

THE DIVINE LIFE OF RAMALINGA AND HIS MESSAGE

THE DIVINE CONCEPTION OF RAMALINGA

He who appears

as the source and origin of all,

as the light that gave the knowledge of the beginning and end of all

He who appears

As my love, my light, my guide and my blissful experience,

As the ultimate end of the path of Sudha sanmarga I have adopted,

As the embodiment of justice,

As the one who reigns supreme beyond all stages

As the one who ordains all that happen

As one who just not teaches but enlightens

Such a vast power that pervades all over

Such a brilliant power that radiates the light of knowledge

Such a power that gave me the knowledge of truth

I have realised such a power within me

Those were the rejuvenating words which Sinnamai heard distinctly. They sounded music to the ears. They were no mere words. They were powerful Mantras that would remove fears, instil confidence, give protection and shower Grace. She knew its value and rushed to the main door, leaving her household chores

behind. What she saw outside the door amazed her. A saint was standing, clad in his characteristic saffron robes, his face serene and sublime, body smeared with white ashes of “Vibhuti” and tongue chanting the Sadakshara Mantra of Muruga. His delightful face radiated a light of divine spirit. There was something unique in his eyes.

Sinnamai greeted him and welcomed him. She offered to the wholly man a seat and paid obeisance to the distinguished visitor. He was treated courteously and fed with a good meal.

Having been pleased immensely with the courteous treatment given to him, at the time of His departure, the saint blessed Sinnamai with some sacred ash “Vibhuti” and uttered these graceful words:

“I see the divine presence of Lord Muruga here. You will be blessed with a son who will rise up to the great height of glory, who will deliver the art of deathlessness which will be a boon to the entire world”.

Sinnamai was overwhelmed with joy and before she could gain composure, the saint had disappeared. Ramayya Pillai, her husband, turned up later and felt equally happy hearing the incident.

Ramayya Pillai and Sinnammai belonged to an average family in Marudhur, near Chidambaram in South Arcot District, Tamil Nadu, India. Ramayya Pillai was a teacher in a local school and an ardent devotee of Lord Shiva, the Almighty God. They were blessed with two sons, Sabapathi, Parasuraman and two daughters, Sundarammal and Unnamali.

Though it has been acknowledged by all as a remarkable event which need to be understood only from a higher plane.

The very moment the lady, Sinnamai, has heard the words of the saint that she would bring forth a child, she conceived.

This form of creation is termed as "*Sambupaksha Shrishti*". The way to conceive a child has been classified into five division:

Of these, the world is only aware of this first two sections:

The most common way of conceiving a child happen through the combination of the male and female substances which create the condition for the creation of an embryo, which gradually grows into a child.

The second way to conceive a child, which is a very rare phenomenon in the world, the embryo comes into existence at the very moment the utterance comes from the mouth of a holy man.

RAMALINGA'S BIRTH

Days passed in and at the end of the gestation period, Sinnammai gave birth to a male child, the fifth child of the family, on the fifth day of October 1823. As the baby started crying, the tears of labour pain turned into tears of joy. The mother was unaware that the baby she just delivered was destined to change the world and was to be known as Arut Prakasa Vallalar, the sage of inexhaustible grace. They named the baby as Ramalingam. Even in the stage of a tender child, taking the first few steps, Ramalingam showed signs of wisdom and steadiness.

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

Ramalinga tells in “Peru Vinappam” that he was conscious of his birth not merely at the time of birth but even during all the processes that culminated in fertilisation, during which the emanation of his soul took active part in the formation of the sperm-cell of his formal father and the egg-cell of his formal mother with the divine inner light of protection for keeping up the divine qualities of his soul and a good physique.

RAMALINGA’S VISION AND REALISATION OF NATARAJA’S TRUTH

In India, as it is the tradition to take a new-born child to the temple and offers prayers before the deity to bequeath the child with His blessings, once Ramalinga was five months old, the parents took him to Chidambaram temple to offer their grateful prayers.

After having lit the camphor and offered it to the Lord at the Sanctum Sanctorum, a vision soon appeared before Ramalinga, the child laughed loudly and gazed for a few seconds before the deity of Nataraja during the formalities of worship, in front of the adjacent sanctorum called “*Chidambaram bara Rahasyam*” signifying according to popular notion the vacant sunya or space, the child sensed infinity, which is expressed by Ramalinga himself in one of his songs “*Arulvillakkaamaalai-Bk.11-36-44*”

People realised and felt by the atmosphere generated saturated with the presence of divinity, that the child has laughed due to its ecstasy.

His laugh was the expression of Ramalinga’s vision and realisation of Nataraja, the dancing Shiva, as the effulgence of the inner Light of Grace “*Arul Jyothi*” as soon as the outer light came to his visibility.

This divinely and most sublime experience has been expressed in some of His poems:

“No sooner the light was perceived, happiness prevailed in me”.

“The sweet nectar was tasted by me as soon as the Great Grand Light “Arutperunjyothi” became visible”.

RAMALING’S CHILDHOOD

From the experience they had in the temple of Chidambaram, all the family members were jubilant as they felt they had a God’s gift. Ramalingam turned out to be a prodigious child, just as the saint had predicted. But Ramayya Pillai, Ramalinga’s Father, could not live longer, to see the blooming of his son into a divine personality. Soon, the responsibility of the family felt on the shoulder of Sabapathi, the elder son of the family. The family then moved over to Madras. Being a teacher himself, Sabapathi, wanted to give the best education to Ramalingam but Ramalingam showed no inclination for studies. He preferred to spend his time in the precincts of Kanda Swamy temple, composing songs and worshipping Muruga.

Sabapathi then sent him to a learned Pundit named Sabapathi Mudaliar of Kancheepuram. He thought that Ramalinga would be receptive to an erudite scholar like Sabapathi Mudaliar. Having come to know the brilliant qualities of the child, Sabapathi Mudaliar said that there was nothing that he could teach to a person like Ramalinga who had the capacity to teach the whole world. Wishing him well, Mudaliar sent him back.

But Sabapathi was not aware of Ramalinga’s extraordinary qualities. He thought that Ramalinga was squandering his time. He instructed his wife not to give Ramalinga food. Sensing his

resentment, Ramalinga avoided meeting Sabapathi. Invariably, he used to sit in the precincts of the temple and return home at his own will. Ramalinga felt that Kandha Kottam Murugan was beckoning him. Ramalinga derived immense inspiration and strength from the temple. Looking at the shrine of Muruga at Kandha Kottam, Ramalinga felt intense and most profound feelings from where all his devotion came out in the form of *"Deiva Mani Malai"*.

"Deiva Mani Malai" laid out criteria for good and noble life for all. He said that he needed no relation with those who speak something and does the opposite. He prayed for being blessed with noble qualities. He prayed for being endowed with the power of exercising mind-control. He prayed not only for wisdom and knowledge but also for Lord's Grace. What an ideal prayer! It seems that only one who received the grace of God could compose such eloquent and uplifting prayers.

It was Papathi who used to look for him, gave him food and attended to his needs like a mother does. One day, Sabapathi performed the *"Sradha Thidhi"*, the ceremony to feed the departed souls and invited few Brahmins for the ritual and for a feast. Ramalinga who was away, came along after the event was over. Pappathi received him through the back door and served him food. She told Ramalinga:

"Being a member of the family, you should have been in the forefront at the time of ceremony. Why do you have to sneak in later and take the cold left-overs?"

On another occasion, after returning home, Ramalinga was taking the food served from Papathi, when he casually lifted his head, he saw tears swelling in her eyes. So far, he had not seen

tears in the eyes of anyone, except in Papathi, who was serving him like a mother. Then, ramalinga asked her why she was crying. Papathi response was:

“How long would you avoid your brother and come home late. If your brother had rebuked you, it was only out of his concern for you. He is interested in your welfare. You are causing anxiety and tension to all by your “erratic ways”. You should not wander like this and adopt the normally accepted way of life”.

Papathi poured out her deep concerns and emotions. Ramalinga who saw reason in her contention, responded that he did not wish to be the cause of tension to others and that he could confine himself in the house if that was their wish. He only requested for an exclusive room for himself, a lamp and a mirror on the table. From that moment, Ramalinga confined himself in the room. Sabapathi too was satisfied with the new arrangement.

Sitting in the room, Ramalinga used to study scriptures like Thiruvachakam, Thevaram and works related to Saiva Sidhantam. He studied Periyapuram containing the life of the 63 saints who hailed the Glory of Lord Siva. The doctrine of Saiva sidhantam had made a profound influence on him. He felt it was Lord Siva who was conducting and guiding him.

Sabapathi, though appeared to be rude, was very loving and affectionate towards Ramalinga. Being a teacher himself, he was just anxious that Ramalinga should not miss out his studies. Obviously, he was not aware of Ramalinga’s divine qualities and masterly knowledge. He was unaware that Ramalinga who was an institution by himself, could impart education without having to receive it from outside of himself.

RAMALINGA’S FIRST DIVINE DISCOURSE

Soon, Sabapathi too realized the greatness of Ramalinga.

It was at the time in which Sabapathi was scheduled to perform a religious discourse at Madras, but for some reasons he was unable to do so. He deputed Ramalinga to convey the message of his inability to perform it. As the authorities could not make alternative arrangements, they insisted Ramalinga himself to perform the role of his brother. A reluctant Ramalinga took the stage. Then his brilliance came to the light and his exposition of Shaiva Sidhanta kept the audience spell bound. No ordinary person could perform a divine discourse as effortlessly and magnificently as Ramalinga, one from the audience remarked. Sabapathi felt ashamed that he had not been able to see the greatness of his own brother before, residing under the same roof.

Ramalinga was used to spent most of his time in his room. Sitting before a mirror, he used to mediate and compose poems. As he meditated, his individual self disappeared and the Lord he had realized within himself had revealed himself in the reflection on the mirror. Usually, devotees sought God outside, in the idol of a temple or a symbolic picture and then realize His presence within. Here, in sharp contrast, Vallalar was seeking the outside reflection of the God who was already being experienced within, being already illuminated within himself.

he composed songs invoking the Grace of Muruga, like Kandar Sarana Pathu, Shanmugar Kalaipattu and Deiva Mani Malai etc.

Visiting the Kanda Kottam Muruga temple became the daily routine of Ramalinga. Looking at the shrine of Muruga at Kanda Kottam, Ramalinga felt intensely emotional and poured out his devotion in the form of 'Deiva Mani Malai'.

“You are the embodiment of love, who has no equal, who is enlightened, who gives happiness to all. When would the rose petals of your Lotus Feet extend their gentle grace to my heart? When would you come, mounted on your beautiful transport of peacock to give me the treasure of your grace?”

So went the lines of Deiva Mani Malai which he composed at the age of nine.

His divinity came to be recognised by the devotees in the early age of eleven years when he began to visit the Siva shrine at Tiruvottiyur, a suburb of Madras, where he sang impromptu devotional hymns and songs in praise of the One Divine, the impersonal Person of formless-form, in the forms of Shiva and the goddess Uma. Even in these early songs we meet and feel with his intense and fiery aspiration for the Grace-world of truth-Knowledge “Arul Veli” and for deathlessness of the body. These songs also touch on his inspiration for spiritual life, purification, consecration, devotion, surrender, compassion and reverence for all human beings and creatures and for the Oneness for the Divine. These poems of this period form three volumes of his Thiruarutpa.

Between the age of 15 and 30 years many disciples came to him seeking illumination. Notable came to see him. Among them was Veelaayuda Muladaliaar, a scholar in Tamil, Sanskrit and English. During this period the swami wrote commentaries and interpretations on some of the rare Tamil works like “Olivil Odukkam” which brought out the integrality of the Divine through a synthesis of both Vedanta and Siddhanta in an age thickly beset with the sectarian philosophical schools of Advaita, Visishtadvaita and dvaita.

RAMALINGA'S MARRIAGE

It was the time, as it is the Tradition in India, Ramalinga married much against his will but in deference to the advice of a saintly soul and the insistence of his immediate relatives, but he remained wholly detached to the married life since the very beginning of it and sought to turn his newly wedded wife towards spiritual life.

RAMALINGA'S PILGRIMAGE TO CHIDAMBARAM

Later, Ramalinga undertook pilgrimage to Chidambaram along with some of his disciples and visited shrines on the way at Conjeevaram, Pondicherry, Cuddalor etc... After a tour of the south from Chennai, he settled in Chidambaram for some time and thereafter in karunguli near Chidambaram since 1858 for 9 years. Here he had the opportunity to worship, often with songs Nataraja of "*Cit Sabha*", the holy of holies in the Chidambaram temple, his favourite deity answering and satisfying at once his inner aspiration for the Grace-Light of Truth-knowledge or Truth-Consciousness and the outer needs, modes and forms of worship. Ramalinga glorifies the Lord of Dance as the Supreme Divine making the world -founding dance, that is, the dance of Universal Vibration, the flickering of the Omnipresent Space of Universal Light of Supreme Truth-Consciousness; Lord Nataraja being a metaphorical representation of the Light of Supreme Grace Light within the light.

Many miraculous events are attributed to Ramalinga during the time he was in Karungkuli. He had mastery over wind, water and rains, fire etc..., and over living beings and creatures like serpents, ghosts and spirits of this world and also on vital beings of the other worlds.

RAMALINGA AT KARUNGKULI

Here, at Karungkuli, he wrote much of his later works except the six volumes of Arupa. One day when he was writing his poems, seated near a clay pot oil lamp at Karungkuli house, at midnight, It happened that Ramalinga poured water, in the oil lamp clay pot water believing it was oil. By the Divine Grace the oil-lamp kept on burning. Sometimes, it happened that Ramalinga has transmuted baser metal into gold and threw it away not to run after such things. He cured many diseases like leprosy, cancer, etc..., by giving them sacred ashes known as "*Vibhuti*".

Vallalar despite the fact he was not against performing miracles, as they form the powers and plays of the Divine. However, he was not after miracle-mongering. His eventful life was interspersed with many divine miracles of various kinds. He promised in the last part of his life that the Divine Himself was soon to manifest on the earth to rule and play Siddhis of Grace, such as resurrection of the dead and transforming the aged into youths. Thus, Vallalar progressively grew into the Divine Nature, as he went on writing inspired poems and doing miracles since his early life. His miracles are continuing even now.

In 1867, Ramalinga settled at Vadalur, two miles away from Karungkuli, and about 40 miles from Pondicherry. It is there that he founded a home for feeding the poor "*Dharamsalai*", a school for spiritual learning and literature "*Samarasa Veda Pata Salai*" and the shrine of "*Satya Gyana Sabhai*", The hall of wisdom.

RAMALINGA'S SECLUSION AT METTUKUPPAM

In 1972, Ramalinga withdrew himself in seclusion for about six months at Mettukuppam, three miles away from Vadalur and in

the concentrated state of realisation of the World of Truth-Consciousness and the Beyond, he wrote his master-piece of "*Joti Agaval*". this poem describes the self-determination of the Vaste Grace Light, the poises of the World of Truth-Knowledge, planes of ascent, involution and evolution, golden plane of the earth, purifying and transforming powers of the Light, transformation of his body, knowledge and science of deathlessness of body, general nature and characteristics of the World Truth-Knowledge, the worlds of "*Satchitananda*" , The bliss Truth-Consciousness and beyond etc.

Ramalinga continued to live at Mettukupam and by his divine inspiration poured out in verses and lyrics which form the last of the sixth volume of his writings. The disciples noted down his teachings in oral discourses and copied down his poems. He managed and guided his Institutions at Vadalur from his cottage-house at Mettukuppam village called "*Siddhi Vaalega Maaligai*", the house of fulfilment and perfection. He considered In January 1872 the opening ceremony of the shrine of "*Satya Jnana Sabhai*" at Vadalur in abstentia, by sending a lamp lit and blessed by him to be installed there for worship. He became so much one with the Divine Grace Shakti that one day, as directed by the Divine, He informed the disciples by a short notice and had all arrangements of decoration and formalities made for his marriage with the Divine Grace Shakti Herself. He married Her symbolically within an hour of the divine direction. From that unique and cosmic moment, Ramalinga expressed having invincible power in him for performing all the five -fold universal function: 1. Creation, 2. Maintenance, 3. destruction for purification, 3. control and renewal, 4. involution, and 5. Evolution and also all the siddhis or miraculous deeds of divine perfection.

In the last part of his life beginning from 1871 he began to preach incessantly on the deathlessness of the human body as an essential part of the realisation of the Divine. He affirmed deathlessness of his own body and that he got triple indestructible of the physical, subtle and causal (*i.e., Suddha deha, Prana deha and Jnana deha*). He began to promise about the coming of the Supreme Divine as God of the Vast Grace-Light in the near future to rule on the earth directly; and that all religions god would go away and lose their influence; and end the sectarian religious and philosophical schools of discipline will fall away and be replaced by the “*Samarasa Suddha Sanmarga Satya Sangam*”, That is the fellowship for the integral and harmonising path of purity, truth, right and harmony. He made the forecast that the rule of Kali Purusha of Kali Yuga will end by 1899 and the rule of Jnana Siddha of the new era will begin.

ON RAMALINGA VALLALAR

Ramalinga, popularly known as vallalar, the Great Munificent, may be regarded as the foremost of the saints and sages of our time, considering the heights, widths, depths and intimacies of his integral realisation of the Divine in all the “inmost, inner, outer and the outmost parts of his being. Vallalar had a magnetic personality. A fascinating face, strangely haunting, eyes beaming with compassion and grace. Uran Adigal wrote in Tamil, “*To those who have not been blessed to see Vallalar, it will be interesting to say, such was Vallalar, such his colour, such his presence*”.

It is said, that the blessed saint had a body which transcended photography. His human body could not be caught on the film by photographs. Ramalinga Vallalar did cast no shadow.

In personal appearance, Ramalinga was a moderately tall, spare man – so spare indeed as to virtually appear a skeleton – yet a strong man, erect in stature, and walking very rapidly; with a face of clear golden complexion, a straight thin nose, very large fiery eyes with a look of constant sorrow on his face. Towards the end he let his hair grow long; and what was rather unusual with yogis, he wore shoes. His garments consisted only of two pieces of white cloth. His habits were excessively abstemious. He was known to have hardly ever taken any rest. He was a strict vegetarian, he ate only once every two or three days, and was satisfied with a few mouthfuls of rice. But when fasting for a period of two or three months at a time, he literally ate nothing, living merely on hot water with a little raw sugar cane dissolved in it.

He was a yogi who put before the people deathlessness of body as an essential part of the realisation of the One blissful Divine, a saint whose very soul-stuff was made of infinite love and compassion, a sage of Truth-Consciousness who possessed the Divine Knowledge and the science of deathlessness of body and attained its deathless transformation along with the self-creative power of creating all substances of whatever kind including bodily substance. He was a born Tamil-poet of divine inspiration who could distinguish the various level of inspiration and who received in silence the

“Word of Truth and Grace from the Chit-shakti of Grace in the transcendence of Chit-Sabha, the transcendent and universal world of Truth-Consciousness”.

Besides, he was a critic, writer and commentator and had knowledge in occultism, alchemy, astrology and medicine, particularly in the nutritional and medical values of herbs and

leaves. He was a musician too, with a keen musical taste for lyrical songs and he composed lyrics to express, in an easier and popular style, his highest and sublime relations with the Divine.

Of the six volumes of "*Thiruarutpa*", the poems of divine inspiration, the last volume is unparalleled in spiritual history as it gives expression to the realisation of the vast world of Truth-Knowledge and the Beyond and touches on subjects like transformation and deathlessness body. If any sort of comparison has to be made at all or even for its own proper understanding, it can be done only with reference to the proper understanding and with reference to the vast and infinitely detailed spiritual and yoga literature.

Ramalinga was the one who affirmed openly and clearly in an unmistakable language the deathlessness of his body which he attained by the power of what he called "*Arut Perum Jyoti*", the Vast Supreme Grace Light of the Divine which he identified as the Truth-Light of Knowledge, "*Satya Jnana Joti*".

RAMALINGA'S PHILOSOPHY

Vallalar gradually started realizing God as the supreme power manifesting throughout the universe. Vallalar was immensely moved by the divine power of the Lord of Chidambaram. Here, Lord Shiva appeared both in form and without form. One can experience that which has a form by seeing it and feeling it. One can visualise that which has no form by imagining it or contemplating it. Vallalar experienced both the characteristics of form and formlessness in Jyothi (Light), the divine light. It has a form because one can experience it and see it. It is also without form because one cannot feel it and it is likely to be extinguished.

Vallalar believed that the Eternal Truth remains unrevealed and it is the Jyothi, the Vast Grace of Light, that causes the revelation of truth. A subject is able to perceive an object only when the reflection of the light falls on the object. If a precious stone meant for public display is kept in a dark corner it never gets noticed. It needs the focus of a light to bring out its full value in sparkling brilliance.

The power of Jyothi is highlighted in all religions. It forms the foundation of all thoughts, all activities and systems. Jyothi is the eternal divine power that first originated in the universe. The cause of all actions, whether physical or chemical, is energy or heat. The source and origin of energy or heat is Jyothi. The Jyothi is invisible and merges with the energy. It is present everywhere; in sun, moon, light and fire. The universe operates within its own inherent energy. There is self-sustaining energy in every atom or human cell. It is this energy that causes all movements and all activities. Jyothi gives the sustaining-power and life to all, and there is Jyothi in every soul (Athma Jyothi). Rig Veda (the main vedic text), says the significance of Jyothi is beyond human comprehension. Brihadaranyaka Upanishad says:

*"Oh Lord, lead me from unreal to the real,
from darkness to the light,
from death to immortality,
May there be peace, peace and perfect peace."*

As Jyothi gets manifested in different forms throughout the universe and within every human soul as Divine Power, Vallalar advocated the Jyothi form of worship. He said that the Supreme Lord had revealed to him the powerful Mantra of Divine Light.

“Arut Perum Jyothi – Arut Perun Jyothi

The Vast Supreme Grace Light – The Vast Supreme Grace Light

Thanip Perum Karunai, Arut Perun Jyothi

Supreme compassion, The Vast grace of Supreme light.”

Another important aspect of Vallalar’s philosophy is Jeeva Karunya Ozhukkam, which means having a compassionate outlook towards all lives. It refers to one’s attitude towards all fellow beings and towards all other creatures like animals, birds etc. Vallalar could not bear to see the agony of people suffering from hunger. He stressed the quality of compassion for all. The privileged ones should help the less privileged and service to humanity is equal to service to God.

God created all living beings, within which Man has been endowed with intelligence. He was supposed to respect and take care of nature as the whole, including the mineral, vegetal and animal kingdom. Unfortunately, he turned out to be the biggest threat for their survival. Man has silenced the feeble voice of his consciousness coming from his heart, surrendered to the dictates of his mind and fulfilled the nefarious demands of his body. According to Vallalar, he or she only is entitled to receive God’s grace who lives in harmony with nature and shows compassion towards God’s creations. He who takes non vegetarian food forfeits his privilege to seek entry into the temple of God.

Vallalar wanted the whole humanity to integrate into one single objective, the divine unity of souls, based on supreme compassion. The path of Sanmarga symbolizes truth, love and discipline which leads to the highest stage of divinity and immortality. Vallalar underlined certain principles which

formed the foundation of Samarasa Sudha Sanmargam, the path of truth and purity.

SUDDHA SANMARGA

God is one. He is Arut Perum Jyothi, the Vast Supreme Grace Light.

All are children of one single God and there is no caste, religious or regional differences.

One should recognize the divinity in every soul, respect it and live in peace and prosperity, in a spirit of love and unity.

Compassion towards all fellow beings and compassion towards all living beings, should form the basis of all actions.

To reach God, tread the path of simplicity and humility and not through rituals or extravagant way of worship.

Vallalar established Samarasa Sudha Sanmarga Sabhai as the medium to translate his ideals into practice. The term Samarasa means equanimity, the concept that encompasses all religious thoughts and respects all faiths and religions. The term 'Sudham' implies purity and sublimity. Sanmargam means the right and truthful way. In short, it is a philosophy that transcends all existing spiritual thoughts and shows the perfect way of truth. It emphasizes the importance of discipline which Vallalar classified as discipline of senses, the disciplines of the mind related to the mental faculties, Attitude towards fellow human beings and acquiring the knowledge of the soul. Vallalar also stressed the importance of charity. He considered food offering "Annadhana" as the most sacred duty of all. Vallalar dreamt of the day when hunger and poverty would completely be eliminated. He established Dharma Salai as a humble effort

towards this direction. The Salai continues to render its inestimable service to the society even now.

The philosophy of Sudha Sanmarga, meaning Pure Gathering, built on the concept of love and compassion, aims at purifying the body, enlivening the mind, enriching the intellect and enlightening the soul, the different steps that lead to immortality. This philosophy follows the path of simplicity and discipline; a path where there are no human distinctions. Usually, a seeker, bound by various attachments in the world, finds many obstacles in his spiritual journey. The family ties, the properties, passions, prejudices, attachments and affiliations are binding one, incapacitating one for any meaningful action.

Vallalar has anticipated the upcoming of many ills plaguing humankind. A humanity steeped in ignorance, in which, people are following certain outmoded customs, dogmas, beliefs and various practices. The need of the time is the transformation of the socio-religious-concepts or mis-concepts and change in way of life. Vallalar felt this need. He wished everyone living in the spirit of universal brotherhood, showing compassion towards all lives.

Vallalar perceived God not as an identifiable image, not necessarily in the form of an idol and not restricted to any religious, philosophical believe, concepts and dogmas. He perceived God as all-pervading divine power. He pointed out the lacuna in the prevailing practices and sought to dispel many ill-conceived notions. He sought to dispense with various practices like rituals. He sought to remove the artificial barriers and unite all aspirants under one common platform. He then took the role of a reformer, introduced the universal and uniform concept of Jyothi worship and Sudha Sanmarga.

Some expressed doubt whether these concepts tantamount to deviation from our established practices. Vallalar only wanted to rid the society of certain aberrations while retaining the basic values. He wanted Sanathana Dharma to flourish, took the role of a gentle reformer and brought about a renaissance. God himself manifested as Adi Sankara and Ramanuja to give the direction and guidance to humanity. Many great saints and reformers appeared in this land from time to time like Sri Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Swami Dayananda Saraswathi, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa and Sri Vivekananda to give the correction as the changing conditions in consciousness necessary. Vallalar has rightly come in that lineage.

Hinduism is never a set of codes or dogmas. It is a way of life, ever vibrant, ever seeking the truth. It is all-tolerant, all-comprehensive, all-absorbing and always reforming itself in the process. The strength of Hinduism lies in its infinite capacity to adapt. "Let noble thoughts come to us from all sides" said Swami Vivekananda. In a changing world, every order has to change in accordance with the necessities of time. Hinduism has come a long way from how it was practiced some 500 years before. It has evolved, over a period of time, correcting itself and reforming itself according to the demands of the time.

Ramalinga believed in the dignity of man and emphasized that religions should respect this dignity. He was the embodiment of compassion. When he saw people suffering for want of food, it reminded him of falling young plants drying up for want of nourishment. He expressed this feeling in one of his songs thus: "I felt sad seeing the falling ear of tender plants, withering for want of nourishment. I felt sad seeing frail people crestfallen for want of food." ("Vaadiya Payirina Kanda Pothellam

Vaadinen"). He led a life of virtue, abstinence and discipline, though he prayed for all people, accepting their vices as his own. He always wore spotless clean white cloth around his body that symbolized gentleness and peace. He looked serene and majestic, his sparkling eyes conveying the message of love. He spoke in a low gentle tone. Even while singing, he maintained a low pitch. Perhaps, one could hear his voice raised while speaking for vegetarianism. He performed many acts of miracles but never agreed that he consciously exercised such powers or even possessed them. He not only fulfilled the aspiration of the soul but also healed the body. He was a good physician who prescribed clean diet habits, exercise, Pranayamam and Yoga for good health.

Vallalar believed that just as the soul, body also undergoes a spiritual transformation by the grace of Jyothi. When the body functions independently of sense organs, it becomes pure. When the soul within is sublime and sacred, it implies that the body in which the soul lives is also pure. Just as the content is pure, the container also has to be the expression of purity and sanctity. As a result of spiritual transformation, the body assumes a stage of divine Golden Deathless Body. It continues to remain in this divine stage deriving its own inherent energy and then attains immortality.

UNFURLING OF THE RAMALINGA'S SANMARGA SANGHA FLAG

Ramalinga unfurled the flag of his sanmarga Sangha on October 22, 1873, making the day as its effective beginning and also gave the Mahamantra of the Vast Grace Light by Divine Authority, to the disciples on the same day since he was actively expected the coming of the God of light to the earth for his direct reign. About

this period, he also expressed his will to enter into all physical bodies (i.e., on an universal level).

DEMATERIALIZATION OF RAMALINGA DEATHLESS BODY

In line with his belief, Vallalar believed to have attained immortality. On 30th January 1874, Vallalar drew some of his close disciples near and said:

"I wish to confine myself in the room here. Do not search for me and if you do, you would not find. I believe, God has willed it that way and I hope it would happen that way".

Then, he did withdraw in seclusion in a closed room in Mettukuppam, promising the disciples that the God of Light was imminently coming and he would disappear from their sight for a period and would come back when the Divine Light become manifested. From his last song, message and spoken words, it is seen that his dematerialisation of his deathless body occurred in the divine presence and in the process of the stable manifestation of the Supreme God of the Vast Grace-Light on this earth. Thus, the dematerialisation of his body was a sacrifice and a consecration for a supreme purpose.

A RARE VISION OF THE DEMATERIALIZATION OF RAMALINGA'S SUPRAMENTAL DEATHLESS BODY

As experienced by Sri Gangadharan

It was by a rare virtue "Punya" that on the first day of the Tamil month Thai (14-01-1978), I had a continuous Vision between 2 and 3 a.m. in my usual meditation in the night. The vision of dematerialisation of the physical body of Ramalinga into and as

the Truth-Light of Supreme Grace which contains or possesses in itself Supreme Compassion and Bliss of Grace.

Though I have had occasions to ascend into and remain for sometime in the Truth-World of Grace-Light wherefrom I could see the earth as part of the universe, the said vision came to me when my consciousness was on the earth itself, though aware of the Truth-World and the Beyond.

To begin with, I sensed an ineffable Silence and Peace (Para Shanta Mauna) prevailing everywhere and I heard continuously Para Nada. The mysterious divine sound in that Supreme Silence and Peace. Then the Vision broke out.

A small village in its simple and beautiful surroundings, though not endowed with a rich beauty of nature. There was the concrete Presence of the Supreme and Universal Divine with the beautiful Truth-Grace and Fragrance, which enriched the place and enraptured my heart with ever increasing aspiration for Grace. At the center of the village was seen a small house standing in its purity and peace from where, sweet fragrance of Grace radiated everywhere.

Vallalar, the Great Munificent, was seen entering the house. His face was calm and peaceful. He was seen as the very embodiment of Compassion and his body was filled with the Fire of tapas of Truth-Consciousness as the of the Purity of the Supreme Divine (Suddha Deham). His whole body was radiating the Light of Grace. Besides, his body was silken or light-golden shining colour. He entered into the verandah and kindled the wick of a burning oil-lamp and it began to burn more brightly. Then he stepped into his room and closed the doors and bolted inside.

At that time there was the Concrete Presence and Universal Divine in the room. The presence could be sensed even physically and even by the born-blind. There was also, silence, peace, fragrance and the Light of Grace due to the Presence.

Vallalar sat on the white cloth spread on a low wooden plank and began to concentrate. In that poise he was seen as a Mountain of Truth-Knowledge with the Truth-Light of Grace and Peace along with the Fire of Tapas. He was verily a Supreme form of the Divine. Flood of Light was radiating from his pure and luminous body into all directions.

Supreme Grace, Supreme Compassion and the Light of Grace are expressive of the secret truth that hold the key for the transformation of the physical body into the deathless body of Grace in its state of eternal youthfulness. One has to live in the depth of the ocean of Blissful Grace Light for getting transformed into the divine nature and as a divinised body.

The intensity of the flood of Light that radiated from his whole body was very powerful and one shall have the strength and capacity to bear and receive it. My whole body vibrated with a joy and blissfulness because of the Vision of Light of Ramalinga's body.

After sometime of concentration, he rose up and saw the physical sky. Full moon was shedding its blissful cool rays over the earth. A little distance away from the moon was seen a very bright and concentrated Splendour of Light. It appeared like a bright dazzling star of Light. Ramalinga poured his concentrated gaze at it for sometime. His heart became enraptured with blissful joy, which radiated on his face. A little time thereafter, he again sat

on the white seat on the plank and entered into deep concentration.

Though Ramalinga was inside the closed and bolted room, he could see clearly the whole universe “Vishwa Prapancha” with its tiers of many worlds of mind; life and the physical including the physical earth and sky with its moon, stars and clouds.

When he was thus absorbed in deep meditation, an effulgent Truth-Light of Grace broke out from his heart and with its unique Heat began to burn his radiant physical body very slowly, as if at a snail’s speed, and that in an upward direction, from the heart towards the head. The burning of the body may be somewhat likened to that of an incense-stick which however burns downwards by its inner heat of fire, forming ash-covering but without the falling down of the ash-form.

When the upper part of his radiant body was burnt completely from heart to head, there was left in its place a form of pure white substance, which radiated its Light of Consciousness. The burnt part, however, showed all its features intact and clearly as well as the burnt hair of his head which was seen distinctly as luminous white hair. Then the Heat of the Pure Light of Grace descended to burn the lower part.

After the whole body was burnt, Ramalinga was seen as a bodily form of pure white substance from head to foot, radiating its Light. Even the blood has changed into a white luminous substance. Ramalinga white body of light had kept intact all the different kinds of cells of his body including all the distinctive features and formations, interiorly as well as exteriorly. Ramalinga’s bodily form did not shrink in size after the burning. I saw no visible flame nor sensed its heat during the burning of

his living body, nor smoke, nor any bad smell as burnt tissues, nor heard any cracking noise as burnt bones. But instead there was a sweet fragrance since the time his body began to burn as it spread everywhere. I sensed in my heart an ineffable Calmness and Silence, which gave me in turn a state of bliss.

Then, a second stage of burning began with the unique Heat of Grace-Light began to burn slowly Ramalinga Luminous Form of White Substance from head to foot downwards. When his White substance-Form full of its radiating Light, it was burn completely. The White-Substance became very fine sub-atomic consciousness particles which permeated and pervaded the conscious particles with it's radiating light which also entered into and got distributed everywhere in the earth, even in matter and in the Inconscient. After the universal pervasive distribution of the particles, they could be seen no more and disappeared from my sight. But now, there is a sweet, the soft and fine fragrance of camphor pervading everywhere, which gave my body a blissful sensation and enraptured my heart as well.

Then I had the rare vision of Ramalinga's Universal golden Form. As a matter of fact, the immensity of his golden form contained in it the whole universe (Vishva Prapancha). This form too disappeared from my view and was replaced by another vision in which I saw the Golden Light of Truth-Knowledge and Grace entering into all directions more speedily than the lightning. It permeated and pervaded the whole universe and the further Pure Worlds of Consciousness. It entered into our earth and it's crores of the physical forms of beings and objects, in the apparently insensible matter "jada" and even in the dark realm of the vast inconscient. All the forms that were permeated by the Golden Light of Truth changed into golden forms of

beings and objects. The Golden Light entered into my whole adhara including the physical body. My body felt in all the cells vibrations of ease and pleasantness.

Then I heard some words of Grace, but they were indistinctly heard and could not be deciphered, as I was absorbed in a raptured of Bliss due to the sublime vision and experiences.

Thus, the vision lasted an hour of time and came to an end.

INSPECTION AND CONFIRMATION OF RAMALINGA'S DEMATERIALISATION

Ramalinga was never seen thereafter, and the place of his disappearance was soon inspected by the ten District Collector and Medical Officer who have reported, confirming his disappearance. One can very well feel today the spiritual and supramental forces of deathlessness in the pace of his last resort i.e., Siddhi Valaga Maligai at Metukuppam, in Vadalur where the shrine of Satya Jnana Sabhai stands as a symbol and monument in honour of the coming of the Supreme Divine to the Earth.

That marked the end of a great sage or the beginning of a new age. That marked the end of a glorious chapter of Vallalar that opened up a new chapter for man's eternal quest to know the truth. That marked the end of a period of darkness that heralded the advent of a new era of awakening, the era of light and Jyothi.

May the light of love, the light of grace he kindled radiate its brilliance all over. May the beacon light he lit brighten up the

world. May the flame of grace he brought bring a sense of unity and peace all over the earth.

MIRACLES AND OTHER INCIDENTS IN VALLALAR LIFE

The miracles performed by the Ramalinga Vallalar refer to different periods; some took place in Chennai and its suburb Tiruvottiyur in his early life; some others at Karungkuli between 1858 and 1867 and yet others at Vadalur (1867-70) and at Mettukuppam (1870-1874). They are not reported in a chronological order. Some do not fall in the category of miracles but are incidents that portray Vallalar's nature in dealing with men and matters both at human and superhuman level. God plays at the human level as much as He does on the supra-human. He is both human and above the human at the same time. His dealings at human level are sometimes better understood and appreciated. Vallalar was not against doing miracles, as they form the powers and plays of the Divine. However, he was not after miracle-mongering. His eventful life was interspersed with many divine miracles of various kinds. He promised in the last part of his life that the Divine Himself was soon to manifest on the earth to rule and play Siddhis of Grace, such as resurrection of the dead and transforming the aged into youths. Thus, Vallalar progressively grew into the Divine Nature, as he went on writing inspired poems and doing miracles since his early life. His miracles are continuing even now.

MERCURY TURNED INTO A BEAD

A magician came and requested Vallalar who was a Siddha, to turn mercury into a bead. Vallalar gently poured into the hollow

of his palm a little mercury and after keeping it closed for a while, dropped it as a mercury bead.

FEEDING THE UNEXPECTED GUESTS

One night, food had been cooked in the Dharmashala for a limited number of people. Unexpectedly about a hundred additional guests came at the time of serving the food. Shanmugam Pillai, the man in charge of the food section, reported to Vallalar that food was not sufficient to serve all. Vallalar immediately rose up voicing forth "pich". This was Vallalar's characteristic exclamation at the time of performing miracles, possibly signifying that it was a child's play and there was nothing impossible, all being a Divine blessing to do what was needed. According to Ooran Adigal, the biographer of Vallalar's life in Tamil, "pich" is a short form of "Pichchan" (name of the divine Lord) which is derived from "Pichchu". We may add that the Divine Lord performs miracle as either a play of a tender child (pinju Pillai or Pichchu Pillai) an inexplicably miraculous way in a divine madness (Pichchu or Piththu). Thus, with the exclamation of "Pich " in Arutpa it also means the madness of non-knowing that God can help. Vallalar asked to supply guests in sitting rows, leaf for serving food, and He himself served the food to the guests. All took plenty of food, but the food remained intact in the cooking pots.

PREMONITION OF FRESH SUPPLIES OF RICE

One day, Shanmugam Pillai, the manager of Dharma Shalai reported to Vallalar that there was no stock of rice to cook. Vallalar sat alone in a place and concentrated for a few seconds and then assured him that rice and all other things needed would come the next day. Exactly so, the next day a devotee from

Tirutturai village brought three 33 cartloads of rice and other provisions and reported that he had been asked in his dream the night before, to bring in supplies of food.

MASTERY OVER FIRE AND RAIN

In the summer month of April, many who came to the Dharma-Shalai at Vadalur suffered due to the drought and heat. Vallalar knew about it and asked them to pour a vessel of water over his feet. The devotees did so. Shortly, there was a heavy down pour of rain. Devotees of Pudupet village (near Cuddalur) heard of this and came to Vadalur and implored the grace of Vallalar, as all wells of the village had become dry for lack of rain. Vallalar asked them to pour six pots full of water over his head. They did so: There was heavy down pour of rain immediately; and the springs of the six wells which had gone dry, once again became active bringing in fresh and very tasty supplies of water in the wells. The village thus had good rains to sustain and nourish its life and activity.

DRY LAND TURNED INTO WET LAND

A report of Vallalar's devotee who was a tax collector, named Murugesu Pillai, failed in his several attempts to have his dry lands changed into wetlands through petitions to the Government (possibly for facilities of irrigation). He implored Vallalar for grace and received from Him the sacred ash of blessing. Thereafter, the dry lands could be converted into wetlands.

FIRE DIES BY SIGNAL

In Pudupetta near Kurinjipadi, a house caught fire. Vallalar who happened to be in the opposite house at that time waved his cloth and the fire soon came down.

RAIN WITHOUT DRENCHING

One evening, Vallalar went out for a walk with the devotees. Suddenly it rained. All of them except Vallalar got drenched in the rain. Not even a drop of rain was seen on Vallalar's body.

FIRE WITHOUT BURNING

In "Siddhivalagam cottage house, at Mettukuppam, Vallalar used to keep on his two sides flaming fire in iron bowls of burning coke. Vallalar sat in between them on a tub-like seat. (His direct disciple and biographer Kandasamy pillai, writes to say that Vallalar perhaps wanted to enjoy thus more intense heat than what was normal to his body transform golden form). One day a devotee of Vallalar by name Sabapathy Sivacharya, who was the priest in charge of the Shrine of Sathya Gnana Sabhai, happened to enter into Vallalar's room suddenly when his leg struck a bowl of burning coal. The burning coal scattered hither and thither and hit Vallalar and himself. The visitor got alarmed and hastened to remove by his hands the burning coal that fell on Vallalar's thigh. He got his hands burnt. But Vallalar remained unaffected in his body and not 34 even his cloth bore any mark of the burn. Vallalar however said to him "Why are you so anxious? It (fire) will not affect me in any way".

FAILURE TO BE PHOTOGRAPHED

Once, some Vallalar's devotees brought a famous photographer named Masilamani Mudaliar, from Madras, to take photo of Vallalar, it was the same photograph appointed by the Queen of

England to take pictures of herself during her visit to India. He attempted eight times; but each time he failed to get a picture because the form and figure of Vallalar was not impressed on the film; only the white cloth which Vallalar wore came in the picture. NOTE: Vallalar's body had no shadow after transformation into Grace Light body, He became full of divine Light within and without

CLAY-IMAGE OF VALLALAR

A pot-maker from Panrutti village heard of the above said incident. Being a devotee of Vallalar he made Vallalar's image in clay and duly painted it. He offered it to Vallalar. He remarked: "The golden body had become a body of mud". So Vallalar dropped it down and broke into pieces. NOTE: The truth of his whole and entire physical body could not be properly represented even by a photo or statue. However the fact remains that Vallalar himself allowed the photographer to take his picture or still earlier the painter to paint his image, and so he could not have been against the preservation of his outer form for use of the disciples, but the very fact of the divine luminosity of his body stood against a representation of his form as a photo. This apart, Vallalar psychologically discouraged the worship of his own figure and image; instead, he persistently kept the supreme Divine, the Lord of Vast Grace-Light, as the goal to be pursued and presented Him in the form of the light of a lamp duly sanctified and lit by himself. This attitude was the need of the hour of God as Vallalar wanted his disciples and devotees also to aspire, without diversion through the worship of the said form of light and through the Arut Perun Jothi mantra of Grace Light. for the universal manifestation of the divine Grace Light upon earth. In his days, Vallalar used to pray that:

"Oh Lord these innocent people go around me as if I were their Lord because they have not seen you."

He asks God many times to grant every life on this earth to have the same bliss as he enjoyed. Ramalingam transformed his dense physical matter into a body of subtle pure divine Grace Light which was indestructible by any elements. He has transformed his dense body into a living light body which is still present in Mettukuppam. Many people have experienced and experiencing it even now. Vallalar is using Mettukuppam as a base of action in this place and travels to all corners of the universe. Through this transformation, he was able to enter any life. I, Dhayanithi, personally, witnessed Vallalar entering the body of a young girl in Mettekupan during poosam day. It was very eminent, for me how Vallalar was using her body. Especially, that myself, had the same experience during Thai poosam where I saw Vallalar coming out of the room, walking toward me and entering my body for some time, then leaving it to return to the room.

"CHIDAMBARAM DARSHAN" SHOWN AT VADALUR

It was the habit for devotees from Mofussil areas, to come to Vadalur, in order to take Vallalar with them to Chidambaram on important festival days. On one such occasion, devotees came in advance and waited for Vallalar to go to Chidambaram. As the day of the festival got closer, most of them left for Chidambaram. But there was no sign of Vallalar's going there yet. Only a few stayed with him in the hope of starting at least on the day of festival itself. Vallalar did not leave Vadalur even on that day. The devotees felt unhappy as they lost the chance of seeing the Lord of Dance, Nataraja of Chidambaram. Vallalar understood their grievance and assured them:

"you can have Chidambaram darshan here; wait and see."

So saying, Vallalar put up a screen of cloth in a portion of Dharmashalai building and asked them to go inside the screen and see. They went inside the veil and saw the rare sight of the "Chidambaram darshan" i.e., of the Lord of the Lord of Dance and play and they were highly overjoyed.

On some occasions, Vallalar sat outside in the sun at noon. At that time devotees, at the Dharmashalai, used to see a column or pillar of light (agni sthambha) rising up between the place where he was seated and the sun. It was easy to see where Vallalar was. We just had to look at the sun and observe where the sun's light was going, there, you would find Vallalar. How can we understand this? We are like the sun ourselves, Ambalam. He is connected to the diverse suns of the universe. Vallalar manifested into his Grace Light body, which was like the sun incarnated on earth, the son of God. The sun of the earth is connected to the Great central sun of the universe, that Vallalar calls also Ambalam. So we can see that there is the Ambalam, who is the manifestation of our Grace Light body and the Ambalam who is above in the upper dimensions of our Being, this Ambalam can be named also the Great central sun, Aton...many names are found for Him in diverse traditions.

MERCUROUS COMPOUND WITHSTANDS FIRE

Vallalar used to wear sandals of a very high quality called "Sakalath Padaraksha" made at Tanjore. He had said, "if jatilingam (a compound of mercury and sulphur) is kept within sandals which a Suddha dehi (a man of perfect and pure body) wears on, he will stand against fire or endure in the heat of fire (i.e., without melting)". A devotee-priest namely Sabhapathy

had special sandals prepared for Vallalar in which four tolas of the said mercurous compound had been kept. At his request, Vallalar wore the sandals for 15 days and then later on the mercurous compound was removed from them and it was observed to withstand the heat of fire without change.

SILVER RUPEE MELTS IN VALLALAR'S HANDS

One day, two Brahmins who were worshippers of the sun came from Vishakapattinam. They reported to Vallalar their inability to attain, practicing the methods given in shastra, either "apara marga siddhi" such as melting iron, silver, gold and other metals by keeping it in hand or "Para marga siddhi" by which one can move and travel in space like sun. Vallalar took a silver rupee coin and kept it in his hand for a few minutes. Then the coin melted and ran down as silver.

SHADOWLESS BODY

One day, Vallalar was standing in the sun along with a devotee named Ayyasamy Pillai of Cuddalur. Vallalar asked him, "What is the sign of a Suddha Gnani?" The devotee remained silent, unable to answer. Then Vallalar told him that there would be no shadow of the body of a Suddha Gnani. The fact that Vallalar's body did not cast shadow on the ground came to be known thus. This proves the glory of one who had realised Suddha Sathya Gnana the pure Truth-Consciousness, and the Siddhi or perfection of the triple body.

SIGNS OF THE FUTURE GURU

One day, Devanayakam Pillai of Cuddalur became Vallalar's devotee, according to the wish of his father who was a yogi. The said yogi at the time of his death advised his son to become the

disciple of one who would come with a cane in his hand and with a hood of cloth covering his head and would strike with his cane at his samadhi (tomb of burial) asking "Is this the Samadhi of your father?" Three years after the death of the yogi, Vallalar came to Cuddalur and went to Devanayakam's house and asked him by striking with his cane at a tomb "Is this your father's tomb?" The latter replied in a positive way and took Vallalar as his Guru.

NOTE: Cuddalur is a town about 25 miles from Vadalur. Vallalar frequently visited Cuddalur to give lectures.

The said Devanayakam was spending a lot of time learning alchemy with a desire to convert baser metals into gold. Vallalar wanted to put him in the right path. First, Vallalar showed him the method of alchemy. He converted an iron sheet into gold of sixteen carat, by treating it with an herb and heating it with dry cakes of cow-dung. Vallalar then throwing away the gold, advised him further:

"Only one who is without desire alone can get this knowledge. Leave off this pursuit of alchemy". Vallalar not only knew the process of alchemy which is a physical-chemical method or occult process (mantra, tantra), or both combined (see his Upadesa on "Rasavada"). He uses herbs and different gases of gaseous heat on different metals. But according to him transformation of body into a golden deathless body implies and includes the possession of the power to transmute or transform baser metals like iron, copper etc. into pure gold. Vallalar had this power too, and by mere look or touch of the baser metal or keeping it in his hands for some time he could transmute it unto pure gold. Some incidents of such transmutation are also recorded in T.V G. Chetty's and Kandasamy Pillai's biographies

on Vallalar's life. Once, Vallalar transmuted sand into golden particles by putting the sand into a vessel of water and keeping its mouth closed with his hands for some time. Then he threw away the golden particles into the open street. This, he showed to one Naina Reddiar of Alappakkam who sought after alchemy and told him that only the pure without desire could transmute substances.

Once, Vallalar took the said Devanayakam to Senji hills and roamed about. The latter became hungry and tired. Vallalar left him below the shade of a tree and walked some distance and returned with a big laddu sweet and a vessel of water in his hands and gave them to him. After Devanayakam had satisfied his hunger and thirst, Vallalar told him that he was going to return the vessel back and thereafter He came back to join him.

VALLALAR'S BODY AND LIMBS DISMEMBERED

One day at mid-day, Vallalar went out from Dharmashalai. Shanmugam Pillai of Velur who was in charge of Dharmashalai, waited for Vallalar's return. Growing impatient and anxious, he went out in search of Vallalar. He was bewildered and shocked to find at in diverse place Vallalar's dismembered body and limbs in several pieces and he began to morn. Suddenly, Vallalar appeared before him and advised him not to come out any more in search of him and Shanmugam Pillai returned to Dharmashalai. Vallalar likes to have some privacy so we can think that he created the illusory vision to his disciple to be believed such thing. Vallalar had high respect for his body so it is difficult to think that he would dismember his body into pieces.

VALLALAR SEEN AT UNAPPROACHABLE DISTANCES

One day, Vallalar went out alone from Dharmashalai for a walk. He saw some devotees following him up and ordered them to stop and not to follow him. But they still followed him. Suddenly Vallalar was seen walking at a very far away distance. They ran with the aim of reaching him. But again, Vallalar was seen still farther off.

At Karungkuli, one evening, Vallalar had gone out for a walk near a pond. A devotee thought that it was the right occasion to get upadesha from Vallalar when he was alone. So, he approached Vallalar in haste. But suddenly, Vallalar was seen at a far remote distance. As the devotee went nearer and nearer, Vallalar was seen farther and farther. Finally, the devotee got perplexed and left the attempt to reach Vallalar

NOTE: The above incident is evidently a phenomenon of dematerialization and re-materialisation while in life. Vallalar absorbs his physical body into the subtle physical form and reappears at a far-off distance, projecting again the physical body from out of the subtle-physical form.

MYSTERIOUS SHORT CUT

While in Madras, one day, Vallalar was walking to Tiruvottiur to worship at the Ishwara temple thereat. He was accompanied by devotees and disciples among whom there were Somu Chettiar and Velayuddha Mudaliar. On the way it was pouring down pour of rain. Those who accompanied Vallalar suffered the difficulty of the journey because of the rain. Vallalar showed them a short-cut way and in an instant reached Tiruvottiur. To quote a relevant portion of the incident as described in T.V.G. Chetty's "Life of Vallalar Ramalinga". Half-way to Tiruvottiur, there was heavy rain, his followers were runing around, a little

lost. Vallalar rallied them and in a second they reach the temple. NOTE: The above incident seems to be a case of collective dematerialization and materialization, that is to say Vallalar took them within his subtle-physical body or possibly enveloped them in his environmental body which is its extension and reached the destination instantly and projected them out again. His devotees should have felt the whole process as going through a mysterious way and reaching the temple in an instant.

VALLALAR FED BY THE GODDESS

One day, Vallalar returned late at night after worshipping at the temple of Tiruvottiyur. The door of his house had been closed by his elder sister, as it was late at night. Vallalar did not like to disturb her sleep by calling her or by knocking at the door. So, he slept outside on the deck of the house, though tired and hungry. After some time, he was woken by someone bearing food in a plate. Vallalar thought it was his sister in law who had come with "rice pongal" for him (cooked rice with ghee and fried spices). With tender love she asked him, "Are you feeling hungry after going to Tiruvottiyur"? and without waiting for his reply she gave him food in the middle of the night. He ate it and again he went back to sleep. Then after some time his sister came and woke him up asking with tenderness "Why have you slept on an empty stomach. Could you not tap at the door and wake me up? Come in and take food". Vallalar replied that some time before she herself had come and given him food. But she denied that she ever came and gave him food, she had just woken up. Then, Vallalar and his sister in law came to know that it was the divine Mother who came in his sister's form and fed him with food by grace.

NOTE: Vallalar refers to the incident in its bare essence in some of his songs (11-36-43 & 48 Arul Vilakkamalai). He observes that the Divine fed him when he was hungry, not only with material substance of food but also with Grace ambrosia.

CURES OF DISEASES: INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE

One day, eleven of his followers, who were inmates of Dharmashalai at Vadalur laid down with fever (possibly due to influenza), in the summer month of mid april to mid may. Out of compassion for them, Vallalar asked each of them, in an endearing tone and language:

"Father will you give your fever to me?"

Then he remained in a room when his body became quite hot like fire and after five minutes he came out in a normal condition. The fever of all the patients was gone.

NOTE: Vallalar should have absorbed the disease and fever of his followers into his body, freeing them from the disease and finally, thrown the disease and its symptoms out of his own body. However, the incident is interesting because of its collective treatment.

One day, when Vallalar was going to Chidambaram to attend "Tiruvadirai darshan" at the temple, a man affected with dyspepsia prayed him on the way to be relieved from the disease. Vallalar gave him "tulsi" leaf (a leaf symbolising devotion for the Divine) and water as treatment. The man was cured.

A man from Sevalai village, had suffered for 12 years from dyspepsia, prayed Vallalar to relieve him from the disease. Vallalar asked him to pray God. The man replied firmly that Vallalar himself was God for him. Then Vallalar gave him sacred

ash (Vibhuti) with blessings. The man took it reverentially and applied it on his forehead and put a little of it in his mouth. He got cured.

VALLALAR AT TWO PLACES AT THE SAME TIME

At Cuddalur, once, Ayyasamy Pillai, son of Vedanayakam Pillai, was seriously bedridden with disease. Death was awaited at any moment. His father who was a devotee of Vallalar became anxious and helpless. Vallalar came and knocked at his door (who was then giving a discourse at Vadalur - one fact which was later verified). The door was opened. Vallalar sat near the patient, applied sacred ash on his forehead and in a short time, made him open his eyes and sit on the bed. Then he left. The day after the father took his son to Vadalur in a cart. They came to know that Vallalar was giving discourse at Vadalur throughout the previous night, when he had also visited them at Cuddalur and spent some time with the patient. Vallalar told them that what took place the day before was a play of the Divine and requested them not to divulge it. The father and son were moved with surprise and surging waves of love and gratitude for the grace of Vallalar..

An old woman of Kongara palayam village, 96 years old, suffered from a nervous shaking of her body. She saw Vallalar and by His darshan, she got cured.

Vallalar cured leprosy by giving sacred ash to a patient, the maternal uncle of Purushottama Reddiar of Karungkuli village.

A case of eye-disease was cured by Vallalar, by giving sacred ash with blessing, and the patient Muthu Narayana Reddiar volunteered to endow and settle all his property in favour of Vallalar.

A case of excessive growth of adenoid was cured by Vallalar by giving sacred ash to the patient, a servant of a merchant who had come from Salem to Cuddalur.

While at Karungkuli, Vallalar was once approached by a devotee, namely Appachamy chettiar, who prayed for His Grace to cure his elder brother from cancer. Vallalar gave the patient three small packets of sacred ash by which cancer was cured.

MASTERY OVER VITAL BEINGS AND SPIRITS

One night, four magicians went from Vadalur at Mettukuppam to see Vallalar. On the way, a Kali (i.e., a female vital being of bad nature); to be distinguished from Kali, the divine goddess, came in her terrible form and frightened them. They replied that while returning to Vadalur, they chained her, and proceeded on the journey. They saw Vallalar, and paid their homage and obedience to him, informing about the frightening kali and the action they had proposed to take on her. Vallalar asked them not to do so, but simply to tell her that they had been to Vallalar. On their way back, kali came in a big frightening form, but as soon as she was informed of the purpose of their journey, she became very small in form and went away humbly.

One night, two devotees followed Vallalar on his way to Tiruvottiyur. On the way a mohini (a female vital being with charming and fascinating influence on man) attacked the said devotees. Vallalar at once voiced forth "pich"; the mohini went away and vanished. Vallalar gave them sacred ash with his blessing.

One constable named "Vijaya Raghavalu Nayud of Kurinjipadi suffered because of black magic or witchcraft operated against him. He became lean. He approached Vallalar craving for His

grace. Vallalar wrote and gave him a poem on the divine glory of Sri Rama to practice it as a form of mantra japa (divine recitation of a name of God)..The constable did so and got relieved of the suffering.

VALLALAR CURED CASES OF SPIRIT-POSSESSION.

One of the two wives of the Zamindar of Vettavalam was possessed by a "brahma Rakshasi", an evil female spirit. The other suffered from the disease of dropsy. In spite of several treatments by medicine, by occultism and magic and by offering of animals in sacrifice, their sufferings could not be relieved. At the request of the Zamindar, Vallalar went to Vettavalam. The Zamindar had provided two identical chairs for Vallalar to sit on. As soon as Vallalar reached the house and was about to step into it, the spirit -possessed wife came out and joined her hands in prayer to Vallalar and assured him that she (the female spirit) was waiting to leave the affected person (i.e. Zamindar 's wife) at Vallalar's bidding. She received sacred ash from Vallalar. The spirit departed leaving Zamindar 's wife to enjoy the freedom of her life. Then, Vallalar gave sacred ash in three small quantities to the other wife of the Zamindar and cured her from dropsy. Vallalar sat in the very particular chair which the Zamindar had chosen for him, this was a test to see if Vallalar was a yogi or not. However, the Zamindar asked for Vallalar's pardon for such a behaviour in his thought. He converted the whole family as vegetarians, stopped sacrifice of animals at the "Kali" temple of that village and instead asked the people to offer milk-rice (i.e., rice cooked in milk) to the goddess. All the poisonous creatures such as snakes were asked to be removed to a distant forest outside the village, instead of killing them or doing any harm to

them. For this purpose, a snake-charmer was engaged at the request of Vallalar.

MAN WITH THE LANTERN

In those days Vallalar used to give discourses daily at Cuddalur. To hear his lectures, people gathered from all sides. Ramakrishna Pillai from Manjakuppam village, came daily to hear Vallalar. On the return journey, he felt fear of the darkness of the night, but he saw at some distance a man with a lantern in his hand going ahead of him, till the former reached the borders of his village. Then the man with the lantern vanished away. If any attempt was made to closely observe the man, his form would not be seen. When Vallalar was informed of this went, he replied that they were the play of the divine Grace.

TORCHES WITHOUT TORCH-BEARER

One lawyer, by named Venkatesa Iyer of Viruddhachalam and his wife would attend Vallalar's lecture on Sundays at Vadalur. For this purpose, they used to come to Vadalur on the previous night. On the way to Vadalur, during the night, at a three miles distance, they had to cross a lonely forest which was full of bushes and trees. On such occasions two torches were seen to go in front of the couple. But no form of the torchbearer would be seen. The said couple was so much moved by this miracle, that in the later days of retirement from the profession they came and settled in Vadalur to enjoy Vallalar's Grace.

NOTE: Even after Vallalar's invisibility, his devotee and disciple, Subbaraya Paradeshi, who was managing the Dharmashalai saw two lanterns on several occasions going before him in advance, in fact when he passed through dangerous places to collect the

funds for the Dharmashalai. he walked the way safely without fear.

One contractor, by name Arumuga Mudaliar, wanted to receive a talisman (Kulikai) from Vallalar. The latter gave him one which was of the size of two peppers. But the former felt them so heavy to bear in his hands that he dropped them. Then Vallalar gave him a printed notice about "the discipline of Truth related to senses, psychic, life and soul" and advised him to follow.

VALLALAR AS GUEST OF HONOUR

At Chidambaram, one Siddha by named Pandinatha Siddha, renovated a shrine dedicated to god "Murugan". At the end of the day, he gave masons and labourers sacred ash which got mysteriously converted into currencies equivalent to the value of the work that they actually performed for the construction. Thus, the renovation was completed. On the day of the opening of the renovated shrine for worship (Kumbhabhiseheka), Vallalar was invited as the chief guest of honour. The said "Siddha" (i.e., one who could do siddhis or miracles of a divine nature) asked Vallalar to sit at a prominent central place among other dedicated and devoted servants of God (Adiyargal) and performed "Maheshwara Pooja". Then after serving food to all, the said siddha received with great joy a handful or a morsel of food from Vallalar (as prasad or Divine sanctified food).

ON SNAKE

Once, Nataraja Pillai chased a snake in order to catch it. But he got wounded on his right hand. Then he ran immediately to Vallalar who addressed the snake "You are Ananda Nataraja, the

playing Lord of Bliss". It went off from the wounded hand of the former soon, without harming him.

NOTE: Vallalar sees the Divine in all beings and creatures. He sees the Divine in the snake.

One night a devotee while going around the "Siddhi Valagam" building, where Vallalar stayed, he accidentally stepped on a snake which bit him in the leg and its fangs pierced his flesh. He prayed Vallalar, and the poison did not affect him in any way.

On a Sunday when one of Vallalar devotee went out and squatted at an open place near a bush for ablution, a snake came hissing to bite him. He called Vallalar's name and vowed saying "On the commanding authority of Vallalar" « i.e., ordering the snake to obey to the Power of Vallalar as he had taken His sacred Name as a shield of protection). The snake became rooted to the spot without movement and food. He went away. But Vallalar came to know of this incident and told the audience in a lecture that the snake was bound by the power of an oath (affirmation) and got fixe to the spot without food for three days and he felt grief and sympathy for the suffering snake. When the said devotee came on a Tuesday, which was his usual day of visiting Vallalar, the latter told him "What a trouble for a soul which is hungry and is without food for three days! "Pich" Go and release it from the Power of the oath, do it by taking of my name".The visitor went to the spot of the incident and released the snake. The snake then moved into its pit.

One day, Vallalar was going back home at night from Vyasarpadi, one of Madras suburb, after having given a lecture there. Some of his devotees were with him when, a big snake appeared in the middle of the road. The devotees ran away from

it, but Vallalar kept unmoved. It came and wound itself around his leg. Vallalar then commanded it to leave off and it went away.

A SNAKE BITES VALLALAR WITHOUT HARMING

At Cuddalur Vallalar, once, visited Appasamy. There were plantain trees in his warehouse. A snake on the leaf of a plantain tree bit Vallalar at the top of his head and blood oozed out. He applied sacred ash on the spot of the bite. Devotees who were around him asked anxiously what had happened. Vallalar replied coolly that the snake on the leaf had bitten him to cause his death. Then it was found that the snake had died on the leaf.

One day Vallalar came from Cuddalur and stayed at a place near Kullanchavadi. A Muslim head-constable offered him a new upper cloth to wear on. While Vallalar was sleeping at a local guest house, a thief came and took off the new cloth slowly and gently. Vallalar knew of it but turned sides so that he could take off the cloth. But the constable caught the thief and punished him. In the meanwhile, Vallalar got up and pacifying the constable kindly gave away in kindness the new piece of cloth to the thief, advising him not to do it anymore.

Once, Ramachandra Mudaliar, shrastadar of manchakuppam court, was taking Vallalar to his village in a bullock-cart. It was night. As the cart drew near Kullanchavadi village, two robbers daringly ordered the cart to stop. The cart-driver and the Mudaliar, his servant, were afraid of them, got down and hid in the groves of a cashew-nut nearby. The robbers came to the back of the cart, asking Mudaliar in a threatening tone to remove the diamond ring from his finger and give it to them. Vallalar intervened asking "Is it so urgent?". They raised a beating stick against Vallalar in order to beat. Instantly their hands became

still; their eyes lost sight. Then they felt and expressed their sorrow for their behaviour and asked for Vallalar's pardon. Vallalar voiced forth "Pich". Instantly they went back restored to their normal conditions of sight and movement of hands. They joined hands in prayer to Vallalar and took leave from him, leading a good harmonious way of life.

Under Vallalar's influence, the villagers living around Him were converted from their non-vegetarian diet into a vegetarian one.

VALLALAR AS A TALENTED MUSICIAN

Once, a musician named Chidambaram Krishna Iyer, came to Vadalur and sang before Vallalar the first stanza of "Mahadeva malai" in the tune of "Apurupa raga". Vallalar listened to him and then he himself rendered the song in melodious music in an even better way. The said musician came to know of Vallalar's great knowledge, taste and talent in music.

Vallalar called for, by letter, one Sabapathy Sivacharya of the Brahmin priesthood-class who was well versed in Vedas and Agamas, the ancient spiritual and religious literature, and explained to him in secrecy the true significance of Gayatri Mantra (i.e., the Mantra of prayer to the Supramental Sun of Truth - Knowledge). The said Sivacharya became his disciple and later he served as a priest in his own way. He was in charge of Sathya Gnana Sabhai, His descendants continue to serve as priest of the Sabhai.

TAMIL AND SANSKRIT AS ROOT FOR ALL LANGUAGES

Once, a Shastri, well versed in Sanskrit and Tamil, came to Vallalar, and in the course of discussion with him, he emphasised that Sanskrit was the first language. Vallalar wrote

at once an explanatory article affirming that Tamil is the original root (technically the "paternal source language" Pitru bhasha) for all languages and gave it to the scholar.

CONVERSION TO VEGETARIANISM

Once, Vallalar asked Amavasya, the headman of Harijans of Vadalur to stop eating the carcass of dead oxen and instead bury them. He promised to do it, but he needed eight annas daily for his maintenance. Vallalar tied eight annas in a piece of yellow cloth and asked him to keep it in a box. He did so and got daily eight annas or half rupee in those days as his earnings, He stopped eating meat and became pure in diet i.e., became a vegetarian.

One day Vallalar called for two persons named Arunachala Padayachi and Venkatachala Padayachi who had large families to support, and blessed them saying 'If you stop eating meat from this day onwards, the yield of your dry crop of indigo and the wet crop of paddy will become fivefold'. They followed Vallalar's advice and became followers of His movement of "Jeeva Karunya" i.e., compassion and reverence to all life. The yield of their agricultural crops went up and they became prosperous too.

PRODIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE IN SEVERAL LANGUAGES

Once, Pinakapani Mudaliar, Manager of the Telegraph office of Pondicherry was proud of his knowledge of seven or eight languages. He came to Vadalur to advise Vallalar about learning many languages. Vallalar by premonition knew of the purpose of his visit. So, when the said Mudaliar was approaching him, He said "Here is one coming to give me advice". When he arrived, they had a mutual talk for a while. Then Vallalar took before the

said multi-linguist a four years old boy, who was the son of his first disciple namely Velayuda Mudaliar. Holding the boy in his hands Vallalar asked him "how many languages do you know?", he replied "I know five or six languages". Then Vallalar told Pinakapani Mudaliar to ask the boy any question on any topic in any language and that the boy would reply suitably in the language he had chosen to ask. The said Pinakapani became dumbfounded with surprise and even fainted. Vallalar again asked him to ask the boy patiently any question he liked. The dumb Mudaliar after half an hour of silence, thought of asking Vallalar's pardon for his pride. Vallalar said "pich". Immediately the said Pinakapani opened his mouth asking for Vallalar's pardon; and after worshipping Him repeatedly with joined hands, he went away.

NOTE: In Vallalar's presence and under his influence the boy seemed to have become His instrument ready to perform in case of necessity the function that Vallalar proposed to do through him. On an earlier occasion and in another situation, though of a different kind, the boy's father i.e., Velayuda Mudaliar, in Vallalar's presence and by His blessings explained some hard passages in a Sanskrit text to Sri Sankaracharya. The said Velayuda Mudaliar received inspiration from Vallalar to write poetry in Tamil. Vallalar used to send him to devotees seeking clarifications on points which could be dealt with by him on an intellectual and human level of understanding.

"UTTAMA PURUSHA" AND NAKED SANYASI

While in Madras, Vallalar used to go to Tiruvottiyur temple through a bye-lane instead of through the main car-shed street. But one day he went through the main street. There was a naked sanyasi sitting on the pial of a house in that street. He would

comment on people going that way as "an ass is passing, a bull is passing." On the day Vallalar passed through that road, the naked sanyasi hailed him in praise as "Here is one highly noble person (Uttama Purusha) coming and so commenting he immediately covered the parts of his body (in honour to the great man who was passing through). Vallalar said a few words to him and that very night he left the place.

KALPATTU AYYAH-A YOGI

One yogi named "Kalpattu Ayyah" intuitively knew that a man of Knowledge (Gnana Acharya) would come on a particular day and time, accompanied or surrounded by a retinue of devotees, in order to accept him as a disciple. The said yogi informed many about his intuition. Vallalar accompanied by many devotees, visited the yogi at his village Tirunarung Kunram on the day and hour as foreseen by him and accepted him as His disciple. Vallalar took him to Vadalur and gave him a separate cottage to pursue and practise his yoga. Whenever Vallalar happened to give lectures to his devotees, and the subject would benefit Kalpattu Ayyah, he would send for him immediately. In his later days, the said yogi was managing Dharmashala. He died at Vadalur and his remains have been preserved in samadhi near Dharmashala. He was a realised soul among Vallalar's disciples.

ARTS, SCIENCES AND OCCULTISM

Apart from his spiritual and occult knowledge, Vallalar had much of what may be called knowledge of the world. He knew about medicines particularly the indigenous "Siddha" system of medicine, medical herbs, literature, music, logical argumentation, alchemy, astrology, philosophy such as Vedanta and Siddhanta, mantra shastra, powers behind talisman and

gems possessing extraordinary powers and qualities. He could readily discuss in great details on any such subject with anyone who came to him seeking explanations.

TAHSILDAR AND HIS HORN-BLOWER

Venkatasubbha Iyer, tahsildar (district revenue officer) of Manchakuppam used to come daily to Cuddalur to hear Vallalar's discourses. His visit was used to be signalled through a blowing-horn which his servant, born of a low caste, carried and ran blowing it in front of the tahsildar's cart all the way from Manchakuppam village to Cuddalur. One day the horn-blower reached Cuddalur very hungry and tired and shaking his body because he had to run fast that day. Vallalar, in this occasion, did not show any gesture by signs or words indicating warmth of reception to the district revenue officer who had just arrived to take his seat to listen to Vallalar. After some time, Vallalar asked him, "For how long are you letting your servant endure this?" would'nt it be better to send the horn-blower in advance to the place you are going to visit, and ask him to blow the horn a little time before you are drawing near that place?" Tahsildar agreed to do so and asked Vallalar's pardon. Vallalar started his speech of the day only after the hungry and tired horn-blower had been fed with food at the Dharmashalai.

SANKARACHARIAR AND HIS DOUBTS

Once, when Sri Sankaracharia Vallalar (the religious head of Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam) was in Madras, he enquired whether there was any Sanskrit Pandit who could clear off his doubt in a Sanskrit book. One of his Brahmin devotees referred the name of Vallalar. Then Vallalar and his disciple Toluvur Velayuda

Mudaliar visited on Sankarachariar at his request. Sankarachariar's doubts in the Sanskrit text were cleared off.

NOTES ON VELAYUDHA MUDALIAR: Velayuda Mudaliar who was also a scholar in Sanskrit and Tamil became a fitting instrument of Vallalar on this occasion, and by His blessings and in His presence the said disciple too participated in explaining the passages to Sankarachariar.

DO NOT BEAT STUDENTS

Once, Vallalar, while at Madras, came to know that one Ponneri Sundaram Pillai who was a teacher, used to beat his young students with a cane. The said teacher and the so said students were respectively the son-in-law and the son of Vallalar's elder brother. Vallalar wrote a poem on the incident and sent it to the teacher through the boy who had reported the matter, admonishing him not to beat his students anymore, as beating goes against the fairness of his name "Sundaram". The said Sundaram Pillai threw away the cane and stopped beating once and for all, as soon as he received Vallalar's poem through the said boy whom he was about to beat again because he had gone out of the school without his permission.

KARANAPPATTU KANDASAMY PILLAI

Karanappattu Kandasamy Pillai, aspirant devotee of Vallalar, was a scholar and musician. He suffered from fainting. Medicines and treatment had failed. He approached Vallalar for grace. Vallalar looked at him with eyes of compassion and blessings and gave him sacred ash for the cure of his disease, assuring him further that he would be taken as a disciple and given suitable work. The disease was cured. Since then Kandasamy became a staunch and dedicated disciple of Vallalar.

Vallalar approved of him to sing His life and glory as a part of his sadhana. Kandasamy began to spread his message of "jeeva karunya" and ideals of the Sanmarga movement by lectures and through songs and Bajans (devotional music in congregation). By Vallalar's grace he got the inspiration to compose poetry and lyrics. He has written poems and keertans of more than a thousand stanzas on Vallalar's life, and songs of devotion and love in glory of Vallalar. He has compiled in one volume all Vallalar's work and published it in 1924. In that volume he has given authentic information on several incidents in Vallalar's life which he gathered personally from devotees and disciples who had lived and moved with Vallalar, and kept notes on informations about Vallalar in their notebooks. Kandasamy has published in his "Arutpa volume" a list of names of such persons in acknowledgement of the information given by them.

PURUSHOTTAMA REDDIAR: VALLALAR'S PERSONAL ATTENDANT

When Vallalar was staying at "Siddhi Valagam", at Mettukuppam, he was used to remain absorbed in the Bliss of Suddha Sivanubhava for some days continuously and then he would come out to give discourses to his disciples. Purushottama Reddiar who served Vallalar as his personal attendant during Vallalar's stay at Karungkuli and Vadalur, continued to attend on him at Mettukuppam also. In the last periods of his life, Vallalar was used to drink a sugar-solution prepared in hot boiling water, that is to say, the water was boiled so as to be reduced to three-fifth of its quantity and then the sugar was added to it. The attendant would prepare and take it to Vallalar by ming a forcep. Vallalar drank it as such in its boiling state. The said attendant would sweep and clean the

rooms and inner apartment where Vallalar used to remain absorbed in his blissful state, and feed in time the sacred lamp (originally lit by Vallalar) with oil and keep it trimmed and ever burning. One day he happened to enter Vallalar's room for his daily routine. It was just the time, after a blissful absorption, Vallalar had just opened his eyes of Grace when He met incidentally (or rather by an act of Grace) the eyes of his attendant. At once, his attendant was transported into a trance of higher consciousness, and he remained absorbed in it. Other devotees were surprised to know about the incident and asked Vallalar what was to be done with the said Purushottama Reddiar. Vallalar replied "Do not disturb him. After four or five days of unmoved and absorbed trance, he got up to move out, but yet he remained still in a state of silence continuously for months without speaking to anyone. It was this attendant who once, had asked Vallalar to show him Grace, by giving him a Sadhana, i.e., a way of practice for his spiritual development. Vallalar said, "You are as humble as I am. If you do sadhana (i.e., practice of yoga discipline such as meditation) you may receive some light within and the power to do some siddhis (i.e. lower siddhis of an occult nature) and you would grow proud of them to boast of and you would get ruined. So, you do not need any sadhana. You may just follow the practice of seeing all beings as your own self (i.e., cultivate the vision of equality with all beings) and get it as your habitual nature. One who gets in his nature this habit of seeing all beings alike, is certainly the omnipotent Divine". Then by Vallalar's blessings Purushottama Reddiar took up the work of receiving all the visitors and devotees coming to Vadalur with warmth and tenderness of love and served them with food and drinks at the Dharmashalai after making kind and due enquiries as to their needs in that respect. Thus, with his

attitude of equality, tenderness of love and dedicated and humble service to one and all alike he carried out many and varied functions, notably as secretary of the Dharmashalai and Satya Gnana Sabhai for many years in the later part of his life. It is not surprising that Vallalar poured on him his eyes of Grace and uplifted him to a state of higher consciousness, as happened in the foregoing incident at "Siddhi Valaga maliga ". In Karunguzhi, Vallalar had his house by the side of the road, and He was a friend to every man. People flocked to him for advice and relief. Reference to this may be found in some of his verses quoted earlier. People from distant places left their homes to be near him. They invited him to fonctions and musical recitals in their houses. Such invitations to him are extant. They considered it a blessing to be of service to him. Spending days and nights in meditation and composing poems, he gave discourses in the house or in the Sabhai at night, and they flocked to listen to him. In Venkata Reddiar's house in Karunguzhi, the mistress of the house, Muthiyalammal herself used to light the lamp in his room and keep near it a mud pot of oil, with which to refill the lamp. One day, the mouth of the pot broke, so Muthiyalammal wanted to change it. She bought a new pot, filled it with water and let it stand beside the lamp, in order to season it before use. Then she left the house for the next village. Writing his poems through the night, as he often did, Vallalar mechanically kept refilling the lamp with water, from the new pot instead of oil from the old. When Muthiyalammal returned the next morning, she found Vallalar absorbed in writing, and the lamp burning. She discovered his mistake which, without any conscious mess on his part, had resulted in this miracle. That's what he says, Vallalar who used to keep a record of his experiences and refers to this in a poem, attributing this kind of office to God, and not to his own

powers. Thozhuvur Velayuda Mudaliar and Madurai Chidambara Vallalargal also refer to this in their tributes to their master. One could fill pages with miracles that the legend attributes to him, but it would be wearisome. Appasami Chettiar, one of Vallalar's admirers, used to come to Karunguzhi from Cuddalore (then called Gudalur) to see his master. Having had his brother cured of an indolent sore on the tongue by the grace of Vallalar, he put his hospitality at Vallalar's service. Vallalar stayed with him for some months in Cuddalore in 1866, to widen his Mission. It appeared that towards the end of his Karunguzhi years, with the founding of the Sanmarga Sangam, Vallalar felt that he had sufficiently prepared himself for his mission in life. He spoke like any inspired prophet, with a sense of his mission derived from God and from his living in God:

"the Lord sent me to this world to help men that abuse the earth, Blotches of black within and white without, to restore them and set them on the path of the high quest, so that they may attain the fulfilment of the soul on the earth here and now. For this He blessed me with His Grace."

He gave his call in no uncertain terms:

"Men of the world, you have missed the truth, your body was fed on rot, your mind remain only at a surface level, your learning goes down, your joy is deception, your ears listen only to the tribal, your sight only look at the past. Hear the truth of the common final path. Seek the Grace so you may gain a life of rejoice and an undying body. And again: I say only what the Lord tells me, no words plus or minus Indeed, by myself, what wisdom do I have but what the Lord gives me?"

After founding the Sanmarga Sangam in 1865, he stayed in Karunguzhi for two years, visiting now and again the places in

the vicinity. During one of his visits to Cuddalore, he mentioned to the fellows of the Sangam his intention to build a free feeding house which would be opened to all, irrespective of caste, creed, country and habits. They suggested various places for its location. Finally, Vallalar himself chose an open plain, north of Vadalur, a village also called Parvathipuram, about thirty kilometers from Chidambaram. The open space was at the meeting of two highways, one from Madras to Kumbakonam, and the other from Manjakuppam to Vridhachalam. On getting to know this, the people owning the land (amounting to eighty kanis or one hundred and eight acres) at this site, made him a gift, in a deed dated 2 February 1867, bearing the signatures of forty owners. A temporary building of mud, thatched with reed-grass, was erected. The feeding of people in the temporary hutment, the construction of permanent structures, the digging of a well, pond and tank for the Hall were started on the same day with a ceremonial opening. A thousand printed invitations were issued to the public. Invitations, written by Vallalar by hand, were sent to sadhus or ascetics. It is stated that one thousand and six hundred people were fed daily for the first three years. The feeding of the hungry and whoever calls there continues to-day. At the opening of the Eating House on 23 May 1867, Chidambaram Venkatasubba Dikshitar read out extracts from Vallalar's tract Jivakarunya Ozhukkam (The Discipline of Compassion). The foremost Vallalar's message was compassion for life. This, he said, leads one to God. There were two aspects concerning compassion, he said. One is non-killing, including rejection of animal food, the other is relieving hunger. His tract on compassion has reached noble heights of poignancy. He named the Free Eating House Samarasa Veda Dharma Salai (Free House of the Good Fellowship). The word which connotes a free

feeding house in Tamil is chattiram. Avoiding this with its associations, he chose the word salai which means 'path'. He changed later the name as Samarasa Suddha Sanmarga Satya Dharma Salai, or Satya Dharma Salai (Path to Charity). The same year he founded a school, Sanmarga Bhodini (School for the Fellowship). The unique features of the school were that it was opened to all, irrespective of age, boys as well as old people, and that three languages were taught - Tamil, Sanskrit and English, specified in that order. Thozhuvur Velayuda Mudaliar, a reputed scholar in Tamil as well as in Sanskrit, and proficient in English, was in charge of it. The school however did not run for long. During this time Vallalar also planned to bring out a monthly magazine called Sanmarga Viveka Vridi. A prospectus was issued, signed by forty-nine people, including one Muslim, named Kadar Sahib, who undertook to contribute monthly towards bringing out the journal. But the journal was never published.