

## THE ĀLVĀRS AND THE FOLLOWERS OF RĀMĀNUJA

Rāmānuja, at the close of his career, devoted his main attention to the consolidation of his missionary work. He remained at Śrī Raṅgam and organised temple worship on the basis of Vaiṣṇavite Āgamas and made the hymns of the Ālvārs part and parcel of daily whorship in the temples. The steps which Rāmānuja took in order to popularise his teachings indicate that he was as great a practical organizer as he was a synoptic thinker. He divided the Vaiṣṇavite world into a number of Ācaryic dioceses, and appointed pious householders who were his disciples as heads, or *śikhāsanādhipatis* as they were called, to popularise Vaiṣṇavism and Viśiṣṭādvaita. These spiritual leaders took up the task of teaching the Vaiṣṇavite religion and philosophy in the villages and homes throughout the length and breadth of this holy land.

(1) *The followers of Rāmānuja*

KŪRATTĀLVĀN: Rāmānuja had, during his life time, in Kūrattālvān, a comrade, scholar and a disciple deeply devoted to him, who was also known as Śrī Vatsānka mīra. He became a disciple of Rāmānuja when the latter assumed the ascetic order of life and was living at Kāñci<sup>1</sup> and studied *vedānta* under him.<sup>2</sup> He assisted Rāmānuja in writing the *Śrī Bhāṣya*<sup>3</sup>. According to one version he accompanied Rāmānuja to Kāśmir and studied *Bodhāyana-ṛṣi*, a gloss on the *Brahma-sūtras* which was available only there. He committed the whole *Ṛṣi* to memory when the authorities in charge of the manuscript did not permit Rāmānuja to take it with him. He helped Rāmānuja in writing the *Śrī*

1. G.P. p.109.

2. *ibid.* p.111.

3. *ibid.* pp.139 and 140.

*Bhāṣya* by reciting the relevant passages of the *Vṛtti*.<sup>4</sup> When Rāmānuja was ordered by Kulōttuṅka to appear before him and admit Śiva's supremacy, Kūrattālvān apprehended insecurity to Rāmānuja's person through persecution at the hands of the king. He had his plain clothes exchanged for the ascetic robes of Rāmānuja and appeared before the king and had to lose his eyes when he was not able to create conviction in favour of Viṣṇu in the mind of the king who refused to be convinced. His devotion to the Lord was such that he was able to visualise the divine vision of Lord Varadarāja at Kāñci and describe Him to Rāmānuja.<sup>5</sup>

Kūrattālvān wrote *Pañcastava* which comprises (i) *Śrī Vaikunṭhastava*, (ii) *Atimānuṣastava*, (iii) *Sundarabāhustava*, (iv) *Varadarājastava*, and (v) *Śrīstava* which are respectively in praise of the Lord in Vaikunṭha, the supreme exploits of the Lord, Śrī Sundararaja in Tirumāliruñcōlai, Śrī Varadarāja in Kāñci and Goddess Lakṣmī. His devotion to Nammālvār is revealed in his reference to the feet of the Ālvār as adorning the heads of people who are proficient in the three *Vedas*. It is treated as the eternal wealth belonging to the enlightened people and as the holy refuge for people who are without shelter.<sup>6</sup> The Ālvār is fancied to be the boundless ocean which is filled with the sweet water of devotion that is animated by his marvellous compositions rich in love for God. This ocean is a treasure house containing the gems in the form of meanings of the *Veda* and is the divine abode for Viṣṇu.<sup>7</sup> These two passages show that the compositions of the Ālvār are the *Vedas* themselves and are held in great respect by those who are proficient in the *Vedas*. The holy Feet of Śrī Raṅganātha are described to dwell in the mind of the holy saint Saṭhakōpa and as immersed in the devotion of the Ālvār.<sup>8</sup> The *kinṇara* women set the compositions of Saṭhakōpa to the appropriate *śvaras*, and sentiments, and began

4. *ibid.* p.140.

5. *ibid.* pp.116, 150.

6. *Vaikunthastava*, 2.

7. *ibid.* 3.

8. *Atimānuṣastava*, 3.

to sing them in the slopes of the hills at Tirumāṭiručōlai. At this, even the stones in the hills melted.<sup>9</sup> Kūrattālvān finds no difference between the presentations of Viṣṇu in *arca* form in several sacred shrines. For instance, Kallaḷakar, in this shrine is identified with Śrī Raṅganātha<sup>10</sup> and Śrī Śrīnivāsa,<sup>11</sup> and Śrī Varadarāja<sup>12</sup> and also with the Deity reclining in the milky ocean.<sup>13</sup> This concept of the Deity is peculiarly Vaiṣṇavite in its nature and is found evolved out of the similar treatment found in the compositions of the Āḷvārs.<sup>14</sup> He asks Śrī Varadarāja which place His Lotus-Foot find most comfortable, from among the four – the heart of the people, the *Upaniṣad*, head of Saṭhakōpa and Hastigiri (at Kāñci).<sup>15</sup> He appeals to Śrī Varadarāja for His Grace, as he had taken shelter under Rāmānuja, a lamp for the family of Yāmunamuni who came in the line of Nāthamuni. Nāthamuni was a member of the family of Saṭhakōpa who was a servant of Lakṣmī and Śrī Varadarāja. Here Kūrattālvān means that Nāthamuni was the spiritual descendant of Saṭhakōpa.<sup>16</sup>

Kūrattālvān composed two *tanīyans*<sup>17</sup> in praise of the perceptors and Rāmānuja and one<sup>18</sup> for recitation before *Periya-tirumōḷi* is taken up for singing. The latter tells us that the compositions of Tirumaṅkaiyālvār contain the five features of Tamil poetry, namely, *eḷuttu*, *col*, *poruḷ*, *yāppu* and *aṇi*. They would act on the systems of others like fire on cotton wool. They are like lamps dispelling the internal

9. *Sundarabāhustava*, 12.

10. *ibid.* 119.

11. *ibid.* 117.

12. *ibid.* 118, 126 and 127.

13. *ibid.* 119.

14. cf. M. Tv. 76, 77; Mu. Tv. 61, 62.

15. *Varadarājastava*, 59.

16. *ibid.* 102.

17. Both are in Sanskrit. One of them begins with the words '*Lakṣmī-nāthasamārambhām*' and the other with '*Yōnityamacyūta*'.

18. This is in Tamil and begins with the words '*Neñcukku truḷ*'.

darkness and are nectar to counteract the effects of the poison of life in this world.

The works of Āḷvān show the extent to which he was inspired by the works of earlier writers belonging to Vaiṣṇavism. The existence of the entire world is dependent on the will of God,<sup>19</sup> and could not be changed or cancelled by any one.<sup>20</sup> That the devotees of God are to be worshipped with fervour gets emphasis in the works of the Āḷvārs<sup>21</sup> and this influenced Kūrattāḷvān in describing the devotees of God as ever wishing to be subordinates to other devotees. It is said here that such people are in fact the deities for this devoted soul.<sup>22</sup> There is reference to the four-fold *vyūha* doctrine with the six qualities present in Vāsudeva and two each among the other three.<sup>23</sup> The path of self-surrender is the course to be adopted by the selves who wish to get *mokṣa*.<sup>24</sup> The Lord has nothing to be sought after. Creation, maintenance and destruction of the world take place at His free will. He descends down to the earth to mingle freely with His devotees who are in various kinds of families.<sup>25</sup> All the positions held by an individual are the results of the serving of God.<sup>26</sup> The Lord dispenses justice to the devotees, creates the worlds and protects them only to please Lakṣmī.<sup>27</sup> The significance of *arcā* is revealed in Āḷvān's describing the Feet of Śrī Kallalakar as fascinating with shanks appearing like the lotus stalks, the Feet resembling the lotuses kept upside down.<sup>28</sup> Such charming descriptions of *arcā* form

19. *Śrī Valkunṭhastava*, 36.

20. *ibid.* 55.

21. I. Tv. 43; Nan. Tv. 91.

22. *Atimānuṣastava*, 77 cf. Periyal. Tm. 4. 4; 10; TVM. 3. 7; 8. 10; 10.

23. *Varadarājastava*, 16.

24. *ibid.* 84, 92.

25. *ibid.* 64.

26. *ibid.* 81.

27. *Śrīstava*. 1, 8.

28. *Sundarabāhustava*, 61.

abound in *Sundarabāhustava*,<sup>29</sup> *Śrī Vaikunṭhastava*,<sup>30</sup> and *Varadarājastava*<sup>31</sup>. Kūrattālvāṇ was in no small measure indebted to Yāmuna's *Śōtraratna*.<sup>32</sup>

**ANANTĀLVĀṆ**: Among the disciples of Rāmānuja, Anantālvāṇ received instructions from his preceptor and went to Tirumalai Hills and dedicated Himself to the service of Lord Śrinivāsa. He maintained a flower garden for the Lord and was arranging for the daily offering of garlands to the Lord. In a *tanḷyan* composed by him and sung when the *Tiruvāymoḷi* is taken up for recitation, he offers his respects to the great Rāmānuja for making his mind steady for the study of that sacred work, the *Tamil Veda*.<sup>33</sup>

**MUTALIYĀNTĀṆ**: Mutaliyāntāṇ, also known as Dāsarathi, was the nephew and disciple of Rāmānuja. He composed a *tanḷyan*<sup>34</sup> to be sung before *Mutal-tiruvantāti* is taken up for recitation. This verse says that Poykaiyālvār was born in the town of Kāñci which was surrounded by groves of the Kētaki (plant with sword-like leaves) plants. This Ālvār was the best among the poets. He composed an *Antāti* in a hundred verses of fine Tamil in order to make the devotees of the Lord live peacefully. Or, it can mean that they could get life in Vaikunṭha. He explained to Empār, the cousin of Rāmānuja that in the verse, TVM 2.9: 2, Nammālvār requests God to put him in the path of devotion (*bhakti*), that is, to help him in being devoted to Him. He says that he could not himself adopt it. Mutaliyāntāṇ says that if one had fallen into a well, it would be better if two persons, instead of one, lift up that person.<sup>35</sup> It seems that the Ālvār

29. cf. *ibid.* 37 to 53.

30. cf. *Śrī Vaikunṭhastava*, 67 to 74.

31. cf. *Varadarājastava*, 21 to 46.

32. cf. *Śōtraratna*, 29 to 44.

33. This verse begins with 'Ēynta perunkīrti'. The Sundapalaiyam edition attributes this verse to the authorship of Tirukkurukaipirāṇpīlāṇ. The *Itu* on TVM 5. 3: 11 contains a reference to his view on the interpretation of this verse.

34. This begins with the words 'Kaltacēr'.

35. *Itu* on TVM. 2. 9: 2.

means that Lakṣmī and Nārāyaṇa should lift him up from bondage. This could be taken as a proof to show that Lakṣmī and Nārāyaṇa together represent Brahman

**KIṬĀMPI ĀCCĀN :** Kiṭāmpi Āccān,<sup>36</sup> also called Praṇa-tārttihara (of Ātreya gotra), looked after the work of preparing and serving food to Rāmānuja. His proficiency in *Vedānta* was such that he was conferred the title of '*Vedānta Udayaṇa*' by his preceptor Rāmānuja.<sup>37</sup> His *taniyaṅ* for Nammālvār's *Tiruviruttam*<sup>38</sup> says that people come out of the womb of their mother and fall into the deep pit of sensual love (*kāma*). Then they become old. The author calls upon these people to recite a portion of the *Tiruviruttam* of Nammālvār so that what they should get would not be obstructed and they could live in the Vaikunṭha.

**YAJÑAMŪRTTI :** Yajñamūrtti, an Advaita scholar, challenged Rāmānuja for a debate which took place for eighteen days at the end of which he was defeated and became a disciple of Rāmānuja. He entered the order of the ascetics with the name Aruḷalapperumāl Emperumāṇār. He learnt from Rāmānuja the Four Thousand verses of the Ālvārs.<sup>39</sup> He composed a *taniyaṅ*<sup>40</sup> for Nammālvār's *Tiruvāciriyam* where he says that the Ālvār was born in the world for uplifting the suffering humanity and in the *āciriyappā* mode, he explained the intricate meaning of the *Śāstras* which would not otherwise be known.<sup>41</sup> He wrote two works called *Jñānasāram* and *Pramēyasāram*. The former,<sup>42</sup> which is in forty verses in Tamil, deals with

36. He was born in the year *Hēvilampi* corresponding to 1058 A.D. The word '*Kiṭāmpi*' is the corrupt form of the word '*ghatāmbu*' which means water (*ambu*) kept or brought in a jar (*ghaṭa*). Praṇa-tārttihara, the disciple of Rāmānuja, was asked by Tirukkoṭṭiyūr Nampī to be in charge of serving food to Rāmānuja. He used to take water in the jar for him and hence was known as '*ghaṭāmbu*'.

37. G.P. p.193.

38. This verse begins with the phrase '*karuvirutta*'.

39. G.P. pp.127 to 129.

40. The verse begins with the word '*Kācinīyōr*'.

41. His interpretations are cited in *Ītu* on TVM. 8 1: 6.

42. This is printed with the commentary by Maṇavālamāmuṇikaḷ.

the doctrine of self-surrender, greatness of Ācārya and the need to render service to God. Any utterance by a devotee of God shall be held as authentic, irrespective of nature. The latter work<sup>43</sup> deals with the import of the *Tirumantiram*.

**VANKIPURATTU NAMPI:** He was a disciple of Rāmanuja, and is mentioned as the author of a *Nitya*, a work dealing with the daily routine life of a Vaiṣṇavite. This work, which it now lost, requires a man to follow the *Pāñcarātra* mode of life and worship Hari.<sup>44</sup> Thus shaping one's life, one would not suffer at all.<sup>45</sup> His remarks on some of the passages in the *Tiruvāymoḷi* are referred to in the *Ītu*.<sup>46</sup> He declared that *arthapañcaka* is the matter dealt with in the *Vedas* and *Tiruvāymoḷi*.<sup>47</sup>

**PILLĀI TIRUNARAIYŪR ARAIYAR:** He was a disciple of Rāmanuja who composed two *tanḱyans* for the two *Mataḱs* of Tirumaḱkaiyālvār. The one<sup>48</sup> that is to be sung when *Cīriya-tirumaḱal* is to be recited states that Tirumaḱkaiyālvār composed this piece. The Ālvār wears a garland of muḱji flowers. He is liberal in gifts without having any feeling of uneasiness (*lit.* the mind blazing forth like the fuel burning at mid-day). He is rich. He is the destroyer of ignorance. He has a lance to fight with others. The other *tanḱyan*<sup>49</sup> is sung before *Periya-tirumaḱal* is taken up for recitation. This is in the words of a bride addressing her lady-companions. The purport of this verse is this: If the Deity at Tirunarayiyūr Who is extolled by the denizens of heaven and Goddess Earth does not show pity in seeing her precarious condition, she would take recourse to '*maḱalūrtal*'. Some of his remarks on some of the passages in the *Tiruvāymoḷi* are found recorded in the commentaries. In a verse TVM. 4.9: 8 Nammālvār

43. Cited by Vedānta Deśika in his RTS. p.853.

44. *ibid.* pp.499, 813, 1181 and 1182.

45. *ibid.* p.1365.

46. Vide *Ītu* on TVM 4.8: 9 and 9.2: 8.

47. Vide Bk I. p. 95.

48. This begins with the words '*Muḱḱic ceḱumalarō*'.

49. This begins with '*Ponḱulakil*'.

appeals to the Lord for his release from this world to attain His Feet in the Paramapada. The phrase "*imaiyōr vāḷ tanḷmuṭ-ṭalk kōṭṭal*" in the verse denotes this universe. In a fort, those inside and those outside of it find difficulty in coming in and going out; the ocean of *samsāra* is one similar to that. Araiyaṛ remarks that no one is able to disentangle the intricately woven nest of the sparrow. When therefore the Almighty has woven a net about our soul, in due regard to the acts of every one of us, how can one with no back-bone in him disentangle this net? Only He can do it when we clasp His holy Feet.<sup>50</sup>

**EMPĀR:** He was the cousin of Rāmānuja. He was originally known as Govindan. He was converted into a Saivite by Yādavap-prakāsa and was the priest in the temple at Kāḷahasti.<sup>51</sup> His maternal uncle Tirumalai Nampi persuaded him to become a Vaiṣṇavite and brought him to Tirumalai.<sup>52</sup> At the instance of his uncle, he became a disciple of Rāmānuja, and took to the order of ascetics under the name Empār which is a contracted form of the word 'Emperumānār' by which Rāmānuja was known. Thus the confusion was avoided which would have been there, had both Rāmānuja and his cousin were to be known by the same name. Empār's devotion to Rāmānuja was intense and inspiring and so was held to represent the shadow of Rāmānuja's feet, thereby meaning that he did not leave his master at any time. No wonder then that he wished to pass away following the death of Rāmānuja and he did so through the Grace of Lord Raṅganātha.<sup>54</sup> It will not therefore be surprising to find him addressing Rāmānuja in a *taniyan*<sup>55</sup> which is to be sung before Tirumaṅkaiyālvār's *Periya-tirumolli* is taken up for recitation. He appeals here to Rāmānuja as the protector for him and his disciples and as an eminent performer of

50. *Iṭu* on TVM. 4.9: 2

51. G.P. pp. 90-91.

52. *ibid.* pp. 115 to 118.

53. *ibid.* p. 135.

54. G.P. pp. 196 to 198.

55. The verse begins with the words '*Eṅkaḷ katiyē*'.



penance who safe-guarded the Vaiṣṇavite system from the attacks of rival faiths by clearing all the doubts raised at that time. Rāmānuja is requested to bless him with a mind which could retain the thousand verses of Tirumaṅkaiyālvār. He is said to have admired the path of self-surrender for adoption which would be helpful to the individual who takes to it and those belonging to him.<sup>56</sup> This is rather a difficult task, as besides one's own affair, one has to take the responsibility for the uplift of others also. Empār offers an analogy to explain this. A master ordered his servant to bring sesame of a certain quantity. When he found that the servant could not carry it, he ordered him to bring oil of that quantity which is of less weight and so could be easily brought. The path of self-surrender is thus described to be an easier mode for obtaining *mokṣa*.

The later commentaries on the *Tiruvāymoḷi* contain much information regarding Empār's views and interpretations of Nammālvār's hymns. When a question arose as to who should be treated as the first Spiritual Preceptor for the soul in the lecture-assembly of Empār and in the discussion, some held that the Ācārya shall be treated as the foremost among the preceptors while others opined that the godly man who helps us to take us to the Spiritual Preceptor for acceptance is to be treated to be so. But Empār declared that the Supreme Person who is seated in our hearts and Who unseen, gives us the impulse *not to resist*, but *to yield* to the proposals for good services offered by the visible preceptors or helpers could be taken as the First Preceptor.<sup>57</sup> It will not be difficult for any one who had made a thorough study of the *Vedas* and *śāstras* to determine the nature of the Supreme Being, while many such scholars are still indecisive in arriving at the correct conclusions, the women and men of no learning who have become the followers of Rāmānuja have unflinching faith in the concept of Supreme Being and treat other deities as mere brick or stone of which the hearth is made.<sup>58</sup> The

56. RTS., p. 420.

57. *Iṭu* on TVM. 2.3; 2 cf. Periyāl. Tm. 5.2: 8.

58. *ibid.* on TVM. 4.10.

*Tiruvāymoḷi* describes the lot of a devotee<sup>59</sup> which is presented as that of a beloved who is much afflicted with love in separation. The trees also sympathise with her lot. Empār explains how the trees also are affected. Even persons, whose minds are not smoothened by self-control, shed tears at this verse. There need be no doubt regarding the reaction of trees.<sup>60</sup> According to Empār, the self was treated in the first four verses of TVM 8.8 as mode of God and the next four describe the nature of self which could not be separated from God.<sup>61</sup>

**PARĀCARA PAṬṬAR :** Parācara Paṭṭar, who was the elder son of Kūrattālvān, was born in 1122 A.D.<sup>62</sup> and made substantial contribution to Vaiṣṇavism within the short span of his life of twenty-eight years.<sup>63</sup> Since his father passed away while yet he was young, he became the disciple of Empār, the cousin of Rāmānuja. He was a dialectician of high order as is known through his *Tattvaratnākaram* now lost and on independent treatise on Viśiṣṭādvaita metaphysics. He is the author of two lyrics, entitled *Śrī Raṅgarājastava*<sup>64</sup> and *Śrī Guṇaratnakośa* in praise of Lord Raṅganātha and Śrī Raṅganāyaki respectively. His *Aṣṭaśloki* brings out the significance of the *Tirumantram*. His *Bhāgavadguṇadarpaṇa* is a commentary on the *Viṣṇusahasranāma*. He calls Saṭhakōpa a sage (*rṣi*) who by his insight into the world which has beyond the human understanding visualized the *Tamil Veda*. This *Veda* is called by Parācara Paṭṭar "*Brahmasaṁhītā*" as it is *Veda* and as it deals with Brahman. This *Veda* has thousand recensions and is identical with the *Sāma-veda*. This *Veda* also represents the reality of the yearning to commune with Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Parācara

59. TVM. 6.5: 9.

60. *Iṭi* on TVM. 6.5: 9. cf. Kālidāsa: *Raghuvamsa* 7: 70.

61. *ibid.* on TVM. 8.8: 5.

62. *Satsampradāya Mukṭāvālī* p. 13.

63. Tradition records him to have lived for 28 years. This is questioned. See *History of Sri Vaiṣṇavism*. pp. 40-41.

64. V. 1:36 refers to Tirumaṅkaiyālvār as having built the jewelled halls and ramparts.

Paṭṭar treats the *Tiruvāymoli* as *apauruṣeya*.<sup>65</sup> Lord Raṅganātha is described to be shining having been praised by the hymns in Sanskrit and Tamil, the latter evidently referring to the hymns of the Ālvārs.<sup>66</sup> Nammālvār and other Ālvārs are referred to as the foremost among men.<sup>67</sup> There is a *punnaga* tree in the temple at Śrī Raṅgam which Parācara Paṭṭar describes as acquiring its own fragrance as a result of watering it with the thousand verses of Nammālvār. It means that the compositions of Saṭhakōpa are frequently recited in the temple and that recitation produces a celestial atmosphere near the place where the *punnaga* tree is situated.<sup>68</sup> The Supreme Person (*Paramapuruṣa*), Who is reclining in Śrī Raṅgam is the same as the Deity lying on the banyan leaf, in the womb of Devaki, at the head of the *Vedas* (*Upaniṣads*), lives with Lakṣmī and is in the body of the compositions of Nammālvār.<sup>69</sup> These show that Paṭṭar was much influenced by the compositions of this saint.

Though Parācara Paṭṭar did not leave behind any work in Tamil on the compositions of the Ālvārs, his views and interpretations are frequently referred to by the later commentators, Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai and Vaṭakkut-tiruvittipillai. They are highly suggestive of the intellectual eminence but are not actually cited by his disciple Nañciyar in the commentary on *Ārāyirap-paṭi*. On TVM 1.6:1 which tells us that those who worship the Lord offer him water, incense and flowers, Paṭṭar remarks that one of these could be offered and the option must be meant to avoid the devotee from his fingers getting pricked by the thorn while plucking the flowers and that this must be the sense of the passage which declares that a flower which has association with the thorn shall not be offered to the deity.<sup>70</sup> Nammālvār states that the decad

65. *Śrī Raṅgarājastava* 1:6.

66. *ibid.* 1:16.

67. *ibid.* 1:41.

68. *ibid.* 1:49.

69. *ibid.* 1:78.

70. *Twenty-Four Thousand* on TVM 1.6:1.

TVM 1.6 is free from the three defects, namely, those which pertain to the author, the matter and composition. These defects are denoted by the words 'itu', 'avam' and 'ētam' respectively. There was not a definite and acceptable interpretation for these words which were taken by some scholars to refer to the matter, author and composition respectively. Parācara Paṭṭar interpreted the word 'ētam' as referring to the composition and the words 'itu' and 'avam' as related to the author.<sup>71</sup> Perhaps his intention was to leave aside the matter here. The Lord is the subject matter and it is sacrilegious to mention Him, even though it is sought to be shown that there is no defect pertaining to Him. Nammālvār refers in TVM 2.5:10 to the Lord as neither male, nor female nor eunuch and describes Him as having dissimilarities from things known to us. Parācara Paṭṭar describes the word 'allan' which means 'he is not' as indicative of the Lord Who is *Puruṣōttama*.<sup>72</sup>

Parācara Paṭṭar is the author of two *tanīyaṅs* in Sanskrit and two in Tamil. The first one in Sanskrit is a prayer offered to the Ālvārs.<sup>73</sup> This mentions ten Ālvārs and Rāmānuja, who is raised to the status of the Ālvār due to *Rāmānuca-nūṇṇantāli* composed in his honour by Tiruvaraṅkattamutanār. The other Sanskrit *tanīyaṅ* is in praise of Āṇṭāl<sup>74</sup> and is recited before *Tiruppāvai* is undertaken for recital. The composition is elegantly worded and is highly suggestive of Parācara Paṭṭar's special liking for, and interest in, this composition. Āṇṭāl arouses Kṛṣṇa from His sleep and conveys to Him her existence for another's sake which means that she belongs to Him alone. This suggests that she is the *sēṣa* while He is *sēṣin*. Parācara Paṭṭar remarks that this state of being *sēṣa* is established through the passages in the several *Upaṅ-*

71. *Itu* on TVM. 1.6:11.

72. *Twenty-four Thousand* on TVM 2.5:10.

73. This begins with the words 'bhūtam saraśca'. This is, according to the edition of the *Bhagavad-viśayam* edited by A.R. Tiruvenkatachariar, Sundapālaiyam (1912), the composition of Tirukkurukaipiran Pillāṅ.

74. This begins with the words 'nīlātūiga'.

sads. This suggests also that Rāmānuja could have been influenced by this aspect of the purport of the *Tiruppāvai* in evolving the concept of *sēṣin* and *sēṣa*, though it is already available in the *Upaniṣads* which Rāmānuja cites for his authority. Āṭṭāḷ wore the garland of flowers and made the Lord wear it and this chained Him, as it were, to be always with her and she enjoyed the communion.

The first *tanḷyan*<sup>75</sup> in Tamil means that the *Tiruvāymoḷi* is in praise of the greatness of Lord Raṅganātha. Nammālvār gave expression to them and Rāmānuja nurtured it. Rāmānuja is referred to here as the nurse because of the installation of the idol of Nammālvār in many holy shrines, the arrangement for the festival in the month of Mārkaḷi (December-January) when this composition is required to be sung and for directing Tirukkurukaip-pirāṅ Piḷḷāṅ to write a commentary on this composition of Nammalvar. The other *tanḷyan* in Tamil<sup>76</sup> states that the *Tiruvāymoḷi* conveys the sense of 'arīḥpañcaka'. The nature of Brahman which is to be attained is stated at the outset<sup>77</sup> and then the self is stated to be real and eternal. The means which is to be practised to get at Brahman is then stated as that which is consistent with the nature of the self.<sup>78</sup> The sins which were committed in previous births by the self obstruct the self from entering into a desirable phase of life for its betterment. Finally, obtaining the final release is stated to be the goal.<sup>79</sup> Here the word 'vāḷvu' is used to convey that, according to Nammālvār, the goal is marked by a stage of better and conscious living. Parācara Paṭṭar remarks that this is the substance of the teachings of Nammālvār whose *Tiruvāymoḷi* is *Veda* itself and is to be sung.

75. This beings with the words 'vāṅttkaḷum'. The Sundapālaiyam edition attributes this to the authorship of Piḷḷāṅ.

76. This verse begins with 'mikka ṭṭaṅṭṭaiyūm'. The Sundapālaiyam edition attributes the authorship of this to Tirukkurukaip-pirāṅ Piḷḷāṅ.

77. cf. T.V.M. 4.5:11; 4.9:10; M.Tv. 86.

78. This may be *bhakti* or *prapatti*.

79. cf. TVM. 10.10:11.

Parācara Paṭṭar was equal to his father in composing enchanting religious poetry. The Lord's control over the existence of things is fully brought out when the Supreme Being is identified by him with Lord Raṅganātha.<sup>80</sup> The *vyūha* principle is referred to by making mention of Saṁkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha as possessing the respective two qualities.<sup>81</sup> The *Pāñcarātra* system prescribes meditation on God in four stages, Aniruddha, Pradyumna, Saṁkarṣaṇa and Vāsudeva to be worshipped respectively in each stage.<sup>82</sup> Parācara Paṭṭar says that Lord Raṅganātha has all those *vyūhas* in Himself.<sup>83</sup>

Parācara Paṭṭar's *Śrī Guṇaratnakōśa* is noted for remarkably high poetic fancies. Lakṣmī is auspicious by her very nature and it is through her that the Lord becomes auspicious.<sup>84</sup> While the Lord is in a fix, like a father, unable to decide how best he could guide his children, the offenders, Lakṣmī shows Him that there is none who is free from offence and makes the people share His Grace. Thus she becomes the mother.<sup>85</sup> The author prays to Lakṣmī that she should treat them as the citizens of Mithila, finding delight in serving her.<sup>86</sup> They should be enabled to get God's favour.<sup>87</sup>

The form and freedom are the same for Lakṣmī as in the case of Lord. She is getting included within the Lord for purposes of mentioning and therefore even the *Vedas* do not make a separate reference to her.<sup>87</sup> This makes clear the fact that both Lakṣmī and Viṣṇu form together the principal deity. In every respect they are alike. Wreaking vengeance on the enemy, equanimity and such other traits which belong to men are possessed by Him while Lakṣmī possesses tender-

80. *Śrī Raṅgarajastava*, 2: 87.

81. *ibid.* 2: 39.

82. Introduction to *Lakṣmītantra*, p. 25.

83. *Śrī Raṅgarajastava*, 2: 40.

84. *Śrī Guṇaratnakōśa*, 29.

85. *ibid.* 52. cf. *ibid.* 50.

86. *ibid.* 51.

87. *ibid.* 28.

ness, subordination to the husband, compassion and forbearance and other qualities which belong exclusively to women.<sup>88</sup> The Lord is therefore addressed by Parācara Paṭṭar as the ornament of Lakṣmī.<sup>89</sup> Lakṣmī has the confidence and authority for assuring shelter for one who seeks it even without prior consultation with her Lord.<sup>90</sup> Paṭṭar appeals to Lord Raṅganātha for protection. His burden was entrusted at the Feet of the Lord by his preceptors.<sup>91</sup>

Paṭṭar's *Nitya*,<sup>92</sup> a manual of daily conduct of the Vaisnavite and *Lakṣmikalyāṇa*,<sup>93</sup> a drama depicting the marriage of Lakṣmī with Viṣṇu are both lost to posterity. In the latter work, the author made Nammālvār one of the characters speak of Lakṣmī's greatness. Paṭṭar's contribution to the cause of Vaiṣṇavism and to the propagation of the teachings of the Ālvārs is singular and great. He had the good fortune of receiving the blessings of Rāmānuja.<sup>94</sup>

After the passing away of Rāmānuja there arose two schools for the propagation of the compositions of the Ālvārs. One of them started from Tirukkuraip-pirān Piḷḷān through his disciple Enkaḷālvān. The other was from the same writer through Naṅciyar.<sup>95</sup>

**TIRUKKURUKAIP-PIRĀN PIḶḶĀN:**<sup>96</sup> He was the son of Tirumalai Nampi and became the spiritual son (*jñāna putra*) of Rāmānuja. He offered his services to Rāmānuja for writing a commentary on the *Tiruvāymoli*. Rāmānuja, who was then

88. *ibid.* 34. cf. M.Tv. 67; TVM. 1.3: 6.

89. *Śrī Raṅgarājasatava* 1.9 cf. Peri. Tm. 7.7: 1.

90. *Śrī Guṇaratnakosa*, 50. cf. *ibid.* 58 where her affection to humanity is revealed.

91. *Śrī Raṅgarājasatava*, 2: 102.

92. RTS. p. 1182.

93. Vedānta Deśika: *Sārasāra*, p. 46

94. G.P. p. 189.

95. Vide Appendix VI for the line of succession of Ācāryas in the two schools.

96. He was born in the year *Plavaṅga* corresponding to 1068 A.D.

thinking about how he could fulfil the wish of Ālavantār, felt surprised at this and embraced him calling him as 'my spiritual son' and directed him to carry out the task, as he was equipped for it being a member of the family of Nāthamuni.<sup>97</sup> He did this accordingly and the commentary is known as *Ārayirap-paṭi*. He was also called the sandals of Rāmānuja.<sup>98</sup> He is considered to be the full moon which arose from the ocean of the king of ascetics meaning that he was the foremost among the disciples of Rāmānuja<sup>99</sup>. Rāmānuja installed him as the sole authority for the two *Vedāntas* which were represented by the *Śrī Bhāṣya* and *Ārayirap-paṭi*.<sup>100</sup> Thus the line of tradition for both the *Vedāntas* passed down to posterity from Rāmānuja through him. He could rightly be described as the first scholar from whom the tradition of Ubhaya-vedāntācārya started. He composed a *tanīyan*<sup>101</sup> for the *Iraṅṅam-tiruvantāti*. He bows to the feet of Pūtattār for getting rid of the life here. This Ālvār offered the composition which begins with the words '*anpē takaliyā*'. He hails from Māmallapuram, also known as Tirukkattalmallai, which abounds in famous pearls which are cool for touch.

**ŚRĪ RĀMA PIḶḶAI:** He is the younger son of Kūrattālvān and a disciple of Rāmānuja and Empār. He composed a *tanīyan*<sup>102</sup> to *Nānmukan Tiruvantāti*. The verse appeals to the mind to live peacefully on the strength of the statement of Tirumalicaivālvār that Nārāyaṇa created Brahmā from whom Śiva was born. The mind shall praise the feet of this Ālvār.

**OTHERS:** Among the innumerable disciples of Rāmānuja most of whom were fully conversant with the import of *Nālayiram*, there were scholars, besides those mentioned above whose views on and interpretation of particular passages are cited by

97. *Yatirājayaibhavam*, 81, 82.

98. *ibid.* 83.

99. G.P. p. 193.

100. *Yatirājayaibhavam*, 108.

101. The verse begins with the words '*eṅ piṇṇi tīra*'.

102. This begins with the words '*nārāyaṇaṅ paṭaittāṅ*'.



Periyavāccān Piḷḷai in his *Twenty-four Thousand* and Vaṭak-  
kut-tiruvltip-pillai in his *Īṭu* or *Thirty-six Thousand*. Some  
of them are Piḷḷai-amutaṇār,<sup>103</sup> Vaṭuka-nampi<sup>104</sup> Ammaiki-  
yammā,<sup>105</sup> and Piḷḷaiuraṅkā-villitācar.<sup>106</sup>

Tirukkurukaip-pirān Piḷḷān's disciple Viṣṇucitta<sup>107</sup> who  
was also called Enkaḷālvān, did not write any work on the  
*Nālaytram*. His commentary on the *Viṣṇu-purāṇa* is the only  
work that is extant from among his Sanskrit works. His  
disciple was Vātsya Varadācārya,<sup>108</sup> also known as Naṭātūr  
Ammāḷ. He was the grandson of Naṭātūr Ālvān, the nephew  
and disciple of Rāmānuja. He was the author of many works  
in Sanskrit, of which mention is to be made of *Pramāyavāla*,  
*Tattva-sāram* and *Tattva-nirṇayam* which uphold the tenets of  
Viśiṣṭādvaita against the contentions of the Advaita and Saiva  
schools. He was the most authoritative exponent of  
Rāmānuja's *Śrī Bhāṣya*.<sup>109</sup> There is nothing unexpected in  
this that Piḷḷān, who was in charge of two *Vedāntas* and  
under whom Śrī Rāmamiśra (Cōmāciyāṇṭān), a disciple of  
Rāmānuja, studied *Śrī Bhāṣya* thrice<sup>110</sup> transmitted the *Śrī*  
*Bhāṣya* tradition to Enkaḷālvān without whom, Naṭātūr Ammāḷ  
had declared, that he could not have mastered the *Śrī Bhāṣya*.<sup>111</sup>  
Besides, Naṭātūr Ammāḷ must have been best gifted to become  
the most authoritative exponent of the *Śrī Bhāṣya* inheriting  
the talents of his grand father Naṭātūr Ālvān who was at the  
head of those who were taught the *Śrī Bhāṣya* by its author  
himself.<sup>112</sup> This attracted Sudarśana-sūri the grandson of the

103. *Īṭu* on TVM. 6.1: 6. The writer may be Tiruvāraṅkattu Amutaṇār  
the author of *Rāmānuja-nāṅṅantāṭi* or Aṅṅiyāraṅkattu Amutaṇār.

104. G.P. pp. (170-171).

105. Vide *Īṭu* on TVM. 5.9: 10; 8.4: 1.

106. Vide *ibid.* on TVM 6.4: 5; 6.8: 1.

107. He was born in the year *Vijaya* corresponding to 1108 A.D.

108. He was born in the year *Pārthiva* which corresponds to 1165 A.D.

109. His views on certain passages in the *Tiruvāymoli* are contained in  
the *Īṭu*. Vide *Īṭu* on TVM 7.4: 4; 7.6: 10; 8.5: 5.

110. G.P. p. 182.

111. *ibid.* p. 193, where the *taniyan* of Enkaḷālvān is given.

112. *Yatirājavaibhavam*, 71.

brother of Parācara Paṭṭar from Śrī Raṅgam and make him undergo the study of the *Śrī Bhāṣya* under Naṭātūr Ammā]. This writer recorded what his preceptor taught him in a work called *Śrutapra-kāśikā*, a commentary on the *Śrī Bhāṣya*.

Ātreya Rāmānuja<sup>113</sup> the third in the descent in the family of Kiṭāmpi Āccān who attended to the preparation of and serving food to Rāmānuja, was a pupil of Vātsya Varadācārya and is the author of a polemical treatise *Nitya-kulśa*. He had the title '*Vādthamsambuvāha*', which means the cloud for the swans in the form of disputants. Like the clouds which cause fear to the swans which therefore move to a place where they could be secure from them, Ātreya Rāmānuja was terror to the rival disputants who dared not to face him.

**VEDĀNTA DEŚIKA:** After Rāmānuja he was the great star in the spiritual horizon. He was the nephew and disciple of Ātreya Rāmānuja. He was born in 1268 A.D. and lived up to 1369 A.D. His name is Vēnkaṭanātha and he was conferred the titles '*Vedāntācārya*', '*Kavīārkkikasimha*' (the lion of poets and logicians) and '*Sarvatantra-svatantra*' (the master of all arts and sciences) by Lord Raṅganātha and Śrī Raṅganāyaki. He received instructions in the secret doctrines (*rahasya*), *Śrī Bhāṣya*, *Tiruvāymoli* and *Bhagavad-gītābhāṣya* from his uncle Ātreya Rāmānuja. His life was one of unceasing literary activity which bore the result in his writing nearly 115 works. His aim in this pursuit was (i) to establish a solid ground for the teachings of Rāmānuja and Nammālvār and (ii) to propagate the doctrines of Viśiṣṭādvaita among the people by writing in Sanskrit and Tamil in various forms such as drama, poetry, lyrics and others. His works include original works in Tamil, like those of Ālvārs, and a large number of commentaries. His Tamil works are available under the title '*Tācikap-pirapantam*'. All these works can be classified under five heads: (i) Panegyrics of a devotional character on different deities or Ācāryas (ii) Poems and drama, (iii)

113. He was born in the year *Vikrama* which corresponds to 1221 A.D.

Treatises for maintaining the Viśiṣṭādvaita system by elaboration and criticism (iv) Works in Tamil and Sanskrit reconciling the teachings of the Ālvārs with those of the *Prasthāna-traya* and (v) Original Tamil poems on Viśiṣṭādvaita topics.

Among the twenty-eight Sanskrit lyrics, special mention must be made of the *Yatirājasaptati* which is in praise of Rāmānuja. His prayer to Nammālvār<sup>114</sup> here has great significance. It runs thus: We worship Saṭhāri (Nammālvār), whose composition that is rendered fragrant by the smell of Vakuḷa flowers is capable of affording rest to the *Vedas*. The *Vedas* got tired of praising Brahman and so declared,<sup>115</sup> "From whom words recede together with the mind without reaching it." The composition of Nammālvār appears to ask the *Vedas* to take rest and then itself take up the description of God and achieve success also there. It is also shown here that there is need to recite the names of earlier teachers referring to their greatness.

The *Dēhaḷṣa-stuti*, which is in twenty-eight verses, is another lyric which is valuable for understanding how the deity at Tirukkōvilūr was instrumental for the compositions of the hymns in Tamil for the first time. The deity pressed hard the self-controlled and eminent poets (the first three Ālvārs) and made them sing in praise of Him in Tamil.<sup>116</sup> These poets were pure in mind and had the *yogic* vision obtained by *Vedic* study. They sighted Him with the lamp lit in the dead of night. The lamp had their devotion as the oil and their flawless qualities as the wick.<sup>117</sup> May the sayings, which are not inferior to any other, which were uttered by the foremost devotees and which correctly make clear the real nature of God, protect the universe from evil.<sup>118</sup> The *Bhagavad-dhyānasōpana* is modelled on the *Amolanātiprāṇ* and is devoted to the description of Lord Raṅganātha from

114. *Yatirājasaptati*, 4.

115. Taitt. Up. 2.3:8.

116. *Dēhaḷṣa-stuti*, 2, cf. *ibid.* 7, 16.

117. *ibid.* 6.

118. *ibid.* 27.

foot to head. The descriptions of each limb of bewitching beauty are executed with great artistic skill. The last *śloka*<sup>119</sup> refers to the court of Lord Raṅganātha which is held in respect by men of refined taste (*rasika*). Evidently the Ālvārs are referred to here all of whom were greatly attracted by the *arcā* form of Lord Raṅganātha. Emotion of love (devotion) made them sing His praise and so they are referred to here as *rasikas*.

In the *Devanāyaka pañcāsat*, which is devoted to singing the charming appearance<sup>120</sup> of Śrī Devanātha at Tiruvahindrapuram, the author offers his respects to the line of preceptors starting from Nammālvār and Nāthamuni and ending with Rāmānuja.<sup>121</sup> The decad of Tirumaṅkaiyālvār on Śrī Devanātha must have inspired the author in the description of the deity and also in addressing the deity as '*naṭasatya*' which means true to the devotee,<sup>122</sup> in the *Acyutaśataka* which was written in *Prākṛta* in praise of the same deity and is a proof of the author's command over that language. That the Ālvārs, who had divine vision, could not comprehend the greatness of Śrī Vardarāja is suggested<sup>123</sup> by the author in his *Varadarāja pañcāsat* where the deity is described in the language of the *Upaniṣads* and the traditional sources of the system. Attracted by the chastening and enchanting form of this deity, the author declares emphatically his unwillingness to proceed to Vaikunṭha.<sup>124</sup> The incident of the Lord accompanying Tirumaṅkaiyālvār and Kaṅkaiyālvār who left Kāñci when they were expelled by the ruler there and returned to the same shrine on their return at the request of the ruler is stated in the *Vegāsetu-śotra*.<sup>125</sup> The path of self-surrender, which the Ālvārs dealt with in their compositions

119. *Bhagavad-dhyānasōpāna*. 12.

120. cf. *Dēvanāyaka pañcāsat*, v. 17 to 44.

121. *ibid.* 2.

122. *Acyutaśataka* 7, 19, 20, 79; for *dāsasatya* vide *ibid.* 71. cf. *Peri. Tm.* 3.1.

123. *Varadarāja-pañcāsat.*, v. 2.

124. *ibid.* v. 49.

125. *Vegāsetuśotra*, v. 6.

received an effective treatment in the *Saranāgati-dīpikā* and illustrated in *Parmārtha-stuti* which glorify respectively the deities Śrī Dīpaprakāsa at Kāñci and Śrī Vijayarāghava<sup>126</sup> at Tirupputkūli in the outskirts of Kāñci.

Much originality is revealed in the *Dayā-śataka* which is devoted to extol the quality of compassion (*dayā*) that is inseparably associated with Śrī Śrīnivāsa of Tirumalai. This quality is indispensable for the Lord Who is ever intending to uplift the suffering humanity. It is raised to the high status of being the queen, helping and guiding the Lord before Whom all the beings, being the recipients of its Grace, become alike without any trace of their natural differences.<sup>127</sup> Rāmānuja, Yāmuna and others could do what is beneficial to the world only because of this quality.<sup>128</sup>

That all material prosperity, however great and attractive they could be, is unwanted for one who has realised the need for serving God alone, is revealed in the *Vairāgya-pāñcaka* which bears the influence of the *Tirumalai*.<sup>129</sup> The *Canu-śloki* of Ālavantār, *Śrīstava* of Kūrat-tālvān and *Śrī Guṇaratnakōsa* of Parācara Paṭṭar bore an appreciable influence in the *Śrīstuti*. Deśika composed *Abhīstava* praying for security to all people and in particular to Śrī Raṅgam which was attacked in 1336 A. D. by Malik Kaḥfur.<sup>130</sup> Here he refers to the temple at Śrī Raṅgam with its towers and guardians of the entrances<sup>131</sup> and the savage attacks of the Muslims.<sup>132</sup> The final prayer he made was that he must be allowed to live amidst people who wish for each other's well-being.<sup>133</sup> In

126. This is the name by which the deity is known in this shrine. Vedānta Deśika refers to Him by epithets such as 'Rānapuṅgava', 'Samarapuṅgava,' etc.

127. *Dayā-śataka*, 65.

128. *ibid.* 59.

129. T.M.2.

130. Introduction to *Saṅkalpa-sūvadaya*, p.70.

131. *Abhīstava*, 25.

132. *ibid.* 22.

133. *ibid.* 28.

this connection, it is worth nothing that his services during this period were unique and commendable. Through his efforts, the *utsava* idol of Śrī Raṅganātha which was then taken to Tirumalai for security, was brought back to Śrī Raṅgam and installed in 1347 A.D. as evidenced by two *ślokas* which were composed by him and inscribed in the temple wall at Śrī-Raṅgam.<sup>134</sup> The other service, which he then rendered, was in preserving the *Śrutaprakāśikā* of Sudārsana-sūri and protecting the lives of the two sons of Sudārsana-sūri when the Muslim forces attacked Śrī Raṅgam. He gave them due propagation<sup>135</sup> among his disciples for the study of this commentary, which must have been lost to posterity but for his interest in its preservation and propagation.

It is only Deśika that sang the praise of Śrī Bhūdevi and Āṅṭāl in the *Bhūstuti* and the *Godāstuti* respectively. In the latter piece, a reference is made to the *Tiruppāvai* which is composed by Āṅṭāl.<sup>136</sup> The word 'godā' which denotes the name of Āṅṭāl, also refers to the river Godāvari which fact is utilised to contrast and compare Āṅṭāl with the rivers Soṅā, Tuṅgabhadrā, Saraśvatī, Virajā, Godāvari and Narmadā by employing pun.<sup>137</sup> The garland which Āṅṭāl wore at first and then offered to God is shown to be superior to any garland, including the celestial one and liked more by God.<sup>138</sup> If God is favourably disposed to the offending devotees, it is because God is restrained by her garland from having his own way of dealing with offenders and by her compositions which are sweet like melodious notes emanating from the strings of the Vīṇa<sup>139</sup>. Lord Raṅganātha is fancied to be reclining with his face turned to the South, because of His esteem for that

134. Introduction to *Saṅkalpa-sūryōdaya* pp. 71-72 cf. *Yatīndrapravāṇa-prabhāva*, p.26.

135. Vide. Vardānātha: *Vedāntadeśikamangalā śāsanam*, 8. cf. Introduction to *Saṅkalpa-sūryōdaya*, p. 70.

136. *Godāstuti*, 4.

137. *ibid.* 6.

138. *ibid.* 14 to 16.

139. *ibid.* 5.

direction in which lies Śrī Villiputtūr the place of her birth.<sup>140</sup> Periyālvār, the father of Āṇṭāl composed hundreds of verses<sup>141</sup> in praise of God but did not get any reputation for that though God usually becomes pleased with a little praise. He got the reputation of having become great by offering the garland which was rendered fragrant having adorned her head, that is, Viṣṇu-citta, her father, came to be known as Periya (great) Ālvār.<sup>142</sup>

Again, it appears that except for Kūranārāyaṇayati, who wrote the *Sudarśana-śatāka*, Vedānta Desika alone wrote independent lyrics in praise of the ten divine incarnations in the *Dasavatāra-śotra*, the divine missiles of Viṣṇu in the *Sodaśayudha śotra*, the discus of Viṣṇu in the *Sudarśanāṣṭaka* and Garuḍa the vehicle of Viṣṇu in the *Garuḍa-daṇḍaka* and *Garuḍapañcāsat*. It is held that the author made use of his knowledge in the *mantra* and *tantra sāstras* in composing the *Sudarśanāṣṭaka* and the *Garuḍa-pañcāsat*. In the latter work, Garuḍa's status is described. His bringing nectar and the exploits which he exhibited in bringing the serpents under control are expounded in detail. Each limb of Garuḍa is then graphically described and this is followed by a description of the astounding feats and achievements of Garuḍa. The *Garuḍa-daṇḍaka* has much importance for one who intends to meet the counter-attacks of the rivals. Greatness of Garuḍa had a meaningful purpose in the life of Deśika who repeated the *Garuḍa-mantra* several times on the hill before the shrine of Śrī Devanātha at Tiruvahīndrapuram. Garuḍa appeared before him and initiated him in the *Hayagrīva-mantra*. It is through the Grace of Hayagrīva that Deśika, who was already proficient in all branches of study, acquired stupendous talent and outshone every other scholar in his time.

The doctrine of self-surrender receives treatment in his three works, namely, *Nyāsa-daśaka*, *Nyāsa-vimśati* and *Nyāsa-tīlaka*. Appeal to the deity for shelter is stated in the

140. *ibid.* 11.

141. Periyālvār Tm. contains 473 verses.

142. *Godā-stuti*, 10.

first mentioned work. The second work gives the attainments and qualifications of the preceptor<sup>143</sup> and pupil,<sup>144</sup> treats the doctrine of *prapatti* from the point of acceptability, after refuting the objections that are raised against it and deals with the way of life which one, who had adopted the course, shall practise. The third work discusses the admissibility of this course and refers to the practice of this through his uncle who was the great grandson of *Kitāmpi Āccān*<sup>145</sup> His utter dislike of serving any one else for personal gains is aptly conveyed in this work.<sup>146</sup> These lyrical poems, which are remarkable for the grace and diction of the Sanskrit language, serve two purposes, namely, (i) the path of self-surrender is presented directly or suggested and its importance is explained and (ii) the greatness of *arcā* worship is stressed. Both these are mainly due to the inspired teachings of the *Ālvārs*.

Among his five works which represent the poetic and dramatic forms, the *Pādukā-sahasra* consists of one thousand verses in praise of the sandals of Lord Raṅganātha. The most original and individual flights of poetic fancy are displayed in this which is one of the Indian poems unsurpassed in poetic excellence. The sandals are called '*Saṭhāri*' and *Nammālvār* is also known as *Saṭhāri* (*Saṭhakōpa*). The author pays his respects to *Nammālvār* whose name is that of the sandals and who had produced another *Saṁhitū* of the *Vedas*.<sup>147</sup> *Saṭhakōpa* composed the *Thousand Verses* in Tamil and he has entered into the sandals in order to bring *Viṣṇu's* Grace within the reach of those who could not make a study of the *Tiruvāymoli*.<sup>148</sup> *Deśika's Saṅkalpa-sūryodaya* is in criticism of *Kṛṣṇamiśra's Prabōdha-candrōdaya*. In this work the author combats the Advaitic conclusion of *Kṛṣṇamiśra* by preferring the solar light of divine Grace to the

143. *Nyāsa-vimśati* 1.

144. *ibid.* 2.

145. *Nyāsa-tilaka*, 9.

146. *ibid.* 26 to 29.

147. *Pādukā-sahasra* 1: 3.

148. *ibid.* 2: 2.



moony effulgence of *ātma-jñāna*. It is an allegorical drama in ten Acts representing the conflict in the *jīva* between the forces of Vivēka and Mahāmoha heaped by Kāma, Krōdha, Darpa and Dambha. Vivēka subdues the evils of *rāga* and *dvēṣa* and is reinforced by Vairāgya and *tattva jñāna* led by Viṣṇu *bhakti*. The hero is Vivēka and Sumati is his queen and their plan is to free *Puruṣa* from the hazards of Karma and to enable him to attain *mukti*. This work is unrivalled in allegorical literature for dignity grandeur, and intellectual eminence and has more divinity in it than the *Divine Comedy* of Dante. His *Yādavābhyudaya* is a fine and elegant poem which won the admiration of the renowned Appaya Dīkṣitar in the sixteenth century and made him compose a valuable commentary on it.

Three out of the twenty-seven works which Deśika wrote for maintaining the Viśiṣṭādvaita doctrines are now lost. Some of the available works are in the form of commentaries on the works of earlier writers. Five of them are devoted to establish the path of self-surrender as authentic and valid and to prove the validity of the *Pāñcarāra* system and the practices governed by it. The *Dramidōpaniṣatsāra* and *Dramidōpaniṣat-tātparya-ratnāvalī* contain in essence the messages enshrined in Nammālvār's *Tiruvāymoḷi*. His *Tattvātikā* is an extensive gloss in vigorous and masterly prose on the Rāmānuja's *Śrī Bhāṣya*; his *Adhikaraṇa sāravalī* is a series of beautiful Sanskrit verses of surpassing excellence summarizing the discussions on the various topics of the *Vedānta-sūtra*; his *Nyāya-siddhāntajana* is a text book of Viśiṣṭādvaitic logic and it consists of six sections dealing with the problems of *jada*, *jīva*, *Īśvara*, *mukti*, *buddhi* and *adravya*; his commentaries on *Īśvāsyōpaniṣad* and Rāmānuja's *Bhagavad gīta bhāṣya* controvert the Advaitic theory of *ajñāna* and *akarma* and defend the view that Brahman is *saguna* and not *nirguna* and that *karma* is transfigured into *kalñkarya*; his *Seśvara-Mimāṃsā* is a reconstruction of Jaimini's *Pūrvā Mimāṃsā* by integrating two *Mimāṃsās* and controverting the atheistic interpretation of the former; his *Tattvamuktā-kalāpa* is an elaborate and critical discussion of the nature of the universe in the light of the

Viśiṣṭādvaitic philosophy, together with an explanatory gloss on it called *Sarvārtha-siddhi*; and his *Śatadūṣaṇi* is a polemical treatise directed against Advaita.

Deśika wrote thirty-four works in Tamil mixed up with Sanskrit for the easy understanding of the tenets of the school by those whose scholarship in Sanskrit *Sāstraic* system is not deep rooted. All these works contain a decisive treatment of the various doctrines of the school viewed from various angles. The conclusions are justified by citing the passages from the *Vedas*, *Itihāsas*, *Purāṇas*, works of earlier writers and from the *Nālayiram*. Two among these are lost and one, which was known as *Steyāvirodha* justified the activities of Tirumaṅkaiyālvār for propagating Vaiṣṇavism and the other was *Maturakavihṛdayam*, a commentary on *Kaṁṇinun-ciruttāmpu*. The *Guruparamparā-sāra* deals with the line of spiritual teachers in the school of Rāmānuja. It is said here that those passages of the *Vedas* which are not understandable, rather the doctrines which are preached in the *Vedas* are easily understood through the compositions of the Ālvārs<sup>149</sup>. No other spiritual teacher in the school of Rāmānuja has made a categorical statement of this kind. That a spiritual preceptor is needed for every one without whom progress in life is impossible is stated by drawing the instance of Maturakavi who worshipped only Nammālvār and no one else<sup>150</sup>. The *Rahasyatrayasāra* is the biggest among these works and deals with the three secret *mantras*. In the introductory section, the author pays his respects to those who recite the compositions of the Ālvārs in the presence of Lord Varadarāja at Kāñci. They are described as the servants who clean the streets which belong to that Lord. They are described as capable of resolving the doubts that arise in regard to *Karma-kāṇḍa* and *Jñāna-kāṇḍa* of the *Vedas*.<sup>151</sup> The *Pāñcarātra Āgamas* declare that songs which are composed in Tamil could be sung on occasions of festivals.<sup>152</sup>

149. RTS. p. 9.

150. *ibid.* p. 20.

151. *ibid.* Chap. 1, p. 72.

152. Is. S. 11: 256.

Those who sing them shall march before the deity thus purifying the streets for the Lord's procession. This is what the author means here by cleaning the streets. Those persons are proficient in *Vedas* and *Vedānta* to the extent of offering the correct solutions for the doubts arising there. Then the author discusses in greater detail the features and importance of *arīhcopañaka*,<sup>153</sup> *Tatvatraya*<sup>154</sup>, Viṣṇu's supreme position,<sup>155</sup> means of getting *mokṣa*,<sup>156</sup> and the three secret *mantras*.<sup>157</sup> His skill in offering an original treatment of the topics in this work is equalled only by his extraordinary talents used in citing the most appropriate authorities from Sanskrit works as well as the *Nālāyiram*. His *Paramapadasōpāna* also brings out of his idea of *mukṭi* more beautifully wherein he constructs a spiritual ladder from the worldliness to Vaikunṭha. The main milestones in this pathway to *mukṭi* are the metaphysical knowledge of Brahman arrived at by *vivēka*, the moral progress of the pilgrim through *vatrāgya*, the religious striving by *bhakti* or *prapatti* and the mystic ascent to the home in the Absolute. In the *Satsampradāya-parisuddhi*, one among these works, the author says that another language (that is Tamil, which is other than Sanskrit) shall be adopted to treat the *Vedāntic* doctrines, as it would be easy to make clear the *Vedāntic* doctrines through that language.<sup>158</sup> The author's eagerness in maintaining the tenets of the system against misinterpretation is revealed when he says that there is nothing contradictory to the tenets among the spiritual descendants of Rāmānuja. The difference, if at all is pointed out to be present, must only be interpreted as arising out of adopting different methods of construing the passages. Any difference in the practices due to time and place could not be taken to show that the doctrines have changed.<sup>159</sup> This is a reference to the differences of views

153. RTS. Chap. 2.

154. *ibid.* Chap. 3.

155. *ibid.* Chap. 4.

156. *ibid.* Chap. 6 to 10.

157. *ibid.* Chap. 24 to 26.

158. *Seventeen Rahasyas*, p.3.

159. *ibid.* p. 5.

in certain doctrinal interpretations which were arising in the days of the author. The other works are of varying size, some being very brief. The treatment that is given to the same matter varies from one work to another. God had the nectar brought out of the ocean that was churned, and helped the world. The Feet of God are more sweet than nectar and these are shown only by the spiritual teacher (Ācārya).<sup>160</sup> No one could be considered to be even equal to those who are devoted to God.<sup>161</sup> That creation and maintenance of the world of sentient and non-sentient beings are due to God's will and are not dependent on anybody else is dealt with in the work *Tattvasandēśa*.<sup>162</sup> The author recounts the action of benefaction which the world has received from the Lord.<sup>163</sup> The path of self-surrender is discussed in brief<sup>164</sup> and it is shown that the Lord has given assurance that those who surrender unto Him would not suffer.<sup>165</sup> In the *Virodhaparihāra*, one hundred and nine objections to the tenets of Vaiṣṇavite school are brought in and answered. Some of the conclusions arrived at are as follows: No one but Nārāyaṇa could be the supporter for all.<sup>166</sup> The sins committed before and those committed due to carelessness and also wilfully get destroyed by *prapatti*.<sup>167</sup> The self does not stand to lose anything by being in bondage, or subjected to the workings of *karma* or directions of the *sāstra*.<sup>168</sup> The Lord becomes subordinated to the devotees.<sup>169</sup> He does not take note of their offences.<sup>170</sup> A servant is one who carries out the order of the master. A devotee is a servant in the sense that he carries out the orders issued by the Lord, his master, through

160. *ibid.* p. 8.

161. *ibid.* p. 16.

162. *ibid.* pp. 32 to 35.

163. *Upakārasaṅgraha*.

164. *Añjaltvaibhava*.

165. *Abhayapradāna-sāra*.

166. *Nan. Tv.* 7, 57.

167. *T.M.* 40, *on. Tv.* 94.

168. *Virodhaparihāra*, p. 280. *cf.* *TVR* 1.

169. *ibid.* p. 252.

170. *cf.* *Varadarājastava* 20; *Peri. Tm.* 4.9: 2.

the *sāstras* with regard to Himself and His devotees. Not carrying out these orders constitutes an offence. Purification, sipping of water, worship of *sandhya* and others are included under *kaiṅkarya*. When these are not carried out, the individual becomes unfit for the specific services.<sup>171</sup> That an interpretation of this kind for the concept of *kaiṅkarya* is not applicable to the *kali* age is no argument, for that is *kaliyuga* when the Lord is not in the heart of a man and *kaliyuga* becomes *kṛtayuga* when He dwells in the heart of the devotee.<sup>172</sup> The concept of service derives its source from the concept of *śeṣa* which declares the relationship of a self to God.<sup>173</sup> To become borne (*ādheya*) and to be ordained (*vīdheya*) become meaningful only when the spirit of service is meant to be put to practice.<sup>174</sup> A self who becomes *śeṣa* to his Ācārya, continues to be the *śeṣa* for God.<sup>175</sup> It is not proper to argue that service is attended with the feeling pain,<sup>176</sup> being likened to the life of a dog,<sup>177</sup> for he, who treats his nature to be controlled by the Lord, would certainly like that dependence and consider that as enjoyable.<sup>178</sup> God is protector of all in two ways, namely, (i) the nature and existence of the selves are not allowed to be affected by anything, and (ii) the selves are protected by the removal of the undesirables for which God expects a sort of request from the devotees.<sup>179</sup> Deśika's *Pradhānāśataka* deals with the important aspects of Vaiṣṇavism under one hundred heads. Some of them could be stated as follows: Service is to characterize the life of a Vaiṣṇavite.<sup>180</sup> One has to avoid doing offences.<sup>181</sup> *Kaiṅkarya* to the devotees is

171. *Virodhaparihāra*, p. 274.

172. *ibid.* pp. 274, 275 cf. *Viṣṇudharmōttara* 109: 57. and TVM 5.2: 11.

173. *ibid.* p. 280.

174. *ibid.* p. 281. cf. *Catusśloki* 2.

175. *ibid.* 284 cf. TVM 3.7: 7.

176. *Manuśmṛti* 4: 160.

177. *ibid.* 4: 6.

178. *Virodhaparihāra*, pp. 280-281.

179. *ibid.* pp. 250, 251.

180. *Pradhānāśataka*. No. 74 cf. TVM 1.2: 8.

181. *ibid.* No. 53, cf. *Viṣṇudharmōttara* 76: 22.

more important than the one for God.<sup>182</sup> Even here, the service to the Ācārya is more important.<sup>183</sup> While rendering service to God, the order of doing it must be for *Para* at first, *Vyūha* next and so on.<sup>184</sup> No discrimination shall be made among the divine descents (*avatāras*) on this account.<sup>185</sup> Procurement of the materials like *tuḷaci* for purposes of worship shall be made without infringing the directions of the *sāstra*.<sup>186</sup> The holy place shall be preferred to an ordinary one for doing *kaiṅkarya*.<sup>187</sup> Priority shall be given here to the places which have manifested themselves (*svayam-vyakta*), then those established by gods (*saiḍdha*), then those which are installed by sages (*ārṣa*) and lastly the ones which are established by men (*māuṣa*).<sup>188</sup> If it is difficult to observe this order, one shall render service in the place where he dwells.<sup>189</sup> Ardent devotion is required for rendering service.<sup>190</sup> One should necessarily get into the company of the *sāttvikas*.<sup>191</sup> A pupil shall at no time bear malice towards the preceptor.<sup>192</sup> If one offends at a devotee, he shall expiate that offence by seeking the help of another devotee.<sup>193</sup>

Deśika achieved distinction by composing eighteen poems in Tamil, all of them being intended to bring forth the Viśiṣṭādvaitic doctrines. Five of them are now lost. Significance of the three secret *mantras*,<sup>194</sup> *arthapañcaka*,<sup>195</sup>

182. *ibid.* No. 58.

183. *ibid.* No. 64.

184. *ibid.* No. 70.

185. *ibid.* No. 71.

186. *ibid.* No. 75.

187. *ibid.* No. 76.

188. *ibid.* No. 77.

189. *ibid.* No. 78. cf. *Periyāḷ*. Tm. 4.4: 7 and TVM. 5.3: 11.

190. *ibid.* No. 68. cf. *Nāc*. Tm. 11: 10.

191. *ibid.* No. 82.

192. *ibid.* No. 84.

193. *ibid.* No. 86.

194. *Tirumanṭrac-curukku*, *Dvayac-curukku* and *Caramaṣṭlokac-curukku*.

195. T.P. 248 to 258.

act of self-surrender,<sup>196</sup> and the routine life of the devotee<sup>197</sup> are dealt with in some of these. The twelve names of the Lord are explained in detail.<sup>198</sup> The author dwells at length on the rapturous sound of the trumpet blown at Kāñci during festival of Sri Varadarāja.<sup>199</sup> The matter which is taught in the *Bhagavad-gītā* is treated in twenty-one Tamil verses, eighteen among them being devoted to the treatment of each one of the chapters.<sup>200</sup> Śrī Devanātha the deity at Tiruvahīndrapuram is described as an enchanting person, the sight of which will remove bondage.<sup>201</sup> *Mummaṅikkōvai*, which shall consist of thirty verses is available only in ten verses.<sup>202</sup> The author's treatment of himself as a woman in love with Śrī Devanātha bears the influence of the Ālvārs' treatment of Nāyaka-Nāyaki *bhāva*. In fine Tamil the author enumerates the restrictions which are required to be observed in the matter of one's taking of food.<sup>203</sup> The *Pirapantacāram*<sup>204</sup> consisting of eighteen verses is a prayer to the Ālvārs to bless him with the purport of their poems. It tells us the number of verses in each of the works of the Ālvārs and arrives the number 4000 in the *Nālāyiram*. Even though Nāthamuni codified it, he did not restate the exact number of verses in each *Prabandham*; at the time of Rāmānuja a poem of 108 verses had been added to the collection as the twenty-fourth *Prabandham*. It may perhaps be the view of Desika to restrict that no more addition was to be made to the holy collection and so he arrived at the number 4000 in his own way taking also into account Amutanār's poem on Rāmānuja and also to stop the tendency of interpolations by the later Tamil poets.

196. *ibid.* 237 to 247.

197. *ibid.* 259 to 268.

198. *ibid.* 280 to 292.

199. *ibid.* 269 to 279.

200. *ibid.* 326 to 346.

201. *ibid.* 357 to 366.

202. *ibid.* 347 to 356. Vide *Pannirupāṭṭiyal-Sūta* 156.

203. *ibid.* 385 to 405.

204. *ibid.* 367 to 384.

The dizzy eminence Deśika reached in the domain of philosophy and dialectics is only matched by the brilliance of his intellectual energy exhibited in every one of his works. It is no exaggeration to say that the moral and intellectual forces that radiated from the long line of great Ācāryas were all the more genuinely and actively combined in him than in any other religious teacher known to history. The powerful influence that he exerted as much during his life as after, is, in no small measure, due to the fascination of his great and attractive personality which was an embodiment of uprightness and nobility, simplicity and wisdom. No framework in which we may try in words to enclose this towering personality, can do justice to the varied power of his intellect, the wide range of his knowledge, or the burning faith of his simple life. No wonder that eminent scholars even of divergent philosophic and religious thought joined in paying their unstinted homage to his greatness as a thinker, writer and controversialist.

**NAINĀRĀCĀR:** After the death of Deśika the mantle of the Ācārya fell on the shoulders of his son, Varadācārya otherwise known as Nainārācār; but after him there was no pontiff to hold the flock together. One of his disciples, Brahma Tantra-svatantra, who was also a leader, withdrew to Tirupati and lost touch with the generality of people.

**NAŅCIYAR:** The other line of Divya Prabandha tradition branching off from Tirukkurukaip - pirān Piḷḷān, was first represented by Nañciyar, the disciple of Parācara Paṭṭar from whom he studied the *Six Thousand*.<sup>205</sup> Nañciyar had the reputation of being known as Vedāntin living in the west to Śrī Raṅgam, perhaps in the Karnataka State. At the direction of Rāmānuja,<sup>206</sup> Parācara Paṭṭar went to his place, and won him in a debate, converted him to become a Vaiṣṇavite and gave him the name Nañciyar (nam-our, ciyar-saint). He wrote with the permission of Paṭṭar a commentary known as *Nine Thousand* on the *Six Thousand* of Piḷḷān.<sup>207</sup> Kiṭāmpī

205. G.P. p. 214.

206. *ibid.* p. 189.

207. *ibid.* p. 214.





composition of Vatakkut-tiruvitip-piḷḷai to Mātavapperumāl. This composition was known as *Thirty-six Thousand* and came to be called *Nampiḷḷai Ītu*, because it contained the record of what Nampiḷḷai had taught. Īyunnī Mātavapperumāl was responsible for the propagation of *Ītu*.

**VĀTIKĒSARI AḶAKIYA MAṆAVĀḶAP-PERUMĀḶ JĪYAR:** He wrote a commentary called *Twelve Thousand* on the *Tiruvāymoli*. From the number 12000, it must not be presumed that this work was anterior to that of his preceptor Periyavāccāṇ Piḷḷai. In fact, the attempt of this writer was to present a simple commentary as compared to *Twenty-four Thousand* and *Thirty-six Thousand*.

**NAINĀRĀCCĀṆ PIḶḶAI:** He was the son of Periyavāccāṇ Piḷḷai and the author of *Caramarahasya-traya* which dealt with the three secret *mantras*. He expressed and maintained the view that Lakṣmī, the consort of Viṣṇu, is an individual self and renders aid (*puruṣakāra*) to the suffering humanity for obtaining the Grace of God. Meghanādāri was perhaps a contemporary of this scholar. He maintained the same view about Lakṣmī.<sup>211</sup> Curiously enough, ŚrīRāmamiśra, who was also known as Cōmāciyāṇṭāṇ, and was a disciple of Rāmānuja and an ancestor of Meghanādāri, maintained that both Lakṣmī and Viṣṇu together form the *śeṣin*<sup>212</sup> In all likelihood, this writer could have been influenced by contemporary views.

**PIḶḶAI LŌKĀCCĀRYAR:** The famous Piḷḷai Lōkācāryar the eldest son and successor of Vatakkut-tiruvitip-piḷḷai, the elder contemporary of Vedānta Deśika is generally regarded as the founder and formulator of *Tenkalaism* as a distinct sect. He is called the younger Piḷḷai to distinguish him from Nampiḷḷai who was given the name of Lōkācāryar by one Kantāṭai Tōḷappār, the grandson of Mutaliyāṇṭāṇ,<sup>213</sup>

211. *Nayadyumani*, pp 255-256.

212. *Nyāya-siddhāṇjana*. pp. 233-234.

213. U.R.M. 51. He was renowned expositor of *Divya Prabandham* basing his exposition on *Itihāsas* and *Purāṇas*.

and who lived earlier. When the Muhammadans sacked Śrī Raṅgam, slaughtered the Vaiṣṇavites and committed sacrilege in the temple, he took a leading role in removing the idol of the temple to a place of safety. An intellectually brilliant man, he composed eighteen *Rahasyas* or sacred manuals of *Tenkalaism*, generally known as *Aṣṭādaṣa Rahasyas*, to uphold the teaching of his school. These works are mostly of *Maṅḍīpravaḷa* or Sanskritised Tamil. Most of these works are small in size; but they came to be regarded by the Tenkalai sect as the only correct interpretation of the cults of Rāmānuja and the Ālvārs. Among his works, the *Artha-pañcakam* brings out the essentials of Viśiṣṭādvaita in their fivefold aspect of (i) the nature of Īśvara, (ii) the nature of the *jīva*, (iii) the *puruṣārtha*, (iv) the *ūpāya* and (v) the *virōdhi*. Each aspect is analysed into five forms with its own special features. Īśvara or God exists as *para*, *vyūha*, *vibhava*, *antaryāmin* and *arcā* of whom the last mentioned form as the permanent incarnation of the Grace of God is most accessible to the *mumukṣu*. The *jīva* or soul is classified into five kinds, viz., the *nitya* or ever free, the *mukta* or the freed, the *baddha* or *samsārin*, the *kevala* enjoying *kaivalya* in a state of stranded spiritual solitude, and the *mumukṣu*. The five chief ends of conduct are *dharma* or the performance of the *Vedic* duties, *artha* or the acquisition of the economic goods of life, *kāma* or the enjoyment of the pleasures of life here and in *Svarga*, *ātmanubhava* or *kaivalya* and *Bhagavadanubhava* or God-experience. The five means of attaining Brahman are *karma*, *jñāna*, *bhakti* or solvation by self effort, *prapatti* or submission to the redemptive will of God and *ācāryabhimāna* or absolute loyalty to the *guru* as a living mediator between the *mumukṣu* and the Lord. The obstacles are also fivefold, and they are traced to faith in other gods, other means and ends than those prescribed for the *mumukṣu*, the mistaken faith as the *svarūpa jñāna* as an end in itself, godlessness and the confusions relating to *prapatti*. This kind of classification runs counter to the traditionally accepted matters and seems to have been intended to lay stress on some of them as essential for the spiritual progress. *Tattvatraya* is written in a terse aphoristic *maṅḍīpravaḷa* style on the model of *Brahma-sūtras*. It consists

of three parts, defining the nature of *Cit*, *Acit* and *Īśvara*. The first part, *Cit-prakaranaṃ*, defines *ātman* and its *jñāna* and explains the classification of *ātman*. The second part, *Acit-prakaranaṃ*, describes *Acit* in its three aspects of *kāla*, *suddha-tattva* and *mīśra-tattva* or *prakṛti* evolving into twenty-four categories including the psycho-physical factors of *buddhi*, *manas* and *indriyas* and the cosmological elements of the five *bhūtas* and *tan-mātras*. It is also known as *avidyā* or *māya*. The third part *Īśvara-prakaranaṃ*, is devoted to the understanding of *Īśvara* including his *svarūpa*, *rūpa* and *guṇa*. His *Śārasaṅgraha* is valuable for exposition of the significance of the *Dvaya-mantra*. This *mantra* conveys ten senses: (i) The Lord is the husband of Lakṣmī; (ii) He is Nārāyaṇa; (iii) His pair of Feet are adorable; (iv) the Feet are the means for *mokṣa*; (v) the self must have faith to request for God's Grace; (vi) Service at the Feet of Lakṣmī is closely associated with this; (vii) the Lord is the enjoyer; (viii) He is the *svāmin* for all; (ix) Service to Him shall be for all times; and (x) the proofs for maintaining eternality of service. All these ten meanings are explained and it is shown that they are suggested by the ten centums of the *Tiruvāymolī*. In his work *Navavidha-sambandha*, he enumerates that the Lord and the self are related by nine kinds of relation: *veśaṣana-viśeṣya*, *rakṣya-rakṣaṇa*, *śeṣā-śeṣin*, *bhartṛ-bhārya*, *jñātṛ-jñeya*, *svasvāmin*, *śarīra-śarīrin*, *dhārya-dhāraka* and *bhokṛ-bhogya*. The *Mumukṣu-paṭi* brings out the greatness of *Tirumantra*<sup>214</sup>. The uppermost limit for the Lord's accessibility lies in the *arcā* form of worship.<sup>215</sup> Service (*kalāṅkarya*) is said to include *karma*.<sup>216</sup> *Śrī Vacana Pūṣaṇam* is also aphoristic and terse. This work consists of four chapters; it is more popular on account of its main religious motive and value. The first chapter brings out the status of Śrī or Lakṣmī in the salvation scheme as the divine mediatrix or *puruṣakāra* between the sentient being (*cetana*) and the Lord. Her unique qualities of *ananyārhatva* (of being His alone), *pāratantrya* or dependence on Him, and *kṛpā* as exemplified

214. *Mumukṣu-paṭi*, 18 to 21.

215. *ibid.* 139.

216. *ibid.* 270.

in Sitā's life. She joyfully submits herself to Īśvara, as she has her being in Him and belongs to Him, and always intercedes on behalf of the sinner by pleading for his being forgiven. She subdues the retributive will of Īśvara by the beauty of her enticing love and at the same time she melts the hearts of the sinner by her infinite tenderness. It is the sinner mentality of the sinner that occasions the intervention of the Divine Grace, and this grace is spontaneous and not conditioned by the effort of the self as in the case of the *bhakta*. Of the fivefold forms of God it is the *arcā* only that is ever available to the *cetana* who thirsts for God. The Lord is Himself the means of salvation and the goal of endeavour. The true meaning of self-surrender is not winning the Grace of God by self-effort, but responding passively to its free flow. The second chapter dwells on the superiority of *paragata svikāra*, in which the Lord seeks the sinner, over the *svagata svikāra*, in which the devotee or *bhakta* seeks the Lord. Grace is the free gift of God. It flows spontaneously like the mother's milk (*mulaip-pāl*); if it is to be gained by effort, it resembles the artificial milk for the same baby, purchased in the milk depot or a chemist's shop (*vilāip-pāl*). When man seeks God, even *prapatti* is futile; but if the Lord elects him, even his sinfulness is ignored, if not relished. *Prapatti* has its fruition in service to God or to His devotees in a spirit of utter humility without the slightest trace of egoism. A devotee is known by his spiritual worth and not by his birth. The conceit of high birth is an impediment to devotion; it becomes a heresy when a devotee of low birth is not duly respected. The third chapter assigns the highest value to *maṅgalā-śāsanam* or benediction offered by the devotee, in his intense solicitude of love, to the Lord for His eternal reign of Grace and to deep devotion as in the case of Viṣṇu-citta who was so much drawn by the beauty of the child Kṛṣṇa that, in his God intoxicated state, he forgot His Īśvaratva and with deep concern for the safety of the Divine child tended him with the affection of a fond parent. The fourth chapter prefers *ācāryabhīmāna* to the Grace of God. The main reason for its preference is that, while the Lord is both just and

merciful, the Ācārya is moved only by mercy.<sup>217</sup> The work then concludes with the statement that service to the Ācārya and to the *bhāgavatas* irrespective of their station in life is the highest and the only means of attaining God. The author stresses that the *Rāmāyaṇa* is of great importance on account of Lakṣmī who was in prison as Sītā and according to the scholar the *Mahābhārata*'s greatness lies in Kṛṣṇa's having undertaken work of a messenger.<sup>218</sup> The Ālvārs practised *prapatti* only in the *arcā* form of God.<sup>219</sup> The *para* form of God is like the water surrounding us, *vyūha* like the milky ocean, *vibhava* like the rivers that flow, *arcā* like the water in the ponds and *antaryāmin* like the water inside the earth.<sup>220</sup> Those who are not learned like us, those who are great in their knowledge like the earlier Ācāryas and those who are extremely devoted to the Lord like the Ālvārs are qualified to adopt the path of self-surrender.<sup>221</sup> The path of self-surrender is expounded with illustrations.<sup>222</sup> The *arcā* form of God shall not be spoken of in terms of the material out of which it is made. It is still worse to talk of the ancestry of the devotees of God.<sup>223</sup> The conduct of a pupil towards his preceptor and the attitude which is expected to be shown by a preceptor towards his pupil are dealt with in the section called *Sadācārya anuvartanam*.<sup>224</sup> The concept of service is dealt with as having three stages. The first stage is marked by rendering service to the Ācārya, the second by that to the Lord and the third to the devotees of God.<sup>225</sup>

ALAKIYA MANAVĀḶAP-PERUMĀḶ NĀYANĀR : He was the younger brother of Piḷlai Lōkācāryar. He commented on

217. The worship of Ācārya became in later days a main feature of some of the sects of Vaiṣṇavism in North India also.

218. SVP. 1 : 5.

219. *ibid.* 1 : 35.

220. *ibid.* 1 : 39.

221. *ibid.* 1 : 43.

222. *ibid.* 1 : 80.

223. *ibid.* 2 : 195.

224. *ibid.* 3.

225. *ibid.* 4 : 412.

the compositions of Tiruppāṇālvār and Maturakaviyaḷvār and Āṇṭāḷ's *Tiruppāvai*. The *Ācārya Hṛdayam* is the best known work of this scholar and is held to be a supplement of *Śrī Vacana Pūṣaṇam*. In it Nammālvār's greatness is clearly expounded and the contrast is drawn between his work and *Gītā*.<sup>226</sup> The ten centums of Nammālvār's *Tiruvāymoḷi* are taken to present the ten divine descents (*avatāras*) of the Lord.<sup>227</sup> Rāmānuja is said to have written the *Śrī Bhāṣya* with the help of *Tiruvāymoḷi*.<sup>228</sup> The Lord is described to have taken divine descent as Varāha, Kṛṣṇa and Nammālvār was born as the son of Kāri mainly to uplift those who belonged to the low castes.<sup>229</sup>

**TIRUVĀYMOḶIP-PIḶḶAI:** Piḷḷai Lōkācāryar's position as the leader of the *Tenkalai* sect was taken by Śrī Saila otherwise known popularly as Tiruvāymoḷip-piḷḷai.<sup>230</sup> He made Ālvār-tirunakari (Tirunelveli District), the birth place of Saṭhākōpa, the scene of his preaching activities and carried on the traditions of this school throughout the period when worship at Śrī Raṅgam was disorganized. His great and main task was to train the celebrated Varavara Muni or Maṇavāḷa-māmuniḷaḷ, the acknowledged prophet of *Tenkalai*ism.

**MAṆAVĀḶA-MĀMUNIKAḶ (1371-1443 A.D.):** This well-known leader of *Tenkalai* school was born near Ālvār Tirunakari in Tirunelveli District. He is believed by his followers to have been re-incarnation of Rāmānuja. He soon acquired proficiency in the tenets of Viśiṣṭādvaita and was initiated into the essentials of *Tiruvāymoḷi* by Tiruvāymoḷip-piḷḷai. On the death of his teacher the leadership of *Tenkalai* school devolved on this scholar. At that time *Tenkalai* school was definitely consolidated and established by him. After a few years' stay at Ālvār Tirunakari he moved to Śrī Raṅgam and

226. A.H. Sūt. 190 to 193.

227. *ibid.* Sūt. 214.

228. *ibid.* Sūt. 65.

229. *ibid.* Sūt. 84.

230. He was also known as Tirumalaiyālvār.

made the place his headquarters. He spent his time there in consecrated service to the Lord and the co-ordination of worship in the Vaiṣṇavite shrines by organizing the work of his disciples in different centres of tradition. He entered the *sannyāsa* order and spent his days in devotion to Lord Raṅganātha and exposition of the *Nālayiram*. He laid down the principle that *Thirty-six Thousand* was the *Ītu* or equal of *Śruta-prakāśika*. He introduced the *Ītu* formally as a subject of holy studies. To popularise the teachings of Piḷḷai Lōkācāryār, he wrote commentaries in a lucid style on *Tattvatraya*, *Śrī Vacana Pūṣaṇam*, *Mumukṣup-paṭi* and *Ācārya Hṛdayam*. He also wrote commentaries on *Periyālvār-tirumōḷi*, *Rāmānuca-nūṛṇantāṭṭi*, and on two Tamil works viz., *Jñāna-cāram* and *Prēmēya-cāram* of Arulāpperumāḷ Emperumanār otherwise known as Devarāja. He also composed a Tamil work in *veṅpā* metre called *Upatēcā Ratnamālai* which contains the main teachings of the Ālvārs. The six works of Tirumānkaiyālvār are said to be the six ancillaries (*Vedāṅga*) for Nammālvār's compositions which are *Tamil Vedas*.<sup>231</sup> The *Tiruppallāṅṭu* of Periyālvār serves like the *praṇava* for the *Vedas* and are recited both before and after the recitation of the Tamil hymns.<sup>232</sup> The importance of Piḷḷai Lōkācāryār's *Śrī Vacana Pūṣaṇam* is stressed by him,<sup>233</sup> as due to the relationship of the perceptor and pupil.<sup>234</sup> His other Tamil works are *Tiruvāymoḷi-nūṛṇantāṭṭi* which is a summary of the hymns of *Tiruvāymoḷi*, *Ārttip-pirapantam*, a small treatise on methods of daily worship at home called *Tiruvārātana-kramam* and two little pieces in praise of Rāmānuja. In his *Yatirājavimśati* he mentions Rāmānuja as devoted to Nammālvār who was ever serving the Feet of the Lord.<sup>235</sup> On account of his deep devotion to Rāmānuja he was known as Yatindra-pravaṇa.

TWO OTHER SCHOLARS: Nammālvār's greatness is sung in the *Śrī Parāṅkuṣapañcaviṃśati* by Vādhula Varadanārāyaṇa

231. URM. 9.

232. *ibid.* 19.

233. *ibid.* 53 to 59.

234. *ibid.* 60 to 72.

235. *Yatirājavimśati*, 1.



of unknown date. Nammālvār is the prominent person among the other Ālvārs.<sup>236</sup> That the path of self-surrender is the only means for *mokṣa* was taught by this Ālvār.<sup>237</sup> One Abhirāmavaraguru composed the *Nakṣatramālikā* in twenty-seven *ślokas*, enumerating the name of each of the twenty-seven constellations in their order and representing the greatness of Nammālvār.

OTHER WORKS ABOUT ĀLVĀRS AND ĀCĀRYAS: An attempt was made by Śrīnivāsa who had the title Garuḍavāhanapaṇḍita to depict the lives of the Ālvārs and Ācāryas in the form of an Epic called *Divyasūricarita* in eighteen cantos. The verses from this work are quoted with the mention of this work by Pinpaḷakiyaperumāḷ Jīyar in his *Guruparamparāpirapāva* while mentioning the dates of birth of the Ālvārs.<sup>238</sup> The author of this work was a pupil of Nampiḷḷai (1147-1252 A.D.) and so it is to be assumed that Garuḍavāhanapaṇḍita should have lived before this date when his work must have become reputed. He is held to have been a contemporary of Rāmānuja. His work stops with the life account of Rāmānuja and this suggests that he could have been a younger contemporary of Rāmānuja. One departure from the traditional account of the life of the Ālvārs that is found here lies in the author's description of Āṇṭāl's *svayamvara*<sup>239</sup> at Ālvār-tirunakari. The arrival of the Lords from various holy places is graphically described and they are described vividly revealing an intended and clever imitation of Kālidāsa's treatment of Indumati's *svayamvara* and the entry of the prince and princess into the city of the Vidarbha king.<sup>240</sup> Pinpaḷakiyaperumāḷ Jīyar's *Guruparamparāpirapāva* begins with the life account of Poykaiyālvār and stops with the life account of Nampiḷḷai who was his preceptor. This biography is valuable for the information it provides about

236. *Śrī Parāṅkuṣapañcaviṃṣati*, 2.

237. *ibid.* 6, 7.

238. G.P. pp. 7 to 9.

239. D.S.C. canto 12 and 13.

240. *Raghuvamśa* - canto 7.

the life-accounts of the Āḷvārs and Ācāryas and for the citations from earlier sources. There is a work with the title *Yatindra-pravaṇaprabhāva* by Piḷḷailōka Jiyar whose aim in writing this work was to describe the glory of Maṇavāḷa-māmunikaḷ who was also known as Yatindrapravaṇa. The author traces the tradition of the *Guruparamparā* to Nampiḷḷai and deals with the greatness of Piḷḷai Lōkēcāryār and Maṇavāḷa-māmunikaḷ. Neither he or Pinpaḷakiyaperumāḷ Jiyar took note of the contribution of Periyavāccāṇ Piḷḷai. The third Brahmatantra-svatanttra-svāmin of Parakāla Mutt, Mysore, wrote the *Guruparamparā* according to the *Vaṭakalai* school. This work begins with the life-account of Poykaiyāḷvār and ends with that of Varadanātha son of Vedānta Deśika, greater importance being attached to the life-accounts of Rāmānuja and Vedānta Deśika. Similarly, *Satsampradāya-muktāvali* was written by Śrī Saṭhakōpa-yatindra the thirty-third Head of the Ahobila Mutt (1851-1877 A.D.) with greater emphasis laid on the life and achievements of Ādivaṇ Saṭhakōpa-mahādeśika (1379-1460 A.D.). The *Prapan-nāmṛtam* and *Artcamaya-dīpam* represent the attempts to recount the tradition of Vaiṣṇavism according to the sources available to their authors. The scholars who came after Vedānta Deśika and Maṇavāḷa-māmunikaḷ contributed to the cause of Vaiṣṇavism by writing more and more commentaries on and criticism of the earlier works on the *Nalayiram*. It could be said that much of what was written during this period was in the form of criticism on the doctrines of Viśiṣṭādvaita school.

(ii) *The two schools of Vaiṣṇavism in the post-Rāmānuja period :*

Thus there have come into existence two schools of *Nalayiram* tradition, the one being known as *Vaṭakalai* owing its allegiance to Vedānta Deśika and the other *Tenkalai* relating to Maṇavāḷa-māmunikaḷ. These names, *Vaṭakalai* and *Tenkalai* are of very late origin and perhaps belong to a period subsequent to Maṇavāḷa-māmunikaḷ. The differences which could have been instrumental for the naming of the two schools have been deep-rooted from early times, perhaps during the period which followed the passing away of Rāmānuja.

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In their attempt to justify their interpretations, the preceptors and scholars forced their views on the sources and expounded them in a manner that could accommodate their view points. Thus started the differences in the interpretations of *Tiruvāymoḷi* and the *rahasyas*. A beginning in this direction appears to have been made in the interpretation of the passages in *Tiruvāymoḷi* by Tirumālaiyaṅṅāṅ and Rāmānuja.<sup>244</sup> Even after the commentary was written by Pillān on the *Tiruvāymoḷi*, Parācara Paṭṭar is mentioned, as evidenced in the *Īṭu*, to have expressed disagreement to the views of Pillān and offered his own.<sup>245</sup> The tone of references to such differences both in the period of Rāmānuja and Parācara Paṭṭar is only suggestive of these two savants' eagerness to offer a better interpretation and not intended to cross the earlier ones. Much discredit was brought by later scholars for the earliest exponents by reading in between the lines and by asserting the authenticity of their own expositions. The unitary nature of the concepts of *rahasyas* was thus lost sight of. This resulted in the formulation of certain concepts most of them being based on the side of religion. Such concepts were acceptable to only one of the traditional schools and drew justifications from the *Nālayiram* and the passages from the works of earlier writers. There was not much for the two schools of Vaiṣṇavism to quarrel about regarding the matters in the *Śrī Bhāṣya* and *Bhagavad-gītā-bhāṣya* which were not therefore cited. The *Rchasyas* and the compositions of the Āḷvārs afforded ample scope for the exhibition of divergences of opinion. While one school interpreted the *Rahnsyas* and the *Tiruvāymoḷi* without even suggesting a deviated sense for them by remaining faithful to the sacred sources like *Dharmasāstras* and *Āgamas*, the other school swore by the deviation and supported it by the practice of the teacher who was held in the highest respect. It was not the language that effected this schism. While equal importance was given in one school for the Sanskrit sources and Tamil sources, the other school stood more by

244. Vide *Īṭu* on TVM 1.2: 1; 2.3: 3; 5.10: 4.

245. Vide *Īṭu* on TVM 6.5; 2.4: 1.

the Tamil sources ignoring the Sanskrit sources when they ran counter to the former and thus attached less significance to Sanskrit sources. For a long period till recently, the followers of the *Tenkalai* system were deeply studied in the Sanskrit sources like *Sri Bhāṣya* and *Gītā-bhāṣya* for matters of philosophical importance and followed the views of their school in matters pertaining to the *rahasyas* and *Prabandham*. The two sources were thus kept apart thus maintaining in practice the concept of *Ubhaya-vedānta*. The Ācārya was the only guide in these matters for the *Tenkalai* school, while he was also the guide for the *Vaṭakalai* school.

The differences which keep these schools apart from each other seem to have taken their rise in the later half of the thirteenth century and are mentioned by Nainārāccān Piḷḷai, Piḷḷai Lōkācāryār and Vedānta Deśika in their works. This does not, however, suggest that the two schools were treated then as rivals as they are held today. Vedānta Deśika, who was aware of such differences, remarks that there was no difference regarding the doctrines among the followers of Rāmānuja and there existed only a difference in the interpretation of the same doctrine.<sup>246</sup> The differences must have become marked resulting in the rise of the two distinct schools in the Fifteenth century A.D. The *Vaṭakalai* school traces the origin of their doctrines to Praṇatārtihara (Kiṭāmpi Āccān) who was in charge of serving food for Rāmānuja.<sup>247</sup> The *Tenkalai* school does it to Empār, the cousin and disciple of Rāmānuja. Neither of these scholars, however, left any written record of their theories.

The main points on which these two sects differed are said to be eighteen.<sup>248</sup> It is worthwhile to consider what these points are :

246. *Satsampradāya-pariśuddhi*, p. 5:

247. cf. RTS, p. 1377.

248. An anonymous Sanskrit verse gives out these eighteen differences :

bhēdās svāmikṛpāphlānyagatiṣu śrīvyāptyupāyatvayoḥ

tadvātsalyadayāniruktivacasām nyāse ca tatkartari

dharmatyāgavirodhayos svavihite nyāṅgahetutvayoḥ

prāyaścittavidhau tādī-bhanjane 'nuvyāpti kaivalyayoḥ |

quoted by Sri V. Krishnamacharya in his beautiful Sanskrit introduction (p. 48) to *Saṅkalpa-sūryodaya*.

1. **GOD'S GRACE:** The *Tenkalai* school insists that the operation of God's Grace is unconditioned by human endeavour and is absolute. They say that the well-known text "He is to be obtained only by the one whom, He chooses"<sup>249</sup> is confirmed by the *Caroma-sloka* of the *Gītā*,<sup>250</sup> and the mystic experience of Nammālvār. According to *Vaṭakalais*, God's Grace though it is uncaused becomes operative only through *bhakti* or *prapatti*, just as the divine tree is considered to yield the results desired by the seekers of them only at their request. Those who are in need of God's Grace have to make a request of God for it.<sup>251</sup> They argue that if Grace is free and unconditioned, *vaiṣamya* or arbitrariness and *nairghṛṇya* or cruelty would be attributable to the divine nature.<sup>252</sup> In that case, all people would in time be emancipated, and there would be no need of any effort on their part. If it was supposed that God in His own spontaneity extended His Grace to some in preference to others, He would have to be regarded as partial. It is therefore to be admitted that, though God is free in extending his mercy, yet in practice He extends it only as a reward to the virtuous or meritorious action of the devotee. God, though all-merciful and free to extend His mercy to all without effort on their part, does not actually do so except on the occasion of the meritorious actions of His devotees. The extension of God's mercy is thus both without cause (*nirhētuka*) and with cause (*sahētuka*).

2. **MOKṢA:** There is no difference of opinion as to *mokṣa* being the ultimate goal. The *Tenkalais* believe that for those who take to the course of devotion, *mokṣa* consists in having the experience of God Himself, but those who take to the path of self-surrender have to render service to God even during the state of release. But the *Vaṭakalais* believe that

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249. Kath. Up. 2: 23.

250. Bh. G. 18: 66.

251. L.T. 17: 78.

252. V.S. 2.1: 34.

whatever be the courses adopted by the individuals, they become released without any distinction among themselves. They have therefore occasions for experience of God as well as service.

3. MEANS OF MOKṢA: According to the *Tenkalais*, there are five kinds of means, namely, *Karma-yōga*, *Jñāna-yōga*, *Bhakti-yōga*, *Prapatti-yōga* and *Ācāryabhimāna-yōga* for *mokṣa*. They believe that *Prapatti-yōga* is a distinctive means from the rest and also believe that each of these five means is a means by itself. But the *Vaṭakalais* believe that *Bhakti-yōga* is the only other means of *mokṣa* besides *Prapatti-yōga*. *Karma-yōga* and *Jñāna-yōga* are only stages leading to *Bhakti-yōga*. *Karma-yōga* is actually self-purification which destroys egoism and leads to *Jñāna-yōga* which is the process of self-realization by self-renunciation, contemplation and the attainment of the orison of *Kaivalya*. The third stage is the *Bhakti-yōga* which is unitive life of beholding God face to face or spirit to spirit. This is the highest realization of reality. Respect for the teacher, according to this school, is only a phase of *Prapatti-yōga*.

4. LAKṢMĪ (status): Lakṣmī occupies an important position in Śrī Vaiṣṇavism. But as there are only three categories in the Śrī Vaiṣṇavite system, a question may naturally arise regarding the position of Lakṣmī in the three-fold categories of *Cit*, *Acit* and *Īsvara*. On this point, the *Tenkalais* hold that Lakṣmī is by nature atomic in size and occupies a special and unique place of her own below that of Bhagavān; they relegate Her to the level of *jīva*, the finite being, but is entitled to the service of the selves in this world and to that of the *nityas* and the *muktas* in the world beyond viz., the region of eternal glory (*Nitya-vibhūti*). Bhagavān, according to them, is, however, the sole *upāya* for the attainment of *mokṣa* and Lakṣmī has no part in this in the same way as she has no part in the creation, sustenance, and destruction of the world. The *Vaṭakalais* believe that Lakṣmī is *akāra* and not *makāra* or *jīva* and state that She is an inseparable attribute of Bhagavān as described in *Pāñcarātra*,<sup>253</sup> equally

infinite and illimitable, without whom the conception of the Lord is impossible.<sup>254</sup> She is not *anu* or atomic, but *vibhu* or all-pervasive and omnipresent. They base their argument on the authority of *Viṣṇu-purāṇam*.<sup>255</sup> Lakṣmī, according to them, is in everyway the object of equal veneration and worship as Bhagavān and that our worship is always to the Lord and His spouse. Being inseparable from Him, She participates in all His activities except in the creation, maintenance and dissolution of the world. She is *śeṣī* to all of us, *bhaddas*, *muktas* and *nityas* as much as Lord Himself. This concept of *Vaṭakalal* school receives support from the following evidences: (a) The Lord declares that *lilā-vibhūti* and *nitya-vibhūti* are the *śeṣa* for Him and Lakṣmī.<sup>256</sup> This means that She is also the *śeṣī* like the Lord; (b) Parācara declared that Viṣṇu represents all coming under the category of male and Lakṣmī those under the female.<sup>257</sup> (c) Kiṭāmpi Āccān told Naiñciyar that he was taught by Rāmānuja that the mention of the Lord in any context must be taken to have included Lakṣmī.<sup>258</sup> This is attested by Parācara Paṭṭar;<sup>259</sup> (d) ŚrīRāmamiśra, the pupil of Rāmānuja declared that Lakṣmī and Viṣṇu together are Brahman;<sup>260</sup> (e) Piḷḷai Lōkācāryār states in his work *Tattva-traya*<sup>261</sup> that the eternal kind of the selves refers to Ādiṣeṣa, Garuḍa and others. If, in his view, Lakṣmī was a self, She, being eternal, must have been mentioned here.

5. LAKSMĪ (power): According to *Tenkalal* school, Viṣṇu alone can grant final emancipation. But Lakṣmī can play

254. Ram. 6.21: 15.

255. V.P. 1.8: 17 and 1.9: 124.

256. *Viśvakṣenasamhitā*.

257. V.P. 1.8: 35.

258. RTS. p. 750.

259. Śrī *Guṇaratnakōśa*, 28.

260. This is taken from the author's work *Sadārthasamkṣepa* cited in the RTS. p. 748.

261. *Tattva-traya*. p. 45.



the role of a mediator between the sinning folk and the Lord; she cannot exercise independent or co-ordinate power in granting salvation. The *Vaṭakalals* believe that both Viṣṇu and Lakṣmī can grant *mokṣa* and they base their argument on *Viṣṇu-purāṇa*<sup>262</sup> and according to them Lakṣmī's redemptive mercy is omnipotent. She is not only the mediator (*puruṣa-kāra*) interceding and pleading for the pardon of the offences of the selves, but also the *upāya* along with Her Lord for the attainment of *mukti* by the *prapanna*. Our service after the attainment of *mukti* extends to Her as much as to Bhagavān. The *Vaṭakalals* say that *mīthuna* or unity of the Lord and Śrī is vital to the seeker after salvation. Whatever be the ontological status of Lakṣmī, there is no doubt, that both the sects insist on Her *kṛpā* or mercy as essential to the final release. This beautiful concept is stated in a beautiful way: 'On the one hand, Lakṣmī subdues the retributive will of Īsvara by the beauty of her enticing love and on the other she melts the heart of the sinner by her infinite tenderness'.<sup>263</sup> As the link of love, she mediates between the infinite that is omnipotent and the finite that is impotent, and transforms the majesty of law into the might of mercy. It is perhaps strength (Father) is tempered by sweetness (Mother) and sweetness is supported by strength; the one stimulates and the other to persuade. The *Vaṭakalal* school defends its position on the following evidences: (a) The *Lakṣmītantra* contains a passage which means that the Lord together with Lakṣmī is the protector.<sup>264</sup> The word 'together' is to mean that Śrī protects the people as much as the Lord. This passage occurs in the context of finding out a means for obtaining *mokṣa*. (b) Śrī is addressed as the *atmavidya* and described as awarding the result of *mokṣa*.<sup>265</sup> (c) *Parācara Paṭṭar* says that he would resort to Śrī at first and then to

262. V.P. 1.9: 118. cf. TVM. 4.5: 11. "vēri mārāta pūmēl iruppā| viṇai tīrkkumē" - 'the occupant of the most fragrant lotus is the Mother who will relieve us of all our sins and bless us'.

263. "Cētanānai aru|ālē tiruttum; Īsvaraṇai a|akālē tiruttum" - SVP., 1: 13.

264. L.T. 28: 14.

265. V.P. 1.9: 120.

the Lord. He desires to do *kainkarya* to the Lord who is together with Lakṣmī. He qualifies the word 'Īśvara' here by the words 'as the means of the desired object'. He means evidently that both are the 'upāya'<sup>266</sup> (d) Parācara Paṭṭar wrote a drama with the name *Lakṣmikalyāṇa* in which Nammālvār is made to ask the Lord for taking him under the refuge of Himself and Lakṣmī.<sup>267</sup> It may be added here that the Lord is referred to as Śrīman Nārāyaṇa. Śrī is the attribute and Nārāyaṇa is having Śrī as His attribute. The substantive and attribute may have independent ontological existence as in the case of blue lotus but as a metaphysical category, it must be only one. This is the way in which the *Vaṭakalāi* school maintains its view.

6. VĀTSALYA: The *Tenkalais* define this quality as the Lord's enjoyability of the defects of the *jīvas*. According to them the pardoning Lord is the god of the sinner and He seeks the evil doer more than He does the *sāttvika*, as the target of His Grace. They say that the Lord treats the sins committed by the selves as "enjoyable" like garland, sandal paste and others. He even relishes the physical evil or *doṣa* in the *prapanna* like the mother who embraces with pleasure her dirt-stained child returning from play, or like the cow which licks the slime on the body of the new-born calf. Similarly God would consider even the faults, offences, and short comings of the self as agreeable (*bhogya*).<sup>268</sup> To a lover, the dirt on the person of the beloved is far from being hateful. The *Tenkalais* argue that it is the nature of the forgiveness of the Lord to welcome the sinner and not to penalise him for his wrong doing. They support this theory of theirs by citing the *Rāmāyaṇa*.<sup>269</sup> The *Vaṭakalais*, on the other hand, believe that filial action (*vātsalya*) consists in not taking note of the *doṣa* of the *jīvas*; that is to say, the defects are ignored.<sup>270</sup> They point out that the admission

266. *Aṣṭaśloki*, 6.

267. This is cited by Vedānta Deśika in *Sārasāra*, p. 46.

268. *Mumukṣupaṭi*: *Caramaślokaprakaraṇa* — Sū. 27.

269. Rām. 5.18: 3.

270. Sri Srinivasa practises non-apprehension of the sins of His devotees. Vide: Vedānta Deśika: *Dayāśataka*, 8.

of the views of the *Tenkalais* would show that sins ought to be committed as they are to be "enjoyed" by God and expiation for the sins done need not be performed.

7. **DAYĀ:** The *Tenkalais* hold that God's compassion consists in His getting afflicted on noticing that of others. That is to say, it is 'para dukhē dukhītvam' entering into the sorrows of others and experiencing the suffering of others as one's own. They support this view by quoting the *Rāmāyaṇa*.<sup>271</sup> To the *Vaṭakalats*, compassion or *dayā* consists of an active sympathy on His part, as manifested in His desire to remove the suffering of others on account of His inability to bear such miseries. In the case of those who could not physically remove others' distress, it must be taken to mean entertainment of a desire to remove others' distress. It must include the removal of others' distress in the case of a person who has the power to do so. So in the *Vaṭakalai* view, the *Tenkalai* opinion amounts to saying that God will always be in suffering since all the living beings are mostly in a state of suffering. Again to suffer Himself at others' distress will have to be treated as a defect (*doṣa*) which would run counter to the concept of God as the abode of auspicious qualities which are opposed to defects (*heyopratyanika*). The passage from the *Rāmāyaṇa*, which is cited here must be taken to mean that Rāma was not in the least really affected but was acting the role of a protector of people where the definition of the *Tenkalai* school would be applicable. This school seeks the evidence of Parācara Paṭṭar,<sup>272</sup> Periyavāccāṅ Piḷḷai<sup>273</sup> and Sudarśanasūri<sup>274</sup> who interpreted *dayā* as inability to bear others' misery.

8. **PRAPATTI:** According to the *Tenkalais*, *prapatti* consists in the absence of any initiative on the part of the individual, as God's love is spontaneous and will, of itself, bring salvation. Or, it may be taken to mean the knowledge

271. Rām. 2.2: 40.

272. Śrī Raṅgarājastavam 2: 98.

273. Gadyatrayavyākhyāna p. 42.

274. ibid. p. 42.

of one's own self as the *śeṣa* of the Lord. They interpret *prapatti* not as a human endeavour, but a mere faith in the Grace of God. A *jīva* who is completely dependent upon God cannot practise it. The *Vaṭakalais* say that before resorting to self-surrender or *prapatti* there must be self-effort. It is only when this self-effort fails to lead the realization of God, and in consequence a feeling of complete helplessness and unalloyed faith in God's Grace is firmly entertained, that one can resort to *prapatti*. It is, therefore, in their view, in the form of practising the act of surrender of one's self. It does not consist in merely possessing the knowledge of one's dependence. The saying of the *Upaniṣad* "with a desire to get released, I seek shelter",<sup>275</sup> the saying of *Bhagavad-gītā* "you take shelter under Me alone"<sup>276</sup> and the saying of *Lakṣmitantra* "The Lord expects from the *jīva* the need for protection"<sup>277</sup> support that the act of surrender has to be practised. The paradox of *prapatti śāstra* arises from the Viśiṣṭadvaitic truth that the *sarvā-śeṣī* is both the *upāya* and *upēya*, the means as well as the goal of *Vedāntic* life, and it leads to the dualism between the spiritual effort of the *jīva* and the spontaneity of Divine Grace. The *Vaṭakalai* school asserts that the soul must exert itself, show a contrition of heart and deathless faith in the Saviour, as the way of opening the flood gates of *kṛpā* and employs the analogy of the young monkey clinging to the mother for protection (*markaṭa-nyāya*) to illustrate the soul seeking refuge at the Feet of the Saviour. The other party asserts that God's Grace is like the care of the mother-cat carrying the kitten in its mouth (*mārjāra-nyāya*) which is independent of all efforts on the part of the latter illustrating that the soul requires no self-effort.<sup>278</sup>

275. Sv. Up. 6: 18.

276. Bh. G. 18: 66.

277. L T. 17: 78.

278. There is a tendency among some of the philosophers to compare the *Vaṭakalai* and *Tenkalai* views to the volitional type and the self-surrender type mentioned by William James in his *Varieties of Religious Experience*, and the Christian distinction between justification by works and justification by faith. But the comparison is superficial as the distinction between those two types is entirely different from the Śrī Vaiṣṇavite views of *sahētuka katākṣa* and *nirhētuka katākṣa*.

9. QUALIFICATIONS TO DO PRAPATTI: As regards the person who is qualified for *prapatti*, the *Tenkalais* base their authority on the *Gītā*. In the *Gītā* the Lord deals with various attributes as forming subsidiaries to devotion. Finally He asks to give up all duties. This shows that one who follows this cannot have adequate confidence in devotion. Such a person alone, according to them, is fit to take to the path of *prapatti*. Again they say that it is only those who study the Tamil *Prabandhams* can be fit to be called *prapannas*. But the *Vaṭakalais* hold that the qualifications to perform the act of self-surrender are having no other course to adopt, miserable position and inability to tolerate any delay on the part of a devotee. The main requirements for the course of *bhakti* or devotion are a clear philosophic knowledge of the realms of *karma*, *jñāna* and *bhakti*, the will regorously to undergo the discipline in due order, and the *sāttvic* patience to endure the ills of *prārabdha karma* till it is exhausted or expiated. Yāmuna declares: "I am not devoted to Your Feet. I have nothing and I have no other course to adopt".<sup>279</sup> This makes clear the relative qualifications for the paths of devotion and self-surrender. This does not in any way mean the lack of confidence in the path of devotion on the part of the *mumukṣu*. They do not subscribe to the view that the mere reading of Tamil *Prabandhams* will make one a *prapanna* for, in that case, one who reads the Sanskrit passages in the *Upaṣads* can become a devotee of God, which is utterly meaningless on the very face of it.

10. GIVING UP THE DHARMAS: The *Tenkalais* think that the person who adopts the path of *prapatti* should give up all scriptural duties assigned to the different stages of life (*āśrama*); for they argue, it is well evidenced in the *Gītā* text that one should give up all one's religious duties and surrender oneself to God. "Abandoning all duties, come to Me alone for shelter."<sup>280</sup> They opine that it is no offence at all for the *prapanna* to give up the performance of *nitya*

279 *Śiotraratna*, 22.

280. Bh. G. 18:66.

and *naimittika karmas*.<sup>281</sup> But the *Vaṭakalais* think that the scriptural duties which are obligatory should never be given up by those who have taken the course of self-surrender.<sup>282</sup> Whatever is done shall be attended with the giving up attachment to the result.<sup>283</sup> They further hold the view that the scriptural duties, being the commandments of God, should be performed for His satisfaction by these people. Otherwise, they would have to suffer for their negligence. Rāmānuja emphatically remarks that the *nitya* and *naimittika* deeds are to be carried out as they are done to worship God.<sup>284</sup>

11. CONTRADICTION: According to the *Tenkalai* view, the path of devotion is by nature contradictory to the *jīva* who is a *śeṣa* or one who is in tune with the will of God. The paths of duties and of knowledge assume an egoism which contradicts *prapatti*. The *Vaṭakalais*, however, say that the path of devotion is not in any way opposed to the nature of the self, but is opposed to only one's miserable condition. The so-called egoism is but a reference to our own nature as self, and not to *ahaṅkāra*, an evolute of matter.

12. DUTIES OF CASTES: On the social side, the *Tenkalais* feel that the acts of the *prapannas* are amoral and should not be judged by the moral standards applicable to the ordinary men following the rules of *varṇāśrama*, and the question of moral laxity, condemnation or condonation does not arise in their case. Duties prescribed by the *Dharmasāstra* texts could however be carried out only for keeping the social status; but they are not binding on the *prapannas*. But the *Vaṭakalais* insist on the performance of *svadharma* or the duties relating to one's station in life even in the stage after *prapatti* as *kaiṅkarya* and in conformity with the divine command. They support their view on the strength of *Lakṣmī-tantra*<sup>285</sup> according to which a learned man shall never violate

281. *Mumukṣu-paṭi* - Caramaślokaprakaraṇam - Sūt. 8.

282. cf. Bh. G. 4:32.

283. vide: *Bhagavadgītā bhāṣya* on 18:6.

284. *ibid.* on 18:5, 9.

285. L.T. 17:94.

the conduct prescribed in the *Vedas*; these duties have to be performed at any cost. The Lord declared that the *Vedas* and *Smṛtis* are His commandments. Any one violating what one is ordained by them would become a sinner.<sup>286</sup>

13. ACCESSORIES OF THE PATH OF PRAPATTI: The accessories of *prapatti* are counted as six.<sup>287</sup> The *Tenkalais* hold that the man who adopts the path of *prapatti* has no desires to fulfil and thus he may adopt any of these accessories according to his capacity and inclinations of his mind. The *Vaṭkalais*, however, think that even those who follow the path of *prapatti* are not absolutely free from any desire, since they wish to have *bhagavadanubhava*, and do service to God. Though they do not crave for the fulfilment of any other kind of need, it is obligatory upon them to perform all the six accessories as they have been ordained in the scheme.

14. CAUSE FOR THE ACT OF SELF-SURRENDER: On the strength of *Upaniṣadic* saying<sup>288</sup> the *Tenkalais* assert that God's Grace could not be obtained by mere exposition of religious functions and hence the act need not be performed. But the *Vaṭkalais* insist that the act of *prapatti* has to be performed. Their argument is supported by a passage in the *Lakṣmīāntra*: "This means is considered by Me as both easy and difficult."<sup>289</sup> They further argue that the passage quoted from the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* must be taken to signify the importance of the Lord. It does not indicate that the act of self-surrender shall not be undertaken. If it were to convey this sense, then even *jñāna-yōga* will have to be given up, as there is always God Who by Himself takes care of everything.

15. MEANS OF EXPIATION: The *prapanna* will have their sins absolved by God's forbearance even when they are done voluntarily. Therefore, the *Tenkalais* say, there is no need

286. Bh. G. 16: 23.

287. L.T. 17: 60, 61.

288. Mun. Up. 3.2: 3.

289. L.T. 17: 104.

to perform any act of expiation. This receives support from the *Gītā*<sup>290</sup> where the Lord declares that He would free the *prapanna* from all sins. But the *Vaṭakalais* insist that the act of expiation has to be done to get relief from the sinful acts done voluntarily. This will be the course when the *prapanna* has adequate facilities to perform them. According to them, repetition of the act of self-surrender shall be the course to be adopted only when the *prapanna* is helpless.<sup>291</sup>

16. ADORATION OF BHĀGAVATAS: According to *Tenkalai* ideal, the devotees of God shall be treated on a par with one another irrespective of the caste to which they belong. The *prapanna* is a *bhāgavata* and his spiritual worth is not in any way influenced by his birth and social status and it is one of the greatest offences to treat him with indifference, disregard, ill-will or contempt on the ground of caste. The idea of service extends to all castes and outcastes irrespective of the social distinction determined by the *varnāśrama* ideal. They support their ideal on the strength of *Mahābhārata*.<sup>292</sup> The *Vaṭakalais* say that though the devotees of God have certainly to be respected and should on no account be disregarded, the rules of caste which pertain to the body and not to the soul apply as long as the body endures and are not annulled by the act of *prapatti*. There will, of course, be no difference in the attainment of *mokṣa* and there will be no such things as castes in Paramapada, but as long as the body lasts, the *prapanna*, too, however great his devotion to God and however pure his life, has to follow the rules and regulations of castes in social life. "The temple cow is certainly more worthy than other cows inasmuch as its milk, butter and the like are used in the service of God, but on that account, it does not cease to be a cow." Similarly, a man of a low caste shall be respected with the reverence due to a devotee as he is superior to all others in his caste.

17. GOD'S IMMANENCE: The *Tenkalais* say that God, owing to His immense capacity can enter into a soul which is

290. Bh. G. 18: 66.

291. RTS. pp. 592, 595, 596.

292. MBh: Aśrama vāsika Parva 108: 32; cf. *ibid.* 106: 8.



atomic in size to accomplish acts which could not otherwise be accomplished. The *Vaṭakalais* assert that God is immanent in the *jīva* as its *antaryāmin* and there cannot be any place in the world, either animate or inanimate where God is not present, and hence there is no question of God entering any soul.

18. KAIVALYA: This consists in having the experience of self alone, otherwise called self-realization. It may be called a flight of "the Alone to the Alone" in which the self enjoys inner quiet and is self-satisfied. It is different from God-realization. The *Tenkalais* maintain the view that *kaivalya* is not a stage on the road of *mukti* but is *mukti* itself in which the *mukta* enjoys the 'peace that passeth understanding'. In this state the *mukta* belonging, of course, to an inferior class, is in some corner of Paramapada and has no hope of intuiting God and enjoying the bliss of communion. But the *Vaṭakalais* favour the theory that *Kaivalya* is only a stage on the path to perfection and those who cross it will eventually reach the divine goal.

There are other minor differences also that exist between these sects. Differences of opinion came into being in many other points of practical importance, such as the extent to which pilgrimage could conduce to salvation, the duties of a *prapanna* if he was a *sannyāsin*, the details of ceremonials to be observed on certain special occasions, the extent of the purifying influence of contact with the *bhāgavatas*, the shape of sect mark, etiquette, certain restrictions regarding food and service, the relation between *sannyāsins* and householders, the tonsure of widows and so on and so forth. But they have little philosophical or religious basis or background

The works of the *Tenkalai* school which are mostly in Tamil are complementary to those of the *Vaṭakalais* and not contradictory to them. The eighteen points of difference enumerated above can be reduced to the single problems of *kṛpā* versus *karma* in its aspect of the practice of *upāya*. If salvation is by antecedent merit and justification by effort, it

is said to involve more faith in the inexorability of the moral law of *karma* than in the inescapability arising from Divine Grace. If salvation is by faith and antecedent of grace and guarantees the remission of sin without any condition like remorse, it is said to favour the faith in election and pre-determination and the idea of divine arbitrariness which might lead to the toleration of moral laxity and chaos. Vedānta Desika's view of *vyāja* or occasion seems to be a good reconciliation of the two extreme views. The Lord is Himself the *upāya* and the *upēya* and the true meaning of human responsibility consists in our responsiveness to the call of divine mercy. Even a gesture and change of heart and the feeling of unworthiness shown in an infinitesimal degree on the part of the sinner evokes sympathy and elicits the infinite Grace of the Saviour. A spark of repentance destroys the whole load of *avidyā-karma* and thus an infinite series of *karma* is annihilated by infinitesimal effort. It is the recognition of the fact that endeavour consists in recognizing the futility of endeavour. This view preserves the idea of divine justice and provides for the domination of Divine Grace which is its fruition. And if there is any difference between these schools, it is in the starting point and not in the goal. It is, so to say, in the emphasis of aspects and not in the choice of opposing theories. If it is assumed that the human will is in any way free, it conflicts with divine determinism. It is difficult to take the dilemma by the horns or escape between them or rebut it. *Dayā* is neither won by effort nor forced on the individual soul. If the problem is restated in terms of *Sariraka Śāstra* and not of *Hētu Śāstra* or logic, the distinction becomes philosophically negligible. *Katākṣa* or grace is neither *sahētuka* no *nirhētuka*. It is based on organic union. Mystic experience is alogical and amoral and it is illegitimate to apply logical and ethical terms to the transcendent law. The gift of grace and self-gift are virtually related like the systole and the diastole of the heart; their relation involves reciprocity and responsiveness. The sucking of the mother's milk by the child is instinctively related to the spontaneous secretion of milk and the two form an organic process in the maintenance of life. It is impossible to divide this unitive process and decide how much it comes from the child and how

much from the mother. Similarly, the *jñāni* is dearest to God, the *śarīrīn*, and God is dearest to *jñāni*, the *śarīra*, and this organic relation is beyond logical analysis. *Dayā* pours itself fully into the self and the self flows irresistibly into *dayā*; and it is undesirable, so to say, to dissect this living flow into the logical categories of cause and effect.

In conclusion, we may say that the relation between righteousness and redemption in the working of God in human history is a holy mystery which is more worthy of reverential study than analysis of logical categories or philosophical dogmas. The *karma-kṛpā* riddle is the mystery of the religious experience and cannot be lightly dismissed as a theological dogma meant for the ignorant. The vexed problem cannot be solved either by logic or by ethics. It can be dissolved only by the direct intuition of God which is the experience of the Ālvārs. If such is the case, the distinction between the two schools regarding the working of *kṛpā* is a distinction without much difference.