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THE RELEVANCE OF ST. RAMALINGA'S PHILOSOPHY TO THE MODERN WORLD

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Abstract

Saint Ramalingam was a contemporary of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. He was one of the most famous Tamil Saints and also one of the greatest Tamil poets of the 19th century. Saint Ramalingam was influenced by Valluvar. He was not merely a philosopher but an ardent practitioner of religion. Philosophy is concerned with a systematic view of relevant facts with their interpretation and implications for knowledge. His message of death lessness and suddha Sanmarga a special relevance to the modern world. Universal brotherhood embracing not only all men but all living beings and the ultimate state of man and the universe is seen not as a liberation from matter and body, but as their transfiguration by which they merged In the transcendent life and light of the Godhead. St. Ramalingam wished a new man and a new social order to emerge. St. Ramalingam wished for an inner revolution in man through Samarasa Suddha Sanmargam.

Key words: Philosophy, Suddha Sanmarga, Truth, Love, Religion

1.Introduction

Saint Ramalingam was a contemporary of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. Both the saints had to face the same social and political climate. Ramalinga Swamigal remains practically unknown even though his experiences and realizations are highly relevant to the modern world. Therefore this article deals about the relevance of St. Ramalinga's philosophy to the modern world.

2. Philosophy of St. Rmalingam

Nowadays Indians are imitating the western way of life. The present day sufferings of Indians are due to the loss of their own heritage. The songs and prose writings of St. Rmalingam indicate that he was preoccupied in his task of revival of Indian spiritual values and thoughts.

St. Ramalingam clearly explained his philosophy in prose form even though his pomes carry much deeper philosophy. Due to the exposition in fine prose style his philosophy become popular among the common people. He named his philosophy "Samarasa suddha sanmargam". Suddha sarmargam is a specific contribution of St. Ramalingam to the modern world.

2.1.The concept of satya

The concept of satya (Truth) gets an important place in the philosophy of St. Ramalingam. He named his philosophy as 'sanmargam' which means a path in search for truth. According to St. Ramalingam truth is greater than any religion or philosophy. There are truth in all religions and philosophical systems. When one realizes that there are truths in each and every religions, it is possible for them to transcend all religions and know the fundamental philosophy which is the basis of all religions. St. Ramalingam himself read the classics of the different religions, visited the various temples in order to know the truth of the religions and realized the fundamental unity of all religions. He also read the classics of philosophy and realized that love is the basic of human life and all the religions and philosophies are based on love. According to St. Ramalingam truth is the basis of the individual being and the cosmos. But the individual's real being is converted with so many impurities like anava, karma, maya, ahankars etc.

2.2. The concept of Reality

St. Ramalingam was a spiritualist with a social commitment. His spiritual communism is full of social commitments. He shed tears whenever he witnessed a crop withered up for lack of water. He suffered whenever he witnessed poor honest people begging for food. He felt very sad whenever he saw animals beings killed in the name of sacrifice to the village deities. He witnessed the sufferings and sorrows of all the living beings within himself. He conceived one reality ie. Arutperunjothi Thanipperumkarunai'. The nature of real being is grace, greatness, light and this conception is similar to the conception of Brahman in Advaita Vedanta.

His conception of reality is different from the conception of reality in Form traditional Advaita. Only God is great and that all the human beings are the devotees of one God who has neither form nor name. All the names and forms are products of the human mind. In order to realize the nature of reality one must go beyond names and forms.

2.3 The concept of soul

Theistic school of philosophy maintain that in terms of size a soul is an 'anu' where as God is Vibhu. By nature the soul is dependent upon God. St. Ramalingam's early life shows that he was a follower of saivism. The last part of Thiruvavuntar shows that he ultimately merged with god himself. He sang that Human life is great. This life is given in order to help others and to share the sufferings of others with them and to get mastery over death which is the only enemy to life. He invited people to move away from small religions to transcendentalism to experience and to save themselves.

2.4.The Ethics of St.Ramalingam

The ethics of St. Ramalingam is a social ethic. They are, Indriya Olukkam, Karma Olukkam Jiva Olukkam and Anma olukkam , These four are called as Sanmarga Olukkam. St. Ramalingam clearly said that Jiva Olukkam and Anma Olukkam are possible only with the help of divine Grace. To attain divine grace one must follow the Indriya Olukkam and Karma Olukkam. St. Ramalingam explained these disciplines in his discourse at chittivalaham to the sanmargi's for attaining the supreme goal of samarasa suddha sanmargm- the deathless life.

The philosophy of St Ramalingam is mainly social. He neither emphasized the practice of yoga nor meditation. His only concern was to save the humanity from suffering. He practiced and preached the path of love.

2.5 The concept of Grace

The souls must get divine grace to attain the goal of life. Grace is the Unbounded love towards every living being. When love transcends its Limitations it becomes grace. Love is the stem in which grace flowers. The path of St. Ramalingam aims at the state of grace in which an individual identifies his self with all the living beings. In

the state of grace one has a duty to help other suffering human beings. In that ultimate state, the souls enjoy real bliss.

3. Conclusion

Philosophy is concerned with a systematic view of relevant facts with their interpretation and implications for knowledge, Saint Ramalingam's Concern did not stop with discovery of new facts and reasoned out the point of the view on fundamental questions like the nature of reality, the nature of man, his origin and destiny and the goal of his strivings, but with realization of the concepts through personal experience.

Saint Ramalingam was not merely a philosopher but an ardent practitioner of religion. His message of deathlessness and siddha sanmarga has a special relevance to the modern world. Universal brotherhood embracing not only all men but all living beings and the ultimate state of man and the universe is seen not as a liberation from matter and body, but as their transfiguration by which they are merged in the transcendent life and light of the Godhead.

He was born a mythic the songs of St. Ramalingam "show that he experienced all the sufferings of normal human being. He sought salutations through religions and spiritual methods. He proclaimed that only love can save the human being from sufferings and that all religions and philosophies are based upon love. Prayer, meditation are some of the important disciplines in the religious philosophy of St. Ramalingam.

Hence St. Ramalingam wished a new man and a new social order to emerge. The songs of Thiruvartupa clearly show his wishes. He named the man 'Sanmargi'. Sanmargi is one who is interested in truth and love. The way of the sanmargi is in search of truth. St. Ramalingam wished for an inner revolution in man through Samarasa Siddha Sanmargam

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