

Dr. Shuddhananda Bharati

Aum Jaya Aum

Mystic Treasure

Tamil Vedam

(Thiru Arul Chelvam)

Rhythmic English rendering of
the hymns of Tamil
Saints and sages



ASSA
Editions

Author's Notes

No hold have I except thy Grace O God pervading Time and Space.

Gold and silver and gems are treasures dug out of earthly mines. They adorn the body; but the body dies one day. This Mystic Treasure is the immortal wealth of Wisdom-lit souls. They are melodious sermons of the Spirit, the supernal voice of Master Mystics. We have a plethora of such hymnal treasures in Tamil. Their emotional symphony moves our hearts. Such is the rich legacy of spiritual treasure bequeathed to us by God-men and God-women like Appar, Sambandar, Sundarar, Manikkavachakar, Andal, Ammaiyar, Nakkirar, Alvars, Pattinattar, Tayumanar, Avvaiyar and inspired Saints of modern days. We have chosen in this Mystic treasure 676 such inspiring hymns suitable for singing, meditation, prayer and lectures. My books Revelations of Meikandar, the Grand Epic of Saivism and Alvar Saints, Saint Ramalinga, voice of Tayumanar etc., will give the reader a detailed account of the Siddhanta Philosophy and the lives of Tamil Saints. So without repetition, we go ahead directly to the Mystic Treasure.

I have taken a pearl-diver's plunge into the ocean of Tamil hymns and brought out in this handy volume fine gems with rhythmic English translation. This is meant for daily study and for use in temples. During my travels abroad, I often sang these hymns and simultaneously translated them into English so that Non-Tamilians were able to follow the significance of the sage-voice. These hymns are suitable for temple worship.

Temples are centres of spiritual radiation which purifies heart and mind and prepares the soul for the descent of the Divine Grace. During my recent tour in South Africa, I was singing *Thevaram* hymns before a large audience and explaining them in English. Mr. G. N. Naidu, gem of Kimberly, came forward to publish these hymns in a book form. Mr. Naidu with his wife Jagadambal is a large hearted philanthropist. He was a friend of Mahatma Gandhi and his family was associated with Gandhiji's movement in South Africa. He visited India in 1925 and saw all our leaders and scholars. He appeared before many commissions to plead for the Indian People. He was the President of the Indian Council in South Africa. He was presented to the Prince of Wales and the royal family in London. He attended the Queen's coronation in 1953. He has built a Gandhi Library for the reading public. He has raised an ideal Temple, the Siva Subrahmaniam Temple, in which he himself conducts Puja and Prayer. I call him Gem Naidu and to him this Mystic Treasure is dedicated. Mr. and Mrs. Gem Naidu visited India recently and graced the Yoga Samaj. They took a photo in the Meditation Hall which is printed here. Let many such patrons come forward to help our Jnana Yejna. Prosper all Large Hearted Souls. Now, friends, sing the hymns with me and enjoy Divine ecstasy.

Dr. Shuddhananda Bharati



Editor's Notes

The land of Tamil speech and people was in ancient times ruled by three famous lines of king, the Chera, Chola, and Pandiya. The land ruled by them was called Chera Nadu (Chera country), Chola Nadu (Chola country), and Pandiya Nadu (Pandiaya country) respectively. The landmass covered by the present-day Kerala State in the South India formed a major part of Chera Nadu, the Central and Northern parts of present Tamil Nadu were the then Chola Nadu and the Southern part of Tamil Nadu was the Pandiya Nadu.

Tamils are of Dravidian origin. Many historians claim that the Dravidians, before the dawn of the history of the Tamils, were spread all over India. For various reasons they split into small groups. Consequently, the original language also split into different languages. Tamil is found to have retained about 80 per cent of the features of the original Dravidian language. Then came the Sangam period. Sangam were Tamil academies, which according to Tamil legend, enabled poets and authors to gather periodically to publish their work. The earliest extant works of Tamil date back to the period between 200 BC and 200 AD. The literature of this period has been referred to as Sangam literature and the period in which these works were composed itself is referred to as the Sangam period alluding to the legends. The word Sangam is the Tamil form of the Sanskrit word Sangha, which means a group of persons or an association. The Tamil Sangam was an academy of poets and bards who flourished in three different periods and in

different places under the patronage of the Pandyan Kings. In the third Sangam it had 449 poets and the most important ones among them were Nakkirar, Iraiyanar, Kapilar, Paranaar, Sattanar, Auvikyar, etc.

The Alvars were twelve Vaishnava Saints, who, during the early medieval period of Tamil history (between the seventh and the tenth centuries AD), helped revive devotional Hinduism (bhakti) through their hymns of worship to Vishnu and his avatars. They included a woman (Andal). The collection of their hymns is known as Divya Prabhandham. The names of these twelve Alvars are: Poykai, Bhutam, Pey, Tirumazhisai, Nammalvar, Periyalvar, Andal (the only woman), Kulasekharan, Madhurakavi, Tondar-adi-podi, Tiruppaan and Tirumangai.

Then the Nayanars or Nayanmars, were Saivite Saints from Tamil Nadu, who were active between the fifth and the tenth centuries AD. According to the Tamil Saiva hagiography, *Periyapuram* written during the thirteenth century AD, there were 63 Nayanmars. *Periyapuram* narrates the history of each of these Nayanmars.

Dr. Shuddhananda Bharati offers to us a trip at the time of these great poets of Tamil. It is a jewel which shows the beauty of the literature of this period. Mystic spelling Treasure revives in us the crowned flame of the enthusiastic faith which one still currently finds in all these temples. These verses are like sugar softening our heart and nourishing it with divine energy. A beauty which seems remote and is even so near.

Christian Piaget



Song of Unity

*Unite. Unite, Unite, Oh Souls
Unite and play your roles
Unite in mind, unite in heart
Unite in whole, unite in part
Like words and tunes and sense in song
Let East and West unite and live long
Trees are many; the grove is one
Branches are many; tree is one
Shores are many; sea is one
Limbs are many; body is one
Bodies are many; self is one
Stars are many; sky is one
Flowers are many; honey is one
Pages are many; book is one
Thoughts are many; thinker is one
Tastes are many; taster is one
Actors are many; the drama is one
Nations are many; the world is one
Religions are many; Truth is one
The wise are many; Wisdom is one
Beings are many; breath is one
Classes are many; college is one
Find out this One behind the many
Then life shall enjoy peaceful harmony*

Presentation of Dr. Shuddhananda Bharati

11th May 1897 – 7th March 1990

The wise one to the cosmic age

Although more than 90 years old, in his school in the south of India, *Kavi Yogi Maharishi* (great divine visionary, wise poet), Dr. Shuddhananda Bharati worked like a young man of twenty. When he was asked his age, he answered: "My age is Courage!" The Yogi wrote several hundred works in English, French, Tamil, Hindi, Telugu and Sanskrit; five thousand songs, and fifteen hundred poems in French. The magnum opus of the man conscious of the presence of God in him, *Bharata Shakti*, (in 50,000 verses) described his ideal: only One Humanity living in communion with only One God in a transformed world! *Bharata Shakti* is a monumental and unique work. The Yogi depicts the essence of all the religions, of all the prophets and saints, all the approaches of yoga and all the cultures on an allegorical fabric. It is a book for any age which all spiritual researchers and all nations should read and meditate on. His commitment is summarized in his book celebrating his life, *Pilgrim Soul*. The three poems mentioned in the opening express perfectly his ideal. His mantra, *Aum Shuddha Shakti Aum*, nourishes our souls and guides our steps toward the inner joy *Ananda*. It means: The light of Grace and power of the pure supreme Almighty bless us of peace, happiness and prosperity! Let the beauty and greatness of soul of Dr. Bharati Shuddhananda bloom and scent the entire Earth of its divine message and his spiritual and unifying benefactor!

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Chapter I

Ambalam

1. Invocation

1

All the world adores and feels the endless Splendour that plays in cosmic space. His locks shine abright with moonlit waters. The Light that dances at *Ambalam* – His jingling lotus feet let us laud and adore.

2

He is *Shakti* and *Sivam*, the cosmic force and bliss. He is the First and the foremost, the Supreme, ever free unique One; he is the victorious *Ganesha*. Let Him grant us dynamic words to hail His holy golden feet.

3

He bears a tusker face and forehead eye. The Divine Lord, let us hail Him and pay homage unto His lotus feet. Then our life in the world shall be purified and all our aspirations shall be easily fulfilled.

4

Let us hail with canticles and bow our heads before the lotus feet of benevolent *Vani*, Goddess of learning, consort of *Brahma* the creator – *Saraswati* who speaks in the tongue of all beings.

5

Our life is an utter surrender unto the unique Lord, the Originator of the entire universe, sustaining and removing it, the endless creative player. That omnipotent One is our Master supreme.

6

The first and foremost among the three Divine forms (*Vishnu Rudra, Brahma*). Men who are detached from the lower plane, attain His bliss. He is our Father. He is the taste in water. He is Himself. O how can I mouth His glory and say He is like this?

7

He is the Originator of the *Veda*, the charming Lord of the milk ocean, He is cloud-hued, lotus-eyed, Lord of lords, the Sire of *Laxmi* (Goddess of prosperity). Let us adore His two lotus feet.

8

Eternal Bliss is theirs who live in love of God. They shall live in immortal felicity who are faithful devotees of the Lord of cosmic dance. All men hail their lasting glory.

2. The splendour beyond description

Splendour!

9

Splendour beyond description, compassion in form, Wonder manifest, the crest of divine *Vedas*, the beautiful dancer in the Hall of super-consciousness, let us hail His Saviour lotus feet!

We bow our heads

10

Siva is the symbol and goal of all the six religions. *Vedas* and *Agamas* conceive Him as impersonal. Inner knowledge knows Him as grace. He is the Mother and Father of creatures; He is ever as He is in His different aspects. We bow our heads at His saviour-feet.

(Six religions adore one God as Siva, Vishnu, Shakti, Ganesha, Kumara and Surya).

Omnipotent God

11

Existence plays as male and female; it comes, lives and goes. Hence there must be one supreme who creates and directs all. He is the first and last, He is the ancient one, ever free, immortal, omnipotent.

Let us meditate

12

His form is Truth-knowledge. He is the life of lives. He is inseparable from His self like coolness in water and heat in fire. He assumes a Mother form to beget the universe movable and immovable. He cherishes the slow, imperceptible creep of bliss and continues the world-play. He is the Light that plays in the inner ethereal void. Let us meditate upon Him in our heart!

The silent master

13

Under the *Banian-academy*, He sits in plenum silence and instructs the four sages who are adepts in *Veda* and its branches. He is the all and *Nihil*. He is Himself as He is. His wordless peace speaks His self-existence. Thought-free, let us meditate upon Him and cut the bonds of birth and death.

Ganesh wrote Mahabharata

14

Vyasa dictated *Mahabharata*, affirming it as the fifth *Veda* added to the four ancient *Vedas*. He was a true royal sage of ceaseless *Tapasya*. *Ganesha* wrote his *Mahabharata* with His sharp tusk as stylo upon Mount Meru. Let us adore *Ganesha* with the purity of our psychic love.

Goddess of learning

15

She was born up the Agastya Hill. She lived in Pandya's renown. She shone on the *Sangam* Seat of poets. She crawled along the flowing *Vaigai* as the *Thevaram* of *Jnanasambandar*. She came up on the horn of the Hog from the ocean – That Goddess of learning flourishes by my side.

The one and the many

16

If you say One He is One; if you say many He is Many. If you say no, He is not for you. If you say yes, yes He is if you believe He is this day. Yes He is this day, verily He is; if you believe, God exists, yes He exists. So how can we exist at all, if He is not homed in our body?

Sweet Lord

17

He is nectar sweet in the heart of sages that have conquered the senses, that are Truth-conscious. He is the Grace that protects them. Hail Splendour that shines up the high hill, hail jingling lotus feet that dance in the psychic hall.

Prosper All

18

Let the heavens shower unfailing rains. Let the earth give us plenty, let the king reign upholding justice. Let all beings be free from want, let the four Vedic virtues flourish and let auspicious *Tapasya* and sacrifice increase. And let the grand *Saiva* virtue spread all over the world! Prosper all, peace for all! Felicity for all!

3. Quatrains of Saint Appar

I fail to live when I do not hail

19

Supreme *Siva*, the glorious God of *Chidambaram*, the Lord of celestials, the Creator and Protector manifest in nature, in fire, wind, in the tossing sea, in high mountain chains, – He is the omnipresent Reality. The Intellect can rarely comprehend Him. Virtuous sages cognize Him in contemplation. He is the heart of *Vedas*. He is atom-subtle. He is a Reality far beyond mentality. He is sweet like milk and honey. He is an effulgent Splendour. We fail the day when we fail to hail Him.

Thou art my all

20

Thou art my father, my mother, my master, my fond uncle and my aunt. Thou art amiable women, glittering treasure, my family, kith and kin, kindred and nation. Thou providest the means of my life and enjoyment. Companion of my existence, Thou leadest my path and openest my heart to Thy love. Thou art this gold, this gem, this pearl and this wealth. Thou art, O Bullrider, my Lord, my God.

We are subject to none

21

Subjects we are to none. Death we fear not. Hell we suffer not. We are not weaklings. We know no disease. We are serfs to none. We enjoy eternal bliss; no misery for us! For we are servitors of the King of all beings who is bound to none. He wears white chanks in His ears. *Shankara* – we are His and we take refuge at His lotus feet.

O Incomparable!

22

Thou art the unique One, the One without the second. Thou art the seed principle of thinkers. Emperor Thou art. Thou art nectar sweet in master thinkers. Thou art the four *Vedas* and six *Angas*. Thou art gold, gem and material enjoyments too. Thou art the laudable Truth in the world. Poor me, how can I mouth Thy glory besides saying O Lord Thou art such and such, this and that.

(*Four Vedas: Rig, Yajus, Sama and Atharvana. Six Angas: Siksha, Chandas, Vyakarana, Niruktam, Jyotisham and Kalpam*).

I am bad

23

I am bad by nature and pedigree. My aim is evil, laden with flaws. I am a wicked impostor with bad propensities. I am not sensible. I don't keep good company. I am not a beast but I am beastly. I prattle despicable scandals. Poor wretch, I cringe but never give. Miserable me, why was I born at all, my Lord!

She lost herself in Him

24

First she heard His name and then His mien and merits. Then she heard of the beautiful town where He lived. She became love-mad, left her mother and father, renounced her traditions and routines. She came out in the open, forgot herself, spoiled her name. She lost herself in utter surrender at His feet.

O my wealth!

25

O Treasure, my Wealth, honey-sweet, Brilliant Light of celestials, effulgent Splendour in form. Thou art my body and psyche, my kinship, the Substance in my heart's core. O *Kalpakam*, Granter of all wishes, my eye, pupil, the light and form in my eyes, my everything, O Grace. Save me from contacts with evil deeds and thoughts, O Lord of Celestials residing in Avadu Turai.

I move as Thy instrument

26

Who plays not when played by You? Led to dance, who will not dance? When calmed, who will not keep quiet? When driven ahead, who will not run forward? When melted, whose heart shall not melt? Who will not sing Your glory when You inspire them? Who will not obey when You mandate? Who will not see when You show the Light? Who can behold when the front-eyed *Siva* does not show?

Such is Thy grace

27

I am Your servitor. You have filled me with Your love, O Father! You have bathed me with Your benign looks. O Rarity, You have become my surety, easy to move closely. You have possessed me with Your grace. I am mad, I am a simpleton, a devil, a dog. You forbear all my faults. Such is Your graceful compassion towards me!

They are adorable, divine

28

Let them give me fabulous wealth, and over-lordship of the earth and heaven. We care a dust for these evanescent riches heaped by mammon who do not love *Mahadeva* (God). On the other hand, let them be low born, eating diseased cows, let them be wreaking with foul rotten leprosy; if only they are lovers of *Siva* who bears the Ganges on His tuft, if they are true devotees, they are the divinities whom we adore.

He is in my sight

29

He is *Narayana*, *Brahma* the author of the four *Vedas*. He is the ship of Grace that rows us across the vast ocean of knowledge. He is the perfect One, the virtuous, ancient Pure One, the Messenger, the moon, the sun, Himself as He is, the One who makes fit all worthy men, the lord of celestials at *Kalahasti* – lo He is in my sight!

How is my Lord

30

He is in the perfume of the lily blossom. He is not away from the heart of lovers. His words are holy *Vedas*. His work is to lead us to pure life. He burnt with bow the triple demon-forts. He is thick darkness and clear light. Such is the self-created Almighty!

31

He is the speaker from my mouth, Thinker from my mind, He fulfils my aspirations. He knows my heart. He is immaculate. He is the Bullrider, shining with a crescent on His crest. He has a motherly affection for me. He is austere in nature. He is higher afar than leading celestials. I am fortunate in adoring the feet of such a Lord *Siva* present in the beautiful city of South *Kudal*.

32

I control breath, concentrate, contemplate, imagine You from in the heart. The soul is offered in surrender into your hands, You live in tune with those who are ever conscious of You with each breath. You do not ride *Indra's* tusker and rule the celestial heaven. You ride a bull and rule over the beautiful *Aarur* on the earth. O rider of the elephant on Mount Kailas, none can behold You but with the eye of Your Grace.

Behold Him within

33

Behold Him, bright like a trimmed light. Behold Him the crest-jewel of age long immortals. He is the God rare for the human sight. Behold, He is easily accessible to those who meditate. Behold, He accords aspirers what they

aspire for. His is the Path of Truth. He is the Mind of the mind of sublime hearts that have surpassed all austerities. Behold Him, the consort of *Shakti* at the woodlands of *Vedas*.

The One who is all

34

You have become all the worlds. You pervade *Kanchi*. You are aware of the goodness in the Good. You shine as the splendour of Wisdom. You snap evil deeds, planting your feet upon my head. You give us lasting wealth, O golden light of the City of Five Streams!

35

You are sounds and rhythms. You stand effulgent as the unique Lord. You are fragrant in all flowers. You are the son-in-law of *Malayan* the Mountain King. You are immensely sweet to speak and laud. On my head You have planted Your feet, Hail Light of all nations, golden effulgence resplendent in the City of Five Streams!

Grace sees Him

36

He is one with *Shakti* of the painted eyes. He lives in the crema-torium of *Kanchi*, the Lord of matted tuft. He is not away from me. He is incomparable, not one personality, not confined to one place. He has not His like. Such is His form, hue, and demeanour. Unless the vision of His Grace opens, who can word-paint and maintain He is such and such in nature and colour declaring, "This is Our Lord."

They are born only to die

37

Vain is their day when they fail to utter His name *Siva* and chant the five lettered *mantra Aum Nama Sivaaya*. Vain is their life if they fail to speak even once, the glory of the fire-bright God and visit His temple and adore Him with fresh flowers before taking food. Vain is their life if they smear not the holy ashes which ward off fell and foul diseases. These foul dregs are born but as victims of vile ailments and they die only to keep on the routine of miserable rebirths.

Pray and pray

38

Do you want to absolve obstinate sins? Do you want to reach higher planes? Do you want to annul bad besieging acts? Listen, O heart: Pray and pray thus unremittingly: "O Snake-girdled *Siva*, the pure One sanctifying the City beautiful, cool with gardens, You are my kith and kin, my prop and protection; no God but You shall I imagine, and to You I offer my love and surrender."

39

Come, my heart to live a lasting life if you please. Visit daily our Lord's temple. Before dawn, clean it, wipe it smoothly, weave wreaths, sing hymns, hailing God, bend your head in adoring fervour, dance in ecstasy, and exclaim: "Hail *Shankara* ancient One with Ganges on the tuft, God of *Aarur*, hail *Siva*".

Enter Thy Grace

40

How shall I think of You; what can my mind tell You, my Lord? I have no other refuge besides Your adorable feet. You have opened nine gates in one body. I cannot feel when You close them. O Goodness, dominating *Pumpugalur*, O Virtue I find final beatitude at Your feet.

O Heart!

41

O Lord residing as Heart in my heart, You are not away from the mind of true lovers. Hail Benevolent One; hail beloved Dear. Hero challenging the prowess of Heaven's king, rider of the white bull, higher than the highest, with Ganges on the tuft. Hail Lord of *Tiruvaiyaar*, You are consciousness in my heart's core.

4. Fatal disease cured

42

I committed so many evils out of ignorance. And yet You have given me refuge at Your feet. I shall hence adore You with unswerving loyalty always, day and night, O Saviour! I cannot bear this colic pain that grips, twists, and wrings my bowels. O Redeemer, I am a suppliant at Your feet. Bless me, O *Siva* abiding at *Virattaanam* on the bank of the *Kedilam* River.

43

I have enthroned You in my heart. I think of You every minute. This cunning vicious canker, this colic pain twists my entrails and eats into my vitals. I cannot bear it. Ward off this vile disease, O Lord and say 'Fear not'.

Hail Saviour Siva residing in *Virattaanam* on the bank of the River *Kedilam*.

44

I have never forgotten to adore You with water, flowers and incense. I have never failed to hail You with sweet Tamil hymns. In good and bad I have not forgotten You. My tongue never forgets to laud Your holy name. You take food in the skull-bowl, O God. Ward off the colic pain that torments me. I faint with pain, O Lord residing at *Virattaanam* on the bank of the *Kedilam*.

Mystic Treasure

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