

God's plan for Man's Happiness

According to

Siva Gnana Bodham

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A Note.

Arnold J. Toynbee, the noted author of 'A Study of History', in his introduction to "Greek Historical Thought", says:

"Ancient Greek or Hellenic historical thought began when the first rudiments of the poetry of Homer shaped themselves in Greek minds. It came to an end when Homer yielded precedence to the Bible as the Sacred Book of a Greek speaking and Greek-writing intelligentzia'..

What could be the possible objection to saying something similar in respect of our old Tamil-speaking and Tamil writing intelligentzia? If the Bible could claim precedence in such intellectual giants as the Greek thinkers and writers, was it impossible to happen in our own land, in the case of our own thinkers and writers, particularly in the field of religion?

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The Twelve Sutras

1. அவன் அவள் அது எனும் அவை மூவினைமையின்
தோற்றிய திதியே ஒடுங்கி மலத்துளதாம்
அந்தம் ஆதி என்மனார் புலவர்.
2. அவையே தானே ஆய் இருவினையின்
போக்கு வரவு புரிய ஆணையின்
நீக்கமின்றி நிற்கும் அன்றே.
3. “உளது இலது என்றலின் எனது உடல் என்றலின்
ஐம்புலன் ஒடுக்கம் அறிதலின் கண்படில்
உண்டி வினை யின்மையின் உணர்த்த உணர்த்தலின்
மாயா இயந்திர தனுவினுள் ஆன்மா”.
4. அந்தக்கரணம் அவற்றின் ஒன்றன்று அவை
சந்தித்தது ஆன்மா சகசமலத்து உணராது
அமைச்சு அரசு ஏய்ப்ப நின்று அஞ்சவைத்ததே.
5. விளம்பிய உள்ளத்து மெய் வாய் கண் மூக்கு
அளந்து அறிந்து அறியா ஆங்கவை போலத்
தாம் தம் உணர்வின் தமி அருள்
காந்தம் கண்ட பசாசத்தவையே.
6. உணர் உரு அசத்தெனில் உணராது இன்மையின்
இரு திறன் அல்லது சிவசத்தாம் என
இரண்டு வகையின் இசைக்கு மன் உலகே.
7. யாவையும் சூனியம் சத்தெதிர் ஆகலின்
சத்தே யறியாது அசத்து இலது அறியாது
இரு திறன் அறிவுளது இரண்டலா ஆன்மா.
8. ஐம்புல வேடரின் அயர்ந்தனை வளர்ந்து எனத்
தம் முதல் குருவுமாய்த் தவத்தினில் உணர்த்த விட்டு
அன்னியம் இன்மையின் அரன் கழல் செலுமே.

9. ஊனக் கண் பாசம் உணராப் பதியை
ஞானக் கண்ணினில் சிந்தை நாடி
உராத்துனைத் தேர்த்து எனப் பாசம் ஒருவத்
தண்ணிழலாம் பதிவிதி எண்ணும் அஞ்செழுத்தே.

10. அவனே தானே ஆகிய அந்நெறி
ஏகனாகி இறைபணி நிற்க
மலமாயை தன்னொடு வல்வினை யின்றே.

11. காணும் கண்ணுக்குக் காட்டும் உளம் போல்
காண உள்ளத்தைக் கண்டு காட்டலின்
அயரா அன்பின் அரன் கழல் செலுமே.

12. செம்மலர் நோன் தாள் சேரல் ஒட்டா
அம்மலம் கழீஇ அன்பரோடு மரீஇ
மாலற நேயம் மலிந்தவர் வேடமும்
ஆலயந்தானும் அரன் எனத் தொழுமே.

GOD'S PLAN FOR MAN'S HAPPINESS ACCORDING TO SIVA GNANA BODHAM

CHAPTER ONE

Under this head, I intend studying atleast in a preliminary fashion how man came into this world and what exactly is the goal of his life on earth. And this I do basing myself on the famous **Twelve Sutras of Siva Gnana Bodham**,

I may start this study with a sentence from the most authoritative commentary on *Siva Gnana Bodham* i. e., சிவஞான பாடியம். Commenting on the 8th Sutra of this Bodham, the commentary says:

“அரன் என்னும் திருப்பெயருடைய முதல்வனை மன்னவனாகவும் அம்முதல்வனது பேரானந்தப் பெருஞ் செல்வம் முழுதும் தனகேயாகக் கொண்டு அநுபவிக்கும் சுதந்திரமுடைமையும் சித்து எனப்படும் சாதி ஒப்பையும் பற்றி ஆன்மாவை மன்னவ குமாரனாகவும் ஐம் பொறிகளை வேடராகவும் உருவகம் செய்தார். ”

The thoughts here expressed can help us to understand to a great extent the plan of God which we want to study. These thoughts may be put in English as follows:

1. The Prime Being (முதல்வன்) is considered as King.

2. The soul is considered as the son of the King, because it has the right to enjoy as its own the indescribable riches which are the infinite happiness of the Prime Being.

3, The soul has this right because it is similar (ஒப்புமை) to the Prime Being, in as much as it is a (சித்து) non-material being. It is not (சடம்) i.e., matter; it is spiritual, in nature. This word (சித்து) can also be translated as 'intelligent', or even **intelligence**. Only a being which is 'Spiritual' can be intelligent. A stone cannot be intelligent. Not even an animal which has only sense perception. Only man has the power of 'intelligence', though this intellectual nature or intelligence resides in what is called matter (சடம்) i. e., the body. Thus man on one side is matter and on the other 'spirit,' In this sense he is certainly 'similar' to the Prime Being which is pure Intelligence, in whom there is only சித்து. He is a Pure Spirit, as the Bible says (See, John 4:24).

This similarity is one of the first truths proclaimed by the Bible, when it says that man was created according to the image and likeness of God (See, Gen. 1:26-27).

See also Sirach. 17:3,6,7:

"He endowed them with strength like his own, and made them in his own image.

He made for them tongue and eyes; he gave them ears and a mind for thinking.

He filled them with knowledge and understanding and showed them good and evil",

Note the words "Strength like his own". "his own image", "a mind for thinking", "filled them with knowledge and understanding", "showed good and evil" etc.,

All these point to the truth that man is **similar to the creator-Prime Being in a significant way**. But all this similarity, with all its wonder and splendour, cannot bestow on the soul, as Siva Gnana Bodham asserts, **a right to enjoy, as its own** the indescribable happiness which is absolutely **proper** to the Prime Being. This 'happiness cannot but be the **absolute property of God**. To say that the soul (which, we will show later, comes to exist as the result of God's creative **triple action**) has, as it were, innate right to enjoy God's happiness as its own is to equate God to the soul. It is far more unreasonable than saying that the slave in a royal palace has right to enjoy the King's riches.

What, then, is the truth? The truth is that the Prime Being, who is in himself infinite knowledge and happiness **comes forward out of his own goodness to bestow a share in it**.

This coming forward out of his own goodness to give is what is called 'grace'. Grace is something totally undeserved; it is something which overflows out of goodness. For goodness is by nature diffusive of itself.

This coming forward to give is also named a **call to happiness**. To say the same thing in other words, it is a call to **friendship**. Friendship, as Cicero says, either finds equals, or makes them equal. That is to say, true friendship can exist only among those who are equal, for example in age, natural gifts, good qualities etc.,. Between unequals as for example master and servant, there can be no friendship. There may be a certain reverence, love, but not friendship. Even

between father and children there is love etc., but not friendship. Now if the master, for instance, wants to raise the servant to his level, by bestowing his riches, etc., a friendship may arise. This is what Christ meant when he said to his disciples, "I shall not call you now servants but friends for a servant does not know what the master does." (Jo. 15 : 15). That is, there is no sharing!

When we open the first pages of the Bible we see already God **calling man to his friendship**. This is not said in so many words but from the way God deals with the first man and man deals with God we can deduce that there was real friendship between them in the very beginning and that God had called him to enjoy that friendship and the consequent happiness. These "dealings" are expressed in the Bible in the following terms:

Sir 17, 8, 12, 13,

"He set his eye upon their hearts to show them the majesty of his works.

He established with them an eternal covenant, and showed them his judgements.

Their eyes saw his glorious majesty, and their ears heard the glory of his voice "

God setting his eye upon man's heart, showing him the majesty of his works, and particularly establishing with him an eternal **covenant**, granting that man's eyes may see his glory and majesty, and his ears hearing the glory of his voice-all these are various ways of expressing that 'friendship'. The '**covenant**' is particularly a concept expressing this friendship.

In order to understand the full import of this we have to understand that in ancient times a **covenant** was something which pertained to the social life and experience of people of various races or cultures or nationalities. People were in the habit of frequently **binding themselves** by agreements or contracts. ('Covenant' means precisely agreement or contract. There were pacts among groups or individuals of more or less equal dignity or position in life. Such pacts were meant frequently to help one another when a need arose. At times such pacts were meant to foster close friendship.

At times such covenants used to take place between unequal persons such as a king and the subjects in which the king undertook to protect the subjects and these in turn promised to serve the king. The 'covenant' we are speaking here between God and man is something of this type with a big difference, however. The difference is that in the case of an ordinary king 'protection,' may be the chief element on the part of the king and 'service' on the part of the subjects. In the case of God not only protection but the **love and goodness** which accompanies would be the dominant element. This love and goodness—another way of calling friendship—on the part of the Lord and Master that is God, would demand not merely service in fear, but service in love! This would be the real friendship, though 'unequal' apparently. But as said above, Love either finds equals or makes equals. In this case we see God's love making men equal, to him as far as they can possibly be. Obviously absolute equality is impossible, Since the distance between divinity and humanity is infinite, it can only be lessened, never abolished! The distance

is further lessened when God takes the form of man and comes to the world as we read in the Bible,

Phil. 2:6-7,

"Who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped,

But emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men."

This 'emptying' is a way of expressing the great lessening of the 'distance'!

Such a 'friendship' with God is frequently mentioned explicitly in the Bible.

Speaking of wisdom, the Bible says: 'Those who get it obtain friendship with God'

God calls Abraham his 'friend.' Is. 41:8 & James 2:23. When God came to the world as 'Jesus Christ' he was not ashamed to be called the 'friend of sinners' (Matt. 11:19). He also says that only those who observe his commands could be his friends. (Jo. 15:13 -14.)

This love and friendship to which man has been called is also spoken of as 'life' i. e., 'Life which is from God' not the natural life which we already have. This 'life' is another name, as we said above, for the grace of God". This life was **lost** (as I shall explain later when interpreting the word டலததுளதரம் of the I Sutra) at the very beginning which God-man says he has come to restore. This is what he means when he says:

Luke 10:10, "The Son of man came to seek and to save the lost". Jo. 10 : 10, "I came that they

(men) may have life and have it abundantly".
Jo. 10 : 28, "I give them eternal life"

This life grace-friendship with God – sharing in the infinite happiness of God is also termed as 'partaking of the divine nature' itself. Read 2 Pet. 1:3-4

From all this it is clear enough that man has no innate right to the happiness which is in God. It has been offered him by an act of generosity and goodness on the part of God. This generous **offering** is also called 'adoption' as children of God.

The Bible speaks of this **adoption** in strong terms. It says that it is not something like the legal adoption in which the child of another person is legally considered as one's own. In this divine adoption a certain power is communicated to actually be transformed into the children of God.

"But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God; who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man. but of God." 1 Jo. 1 ; 12 13.

"See what love the Father has given us that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him."

"Beloved, we are God's children; it does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is". 1 Jo. 3:1-2.

See what great 'power' is being communicated: ordinary human beings will be able to see God as He is. Note the words 'We shall be like him'. This is the சாதி ஒப்புமை in the final stage of Salvation when God is seen face to face.

This 'adoption.' was not a sort of second thought after creating man. It was planned from all eternity. Eph. 1:4-6,

"Even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him.

He destined us in love to be his sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will. To the praise of the glorious grace which he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved."

Note the words, 'freely bestowed' 'to rule out the 'right' which Siva Gnana Bodham asserts. However when we reject this **right**, we should understand aright that we are rejecting an **innate right**. In other words we do not admit that We have this right as a part of own natural make up. It is however possible to envisage a state in which what is not an innate right can be bestowed as a gift.

Take the example of legal adoption. The legally adopted son has no natural right to the property of the adopting father. It is **given to him by the adoption itself**. It can also happen that a natural son who has indeed a natural right for the property of the father can by an explicit act, and for a legally accepted reason, be **disinherited**.

And so there is such a thing as **giving a right to inheritance**, as well as denying that right for adequate reason.

God actually acts almost in this way. He adopts human beings (who are not naturally his children) and gives them the **Power** to become his children which includes the right to God's 'inheritance' which is the same as His infinite and eternal happiness. This is what is meant by the following texts of the Bible Rom. 8 : 14-17

'For all who are led by the spirit of God are sons of God.

For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but have received the spirit of sonship, when we cry, "Abba! Father!"

It is the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God.

And if children, then heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him."

Note the word "heirs" but 'with Christ'!

Eph. 1 : 13-14

"In him you also, who have heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and have believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy spirit,

Who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.'

The words: 'guarantee of our inheritance ... acquire possession . " 'rule out' innate right' but

assert a 'right or guarantee given by God's sheer grace. A guarantee is always " 'given' never an innate one! In the same strain speaks St. Paul when he says; 2 Tim 4:7-8

"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me but also to all who have loved his appearing."

The words 'crown' and 'reward' denote a certain 'meriting', though, of course, this very meriting is due to the grace of God.

And so the sharing in the happiness of God is a gift and at the same time a 'reward'. Considering the immensity of the goodness on the part of God in giving it and the little 'that we can do to achieve it, it is a 'gift' and therefore not a 'right'. A gift is one that is freely given. But at the same time, considering the 'little' that we do to appreciate it and receive, it is a 'reward', -reward for having accepted to suffer something in union with the God who suffered so much for us, (cf. Rom. 8:17) reward for having fought the good fight against sin and evil and lived righteous life for God (cf. 2 Timd. 4:7-8).

With all this in mind we can now understand the words "மன்னவ குமாரனாகவும்". The soul is considered, and is, the son of the King who is God, but (as we shall explain later) being caught in the allurements of senses and sin it scarcely recognises the fact-just as the son of a King caught between hunters in a jungle.

CHAPTER TWO

The rest of the above sentence from Siva Gnana Padiam pertains to the **Eighth Sloka**. I shall deal with it in its place. From the previous chapter it should be clear that man has no innate right to God's happiness and that the 'right' was bestowed on him.

But before the bestowal. man i.e., human race has to exist. How did it come to existence? What does Siva Gnana Botham teach us about this basic problem? The first Sutram deals with it.

The part of the Sutram to be dealt with in this Chapter is : ' அவன் அவள் அது எனும் அவை முவினைமையின் தோற்றிய திதி. "

These words may be translated as follows :

அவன், அவள், அது - He, She, it i.e., man, woman and all that is not man and woman.

அவை - means all these three groups of beings

முவினைமை - (three fold activity வினை - action. can mean activity, or pattern of activity - or even powerful activity-as explained below.

தோற்றிய - (as different from the active (தோன்றிய)- made to appear or exist by the activity of some one

திதி. - State (of being)

Put together - the sentence would run as follows a state (of being) made to exist or created) - by a **three fold powerful activity**- comprising of man, woman and all the other things (called the world).

We have to explain now :

- i) the divine powerful activity in creating **man**,
- ii) the divine powerful activity in creating **woman**;
- iii) the divine powerful activity in creating other things.

In this explanation we will be able to see a certain **pattern** of activity, meaningful and significant, at the same time will be able to see the import of **தோற்றிய**.

The Order of Creation in the Bible

The very first page of the Bible tells us how the world began to exist - how the heavens and the earth were created, how light - the sun, the moon, the firmament, the seas, the plants, the animals of all sorts were made.

And only after all these were made **man** is made. The Siva Gnana Bodham Sutram reverses, as it were, the order and seems to say that the first to be created is man, then the woman and then all the other things. What could be the reason?

The Biblical narrative represents a sort of chronological order, whereas Siva Gnana Bodham is intent on giving the **rationale** of creation or if you like, the logical order. The first intended by God is certainly **man**. The Bible itself hints at this when it says:

Gen. 1:26, Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth"

and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth."

This is further confirmed by Sir 17: 2.

It is clear that unless the earth, with its seas, fish, the birds, the cattle were already there, there was no meaning in God telling man to have 'dominion' or 'authority' over them all. Hence this apparent, reversal of the order. Now we explain the '**pattern**' of activity or the **power** of activity in creating the above - i.e., the inanimate things, like the sun etc., and living things like plants and animals. Here is how the Bible describes it:

God said - "Let there be light", and there was light", And God said : Let there be a firmament

... And God said : Let the waters .. be gathered And God said - Let the earth put forth vegetation

And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament and it was so: And God said -

Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures

And God said - Let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kinds" .. (See Gen.1 Chapter)

This repetition of **God said** and it **was so,** is a '**pattern**' which gives us the all **powerful activity** of the word ('said') of God.

Some scientists think that all things in the world including man have come about by a process called Evolution. This means that from some of the basic elements of matter other higher things or forms were evolved. Now, there are two kinds of evolution : one that may have happened subordinate to God's

creative and controlling action, according to norms fixed by him. This is not against reason and so can be admitted. The other evolution said to be altogether independent of God is atheistic. It is inadmissible, because without the action of God we cannot explain the existence of these many basic elements, much less their evolution.

But recent progress in science seems to be loosing faith in this so called Evolution.

Prof Norman Patrick of Columbia University describes it as "a farce". Prof. Stephen Gould, the Harvard fossil expert, tells us it "is effectively dead". And Dr. Niles Eldridge of New York's Natural History Museum says it "is not proof : it has been accepted for a century largely because of the persuasiveness of a few highly talented biologists".

Modern knowlege of the intricacies of genetic coding now enables scientists to begin to calculate the odds against evolution, and they are quite inconceivable, states Prof. Sir Frederick Hoyle, the Cambridge astro - physicist, in his new book *Evolution from space* (1981). "The likelihood of the spontaneous formation of life from inanimate matter is one to a number with 40,000 noughts after it" he writes, "It is big enough to bury Darwin and the whole theory of evolution. There was no primeval soup, neither on this planet nor on any other : and if the beginning of life were not random, they must therefore have been the product of purposeful intelligence". The last chapter of his book is called *Convergence to God*.

Dr. Rupert Shaldrake, in his book "*A New Science*" concludes that the universe must have been

created by a 'transcendant conscious Being, and so on other Scientists. The truth that God made all, stands as firm as ever. This is the first 'வினேமை' of the Sutra.

Now we come to the 'pattern' in the creation of

MAN

Referring to the creation of man (the male) we see God adopting, as it were, another pattern. We read a sort of solemn **deliberative** intention in the words: (Let us make man in our image, after our likeness" (Gen. -1:26)

Then there is the 'manner' of fashioning described: then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed in his nostrils, the breath of life" and man became a living being (Gen -2:7)

These two texts tell us that God was intending to make man a special creation.

There is discussion as to what the words - "Let us make' mean. Why this plural 'us', is it just an editorial or majestic plural? Or is it some vague reference to the Trinity of Persons in God who, in a human way of speaking, as it were **decided in common** to create man, thereby showing the tremendous importance of what was going to happen i. e., a **man** coming to existence?

Without going deep into the discussion, we may just say that it certainly points to a **very important activity by God, in his creative work**. Man being given dominion' adds to this importance.

The 'manner' of his being fashioned again illustrates another aspect of the 'pattern' above mentioned and, at the same time, the power of His activity
(வினைமை)

Read (Gen.-2:7) See above,

The reading may easily bring a smile to our lips. since it appears so 'childish' and 'funny'!

What is this 'forming man of dust' ?

What is this breathing into his nostrils?

And what is 'man became a living being? by the above activity?'

The idea of forming man of dust is further illustrated by the Prophet. Jeremias for instance says :

"Behold, like the clay in the potter's hand
so are you in my hand, O house of Israel"
(Jer. 18:6)

What is said of Israel applies obviously to all mankind. One can ask : Has God hands, like a potter? How can he then handle the clay? Has God a mouth to breath? How 'ridiculous' it all is? Indeed it would be ridiculous if taken literally. But it is a 'word-picture according to the Hebrew genius, to express a deep thought. The thought which the writer desires to express here is this :

Just as clay in the hands of a potter depends absolutely on him and allows itself to be made into whatever vessel he likes with it, so too man is absolutely dependant on God for his

being, his life (breathing into nostrils) etc ,
This is also explicitly said in the Bible :

“Woe to him who strives with the potter!
Does the clay say to him who fashions it,
‘What are you making? or your work has no
handles? Is. 45:9.

“You turn things upside down! Shall the potter
be regarded as the clay; that the thing made
should say of its maker, “He did not make
me” Or the thing formed say of him who for-
med it, “He has no understanding”? Is. 29:16.

The utter dependance of **man** on God, acknowledging
that he is God's creature and that God has supreme
dominion over him - this is the thought that this
pattern of activity would wish us to understand.

The Woman

If the Biblical narrative about the creation of
man is a bit funny, the creation of the ‘woman’
appears even more funny! Here is the narrative.

“The Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall
upon the man, and while he slept took one of his
ribs and closed up its place with flesh; and the rib
which the Lord God taken from the man he made
into a woman and brought her to the man. Then
the man said, “This is at last is bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman,
because she was taken out of man.” Therefore
a man leaves his father and mother and cleaves
to his wife and they become one flesh.”
(Gen. 2, 21-24)

Here we see God performing a double action:

One - performing what appears a regular surgical operation (taking the rib, closing it etc;)and

Two - bringing man and woman together and uniting them in what is obviously a marriage ceremony.

What could be the import of the 'rib' operation? Once again it is a Hebrew word - picture to convey a deeper concept. What would be this concept?

First there is the 'deep sleep' to be explained. It doubtless suggests (not an ordinary sleep however deep) but some mysterious and highly significant nature of the divine activity. It was probably a kind of dream or even a mental vision in which man was made conscious by the 'divine activity, of what was taking place at the moment. Otherwise, when he came to himself he could not have pronounced the words :

"This at last is bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh.

She shall be called woman.

because she was taken out of man" Gen-2;23)

By which words the first man was proclaiming the unity of human nature. 'Bone of one's bones, flesh of one's flesh' is just a Hebrew way of expressing deep unity. In fact, in living beings, who are more similar in nature than a man and woman? But what he proclaimed was more than that; it is in marriage that this 'bone of bone' and 'flesh of

flesh' is verified in a most singular manner. Actually, immediately after the first man pronounced the above words, the writer of the Sacred Text adds:

"Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife and they become one flesh" (Gen- 2: 24)

In the natural order of things, there is indeed no act in which the male and female become one flesh - as the natural instinctive act in animals, and the rational deliberate act of man and woman in marriage.

This thought is again strongly affirmed and insisted upon, when God came to the world and spoke, as we read in the Bible.

Here is the narrative :

"The Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, 'Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?' He answered, 'Have you not read that he who made them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? So they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder.'" They said to him, "Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce, and to put her away? He said to them, "For your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but **from the beginning it was not so.** (Matt. 19-3-8)

Note how the text above from Genesis is here quoted by Christ himself and confirmed. Note now he was restoring what was in the beginning of history, when the rule was "One man with one woman and for life ". No divorce therefore' etc.,

The ' Rib '

We have yet to interpret the 'rib' operation. The word used in the original text seems to have been a word of the Sumerian language which could also mean 'life'. The text says :

- i) that God took one of man's ribs
- ii) that He closed up its place with flesh, and
- iii) that the rib taken was made into woman.

Obviously here too there is some mysterious and not easily understandable pattern of activity on the part of the Creator. Referring to this a Saint (Lawrence Justinian) has this Comment, His comment is actually on the act of the soldier who pierced the 'side' of Christ after his death, as we read in St. John's Gospel. This is what he says :

"From the dead body of Christ there flowed blood and water. In this, God's wisdom certainly desired to show us something mysteriously meaningful, viz, the intimate unity which he has with his Church. Such a unity, a most spiritual one, could be seen, as in a 'figure' or 'type', when from the 'side' of Adam who

was asleep, a rib was taken and from it Eve the mother of all men was formed, Eve thus became a type of the church. The Holy Spirit was already telling us that there would come a real and spiritual Adam, (as we read in 1 Cor-15:45-49) from whom, formed as He was by the power of the Holy spirit, there would be born as he lay 'asleep' on the cross, a Church without 'spot or wrinkle' (as we read in Eph. 5:27) The linking of the two equally mysterious events could in no way be impossible for God whose gaze sweeps eternity and sees the first and the last in a way only He can, and whose inner meaning only His divine mind can penetrate and present to us for understanding at least in some measure his wonderful pattern of activity.

In fact this truth is brought out beautifully and in a deeper way by St. Paul in his letter to the Ephesians when he speaks of married life :

"Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives be subject to your husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the Church, his body, and is himself its Saviour. As the Church is subject to Christ, so let wives also be subject in everything to their husbands. Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the Church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present the church to himself in splendour, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. Even so husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no man ever hates his own flesh, but

nourishes and cherishes it, as Christ does the Church, because we are members of his body. "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh". **This mystery is a profound one**, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the Church; however, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband."

(Eph. 5, 21-33)

In no other passage is the meaning of married life (a life which apparently seems to be one linked with the pleasure of the flesh) more expressively and emphatically taught. We may well speak of a veritable mystery of married life! In the above passage we must note how subjection and love are each harmoniously given their place-the former does not dispense with the latter, and latter does not dispense with the former. Subjection alone without love would be slavery and lack of subjection would be disorder! And so God's wisdom is seen both in the creation of man and woman as well as in the establishment of his Church.*

In any well established society or group of persons there should be order. Now the family (which comes to existence through marriage) is the basic unit of society. And so in that basic society order should reign supreme. This cannot be unless both love and reasonable subjection are maintained. Unreasonable subjection will destroy both love and order, and un-subjecting love will do the same. Now who is to be subject? This is the big question

*By 'Church' we understand the 'body' of persons who believe in Christ and try to live a life according to His teachings.

to-day when equality of sexes is hotly debated. Note however that subjection here is not meant to convey the idea of the subjection of a slave to master, but observance of a certain orderliness; which orderliness necessarily postulates one to be in a position of responsibility and command and another to be also responsible by observing order and a certain subordination. Note that subordination is a responsible way of ordering life. It is not slavish subjection without love.

Now the above described story of creation of man first, and woman second tells us exactly how this 'ordering of life' is to be maintained. The sacred text itself tells how the woman has to play a responsible but secondary role in the plan of God. She is given to man' as a HELPER fit for man' (Gen. 2:18 & 20). This is mentioned twice in the passage. The whole 'rib' operation, it would seem, would only point to this 'role' of the woman. This is however more fully and appropriately described in the above quoted letter to the Ephesians.

Here the man (husband) is clearly said to be the head of the (woman) wife and therefore the wife has to be subordinate to man. That this subordination may not be wrongly interpreted, it is immediately added : 'as Christ is the head of the Church, his body and is himself its saviour'. Now Christ is not 'head' in the sense of 'a despot and a cruel master, but 'nourishes and cherishes, his body, the Church : He loved it even unto death in order to make it holy 'in splendour .. without blemish''. So too the husband, the head of the family has to

love his wife, cherish her etc. The body of Christians i. e. the church has to obey Christ and so has the wife to obey the husband. This obedience is in no way derogatory to the dignity of the woman just as Christ's obedience to the Father was in no way unworthy of Him, but salutary for mankind. There is no question here of who is superior, man or woman - the whole question is: how is order to be maintained. Doubtless there is absolute equality between man and woman as human beings and as baptized, but there is no equality in their respective roles. This inequality in roles is needed for maintenance of order in society.

Thus we see the wonderful pattern of divine activity in creating man first, then woman as his helper. This is the second of the முவினைமை of the sutram. We see how wonderfully the Creator saw at the very start what were to be the respective roles of man and woman and how he, at the appointed time, (i.e. when God came to the world) would bring those roles to perfection by making them similar to the roles of Christ and his Church itself!

The third of முவினைமை (i.e. அது) has been already explained at the beginning of this chapter.

CHAPTER — III

“தோற்றிய திதியே ஒடுங்கி மலத்துளதாம்”

ஒடுங்குதல் can mean 'lose brightness', get impaired. மலம் can simply mean uncleanness; it can also mean 'sin' the great uncleanness of mind and heart. The line should mean: "the beings above described i.e. he, she and it ... after being made or created are in a state (திதி) of loss of brightness or in an impaired condition, or in a state of sin!

The ending யே in the word திதியே would emphasise "at the very state of creation or better at its very start."

That is exactly what the Bible says. It clearly says, something happened in the beginning itself as a result of which a great loss and impairment took place. As usual the Bible expresses this through a series of Hebrew style word-pictures.

Here are the passages :-

I Gen 2:8-9

"And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east; and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground the Lord God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and tree of the knowledge of good and evil."

II Gen. 2:15-17

"The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it.

And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die."

III Gen 3:1-6

"Now the serpent was more subtle than any other wild creature that the Lord God had made.

He said to the woman, "Did God say, you shall not eat of any tree of the garden?"

"And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden; but God said, "You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it lest you die."

"But the serpent said to the woman. "You will not die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

"So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband and he ate."

IV Gen. 3:7

"Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves aprons."

V Gen. 3.8-13

"And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden."

"But Lord God called to the man, and said to him, 'Where are you?'"

"And he said, 'I heard the sound of thee in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.'"

"He said, 'who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?' The man said, 'The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.'" Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent beguiled me, and I ate."

i Gen. 2:8 9 — The Garden

It is named 'Eden' translated in Greek as 'Paradise'. This word is of Persian origin and meant an extensive tract of pleasure land v. 9 of this passage describes precisely this aspect of 'pleasure land'

The word picture is meant to convey the fact that the first man and woman (mankind's original parents) were in an extremely happy and pleasurable state. Nothing was wanting to them. 'The tree of knowledge of good and evil' is a rather

mysterious way of indicating that it would be an occasion of man coming to know what evil is! The subsequent passages tell us what and how great that evil was and would be for whole mankind.

ii). Gen. 2: 15-17 - The Test:

Though the pleasure - land was placed at the disposal of man, and God had, as it were, taken the initiative to plant it, man was not left without any responsibility in its regard. He had 'to till it and keep it', God's gifts are never bestowed on us without any responsibility on our side to cherish them and to fructify them as far as possible.

A great deal of freedom is given him ('freely eat . . .') but the final goal of man was not to be merely enjoying the pleasure of the 'pleasure land'. As we pointed out earlier he had been called to a share in the happiness which is God's own, eternal and infinite. But this 'share' by its very nature 'a gift to be bestowed' could not as it were be thrust upon him.

Benefiting from the gifts already given (the pleasure land... etc) using the great freedom given, with responsibility, he was to be given that final happiness if he accepted it willingly, by doing what he was told to do. (i.e. by going through a test). This is because it is in the very nature of a gift that it be freely given and freely and gratefully accepted. If it is not willingly accepted, it would cease to be a gift, and would remain in the hands of the offerer. In other words a gift - and that a supreme gift such as a share in God's own happiness - could

not be thrust upon man. The test was just an **occasion given to show whether man was really appreciative of the gift.** It is not a question of eating a fruit and losing every thing, as though there was something in the fruit and that caused all the trouble. As noted more than once it is merely a hebrew word-picture to convey an idea. The idea here conveyed is that a test was necessary and it was a very small one compared to the divine happiness to be enjoyed. The very picture viz. that of all the trees, only one was forbidden - shows the great freedom on one side and the insignificance of the test' The threat that 'death' which was not known till then would follow was meant to be not only a warning but a real deterrent. Till then man did not know anything but good, but now if the warning went unheeded a taste of what was "bad" would occur! "And so be on your guard and obey,",, God meant to say that !

iii) Gen. 3:-1 6 - The temptation:

Once again, a word picture. The man and woman were indeed in an innocent state and God loved them as his great handiwork of creation- as the masterpiece in the whole universe. A great deal of cunning and persuasive power was needed to make them do something which God had explicitly forbidden. Moreover, envy of the worst sort had its play in this. Here it is necessary to indicate how there are evil spirits (called devils) whose only work is to tempt man cunningly, deceive him and make him disobey God

What is the story of these evil spirits? How did they come? From certain hints in the Bible we come to know the following:

Before this visible universe was created, God created an invisible one. It can be called an invisible universe, invisible to our bodily eyes. It was a world of bodiless beings, i e. spirits. (They are usually called 'angels' in the Bible-the word angel meaning a 'messenger'-since later they were frequently sent as messengers to this world, obviously under some bodily form!) These spirits were also offered a share in God's happiness and were also put under some test-for reasons explained above. We do not have details, but there is enough evidence in the Bible to show that some of them failed in the test because they rebelled against God. These rebellious spirits are called **Evil spirits** or **devils**. Since they thus lost the offered share in God's happiness. They could not bear to see that men - far inferior in nature to them should now obtain it. And so the chief leader of those devils planned to **ruin the plan of God** for man.

Hence he comes to the first parents to tempt them cunningly. But the Bible says that it was the **Serpent** which came to tempt. Why? Throughout the eastern countries, in those days, the serpent was used as an emblem of the evil principle, of the spirit of disobedience and contumacy. Once again we have the usual word - picture, to show what happened viz. how man was cunningly tempted by the devil whom the Bible itself calls "the old serpent" (Rev. 12:9). Christ also called the serpent **wise** (Matt: 10:6) i. e. cunning, which word can have also a good sense, in the meaning of 'prudent', and not easily deceivable.

It is this serpent, the devil which came to tempt. We see at once his cunningness in his starting the

temptation with the woman, since she was more likely to be deceived easily and could be used to prevail on her husband. We notice also how the devil excites the natural vanity in the woman by saying that if she disobeyed she would discover her own glory-a glory which would be equal to that of God himself!

Vanity, pride and the ego rise up. Pride usually closes one's eyes- those of the mind-and so she is unable to detect the utter foolishness in the words of the devil! She falls a prey, and prevails on her husband to become a prey, too!

The disobedience combined with disbelief in God's word, and trusting the false promise of the devil- this is the **மனம்** the sin! (not the eating itself!)

iv) Gen. 3:7 - The result :

The result of this first sin is immediately realised and felt- felt even in their body. In Gen. 2:25 we read that the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed. That was when they relied on God and appreciated what he did for them - in giving a garden of pleasure etc.

But as soon as they forgot their God and trusted the devil's words, the eyes of their body as well as of their mind were opened and they realised their nakedness. Innocence (as in children) makes one unashamed of nakedness. That is what they were before the devil came in'.

But the 'nakedness' which they discovered now was not merely that of their bodies, but an utter

emptiness and shame of having done something so abominably insulting to God. A far greater nakedness than of the body is to be deprived of the 'wedding garment' of the soul i. e. the grace of friendship of God described earlier. This friendship with God is often described as the intimacy enjoyed in wedded life. And the grace of God is actually called the 'wedding garment' by Christ himself. Read Matt: 22: 1-14.

v) Gen. 3 8-13- Loss of Blessings and Knowledge of evil

In this passage a more disastrous result of the disobedience committed is first narrated using another word picture. Man and woman are said to have heard the sound of God walking in the garden in the cool of the day. This is certainly an expressive way of saying how familiar and friendly was God's attitude to our first parents. Walking in the garden! In the cool of the day! It is obviously God going for a walk with his creatures - an event which should have been a daily or frequent affair!! It was to foster and increase the familiarity and friendliness! 'Coolness of the day' - a symbol of peace and pleasure. The man and woman used to hear the 'sound of God', and go to join him in the walk! what a delightful picture! And it was a frequent experience! But now- after the disobedience was committed - they hear the same sound, but instead of running to join him in the walk, they hide themselves! They hide themselves it is said, from the presence of the Lord. Note it is not said, that they hid themselves, but hid from the presence of God. Not that any one can hide himself really from God,

but one can become alien to the loving, and beatifying presence of God! That is what is meant by this "hiding from the presence". They could no longer face their God with joy. They felt guilty! They felt terribly ashamed of the sin! Fear too took hold of them. All this is meant by what the man replied to God calling him. He says, obviously also in the name of his wife..... "I heard your call but was afraid, because I was naked".

These words mean "Your call was no longer a sweet one to me, (since I had offended you!) and so I felt afraid and empty and spiritually naked! (as explained above). Hiding from a friend, and that when the friend is God himself was indeed a terrible experience! That is the most awful experience or knowledge of evil, which had now definitely entered into the world. They had till now **knowledge** (biblically this word means experience) of what was good: now they began to experience evil. The forbidden tree thus became the occasion of coming to a knowledge of **good and evil**. That is why it was called simply the "tree of knowledge of good and evil". In Gen 3:23 it is said that man (& woman) was **driven out** of the garden. This simply means that the pleasure and happiness which they had till now, was lost, Driving away simply means being "deprived".

The word 'மலத்துளதரம்' is thus sufficiently clearly interpreted, The other 'evils' as a sort of physical or material consequences of the **மலம்** are described in Gen. 3 : 16-19.

Though the 'impairment' was chiefly in man i.e. human race, the lower creation was also affected by it. The Bible speaks of it thus:

"For the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the glorious liberty of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning in travail together until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. (Rom. 8, : 20-23)

The animal creation we see is also affected for instance by disease. In the original plan there were to be no wild animals, some injuring others etc. Creatures lower to animals are also in some way 'groaning' to be released from a certain 'futility' to which they are subjected by man who so often makes use of them not for the purpose for which they were created, but even for committing sin. Riches, for instance, are so often cause in the hands of man for crimes etc. Even food and drink are so often misused and thus even the lower order of creation is subjected to 'futility'.

Though the above passage is difficult to understand in every aspect, it is clear that the above idea is contained in it.

அந்தம் ஆதி

What could these two words mean? அந்தம் means, 'end' ஆதி means beginning. End of what and beginning of what? The only reasonable interpretation seems to be that based on the foregoing commentary. We

note therein a 'plan' by which God desired to communicate a share to man in his own happiness. We saw also how that plan was, as it were, made ineffective by man's disobedience and sin.

What did God do next? Did He give up? On the answer to this question will depend the meaning of the above அந்தம் and ஆதி ie. **end** and the **beginning**.

The meaning of the 'end' now becomes clear when we keep in mind how the "first plan was thwarted by man and came to an end. But did it really? It is rather the manner of executing which came to an end. The plan itself ie. that of communicating his life and happiness did not really come to an end. God in his wisdom and goodness did not give up the whole plan. Love, flowing from the goodness is always inventive. When one method fails, love finds another. Love never gives up. As St. Paul says:

'Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things and endures all things' (kor. 13:7) Love bears even defeat, believes in the possibility of a new way to conquer, hopes to achieve what appears to be hopeless and goes through the humiliation which defeat and frustration may bring with it. If ordinary human love can achieve so much what is not possible for the all powerful love which is God's! If human love is **inventive** God's love is infinitely more inventive! This is precisely what we read in the very heart of the passage above referred of the III Cha. of Genesis - which told us how creation got impaired. The text is:

"I will put enmity between you and the woman,

and between your seed and her seed ;
he shall bruise your head,
and you shall bruise his heel." (Gen, 3, 15)

The words are addressed to the evil spirit hiding itself under the form of a serpent. The enmity is therefore between the evil spirit and the woman, in as much as she was the one who was first approached by the evil spirit and in a way, was the leading cause of the whole impairment.

The enmity is at the sametime between the 'seed' (ie. progeny) of the evil spirit and that of the 'woman'. Who could be the progeny of the evil spirit but those who are imbued with the sinful mind of the evil spirit! It is meant to signify the entire human race which was impaired.

The seed of the woman should signify some **one** born of the woman who would have the power to **bruise** the **head** of the evil spirit ie. its evil genius, and its power to pervert man, as said above. It is to be noted that the one to be born of the woman would 'bruise' the head' i.e. overpower it completely. While all that the evil spirit would be able to do would be to 'bruise his heel' ie. try to harm it in some way but would not be able to achieve complete victory. It could be something like a shot at the head by which the person is simply destroyed, while a shot at the heal would just wound, but would not destory. This is exctly what happened (as we will try to explain in course of this essay) to the 'Son of the woman' who came into the world with the name - Jesus Christ. The

evil spirit and all men under its power did everything possible to destroy the Son of the woman, but they could not do anything except 'wound' him physically, while **he** achieved a shattering victory over the evil one by his 'rising' after death!

This 'bruising of the head of the evil spirit' and providing spiritual aid to all to get released from its power and finally achieve that 'share in the happiness of God'-this is the ஆதி ie. the beginning of a new plan. This new plan will now be explained.

CHAPTER IV

The Impaired Mankind

The new plan was not to be executed immediately. Its immediate execution would have served no purpose for when a gift offered is rejected, there would be no meaning in offering another, even a greater gift. Share in God's happiness was a gift great enough. Now that it was not appreciated and was rejected, God was planning to offer a greater gift as we will see in due course. And so it was only proper that it be not offered immediately but delayed till mankind should realise its utter foolishness in rejecting the first offer, repented for it in some way and prayed for mercy and God's initiative to come to their rescue. This is what is called by the Bible "the appointed time" (See Gal: 4:4) What happened in the meanwhile? Were the first parents and their progeny left to themselves? What could they have done by themselves, if left to themselves? These are some of the questions. Sivagnana Bodham seems to answer them in some way,

We saw how God drove out our first parents from the garden of pleasure i.e from a state of happiness. From then on mankind began to experience all kinds of misery, hardships even for livelihood, sicknesses, and finally death.

But first of all according to the blessing given by God to 'increase and multiply' the first man and woman were to give birth to other human beings. The first man and woman were not born, as we saw. They were directly created by God as full grown human beings. But now, every new human being was to be

born of them or from them ie. from their marriage relationship. The Creator could definitely create any number of human beings by his own power and action-as he did the first man and woman-but He deemed it fit to use the first man and woman to bring into the world other human beings. How much or how far could he use them? Did he give them power to reproduce human beings by themselves without his immediate intervention? God we saw, formed man of "dust from the ground" and, breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living being" (Gen 2 : 7). Two distinct actions are here described : One, forming from dust and two "breathing into nostrils". This is just a word-picture to say that for a human being to come to full existence a twofold action was needed viz. what may be called the forming of the body and the 'breathing' of life into it. For the first man God, as it were performed both the actions- he created a body and breathed life into it. This 'breathing life' is also called **giving a soul**. We know that in man there is body and the soul. This distinction becomes only too clear when a man dies, when the body is left behind and the soul leaves it!

As I said, for the first man God did both-but for human beings to be born of the first man and woman God ordained that the body should be formed by the joint action in marriage, of parents, but that the **soul** should be **created directly by God and infused at the very moment of conception**. This is an important truth to be kept in mind so that the action of man and the action of God may be properly understood and duly

acknowledged. For, on the one hand, God does not despise his own creation, especially man and woman to whom he has given distinct bodily organs with their respective organical functions for a definite purpose. If there were no distinctive purpose there would be no meaning in creating man and woman! At the same time since man and woman are not capable of producing life (as even scientists are now convinced) **the direct intervention of the creator becomes necessary.** In other words when man and woman act conjugally, God creates a soul and infuses it into the body at the very moment of conception. **Note** this is entirely different from the theory of souls existing eternally etc. according to Saiva Siddhanta teaching.

We see a double action in this. It is this double action that the word இருவினையின் of the II sutra seems to refer to ie. the action of man on one side and the action of God on the other simultaneously, and effectively.

This action is needed according to the Sutra II, not only for birth of a new human being but even for death (or **exit**) of the same. The Sutra says, placing death or exit (போக்கு) first and only secondly வரவு — ie. birth or coming in ! This may seem rather strange, but is not. Chronologically death or exit is announced first see Gen. 2:17 No birth had yet taken place! And it is only after the creation of woman and the celebration of their marriage that the question of birth arises.

Now for birth of a new human being we can easily understand a direct action of God, as explained above,

for the creation of a new soul. But is a special action necessary for 'death' too! Yes, in the sense, that unless God by a special action prevents death, it will happen and must happen according to God's own disposition. **Not** intervening specially, to prevent death is also an action of God which results in the catastrophe called death. And so the இருவினையின் போக்கு வரவு புரிய is fully meaningful. Since now there is a double action, one on the part of the Creator, and the other on the part of the creature there has to be a certain order. The action of the creature is necessarily subordinate to the action of the Creator. The former has to **depend on** the act or will (ஆணை) of the latter. If it separates itself from that will; it will be ineffective. That is the meaning of the words நீக்கம் இன்றி.

Paraphrasing this whole (I I) Sutra we may say: (அதாவது அவன், அவள் அதுவாகிய உயிர்களும் மற்று முள்ள படைப்புகளும்) ஒவ்வொன்றும் தானாக இயங்கி எதையும் செய்து முடிக்க இயலாது. அனைத்தும் இயக்கும் முதல்வனுடைய செயலோடு தன்னுடைய செயலையும் இணைத்துச் செயலாற்றினால் தான் உலகில் நிகழும் பிறப்பு இறப்பு ஆகியவை நிகழக்கூடும். இதற்காக அவையெல்லாம் முதல்வனது திருவுள ஆணையுடன் பொருந்தி நின்றல் வேண்டும்.

The creatures-man, woman and other creatures each by itself cannot achieve any effect. They have all to act in union with the creator and dependently on Him, for everything-for life or even for death.

The Soul

That there is a **Soul** in man is attested by the very narrative of creation. There it is called simply 'life' all

over the Bible this word is used for soul; sometimes the word 'spirit' is used. The word soul is also used in the Bible as in Matt. 14:28. But natural reason also proves the existence of soul in us. The III Sutra of Siva Gnana Bodham summarises, these reasons. By distinguishing 'yes' and 'no' by asserting 'my body etc' since we are able to realise the various actions or passions of our senses, since there is no activity like eating etc. when asleep, and **especially because we acquire knowledge when some one instructs us** we know there is a soul in us. (A detailed commentary on those points is not necessary for our purpose) The most important characteristic of the soul, according to Siva Gnana Bodham, seems obviously its **capacity to be instructed**. This word 'instructed' can be interpreted, 'to be made alert to reality'. This will be further expatiated in due course.

The IVth Sutra gives the reason why the soul is not in a position to be made alert by itself to reality, but needs some one to be thus made alert. The reason is the மலம் as above explained. It is called in this Sutra as சுகசமலம் i.e. the impairment which is following the soul from the very origin as almost something natural to it.

The Sutra also says that the soul is not the same as மனம் (mind), புத்தி (knowledge) அகங்காரம் (ego) கித்தம் (will). These can be likened to ministers who are activated by the king. The soul it is which moves or activates these faculties. Depending on the strength and length of the activation-there arise different states in us-state of vigilance, state of dream, state of semi-consciousness, or even of full sleep, state of full consciousness and a state of pure consciousness.

The state of full and pure consciousness is the ideal-but it is not easy to achieve it, on account of the impairment which has set in man's life

For this the action of the Creator is absolutely necessary. This is explained in the V Sutra.

The five senses are able to find out the nature of the objects which they meet. For instance, the eyes see colour, the ear discerns sound etc. But unfortunately they are not able to find out where those sense perceptions may lead to. For example the sight of an attractive woman may lead one to do something wrong. The hearing of foul language may lead one to use the same. The taste of food can lead one to gluttony. The sense of touch can lead one to impure actions and so on.

To avoid such evil results to which sense-perceptions in the state of impairment in which man is now, can easily lead us, we need something which has its origin not in the soul, much less in the body. We need the **grace** of one who is தமிழ். This word means one of unequalness. Such a meaning suits well to describe God **who is one and unequalled**. The Sutra seems to say that nothing less than the favour or grace of the one, unequalled God can help man to avoid the evil results of the actions of sense. And how does this grace operate? Here is a concept which most suits the Christian concept of God's grace. This grace is not something as it were imposed on the soul so that the soul has nothing to do but be forced to do what God wants. It is not a kind of compulsion under which the soul acts. If there were any kind of compul-

sion, then the freedom of the rational soul would be destroyed.

On the one hand, the soul falls an easy prey to sense perceptions and does evil and commits sin. On the other hand God's goodness which, as we explained at the very outset, is so desirous to communicate to man a share in his happiness, has also power and wisdom to draw man to himself without compelling him in any way. This is called 'attraction' You show something nice to a child. It immediately stretches its hand to have it. This is no compulsion. It is merely showing the beauty in an impressive way. God has this power and wisdom to attract his creatures in this way by showing in a special way all the beauty of what he is offering viz, his own Happiness. The soul sees it in a way it has not seen before and is drawn towards it. This is likened to a magnet which naturally attracts. It is in this sense that in the Bible Christ says :

"No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day." (Jo,6,44)

"And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself." (Jo,12,32)

Note in the second text Christ saying: '**when I am lifted up**'; meaning his being lifted on the cross. (This will be further expatiated in the VIII Sutra)

In this way the soul comes to see the beauty **not only of what God offers** (ie share in his happiness) **but of Himself! Seeing the Beauty of God Himself?** How is it possible? The VI Sutra poses the question and discusses as follows: If God can be seen or known by any perception connected with the body or senses then He would be **அசத்து** ie. something not **சத்து** (The word **சத்து** means an object which exists with the same perfection always and is not subject to any change.)

If God therefore were seen ie. known by the soul, He would be an imperfect and changeable being. This is the meaning of **உணர் உரு அசத்து எனின்** -which has to be read **உணர் உரு எனின்** (God would be) **அசத்து** Does this then, mean that God cannot be known at all? If that were the meaning, it would imply that God does not exist at all. For only objects that don't exist cannot be known as for example, as flying bull which is merely a figment and does not have existence.

This is conveyed in the Sutra by the words **உணரா தின்மையின்** construed as = **உணரா தெனில் இன்மையின்** Is then God not knowable at all? No. **He is knowable only by a knowledge which is beyond sense perceptions:** which means it is not true to say that he is not knowable at all, and therefore that he is not an existent object.

God is knowable: by a special knowledge which may be termed as divine knowledge.

God is not Knowable: by mere sense perception.

He is therefore both- **இருதிறன் அல்லது** ie. He

is சிவசத்து By the word சிவ is understood Love-
அன்பு (eg, அன்பே சிவம்) சிவசத்து would mean self
existent being and perfection, or simply self existent
Love. For love includes all perfection. Love is good-
ness and goodness is summit of every perfection.
This is what the wise say about God, The above is
further expatiated in the next i.e. **VII Sutra** It says: In
the presence of the Self-existent perfection (சத்து
எதிர்) everything in the world is just equal to non
existent. (யாவையும் நுனியம்) ie, they cannot shine
in the presence of God.

Therefore God (சத்து) does not know anything
as man knows by senses. But **not knowing thus** is
not an imperfection for God, For sense perception is
not a perfection In itself (சத்தே அறியாது) it is a
relatively small perfection in man and animals, it is
some what a greater perfection, however in men,
since in them/sense perceptions make way to rational
perceptions. Hence it is said: There is nothing in
man's intellect unless it has already been in the sense.
The intellect elaborates by its faculty universal con-
ceptions or ideas from sense perceptions. For exam-
ple, the eyes sees a colour white or red. the intel-
lect developes the idea of colour in itself. This is
doubtless a perfection but is nowhere before God's
perfection who knows everything by himself. In com-
parison with that knowledge, the knowledge which
அசத்துப் பொருள் (i.e. not perfect object) can acquire
is almost nil. அசத்து is here taken for அசித்து
ie. non intelligent object or matter or material object
அசத்திலது அறியாது in the Sutra is to be construed
as அசத்து அறிவு இலது ஆதலின் அறியாது. Now

the soul is capable of understanding (though imperfectly) God, as well as objects around (இரு திறன் அறிவுளது,)

The words இரண்டலா ஆன்மா mean the soul which is neither perfect சத்து or God, nor unintelligent matter, as a stone, for instance.

The soul can therefore know, How? Is it by its own effort or innate intelligence? Or by a special activity by the creator?

This we study in the next chapter - in which the VIII Sutra will be interpreted.

CHAPTER - V

When God created the first man he was endowed by Him with some special gifts. Among these gifts the chief could be considered his **innocence**. We saw how the first man and woman were naked and were not ashamed. This is proof that in that premordial state there was a certain **orderliness** in their minds and hearts by which they could keep under control desires which would disturb the orderliness. This orderliness was given as a special gift by God. It was not something that was natural to him. The root of that orderliness was, as we said above, the grace and friendship with God. This '**grace**' was a powerful means to preserve that orderliness. It was not, however, so powerful as not permit them to make a mistake or misjudge a situation or even commit a sin. As we saw earlier, they were yet in a state of 'testing' or trial and therefore not yet confirmed in grace and God's friendship so as not to be misled or commit a sin. That is how we see our first parents doing something which was wrong and sinful.

All the same there was a certain orderliness in their life, which they could have certainly preserved had they listened to God's warning and obeyed Him. The orderliness consisted in the senses being under the control of the mind, and the mind submitting itself to God's action. As I remarked earlier this submission was not a sort of compulsion but was to be a voluntary surrender to God's will. Freedom was still there, but the freedom could be abused, if not placed under God's loving will. That is why, as I said, there

was the possibility of withdrawing the senses and their activity from the rational control of the mind, and subsequently withdrawing one's mind and its activity from God's control. This is precisely what happened. The senses rebelled against the mind, and the mind rebelled against God. In this rebellion the soul which activates both the senses and the mind was, as it were, badly **caught**. This is to say that the soul was not able to control the senses and their attractions to sensible and sensual delights - so that sin became an easy occurrence.

The Bible points to this frequently. Quite early we note how irresistible sensual pleasure became. This is the meaning implied in Gen 6:1-2. Such pleasurable actions were multiplied beyond measure in course of the ages. Here is a description of the situation in which senses and their delights dominated, as the 'appointed' time was drawing near :

"The wrath of God is revealed from Heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness of men who by their wickedness suppress the truth."

"Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal men or birds or animals or reptiles. Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonouring of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. For this reason God gave them up to dishonourable passions. Their women exchanged natural

relation for unnatural, and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in their own persons the due penalty for their error. And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a base mind and to improper conduct. They were filled with all manner of wickedness, evil, covetousness, malice. Full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malignity, they are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents." (Rom, 1, 18 & 22 - 30)

We have here a good picture of the world caught in the meshes of senses and their sensual delights.

This is the picture which the VIII Sutra depicts for us. Here is a free translation :

" You (O soul) have forgotten yourself (அயர்ந்தனை) having been caught up in the midst of the hunters which are the five senses (ஐம்புலவேடரின், (senses which are spread as nets)" says God who is the prime being, creator of the soul (தம் முதல்); and so he comes (into the world) Himself as Teacher (குருவுமாய்) but a Teacher who desires by renunciation (தவத்தினில் உணர்த்த விட்டு) to instruct and help the soul to realise its identity, i.e. its being called to share in God's glory and happiness. After such a realisation the soul seeing itself no longer alien to God (அன்னியம் இன்மையின்) reaches the feet of the one who destroys sin (அரன் கழல்). Note that the name அரன் is here used as one who destroys

sin, according to Heb 2, 14 and Eph. 2,15. These ideas are brought out in the following Biblical passages :

“Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal bodies, to make you obey their passions. Do not yield your members to sin as instruments of wickedness, but yield yourselves to God as men who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments of righteousness. For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are under grace,” (Rom. 6, 12-14)

“ I say, walk by the Spirit and do not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you would. But if you are led by the Spirit you are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are plain: fornication, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, anger, selfishness, dissension, party spirit, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and the like. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God” (Gal 5, 16-21).

“And you he made alive, when you were dead through the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience. Among these we all once lived in the passions of our flesh,

following the desires of body and mind, and so we were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with him, and made us sit with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God." (Eph 2-1-8)

Note the words in the second passage - "walk by the spirit" means living according to the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us in order that we may not allow the evil spirit (spoken of earlier) may not tempt us and dominate over us through our senses and their desires. The words in the third passage, "prince of the power of the air" means also the evil spirit who is busy in the world to ruin souls.

The words most important in this VIII Sutra- are தம் முதல், குருவுமாய், தவத்தினில் உணர்த்த. **Four** great truths regarding the plan of God for man's happiness are contained here.

- i) That the Prime being-God himself தம் முதல் took the **initiative**.
- ii) That He come (not merely as guru (குரு) i.e. As a Teacher.
- ii) That He came (not merely to teach but) to

make man realise in his life (உணர்த்த) the happiness for which he was created.

- iv) That He came to achieve this sublime purpose through renunciation and suffering (தவத்தினில்).

The initiative of God :

Caught in the meshes of the misleading senses, man could not do anything to save himself, just as the king's son caught by the hunters and living with them could not realise his identity and be restored to his father the king. The king himself had to come there and show him his self i.e. to reveal to him who he was etc.

This is exactly what God did for mankind. That the initiative is always from God we see right through, from the beginning of creation. We saw above how the call to share in his own happiness came from God. Indeed, it could not come from elsewhere. Nor could man, as it were, call himself to such a sublime goal.

When it was a question of saving Noah and his family from the great flood, it was again God who took the initiative.

In the great deliverance from the slavery of Egypt we see more evidently than elsewhere that it is God who was all the time taking the initiative—even when people did not gratefully appreciate it. When it was time to take possession of the promised land, again it was God who took the initiative.

When after taking possession the chosen

people had to battle with enemies, God was there all the time to send some one and help him to save his people. We see such an initiative on the part of God all the time, but for which the chosen people would have been completely annihilated.

But the central act of such initiatives was the one which God conceived to save the impaired human race-the new plan mentioned above. This was the supreme initiative we may say to restore mankind to grace and His friendship and thus give that share in his happiness which was his original plan.

The initiative in the first creation, we saw, commenced with the **creation of the world**, of man and woman. Though the lower creation i.e. the sky, the earth, the animals etc., seems to be the first, it is first only in a chronological order. The **first** in God's mind was man i.e. mankind.

Something similar happens in the new creation which God now planned for the world. A rather puzzling reference to the **new initiative** was made, we saw, soon after the sin of disobedience. It was to some enmity between the evil spirit (serpent) and the woman (who was deceived by the serpent) as well as between the progeny (or followers) of the evil spirit and the progeny of the woman. In this enmity and the consequent struggle, the progeny of the woman would, though hurt or wounded a little, finally become victorious.

At the appointed time, this 'plan' was to be inaugurated. The son of the woman was to come in-

to the world. This 'son' would be powerful enough to crush the power of the evil spirit. He would indeed be God himself. (This is the தம் முதல் of the Sutra) He would be the முதல் (or முதல்வன்) i.e. the Prime being, pre-existing not made like the first man and woman. He would however have to come to the world in the form of a human being. Only thus could he be a 'guru' to men and be able to make mankind realise (உணர்த்த) the Truth. If he was to come to the world he could suddenly appear as a full grown man, as Adam the first man did under the creative action of God. Or he could be born as any other child, grow up and then fulfil the divine plan. The Bible tells us that He choose the latter, viz. to be born a child. For this a woman-mother would be needed. She would have to be worthy of the person to be born - absolutely pure and holy, having to do with the evil spirit i.e. full of grace and friendship with God right from the first moment of her existence, from the first moment of her conception in the womb of her mother.

He would have to be, as the poet said

" Our tainted nature's solitary boast"

That is to say, the only human being who would be untainted by any sin or by a grace - less state, i.e. by a state in which the soul would not be friend of God. How could the woman chosen to be the mother of such a Son (the Prime Being) be in a state of disgrace, or state of enmity with God even for a moment? How could she who with her son was to crush the 'head of the serpent' be herself, even for a brief

moment, as it were 'crushed' by the evil spirit? How could He who chose, with the co-operation of his mother, to destroy the enmity of man with God, permit his mother to be even for a moment, in enmity with God. Hence she was conceived pure and holy. (This is usually called the immaculate conception. The word 'immaculate' means without stain.).

We see here that the **woman** seems to be the first in God's mind. But, actually, it was only chronologically so. Actually the first in intention was the son who was to come to the world. This preparation of the mother was only a preparation for the initiative itself viz. for the coming of the தாமுதஸ் into the world.

All this is clearly expressed in the Bible.

a) In this preparing for the great initiative God was going to start a **new creation, a new Adam and a new Eve** another man and woman who would reverse what the first man and woman brought about.

"Thus it is written, 'The first man Adam became a living being'; the **last Adam** became a life-giving spirit." (1 Cor. 15, 45)

"The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. As was the man of dust, so are those who are of dust; and as is the man of heaven, so are those who are of heaven. Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven." (1 Cor. 15. -47-49).

Christ is here called 'the last Adam' -in the sense that He is the **last** means provided for mankind to be saved. He is also the new Adam who will undo the harm done by the first Adam. Hence He is called 'the life giving spirit' ie. one from heaven able to communicate the divine life which was originally offered to mankind, but which was not accepted.

We see here mention only of Adam, the man. Eve the woman is not mentioned, though understood, in the sense that she was the one who first listened to the evil spirit and persuaded her husband to disobey.

Similarly, the 'last Adam' Christ is mentioned, no mention of his mother whom the Fathers of the Church call the Second (or last) Eve. In the case of the First Eve she was the first to listen to the evil spirit and led Adam to disobedience. In the case the last Eve viz. Mary, the mother of Jesus, she too listened, but to the good spirit, the Angel Gabriel (Read Luk-1:26-38) and obeyed God's word and co-operated with Him to bring salvation to mankind. She co-operated ie. did what God wanted her to do. The one who really worked out salvation was the Son, but He did not disdain to use his own mother, as the Second Eve, for working out his **new** plan, to bring about **a new creation**. ie. to make mankind a new race, a race of men who would get back the grace and friendship which was lost in the beginning.

In the Gospel of St. John the mother of Jesus is twice called by Jesus himself as 'woman-

This was no disrespect to her. It was to recall to the mind of the readers that he was referring to the **woman** in Genesis - 2. In this sense too she can well be called the Second Eve.

This thought about the 'new creation' is seen in the following Biblical texts:

"But far be it from me to glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a **new creation**." (Gal. 6, 14-15)

"Therefore, if any one is in Christ, he is a **new creation**; the **old has passed** away, behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation." (2 Cor. 5, 17-19)

For the Jews the ceremony of circumcision was all important. But Paul tells them that unless they become a 'new creation' through the cross of Christ, nothing would be of any avail.

This divine initiative is expressed in a variety of ways in the Bible.

Christ himself says: Apart from me, you can do nothing; (Jo 15:5)

"No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him." (Jo. 6 44)

"Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me," (Jo. 14.6)

"All things have been delivered to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and any one to whom the Son chooses to reveal him "(Matt, 11, 27)

The Apostle St. Paul who himself experienced this divine initiative in a special manner speaks of it often

- a) Quoting Hosea, he speaks of the utter gratuitousness of the call of God to people to be saved (Rom 9 : 24-27)
- b) That God's call does not depend on anybody's fitness, he speaks at length in 1 Cor. 1 : 18-29
- c) about his own call he speaks in Gal. 1 : 11-16
- d) This initiative is according to a plan and a mystery Eph. 1 : 3-10
- e) all that we have is a gift from God and therefore we cannot appropriate anything to ourselves 1 Cor. 4:7

There is scarcely any idea that is more, emphasized than this.

குருவுமாய் - as Teacher

The தம்முதல் ie. the prime Being who comes into the world-Christ - calls himself the only Teacher and master, See Matt. 23, 10

The four Gospels are full of his teachings-by word and example. He calls himself not only Teacher of Truth but Truth itself. (See Jo. 14.6)

தவத்தினில் உணர்த்த -instruct through pain !

This 'Teacher' is not like any other 'guru' whom the world has seen, he is a guru who instructs not only by word, not only by example but **above all through renunciation, pain and suffering, through humiliation and obedience unto death.** Instructing in this context is not merely teaching some doctrine, but making the hearer **realise the Truth in his life, make him experience the Truth.** This is the central feature of the new plan thought out by the Divine Mind - something which human mind cannot possibly comprehend, but was **thought opportune** by God

It is about this the Bible speaks very much, **Sin** had become the main obstacle to man's happiness. This sin was to be taken away from the world. For this the தம்முதல் was to be sacrificed as an innocent **lamb**, as it was done in the olden times, particularly before the deliverance of the people from the slavery of Egypt -a slavery which was a symbol of the slavery which is sin too! And so at the very first appearance in public, this **Guru** (Christ) is pointed to by his herald, "Behold the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world". (Jo. 1 : 29) Note, it is said that he will take away the 'sin' of the world, meaning the first sin committed in the world, which

was the cause of so many other sins. Note also how the sacrificial lamb is linked with the taking away of sin. More than once, and long before the event, Christ spoke in this strain:

"Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man will be delivered to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn him to the Gentiles to be mocked and scourged and he will be raised on the third day." (Matt. 20. 18-19) All this He used to link with the humiliations which he had to go through, saying :

Even as the Son of man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.' (Matt. .20, 28) Note the words 'ransom for many' which meant propitiation or reparation for the sins of men. The same thought pervades in the narrative of the last supper, before his death - especially when 'blood' is mentioned :

"And he took bread, and when he had given thanks he broke it and gave it to them saying, "This is my body which is **given for you**. Do this in remembrance of me." (Luke. 22, 19)

"And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you ; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is **poured out for many** for the forgiveness of sins." (Matt 26, 27-28) the words " given for you", and "poured out for many," mean that a **Sacrifice of Self** was being offered. Note how this 'sacrifice' was necessary for the forgiveness of sins

In this new plan of God, this sacrifice was thought fitting.

"And he said to them: Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things ... (Luke. 24, 26). 'Necessary' here means 'fitting'. Note that all this was not absolutely necessary, but was thought opportune to make man realise the gravity of sin and repent for it. It may be said to have been necessary only in the sense of desirable, opportune", and in line with God's goodness, which goes all the way to draw the sinner to himself as He himself says:

"And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself". (Jo. 12, 32)

Here we see the exact purpose of all this humiliation and suffering: it is to draw all men to himself. Man who is not so easily touched by words, is touched and drawn by deeds-especially by deeds involving suffering and pain, especially if this suffering is gone through for no other motive than that of proving one's love for the beloved. Hence it was that Christ defined love thus :

"Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." (Jo. 15, 13)

This central teaching is also preached by the apostles.

a) The humiliation and obedience and the exaltation:

"Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is the Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2, 5-11)

b) The immense love of Christ for us;

"And walk in love, as Christ loved us and **gave himself** up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God" (Eph. 5, 2)

c) It is a personal love:

"I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and **gave himself for me**" (gal. 2, 20)

CHAPTER - VI

The ' New ' plan above described is not complete without atleast some ' response ' on the part of man to the gratuitous and loving initiative

of God, for no gift can be thrust upon any one. At least a minimal response is needed. Man is a rational being and as such he has to respond responsibly. This response can only be minimal since man is already burdened with sin, distracted by the senses etc. etc. But this minimal response cannot be dispensed with.

This point is explained in the IX Sutra. Here is a paraphrasis of the Sutra.

The physical eye (ஊனக்கண்) cannot understand (realise) the Lord (பதி) nor can the Knowledge be possible to the senses. One has to seek (நாடி) him in one's own mind and heart (சிந்தை) using a spiritual eye. (ஞானக்கண்ணினில்) Then it will happen that the activity of the senses (பிாசம்) will disappear as fast as the mirage which one cannot reach, in fact seems to recede the faster you try to reach it. The fire of the passions arising from the senses under the healing (cooling) effect of God's grace will gradually burn less, as one goes on meditating in due fashion (விதி) on the word of God (பதி) which instill fear in the heart (அஞ்செழுத்து, the word of fear ie. salutary fear of offending God by any wrong doing).

The response is ' Faith ' :

In the context of the ' new plan ' and the ' new creation ' which I have been trying to explain above, **faith** would mean simply ' saying yes ' to the plan and giving the co-operation, be it ever so minimal in order to benefit from the plan.

Now for this faith a certain divine and spiritual eye is needed, a man with only the physical, sense-perceptions, cannot see the Truth which is understood only by the spirit or power and grace of God, It is essentially pertaining to matters unseen by natural eyes. Hence it is said to be a conviction of things not seen ' and an "assurance of things hoped for" (Heb. 11:1) in keeping with the above new plan.

That is why Christ pronounced 'blessed' those "who have not seen and yet believed" (Jo. 20:29) Faith is a gift from God, and, "the unspiritual man does not receive the gifts of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned". (1 Cor. 2, 14)

It is a gift, and comes from the spirit of God, not from this world.

"Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is from God, that we might understand the gifts bestowed on us by God. And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who possess the Spirit."

(1 Cor. 2, 12 - 13)

We see therefore the necessity of a spiritual eye or mind to understand the things of God.

It is this spiritual mind that we have to continually seek and reflect on. Only thus can we hope to

get rid of the misleading sense perceptions, the sensual and the carnal. It is a struggle, but the spirit of God is powerful enough to free us from them.

Read the following:

"We know that the law is spiritual; but I am carnal, sold under sin." "For I know that nothing good dwells within me that is, in my flesh. I can will what is right, but I cannot do it. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do. Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I that do it, but sin which dwells within me ." (Rom. 7 . 14-18-20)

"For I delight in the law of God, in my inmost self, but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin which dwells in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I of myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin." (Rom 7. 22-25)

"There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death. For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. For those who live according to the

flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, indeed it cannot; and those who are in the flesh cannot please God" (Rom. 8, 1-9)

The Healing grace :

It was to communicate this healing power that the தம்முதல் (God) came to the world (தவத்தினில் உணர்த்த) Even before he came to the world this was prophesied to be his chief mission. Read;

"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good tidings to the afflicted;

he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound;

to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour, and the day of vengeance of our God;

to comfort all who mourn." Is. (61, 1-2)

Read also Is. 53, 4-6.

Fear of God-meditating on His word-the Word of fear.

"The Son of man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all evil doers, and throw them into the furnace of fire; There men will weep and gnash their teeth."

(Math. 13, 41, 42)

Fear, therefore, for God's word is necessary to free oneself from evil!

Fear for the punishments :-

"Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour." "And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness; there men will weep and gnash their teeth." "Then he will say to those at his left hand, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.'" (Mat. 25, 13, 30 & 41-46)

It is to preach this **word of fear** that Christ sent his disciples to the world.

"And he said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.

(Mark 16, 15-16)

Among the gifts of the spirit the basic one is **fear of God.**

"And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him,
the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the spirit of counsel and might,
the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.
And his delight shall be in the fear of the Lord.
He shall not judge by what his eyes see,
or decide by what his ears hear;" (Is. 11, 2-3)

This fear is not that of a slave, but of a son who **fears to offend his loving father.**

Without a continuous sense of such a fear the sensible and sensual in us will soon dominate and we will lose all that we have gained by 'faith'. To reap in full the fruits of the 'new creation' we need faith as explained above. But faith in all its intensity is more than seeing with a spiritual eye, and living in the salutary fear of God. This is necessary, but more earnest efforts are needed to realise the 'new creation' as perfectly as possible on this side of life. This is taught in the Xth Sutra.

The call to share in the life and happiness of God implies an **elevation** of the ordinary man-to a status which is almost divine. This is actually called the supernatural elevation ie. a being raised up above what is purely natural and human. Such an elevation of course can take place only by the power and goodness of God as we saw earlier.

When people asked Jesus : " What must we do, to be doing the works of God? Jesus answered : This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom he has sent" (Jo. 6 : 28-29) We see here how faith implies a very work of God! It makes ordinary poor mortal man be elevated so high.

The same thought, even more emphatically is found in the following words of Jesus:

"He who believes in me will also do the works I do: and greater works than these will he do" (Jo. 14, 12)

Faith has power even to that extent.

This is what is meant by the words அவனே தானே ஆகிய அந்நெறி. The word அவனே here means God,

தானே means the soul. அந்நெறி-in that state. The thought is - In the state of the soul participating in the power of God and in some measure becoming himself (God).

In that state the soul becomes one with God (ஏகானுகி) ie. one with Jesus. Here are the words of Jesus :

" Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. If a man does abide in me, he is cast forth as a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you. By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be my disciples." (Jo. 15, 4-8)

Abiding in one another is a most intimate union and such an union was necessary to bear much fruit-fruit of grace and life in God; the fruit of the new creation ... The same thought is expressed in the following words of Jesus :

" Not that any one has seen the Father except him who is from God; he has seen the Father."

"I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any one eats of this bread, he will live for ever; and the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh."

"He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats me will live because of me." (Jo. 6, 47, 51 & 56-57)

See how 'faith, eternal life abiding in Jesus' are all linked and express the same reality.

Thus "he who is united to the Lord becomes one spirit with him" (1 Cor. 6 : 17) This is the full import of the word ஏகானி in the Sutra.

As a result of such a close union, the soul will be able to over-come (a) the results of that original மலம் i.e. the evil fruits of the first sin (b) the confused state (மாயை) into which the senses and their misleading activity bring the soul - due to which a slackening of the consciousness of the only Reality that matters i.e. God, since too much of the sense unreality (மாயை) causes such a slackening.

Overcoming these obstacles the soul will establish itself in the work of God as we saw in Jo. 6 : 28-29. This is the இறைபணி of the Sutra.

This work of God which is radically faith leads to a number of works of excellent virtue and holiness, prayer, worship of God, contemplation, Love of the Divinity, union with him, acts of goodness and concern for others etc.

The soul will now be in a fairly stable state of virtue- strengthening and perfecting God's grace, and the new life according to the new plan of God.

To be in a fairly stable state of virtue is yet not enough. The soul will still have to progress in the new life and love of the Lord. For this, the personal effort of the soul, though necessary is far from enough. The spirit of God, who is the very soul of our soul will have to take the lead and goad on our poor minds and hearts to further heights. The goal of all this to reach "what no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him." (1 Cor. 2, 9).

"This supreme goal cannot be reached unless God himself now, more than earlier, took the initiative. And this He does,

When our physical eyes perceive an object it is not the eye itself that perceives; it is the soul within the body which does it. (This is why a corpse does not perceive). When our spiritual eye is to see God and His Infinite Realities, the soul (spirit) within us has to act under the influence of the divine power and spirit. The Bible says; "God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. For what person knows a man's thoughts except the spirit of the man which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God." (1 Cor. 2, 10-11)

This is what the XI Sutra purports to say. Note that in this Sutra as well as already in the VIII Sutra the words அரன் அழல் செலுமே are found. Why the same thought in both?

If அரன் கழல் செலுமே should mean that the soul "reaches or arrives at the feet of the Destroyer of sin", why is this thought expressed in both the Sutras? The answer is: In the VIII Sutra it was a question of getting rid of the separation of the soul from God on account of sin (அன்னிய மின்மையின்). We may say it was an **initial reaching** - as it were arriving at the true object, after wandering here on account of sin. In this Sutra it is a question of a **final arriving** at the goal. And this can happen, says the Sutra; only அயரா அன்பின் i.e. by a steadfast and persevering intention and effort to reach the end. It implies no break of any sort in the love relationship which was attained in the VIII Sutra. How this love-pursuit is to be for ever kept in mind, how it is to be relentlessly kept on, how its absolute need power and excellence is to be ever more understood and appreciated is described in the whole Chapter 13 of 1 Cor. This may be read.

CHAPTER VII

In the last (i.e. XII) Sutra of Siva Gnana Bodham, we are given the very last stage of the love-pursuit. It would seem that this stage pertains to life after death-when the share in divine life is finally and fully achieved.

The words அரன் கழல் செலுமே were explained above. In this sutra the கழல் are called செம்மலர் தாள் which can be translated as red flower like feet or in general "perfect or excellent feet". The word செம்மை can mean 'red' as well as perfect. But since the words are not simply செம்மலர் தாள் but செம்மலர்

நோன் தாள் we have to understand these words with reference to the தவத்தினில் உணர்த்த of the VIII Sutra. For நோன்பு and தவம் have the same meaning. Since in VIII Sutra we have shown how the word தவத்தினில் could be applied only to a God (தம்முதல்) who, underwent suffering, these words செம்மலர் நோன் தாள் can be interpreted only as "the feet of one whose feet were reddened by blood" as actually were the feet of Christ when they were nailed to the cross. Though only feet are mentioned, we have to understand the whole person of Christ whose whole body become one wound - reddened by blood. We may also translate as: the "rose-red feet" etc. The 'feet' are particularly mentioned because it is a Tamil way of expressing that man is unworthy of God; the most he can aim at is reaching his feet. It is also a way of expressing 'refuge': here the final refuge of the soul

There was a time when the soul caught up between the meshes of the senses and their attractions and consequent sinful acts was prevented (சேரல் ஓட்டா) to reach these blessed blood stained feet in order to be saved. But now by the loving and gratuitous initiative of the Lord the soul has been **washed clean** of all its filth of sin (அம்மலம் கழிஇ). We read in the Bible - Christ..... "having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word" (Eph. 5:26) i.e. through 'water and the holy spirit' (Jo. 3:5) in the sacrament of Baptism. The 'water' here would rather mean the blood of Christ. The Bible speaks of this often. See Rev - 5, 9, 7, 14, etc

Once the enemy of love and friendship with God, enemy of grace and intimacy with Him is removed, union with the Lover (அன்பர்) will follow. This (அன்பர்) in the first place can only be the **Lord Himself**. The word can also mean 'friends' but here the prime effect of the removal of sin and its being washed away can only be intimate union (மரீஇ) with God as the Lover of lovers-the Infinite Lover, the Lover who more than any human lover yearns to possess the human heart and its love. Not that He is in need of it in any way, but because He knows that is the only way for the human soul to be truly happy, here and hereafter. The whole purpose of God desiring man to have a share in his life and happiness is precisely to make man happy.

Once this intimate union with the divinity is realised, sin and its deceptiveness disappears completely (மால் அற) and the soul is enabled to adore and love the Lord with undivided attention and attachment.

It will be in this continual adoration of the நேயம் மலிந்தவர் வேடம் i.e. the appearance of the one who is full of love, who is a very personification of love.

To understand this fully we have to explain first what the word (வேடம்) means. It can mean both a hypocritical appearance i.e. showing oneself to be what one is not, as well hiding externally the excellence one really possesses.

The word (வேடம்) here can only mean the latter sense. For that is exactly what the Lord, the one who came (தவத்தினில் உணர்த்த) did.

As we read in Philip. 2, 6-8 there was no need for him to aim at grasping something which was not his. The divine splendour was his; equality with God and Form of God was his by his very nature. But for the present he hid all that and showed himself in all human weakness and misery, poverty and suffering.

Infinite happiness was his, but did not hesitate to endure the shame of it all (See Heb. 12:2)

Look at him in the manger at Bethlehem - there is nothing but poverty, weakness and misery!

Look at him fleeing to Egypt, from his enemy. There is nothing but helplessness!

Look at him in the workshop at Nazareth. There is nothing but poverty and a struggle for daily existence.

Look at him despised by his own relatives, insulted by his enemies, finally captured, tortured and put to death. Look at him hanging on the cross. What is it but the utmost limits of weakness, misery and suffering. And why all this?

Because God **so loved** the world that He gave his only son to suffer and be sacrificed for the sins of the world. (See. Jo. 3:16).

Because he loved each one of us personally, and gave himself for each one of us (Gal. 2:20)

Because, as he himself said, there is no greater love than giving one's life for his friends
(Jo. 15, 13,).

Actually when Christ sacrificed himself for love of mankind, we were sinners and therefore not friends of God or righteous.

"While we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly, Why, one will hardly die for a righteous man though perhaps for a good man one will dare even to die. But God shows his love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we are now justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.", (Rom. 5, 6-10)

St. John Says:

"In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the expiation for our sins." (1 Jo. 4,9-10)

"So we know and believe the love God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him." (1 Jo. 4-16).

All this is conveyed by the words நேயம் மலிந்தவர் வேடம் They refer to the அன்பர் i.e. the **Lover God**.

This same அன்பர் is also the **temple** - a temple to be worshipped, not merely a temple **where** one worships God.

On the occasion when Jesus drove out those who were making the great Temple of Jerusalem a house for trade, the authorities questioned him:

"For in him all the fulness of God was pleased to dwell", (Col. 1:19) greater than the Temple of Jerusalem where the fulness of God was not really dwelling.

The வேடம் above described will in some way be perpetuated even in heaven. For even there the only Temple will be the Lamb',

"I saw no temple for its temple is the Lord .. the Lamb". Rev. 21, 22)

Before this Temple which is the Lamb there will be continuous adoration and praise (தொழுதல்).

Day and night those around the throne of the Lamb will never cease to sing:

Holy, Holy is the Lord God almighty.

"Worthy art thou, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honour and power, for thou didst create all things, and by thy will they existed and were created." (Rev. 4, 11)

"and they sang a new song, saying,

"Worthy art thou to take the scroll and to open its seals, for thou wast slain and by thy blood didst ransom men for God from every tribe and tongue and people and nation," "saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth

and wisdom and might and honour and glory and blessing!" (Rev. 5, 9-10-12)

This is the final stage of the happiness to which mankind has been called. "Blessed are those who wash their robes" (Rev. 22:14) i.e. their souls in the Blood of the Lamb and enter into this city of God where 'nothing unclean shall enter' (Rev. 21:27)

Summary

The plan of God for man's happiness

1. Call of God to a share in His happiness - creation of man, woman and the world-This was the original plan.
2. At the very beginning mankind rejected the offer made by God. Thus sin (மலம்) entered into the world.
3. As a result of this sin, man's life became one of sin, a slavery to senses and their misleading activity. The soul was enmeshed in them. (ஐம்புல வேடர்)
4. God did not abandon man. He conceived a new plan - to come into the world himself and attract man to himself by suffering (தவத்தினில் உணர்த்து)
5. To realise this attraction in oneself, faith is needed - faith is a spiritual eye.
6. Faith leads the soul to union with God Per-

severing love will finally lead him to the greatest intimacy with Him!

7. To realise this one has to keep before him the form of God becoming man - his suffering form - and worship him as the very Temple of God
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APPENDIX I

The word அஞ்செழுத்து of the IX Sutra has been traditionally interpreted by scholars to mean **five letters** - viz. சிவாய நம or நமசிவாய which mean 'worship to Shiva', in Sanskrit. This phrase is considered almost as a **key** element in Saiva Siddanta philosophy. How or why this phrase came to be introduced as such an important point is not easy to say-all the more so since it is in Sanskrit. Was it to say equivalently that to arrive at a real knowledge of God this prayerful invocation of Shiva was needed and that in Sanskrit? Was it impossible to find something equivalent in Tamil itself? Was it to show that somehow Sanskrit was necessary? or to show that ultimately the whole philosophy was derived from Sanskrit original as some Scholars are actually saying?

I have given an altogether new meaning to the word அஞ்செழுத்து. I have first split word into அஞ்சு and எழுத்து. When a Tamilian wants to express the number **five** he ordinarily uses the word ஐந்து. Why was அஞ்சு used here? It is mostly in colloquial form that the word அஞ்சு is used.

I have taken the first part of the word அஞ்சு to mean 'fearful' or fear-worthy, and the word எழுத்து to mean **word**. The whole phrase would mean 'The word instilling fear'-fear of God which is **wisdom**, as the Bible says.

There is no grammatical snag in அஞ்சு and எழுத்து coalecing into அஞ்செழுத்து. (e.g. பஞ்சு + அணை; பஞ்சணை.) The question could be whether அஞ்சு

can mean 'fearful or fearworthy' .. It is my opinion that it can mean it It would be அஞ்சுவதற்குரிய, அஞ்ச வேண்டிய etc. It can also mean 'அச்சத்தை வெளிப்படுத்தும்' like கொஞ்சமொழி - (meaning கொஞ்சதலை வெளிப்படுத்தும் மொழி).

The word of God reveals a certain salutary fear without which man cannot avoid wrong deeds - just as a son who has no reverential fear for his father would not be easily prevented from doing wrong deeds! ... Similary note :

எஞ்சு மொழி : எஞ்சி நிற்கின்ற மொழி
மிஞ்சு பேச்சு : (வரம்பை) மிஞ்சுதலை வெளிப்படுத்தும் பேச்சு

When, as narrated in the Bible God revealed his name, to the question asked by Moses (See Exod. 3, 13-14). He said "I am who am" or "I am Being" In Hebrew it is 'Yahweh'. This name was held by the people as so sacred that they could not pronounce it when reading the Bible. Wherever that name occurred they used another word **Adonai**

This adds one more reason to my argument that the name of God is fear worthy and has to be used with the greatest reverence in prayer etc. That is why the Second of the Ten Commandments given by the same Yahweh runs as follows: "You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain" (Exod. 19,7). 'In vain' here would mean "unnecessarily or without reverence". It could also mean 'as in a false oath'.

There seems to be no serious objection, therefore, to my interpretation of அஞ்செழுத்து as 'a name fearful or fearworthy' or a name to be used with the greatest reverence.

Such a reverence and pious pronouncing the Name of God is doubtless meritorious, and is powerful to gradually overcome the பிாசம் i.e. the lower appetite or desire which is the source of all evil in us.

APPENDIX 2.

In the beginning of the 2nd century A. D. there was born in Babylon a person called Mani. When he was about 25 years old it is said that he claimed to have received some revelation from above and began to preach his revelations in the missionary journey to "the land of the Indians" the Iranian provinces of Turan, Maquan and north-west India. Here he apparently came in to contact with Buddhism.

What he preached is known by the name of 'Manichaeism' which is the final and logical systematization of an earlier even-pre-Christian philosophical system known as "Gnosis" or Gnosticism. For centuries the exact history of these systems was not quite clear, but more recently a considerable number of primary sources became available. And so we are now able to know more precisely about the system.

Deliberately syncretist in character Manichaeism drew on the religions of its missionary fields particularly from Zoroastrianism, Buddhism and Christianity. The basic principle proclaimed by this system is regarding the **Double principle** which alone can explain the problem of good and evil in the world. It is described as the principle of Light and Darkness and God and matter

These opposed principles cannot be reconciled in any way. And so God who is Light and Good cannot touch matter which is evil and darkness. So it is not possible for God to be born as man. This opposition is emphatically taught by Saiva Siddhanta when it asserts:

மூலமலம் ஒளிமுன் இருள்போல முதல்வனுக்கு
மறு தலைப் பொருள்.

It is then but logical to assert that God cannot touch matter and therefore can come only in the form of a **guru** and not taking a body, as Vashnavism and Christianity assert. Was there any link between Manichaeism and the above principle of Saivism since Manicheism had enough link with Buddhism etc?

APPENDIX 3

In explaining ஐம்புலவேடரின் (see chap. V) writers often compare the pitiable plight of the soul (caught in the meshes of the senses) to the Son of a king who is captured as an infant, is taken away and left in the custody of hunters. The child grows up there absolutely unaware that he is the son of a king and becomes more aware that he is the member of a hunter family.

The king, meanwhile, goes out in search of his son and after a laborious search discovers somehow that the boy staying with the hunters is his own son. He then naturally begins to make him aware of his identity i.e. of his royal dignity. After much talking he convinces him of his state and is taken home to the Royal Palace to live as a prince there.

The inner meaning of this parabolic narrative may be given as follows

The soul, as we have seen, was elevated to a divine royal dignity when he was offered a share in the very life of God, when he was offered the enjoyment of nothing less than a most intimate friendship and love of God. (What or who is more royal than God?). The soul (man) did not fully realize the tremendous import of the offer, failed to appreciate it and then fell into what Siva Gnana Bodham terms 'மலம்'. He (Man) becomes altogether immersed in the pleasures which senses offered and almost forgot his identity i.e. the **Call** made to him to share in God's life and happiness.

God, the king, then comes, as it were, in search of man, by himself taking a human body in order to make him realise his identity. Christ, (the King) himself said that he had "come to seek and to save that which was lost". Man was, as it were, lost to God, when he refused to accept the generous offer made to him. And so God in Christ, step by step, not only instructs about the offer, but gives him a divine power and grace to realise it. Man now becomes aware of his real identity viz. that he was not to be a slave of the senses, but a prince to be in the divine palace of the king i. e. in Heaven, with God himself. Thus he is enabled by grace to be rid of the tyranny of the senses, their machinations, the temptations they bring about and finally at the end of life reach the **feet of God**, as Thirukural says, and அரங்கமூல் as Siva grana Bodham says.

The above thoughts may be illustrated also by the following parabolic narrative, which we will call, The story of an eagle."

Once upon a time, while walking through the forest, a certain man found a young eagle. He took it home and put it in his barn-yard where it soon learned to eat chicken feed and to behave as chickens behave.

One day a naturalist who was passing by, enquired of the owner why it was that the eagle, the king of the birds, should be confined to live in a barn-yard with chickens.

"Since I have given it chicken feed and trained it to live as a chicken, it has never learned to fly", replied the owner. "It behaves as chickens behave, so it is no longer an eagle".

"Still" insisted the naturalist, "It has the heart of an eagle and can surely be taught to fly."

After talking it over, the two men agreed to find out whether this was possible. Gently the naturalist took the eagle in his arms and said, "You belong to the sky, not to the earth. Stretch forth your wings and fly!"

The eagle, however, was confused, he did not know who he was, and seeing the chickens eating their food, he jumped down to be with them again.

Undismayed, the naturalist took the eagle on the next day up on the roof of the house, and urged him again; saying: "You are an eagle, stretch forth your wings and fly! But the eagle was afraid of his unknown self and the world, and jumped down once more for the chicken feed.

On the third day, the naturalist rose early and took the eagle out of the barn-yard, up to a high mountain. "There he held the king of the birds high above him and encouraged him again, saying: 'You are an eagle. You belong to the sky. Stretch forth your wings now and fly'".

Then the naturalist lifted him straight towards the sun. Slowly he stretched out his wings. At last with a triumphant cry, he soared away into the heavens.

Here is the interpretation :

The young eagle is man i. e. the Soul. The barn yard is the world. The chicken feed is the petty pleasures provided by the senses. Man learns to enjoy these petty pleasures and behaves more or less like animals which live purely on sense instincts and the pleasures derived therefrom. The naturalist is the one who created all nature i.e. God, who knows what is man and the purpose for which he was created, as explained above. Though he (man) behaves almost like an animal (so often he does behave like one!) he has a heart which was created for God, to share in the happiness of God, and so, as St. Augustine said long ago (after having tried to enjoy in his early life all the pleasures which the world of sense can give), his heart cannot rest but in God. The soul therefore, has in itself a natural tendency to God, as it were to fly to God. God (the naturalist in the parable) takes the soul, as it were, in his hand and says: "You man belong to heaven, not to the earth. Stretch forth the wings of your desires heavenwards and fly. I give you the power, the grace you need." Confused at this, the soul jumps down and goes after the earthly delights, not knowing his destiny.

God, however, does not give up. He urges, in the secret of his (man's) heart, "You are meant for heaven. Become conscious of this and try to fly to God!" But the soul does not try, it runs after the petty pleasures of senses.

But God like the 'Hound of Heaven' portrayed by the Poet, Francis Thompson, runs after it and repeats the offer which He made at the beginning. He (God) finally lifts him straight towards the sun i.e. lifts him by his divine power and grace towards the sun i.e. towards Himself, the all powerful Light. The Soul is now attracted powerfully by a great internal grace, and liberating himself from the low sense pleasures, lifts his mind and heart and learns to soar towards God. He begins to think on God, contemplate His eternal Beauty and Glory and prepares himself to take the final flight to God i.e. after death ! He thus reaches God Himself, if he has properly prepared himself by learning more and more to live in the divine love.

