

**Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts
Regional Centre, Puducherry.**

Topic: - **The Core Philosophy of Devotion in Tamil Saivism and Vaishnavism
In the perspective of Nāyaṅmārs and Āzhwārs.**

Date: 15th July, 2021

The Regional Centre of IGNCA Puducherry, in collaboration with **French Institute of Puducherry**, organized an online presentation on 15th July 2021 from 10.30 Am to 12 pm. titled “**The Core Philosophy of Devotion in Tamil Saivism and Vaishnavism in the perspective of Nāyaṅmārs and Āzhwārs**” by **Dr. T. Ganesan**, Research Associate, Puducherry and **Dr. K.T.V. Raghavan**, Research Officer, IGNCA, Puducherry.

The program comprised of the two following presentations, as:

- 01. Contribution of Some Nāyaṅmārs for the Propagation of Shiva Bhakti.**
- 02. Contribution of Āzhwārs for the Propagation of Vishnu Bhakti.**

The French Institute of Puducherry is a most prestigious Institution of Research in India. The event focused on topic as The Bhakti in Tamil Culture and How the Tamil people were influenced by the propagation of the Nāyaṅmārs and Āzhwārs in the matter of devotion. The Welcome address was delivered by **Dr. Gopal Jayaraman**, Regional Director of IGNCA, Puducherry, and The Inaugural address was given by Shri. **Hugo David**, H.O.D, Dept of Indology, French Institute of Puducherry in this Program.

Thereafter, **Dr. T. Ganesan** started giving his presentation. In his extraordinary presentation, he said that The Nāyaṅmār saints led the bhakti movement in south India. They preached unflinching love of Śiva as the only path to get freedom from the worldly life. They were against the rigidity of rituals followed by the people. They stressed on pure devotion and love.

In order to explain the epics of Nāyaṅmār Dr. Ganesan said that The Tēvāram hymns were composed with intense bhakti and portray the struggle of the saints for union with the Almighty. They are the literary expressions of supreme bhakti characterized by a mystical fervor. The dominant emotion is one of joy propelled by pure love expressing itself in the songs. The Tēvāram hymns are a turning point in the history of Saivism. Demonstrating the devotional experiences and feelings of The Nāyaṅmār, the quoted the following hymns from Tēvāram.

Tēvāram song by Tiruñāṅacampantar-

இடரினுந் தளரினும் எனதுறுநோய்

தொடரினும் உனகழல் தொழுதெழுவேன்

கடல்தனில் அமுதொடு கலந்தநஞ்சை

மிடறினில் அடக்கிய வேதியனே.

இதுவோ எமை யாளுமா றீவதொன் றெமக்கில்லையேல்

அதுவோவுன தின்னருள் ஆவடு துறையரனே.

That means, Oh Vedanāyaka! Oh God Hara residing at the holy place Tiruvāvaduturai! In order to save the world, you swallowed the deadly poison that came out along with the amrita when gods and demons churned the ocean. I never cease to worship your holy feet even when I undergo miseries in my life, when I am depressed in spirits, when I become physically weak due to old age and when I am attacked by many diseases. Is this the way? Are you blessing me? Even if you have nothing to give me I take that itself as Your blessings.

Tēvāram song by Tirunāvukkaracar (Appar) –

நாமார்க்குங் குடியல்லோம் நமனை யஞ்சோம்
நரகத்திலிடர்ப்படோம் நடலை யில்லோம்
ஏமாப்போம் பிணியறியோம் பணிவோ மல்லோம்
இன்பமே எந்நாளு ந்துன்ப மில்லை,
தாமார்க்குங் குடியல்லாத் தன்மை யான சங்கரன்நற்
சங்கவெண் குழையோர் காதிற் கோமற்கே
நாமென்றும் மீளா ஆளாய்க் கொய்ம் மலர்ச்சே
வடியிணையே குறுகி னோமே.

It means, we are subject to none; we don't fear to death; we will not suffer in hell; we are living without falsity; we will be glad forever; we don't know any illness; we don't bow to anybody else; joy abides with us forever; we will never get sorrow; know that we are the bondsman of Shankara, the Sovereign who is subject to none and who wears in one ear the kuḷai of pure white shell; we have attained His lotus feet as the only refuge. Dr.Ganesan concluded his presentation by quoting many Tevaram Tamil poems and its devotional philosophy.

In the second presentation, **Dr. K.T.V. Raghavan** emphasized the significance of the Bhakti Culture in Vaishnavism and contribution of Āzhwārs in the aspect of Devotion.

In order to explain the divine mission of the Āzhwārs, he said that Man should, with a spirit of devotion, love and surrender or humility, worship the divine idol with an alert mental consciousness of its significance. He should display such qualities of love, kindness and brotherhood to the fellow beings; thus, people should feel that they are the children of one and the same omnipresent power, Vishnu, and live-in peace, amity and joy; and this type of living is said to be realizing God or living with God.

Demonstrating the devotional poetic glory of Āzhwārs, Dr.Raghavan quoted the following verses from Divya Prabandhas.

வையம் தகளியா வார்கடலே நெய்யாக,
வெய்ய கதிரோன் விளக்காக, - செய்ய
சுடராழி யானடிக்கே சூட்டினேஞ்சொன் மாலை,
இடராழி நீங்குகவே என்று. (Mudal Tiruvandadi-1)

It means, this world is a lamp, the surrounding oceans the oil, and the blazing Sun its wick; Let me dedicate my garland of Verses at the feet of the Lord who sports the sparkling wheel "Sudarshana", Then suffering of this world may pass.

அன்பே தகளியா ஆர்வமே நெய்யாக
இன்புருகு சிந்தையிடு திரியா நன்புருகி

ஞானச் சுடர்விளக் கேற்றினேன் நாரணற்கு
ஞானத் தமிழ்புரிந்த நான். (Irandaṁ Tiruvandadi-1)

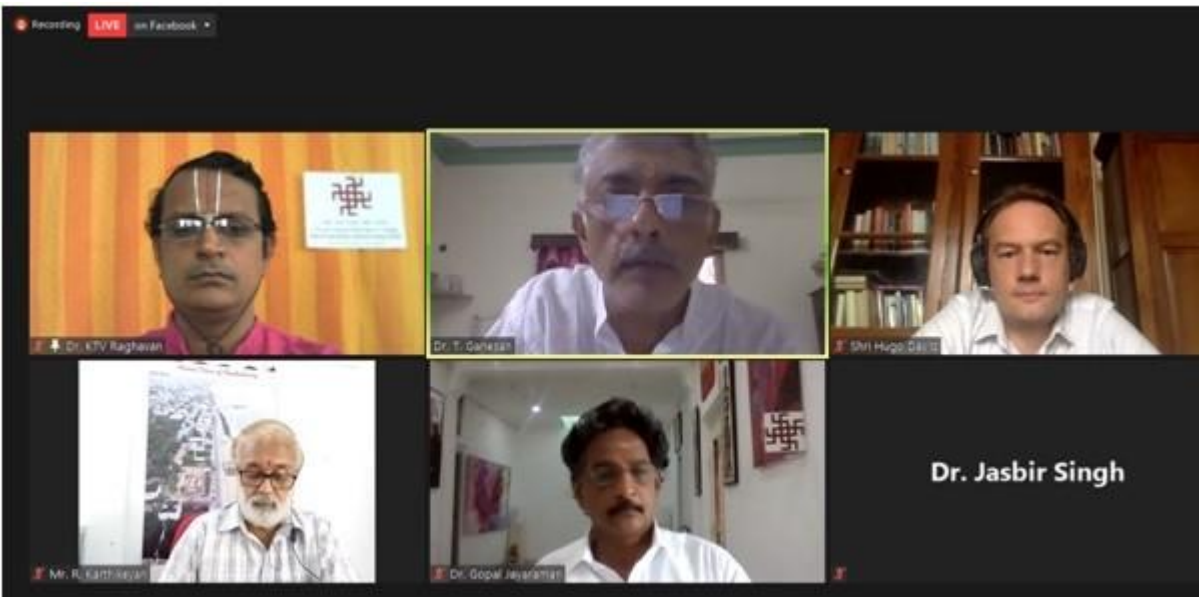
It means, with love as the lamp, deep yearning as the butter oil, and Thoughts soaked in bliss divine as the wick; I lit a sparkling Spiritual light where the self melted and dissolved- for Narayana, and composed this inspired Tamil poem illumined by that light.

திருக்கண்டேன் பொன்மேனி கண்டேன்திகழும்
அருக்கனணிநிறமும்கண்டேன் செருக்கிளரும்
பொன்னாழிகண்டேன் புரிசங்கங்கைக்கண்டேன்
என்னாழிவண்ணன்பாலின்று. (Moonraṁ Tiruvandadi-1)

The scene that happened before me at this very instant was that, I saw my divine mother Lakshmi with my Lord who is in the colour of ocean. Then I saw his brilliant form radiant like the sun, with his Sparkling disc called Sudarshna which is deadly in battle in one hand, and the curved conch called Panchajanya in the other. Dr. K.T.V. Raghavan explained the philosophical meaning behind every poem of Alwars.

At the end of presentation, Shri R. Karthikeyan, Accounts Officer, IGNCA, Regional Centre of Puducherry, made his vote of thanks to both the presenters and authority of IGNCA as well as those participated in this presentation. Beside the program has been well received by the audience and it has been applauded by all the Scholars and viewers of this Program. This program was organized well with the supports of staff members of Regional Centre of Puducherry.

Prepared by
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11:56



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Thiru Mantra

- In the view of Āzhwārs Ekeswaropasana is the better way to reach and enjoy the god. Therefore they stated the word Srimannarayana in their Prabandhas.
- This word stands for oneness of god and it inspires the wise scholars, thinkers and devotees for Ekeswaropasana.
- OM NAMO NĀRĀYANĀYA is called as Ashtakshari Mantra. It is calling as Thiru Mantra in Tamil.