbol also. As Saint Manickavachaka has chosen the words denoting the humbler species, instead of Padma, with a set purpose. The word புவல்லி can be split up into பூ+அல்+இ, which mean respectively otherwise as (பூமி=world) + (இருள்=darkness) + (the negative of these), and the whole phrase gives as such, the esoteric meaning ‘Release from the dark world of Maya’ The chorus in each verse ‘புவல்லிக்கொய்யாமோ,’ ‘Pluck away the dark world’ brings out the sense more particularly also. And as we have elsewhere pointed out, that this darkness can only vanish, when the Light dawns on the horizon, the hymn begins with “இணையார் திருவடி எந்தலைமேல் வைத்தலும் துணையான சுற்றங்கள் அத்தனையும் துறந்தொழிந்தோம்.” “by the placing of the gracious Lotus Feet on my head, my bonds are released.” The nature of this bond, Pasa Maya is more fully defined in that, it consists in the idea of ‘Me and mine,’ the idea of self and selfishness, the root of all evil. The next verse states a further inducement for the worship of the Most Supreme, by means of a comparison. God lives in the honeycomb buried in the heart of the Marutha tree, referring to the shrine of திருவிடைமருதூர் (Thiruvidadaimaruthur), and the suggestion is that instead of our vain quest after the little honey contained in each flower, பூ†

[† Compare also the verse 3 in திருகோத்தும்பி.

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தினைத்தனை யுள்ளதோர் பூவினிற் றேனுண்ணாதே  
நினைத்தோறும் காண்டொறும் பேசுந்தொறும் மெப்போதும்  
மனைத்தெலும் புண்ணெக வானந்தத் தேன்சாரியும் குனிப்புடையான்.

(world) sensual and transitory enjoyments without ever quenching our thirst, if we go to the honeycomb itself, we will drink of the Divine Joy to our hearts content. To the questions, is not man himself great, why should he give up himself and others who are nearest and dearest to his heart, his own mother, his own father &c, the next verse answers by saying, that we are nothing but the dust of the earth in His Presence, ‘much inferior to the much despised dog,’ and as such though, we deserve to be spurned, the Lord who, in His Love and Grace to us, is much superior to our own mother, who has her own favourite among her children, is extremely solicitous and ever intent\* on our salvation.

[\* Thayumanavar:

“இமையளவுமுபகாரமல்லால் வேறொன்  
றியக்காநிற்க்குணக்கடலா யிருந்தவொன்றே.”

Young:

Though man sits still and takes his case,  
God is at work on man,  
No means, no moment unemployed,  
To bless him if he can.]

And unlike our own fond mother who is so weak that she cannot minister to our smallest ills, our Lord is able to heal us from our hardest ill of birth and death. The next verse gives instances of Daksha the first son born, and Sun and other gods, who asserting their Egoism in opposition to the Will of the Supreme were immediately and sharply overtaken by misery and sorrow and disgrace. The next verse says, ‘search and you will find Him in yourself. Cry for him, with all your heart and soul, and as the mother who answers the cry of her babe, He will run to your help.’ The next verse contains instances, where to such cry for help, he rendered immediate help. ‘This *One*, who manifested himself as the *Three* has given you a body and other organs (out of Maya) only as a means of your salvation. So use this for their best. With your head, bow down to Him. With your mouth praise his Victorious Foot. Join the society of His Bhaktas, leaning by example and by precept,’ is the import of the 7<sup>th</sup> verse. ‘Love Him and His devotees and your Karma will sure be destroyed’ says the next verse. 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> verses are devoted to show the way by which God manifests His Grace, and the Hymn closes with one or two instances of His Manifestation, and Grace which are so difficult for man, and yet easy enough for Him, namely, His swallowing the fearful poison, and His burning the *Thripura*.

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