

SOCIAL REFORMS OF PADITHAR IYOTHEEDOSS

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Iyothée Thoss was Prominent Dalit activist in South India. He was a first recognized Anti-Brahmin leader of the Madras Presidency. He was Thinker, Social Reformer, Writer, Siddha Physician, Tamil literary reformer, Buddhist Scholar. He was the first man run the journal Tamizhan. He mobilized his social works and views through his journal. He strictly opposed Untouchability, Brahmanism and Vedic rituals etc. He championed the cause of communal representation, women's Rights, Self Respect, Rationalism etc.

Early Life

In this way Pandit Iyothée Thoss was born in one of the Cheries in Madras, called Maggins Garden May 20 1845 to one Kandaswamy who named his Kathavarayan. Later his family migrated and settled in Nilgiris district. Traditionally the Paraiyars are noted for their fidelity and gratitude and Kathavarayan was exemplary to this traditional character. He changed his name from Kathavarayan to Iyothée Thoss a mark of gratitude to his rendered teacher Iyothée Thoss Kairaja Pandithar under whom he studied Tamil Literature.

The depressed society leaders during this time has started a big-movement to send their children to schools. They made long invitation to the parent to educate their children. In this situation Kandaswamy sent his son to an elementary school in Teynampet and later he joined whom revered teacher Iyothée Thoss Kaviraja Pandithar. He became a very good scholar in Hindu-Philosophy and master of classical Tamil Literature, Sanskrit and Pali and also he well versed in Hindi, Buddhist, Islamic, Christian theologies, However, 'Advaita - Vedanta' attracted him most since it teaches equality by ignoring. "Varna betha" His followers in Teynampet chery strongly believed in the 'Karmakanda theory' and that their miseries were due to the Karma that they have done in the previous Janmas their life was one of never ending miseries from womb to tomb. But this was not accepted by the young Ayothidass who was the master of existing religious philosophies. He said, that casteism and untouchability were the embodiment of Hinduism but not other religions or did not exist in other countries except India.

Hence he was called the morning star of Rationalist Movement in Tamil Nadu. He was born 35 years before the birth of Periyar, (1879-1976) the leader of the Rationalist Movement in later years. His rationalist view predated the political expression Non-Brahmin mission in the Madras Presidency and eventually came to constitute an important and decisive flank of the Non-Brahmin Movement. Thus Ayothidass became the pioneer of the Non-Brahmin Movement and Rationalist movement while he was very young Ayothidass lost his Tamil Pandit title and became a popular speaker and writer, his father Kandaswamy who was

employed in an English firm. But Ayothidass had turned towards his downtrodden brothers and wanted them to be considered at least as human beings.

While he was in ootacamund, Nilgris, he got married to a tribal girl, and a son was born to them. Unfortunately the son was born blind. Within a short period his wife and son died. After sometime, he married Dhanalakshmi Ammal, younger sister of the famous Pariah leader Rettamalai Srinivasan, she was well versed in her occupation, siddha medicine and so become his beloved wife and a close associate of his profession, when they were living in Nilgris, they moved very closely with Tribals and untouchables. They got six children four male children and two female children.

Advidananta Sabha

When he was only 26 years old, Ayothidas started Advidananta Sabha, in 1870 at ootacamund. He mobilized all the Tribals, Badugas and untouchables under this banner against the proselytizing activities of Christian missionaries. His main motive was to prevent the poor estate coolies from conversion to Christianity according to Ayothidas the Christian converts used to become Non-Indians and deviated from the traditional Indian culture and civilization and thereby their patriotism used to be lost. Tolerance is the central theme of Advaita. Brotherhood, spirit of realizing one's own duty, nothing unholy and revering all faiths are the important tenants of Advaita. Dharma is sacred to all and truth is its main cord line. Thus Advaita teaches respect to individuals and equal opportunity to all. Moreover, it champions the cause of human code of conduct to feel oneness without any difference such as caste, color or creed, rich, poor, strong or weak, Advaitism accommodates all, placing each in its proper place leading all to the ultimate reality of oneness.

Ayothidass became well acquainted with local languages of the tribal people and he preached Advaita philosophy in their own terms and phrases. Badugas, who are the followers of Saivism also convinced and joined the Sabha. This movement gave alarm to the pujaris who guided the Tribal in worshipping local deities with animal sacrifices. The Christian missionaries were the first to be worried over the activities of the pandit, he said, there is no heaven or hell and this good earth is the abode of mankind and it is the only happy home to mankind, there is no difference between man and they must be filled with love and affection, man's purity of spirit is supreme, hence, he became the rival of the scholars. From 1870 to 1875 his oratory was the order of the day in Nilgiris district, he further refused to accept the Karma and Maya theories, the world is not Maya and it is the citadel of men and women's life on the earth. Only the greedy and self-seekers made the people believe it so, said pandit Ayothidas. Give him the equal share and he will feel or enjoy property. He said don't make him your slave or teach him the Karma theory or Maya theory.

Ayothidass caused awakening in the minds of the down trodden, a sense of human dignity. A feeling of self respect and a burning desire for Hindu religion, he infused courage and new life into their demoralized and dehumanized cells. Therefore, his volcanic

struggle shattered the hopes of missionaries and iconic Hindu Pandits. However, his mind was caught in a dilemma. He neither liked his people to be converted to Christianity nor to stay in Hinduism. But he wanted to safeguard this Indian culture. Therefore he decided to convert them to Buddhism.

South Indian Chakya Buddhist Sangam 1902

Ayothidas became Buddhists in Ceylon in July 1898. After their conversion to Buddhism they returned to Madras. As soon as they returned Ayothidas founded the South Indian Chakya Buddhist Sangam at Royapettah, Madras Tamil Country. The Sangam organized regular discourses, debates and symposiums on Buddhism, scholars, Bikkus and leading members of other religions were also invited from all over India and from foreign countries.

Dravida Mahajana Sabha 1891

The Dravida Mahajana Sabha was formed in 1891 under the leadership of Ayothidas at Ooty on 1st December. Ten resolutions were passed demanding civic rights educational, concessions, removal of certain objectionable rules in Jail manual, economic advancement of the depressed classes, due share in appointment in government services including that of village offices on the conclusion of first state level conference, he sent a copy of the resolutions to the congress party. Here merely received an acknowledgement. But no subsequent action was taken. Annoyed by this he remarked that the Indian National Congress was only a Bengali Brahmin congress. His nationality towards the congress made him anticipate and predict he self fulfilling prophecy that just like the caste system split from the loot graded castes, the congress would also split. He became a highly Dalit activist and led the people to the path of progress.

Contribution of Pandit Ayothidas Tamil Culture

He was a scholar in Tamil, Sanskrit and Pali and was an original thinker and all his found of knowledge was vitalized to awake and raise the Dalits and created the sense of self respect in their enslaved mind.

Oru Paisa Tamilan

He was the earliest journalist in the field of press who published his weekly journal Oru Paisa Tamilan since 1907. The theme or ideology of Pandit Ayothidas was published in his journal Tamilan and was cherished by the Tamils not only in Tamil Nadu but also abroad and wherever the Tamils migrated. The rare ancient Tamil literatures that carry the cream of Tamil culture and civilizations were referred in this journal and so it was published by his son Pattabiraman and disciple Pandit G.A.Appadurai even after his demise in 1914.

Adivedam

A serialized tract poorva tamizholi had been published in the weekly journal Tamilan and subsequently it was published major observations on history, religious and cultural development in Tamil Nadu after a prolonged analysis Ayothidas confirmed that the

Pariahs are the original inhabitants of Bharat whose religion was Buddhism during the pre Aryan era. Dalits before the coming of the Aryans were the torch bearers of Dravidian or Tamil Culture and civilization. But this great people and their culture and civilization were completely destroyed by the traced the sorry status of the Pariahs who were degraded as untouchables because they refuse to embrace Brahminical Hinduism. Ayothidas traced the decline, deterioration and death of their socio, economic and political positions at the hands of Arya melechches. The ethical norms of moral values and the traditional greatness of the Dalits were ruthlessly destroyed by the Aryas. They were forced to gateway from society and live in the separate lonely dirty quarters their wealth was exploited, their civil rights were denied and literally they were treated as sub human beings staved Ayothidas.

History of Tiruvalluvar

This research work of Iyothedoss was published in 1950 by the Siddhartha press, Kolas Gold field; Tirukkural was printed and published by Tamil Sangam started by an European civil servant Ellis ICS in 1825 Ellis as a devoted lover of Tamil Language and literature used to collect palm leaves manuscripts and printed on one such occasion one Kandappan grandfather of Iyothedoss who was a butler of another European civil servant George Harrington handed over to Ellis the palm leaves manuscripts pillai. Manager of the press and corrected by Thandavaraya mudaliar a Tamil Scholar.

When it was released from the press Kandappan was taken a back because four new verses had been added to the original Tiruvalluvar Malai. This was published first in 1831 and then reprinted in 1834 by Ellis ICS again in 1835 one vishakperumal Iyer brought out the third edition of Tirukkural with Tiruvalluvar Malai. In 1837, a new edition was brought out by the younger brother of visakaperumal Iyer. Saravana perumal Iyer when Ayothidas compared the first and second editions of Ellis with that of the editions of Vishaka Perumal Iyer and Saravana perumal Iyer found a newly added story in the Iyer's edition of Tiruvalluvar Malai, that Tiruvalluvar was born to Bhagavan a Brahmana father and adi a pariah mother, this take was not found a place in the Ellis Editions'.

According to pandit Ayothidas Tiruvalluvar belonged to Sakkiyan clan who were called well known best astrologer and expert doctors of medicines. They were of noble birth, acted as priests in siva temples and honored by the kings. The present saivite mutt in Mylapore, Chennai was once the abode of valluvas and for this there are evidences of Inscriptions and copper plates. Originally they were not Hindus and were in all probability Buddhists. The worshipping deity of the mutt is portrayed in recycling posture and so also the Buddha is usually portrayed in reclining posture further, the shivarathri festival that is being celebrated in the temple and mutt of mylapore is meant to consecrate the day of Siddhartha's renunciation of his princely life and his leaving home, bowl in hand. The Tamil ward for begging bowl noted Ayothidas is Karabol which later became twisted in the kabalam by the saivites. Thus, kabaleeswaran. According to purna the skull in the hand of siva and struck with siva's hand. This is an irrational patch work of Brahminical Hinduism.

Sivarathri festival according to Ayothidas is nothing but the Buddha's midnight renunciation but this fact has been erased by the vesha brahmanas and the story of vulgarity of siva detaching Brahma's head has been inserted.

Ayothidas logically put forth his argument further in his books kabaleeswarar history and vibudi Arachchi thereby he started Rational Thinking forum or movement in Tamil Nadu even four decades before the birth of EVR periyar who is adorned with the title the father of Rationalism on which bed rock the Dravidian movement was built. The term Dravida Kazhakam was coined by C.N. Annadurai in 1944 by Ayothidas started his Dravida Mahajana Sangam in 1980 A.D. thereby; he was called the Grandfather of us Tamils, we Dravidans the three famous and organization Non-Brahmin movement, Dravidan movement and Rationalist movement were certainly rooted at the bottom of Adi Dravida movement of Ayothidas.

Conclusion

Pandit Ayothidas was a pioneer on the struggle for social justice and economic betterment and civil liberty for the Adidravidas. His writings are regarded as scholarly treaties on Buddhism. Thereby he contributed to the growth of social literature in Tamil Language. The struggle against the evils of caste system led him to question the concepts found in the puranas and the Vedas. This made him play the role of a rationalist and this in turn paved the way for the growth of Rationalist movement in Tamil Nadu.

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