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AT THE MEETING HELD AT
HIS RESIDENCE, 26, WARD PLACE
COLOMBO 7

To Inaugurate
THE AKILA ILANGAI SAIVA SIDDHANTA
SANGAM

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TAMIL CULTURE AND SAIVA SIDDHANTA

Until quite recent times every major culture has had its own cosmology, its own interpretation of the nature and significance of man's relationship to God. During the last hundred years something quite new has happened—the growing acceptance in every culture of similar ways of thinking based upon the scientific method.

"This new branch of science was started with the revival of the Atomic Theory of Democritus, according to which all that we see in the world was but appearance and only the atoms underlying this appearance were real. This view of Democritus inevitably led to an atomistic world-view which was made fully explicit by Laplace about 1814. He wrote that an Intelligence which knew at one moment of time all the forces by which nature is animated and the respective position of the entities which compose it would embrace in the same formula the movements of the largest bodies in the Universe and the movements of the smallest atoms, nothing would be uncertain for it, and the future like the past would be present to its eyes."

A similar view was succinctly expressed by AUVAY, the historic figure-head of Tamil antiquity. She described this world of Evolution in the words:

அணுவுக்குள் அணுவாய்
அப்பாலுக்கு அப்பாலாய்

the atom within the atom and the beyond within the beyond ad infinitum.

and described dissolution as gradual wearing off atom by atom to resume original state of single unit.

In our social history we may expect continuation of our halting progress towards a more egalitarian society. Future attempts in social reforms will tend to add to our knowledge. Neither science nor sociology however can prescribe values which, ultimately inspire such intervention—a belief in the individual's worth and dignity of every human being.

It may be helpful here to say a word that Culture indicates the pabulum on which the life of the organism—the life of the people is nourished as in the case with any organism vegetable or animal. It is the tap root that nourishes the soil from which the tap root has sprung, *i.e.*, the language—the vehicle for expression of thought and action to indicate the nature of the life they lived, the culture they had attained to.

Tamil Culture Pre-Aryan

Dealing with the cultural evolution of the Tamil people 5000 years ago, P. T. Srinivasa Iyengar, Reader in Indian History, Madras University, in his entrancing story of the continuous evolution of the Indian people from its start when man appeared on this globe refers to the steady growth of the Tamil people their social, moral and religious ideals and their ceaseless efforts to realise them in actual life. Hence, the Historian of India is chiefly concerned with the cons-

truction of pictures of how people age by age ate and drank, how they dressed and decorated themselves, how they lived and loved, how they sang and danced, how they worshipped their God and solved the mysteries of human existence.

Ancient Indian history refers to Vedic Culture as synonymous with Fire Cult, with Sanskrit as sacred tongue for the offering to the Gods through Agni, believing that Agni was the mouth of the Gods—a cult name, a method of worship—lighting the sacred fire and uttering Sanskrit 'Mantras'—the Indigenous Tamil people had no use for fire or for Sanskrit Mantras uttered by a privileged class of priests.

“From the time when Vedic Mantras were said to have been current about 3,000 B.C. though there have been rivalries between the Aryas and the Tamils they lived the same kind of life, ate the same food, wore the same kind of clothes, observed the same customs and manners.”

The Tamils were the most highly cultured of the people of India before the age of the Rishis and the Three Fire Aryan rites spread and Vedic literature was promulgated on the valleys of Sindhu and Ganga”.

There are three lines of evidence utilised for constituting the picture of life of the ancient Tamil people before the Aryan Triple Fire Cult intruded into South India:

1. Pre-historic antiquities belonging to the lithic and early iron age.

2. The study of the words within the Tamil language possessed before it came into any kind of contact with Sanskrit. Nouns and verbs, constitute the trunk of a language and the objects and actions which nouns and verbs refer to must have been possessed by or known to the speakers before they could use their essential parts of speech in their talk. The nature of the life they lived and the general culture they had attained to.

3. The third line of evidence, the early literature of the Tamil people depicting the even tenor of the life of the people in that Ancient Epoch not disturbed by catastrophic changes, as the life of the people mirrored in the early literature which we now possess is but an unbroken continuation of the early epoch, the evidence of that literature can be used to confirm the conclusion reached by the other two lines of evidence.

These lines of evidence are utilised in the study to construct the picture of the culture of the Tamils 5,000 years ago. The life of the people at the end of the lithic times may yet be found in the interior of the Tamil land. There still exists in the heart of the Tamil country hamlets and villages where the ubiquitous Telugu Komati is not found, where the ministrations of the all pervasive Brahmanas do not exist and where even the Kabandha arm of British trade has not introduced the kerosene oil and the

safety match, called by the people Manneney-earth oil and the fire stick—Tikkuchchi—where the whistle of the steam engine and the toot of the motor horn has not yet been heard; and if you wipe off the picture of the life of the people there, the part played by iron tools, you can see with your own eyes the slow placid life of the stone age man, exactly as it was in 10,000 B.C. Even in other parts of the country which have participated in the elevation of culture due to the later discovery of iron, to the spread of the Aryan Culture by the Brahmanas, and to the development of internal trade during the long ages when there were numerous shuttling of dynasties of Indian Rajas and the Foreign Trade after European ships pierced the extensive sea wall of Barathavarsha, the greater part of the life of the people is but the life of the Stone Age man exactly as it was when Indian man was in the lithic epoch of Culture”.

The Dawn of the Iron Age

“About 7,000 years ago began the Iron Age in India, Sriinivasa Iyengar assigns a greater antiquity to the Iron Age in India than most scholars are inclined to admit because the Vedic Culture which began at least 5,000 years ago was a culture of an advanced Iron Age—prior to it, flourished Cultures revealed by the excavations of Adichanallur in the Tinnevely district and Mohinjadaro and Harappa in the Indus Valley. Moreover, Srinivasa Iyengar proved that the Iron Age began when Tamil had not come into any kind of contact with Sanskrit—the language vehicle of Vedic Culture. Hence 2,000 years before the

Brahmanas lighted the Triple Fire at Pratishthana is not at all a exaggerated estimate of the length of the Pre-Vedic Iron Age in Tamilian India."

Saiva Siddhanta

The philosophy of life that has evolved in the evolution of the Tamil people delineated above may be said to have formed the foundation of the Siddhanta philosophy. Man lives in accordance with his philosophy of life, his conception of the world.

There is today in the minds of men of all races and creeds a yearning and hope for a philosophy that could bring almost all mankind within its fold. Saiva Siddhanta is the philosophy for this yearning and hope to be fulfilled.

Prof. R. Ramanujachari, Professor of Philosophy in Madras University, in the course of his lectures on Saiva Siddhanta delivered before the Benares University expressed his thoughts in the following words "Among the religious faiths that have continued from Immemorial antiquity to mould the thought and life of the people of India, the most important are Saivism, Vaishnavism and Sakthaism.

Saivism dates back to Chaloolithic Age and perhaps even further still. There is archeological evidence to show that five thousand years ago worship of Siva was current in the Indus Valley (vide Mohinjadaro Preface VII Script of the Indus Valley Page 25) stands out among the several Saiva Cults as the most highly developed. The term Saiva Siddhanta is sug-

gestive of its kinship with other schools of Saivism and of its distinction therefrom.

Saiva Siddhanta recognises as ultimate three realities—God (Pati), Man (Pasu) and the bonds that fetter him (Pasam), though the three are equally ultimate and real, the first dominates over and controls the rest.

The Siddhanta presents a noble and lofty conception of the Deity. The God in whom he believes is the Supreme reality for thought and life. He is at once the Absolute of Philosophy and the Supreme Personality whom men adore and worship. The Lord Siva is Supreme Spirit or Intelligence. He is beyond comparison:

தன்னோர் இல்லோன்றானே

He is wholly pure and spiritual. If He were devoid of attributes He would be a nonentity. The Lord has eightfold perfections such as Self-existence, Purity, Omniscience, unlimited Grace, Omnipotence and infinite Bliss.

While words fail to describe the Lord, the one formula that gives us a working definition of Him is SAT-CIT-ANANDA—God alone is SAT for He exists in His own right and is not dependent upon others for His existence.

It is God's omniscience that enables the souls to gather knowledge of the world, of itself and that of the Lord, Sivagna enables the soul to know itself, the external world and even the Lord. The Lord

alone is CIT in the real sense of the word, likewise the Lord is Ananda.

He is the unchanging centre of the changing universe. He is the energiser of all things animate and inanimate. The manifold objects of the universe are not thought of as singly existing along with Him.

காட்ட அனல் போல் உடல் கலந்து
ஆட்டுவிக்கும் நட்டுவன்

“Consider our Lord as the Dancer who pervades all our bodies as heat pervades firewood and induces all life to act”.

The Lord of the universe is unborn and ever existing and takes no birth. God pervades all things and transcends them. God is all, but not ‘all’ is God.

Whatsoever the eye seeth is Thou,
Whatsoever the hand doeth is Thy worship,
Whatsoever the mouth uttereth is Thy praise,
The earth, the elements and all living things are They
Gracious Forms,
Oh Lord—(*St. Thayumanavar.*)

The Agamas set forth the experiences of the seers who had the vision of the Truth. These spiritual experts were followed in later times by the Saiva Saints. Contemplation on the Divine brings home to the mind of man very clearly the fact of his own imperfections. The ancient One transcends all set speech, is beyond mental comprehension and imperceptible to the eye and other senses. No separation

is made between the sacred and the secular because such an artificial sundering robs either of its value.

“All life is sacred, God centred,
Everything we do is service to the Lord
Thus life secures a sanctity and aim”

A more satisfactory basis for social ethics is hard to find, the concept of a God who loves all mankind, especially the weak and the sinning, and who strives ceaselessly to wean them from their folly and wickedness must make for brotherly love. If God loves all and is the Father of all and is present in all, man can have no foes, he can have no room for narrow loves and hates. The whole of humanity must be one vast and well-knit family.

This is the message of Saiva Siddhanta for our times.

In concluding this summary of Saiva Siddhanta thought and religion, it must be mentioned that this ancient system continues to move the hearts of millions, mould their lives and afford spiritual consolation and solace because it presents a comprehensive system which attempts to reconcile many seeming contradictions such as reason and authority, pluralism and monism, and the claims of the work-a-day world and those of spirituality.

It inculcates a religion of love and discountenances external manifestations and pharisaic practices:

“கங்கை ஆடி லென் காவிரி ஆடி லென்
கொங்கு தன் குமரித்துறை யாடி லென்
ஓங்குமா கடலோர நீராடி லென்
எங்கு மீச னெனாதவர்க் கில்லையே”.

Why bathe in Ganga's stream, or Kaveri?
 Who go to Comorin in Kongu's land?
 Why seek the waters of the sounding sea?
 Release is theirs, and theirs alone, who call
 In every place upon the Lord of all.

Professor T. P. Meenakshisundaram Pillai, writing on Saiva Siddhanta and Tamil literature records:

"God is Transcendental Principle, that which is beyond words and thought; beyond all that we know and see. But He is also the Immanent Principle, that which inspires everything from within. There are two beautiful words for God in Tamil emphasising these two aspects respectively:—Kadavul, the Beyond and Iyavul, that which moves from within. What is in the Universe or the MACROCOSM is also in the tiny organism or MICROCOSM. So speaks any man in the street in Tamil land. A sublimation and a deification of the world. This is not superstition but science explained in the language of universal poetry:

அண்டத்தில் இருப்பது பிண்டத்திலிருக்கிறது

ANDATHILIRUPATHU PINDATHILLIRUK-RATHU. If we understand the mystery of the tiny plant we understand as Tennyson has said the mystery of the universe—the Divine mystery everywhere.

Here is no negation of life nor of the world, it is a fulfilment and a perfection of life, a sublimation and a deification of the world. This is not superstition but science explained in the language of universal poetry."

We are far too disposed to measure civilisation by material standards. The material slide of life has grown in importance as compared with the spiritual side. In ancient India it was otherwise. The antidote of worldly materialism of the present age is the spirit of Siddhanta. If we have lost positive faith, lost our ideals, any firm ground on which faith can rest, we have lost the spirit of Siddhanta, lost the foundation of Siddhanta Philosophy and bartered serenity of soul for random incoherency and the anarchy of modern desires.

The purpose for which one is brought into this world is to meditate on the wonders of God. The power of seeing straight and knowing what is beautiful or noble, quite undisturbed by momentary boredoms of taste is a very rare gift and never possessed in full by anyone, but there is a profound rule of art bidding a man in the midst of all his studies, all his pursuits of his peculiar imagination, from time to time to steep himself again in nature, and in something the same way it seems as if the world ought to steep itself again in Siddhanta. We must begin afresh in our truth seeking back to Siddhanta sense and sanity.

It is through Siddhanta we would be enabled to 'See beyond the material present to the heavenly places from which the human spirit drew its life'. Siddhanta embodies the essential Oneness now thought of by the scientists. The Arul Sakthi of Parasivam is the energy of 'high availability' imagined by the scientists. The perpetual unremitting vibration of the electrons is the cosmic dance of Siva.

The scientist says the ultimate realities are beyond the comprehension of the human mind. Siddhanta makes it possible to comprehend them through the Lord's Grace. He comes visible to those who pass over to HIM from the illusion of material bondage, to the emancipation and freedom of man's destiny. The ^{scientist} ~~scientist~~ ^{admits} ~~admits~~ ^{and} ~~and~~ ^{comprehended} ~~comprehended~~ the essential Oneness through their psychic eye; while the scientist is floundering with his crucible and optical glasses, Siddhanta has laid down an orderly and exact science that has anticipated the discoveries of modern man.

Dr. Sir S. Radhakrishnan, later President of India, writing from the Andhra University, Waltair, in his New Year message to the "Hindu Organ" of Jaffna on 3 April 1924, had this to say—"I am glad that the Hindu Organ is popularising the Monotheistic idealism as developed in the Saiva Siddhanta and hope that your efforts in the spread and understanding of that famous school will have great success".

The "Hindu Organ" in its editorial on Monday 14, June 1926, writing on the first anniversary celebration of the Malayan Saiva Siddhanta Sangam, declared: "A few self-sacrificing and philanthropic gentlemen have organised and established the Malayan Siddhanta Sangam. It is now left to the Saiva public of Malaya to make it a living force throughout Malaya. If we wish to achieve anything we should have faith not only in God but also in man to believe, to unite for a common purpose. What worthier and nobler purpose could there be than the purpose of fostering

one's religion. Nothing short of this is the task that lies before the Saiva public of Malaya. Where in the world can be found an all-embracing and transcendental religion that can satisfy all tendencies as is found in Saiva Siddhanta".

It is most gratifying to record that the Malayan Saiva Siddhanta Sangam, which was established in 1926 had the foresight to ensure the sanctity inherent in the shrine against profane mismanagement at the hands of any ignorant section of the community, by securing the enactment of Act No. 8 of 1941 passed by the State Council of Selangor (published in the Malayan Union Government Gazette No. 21, Volume II, dated Kuala Lumpur Monday 29 September 1947). This monotheistic ideal of the worship of Paramasivam, enshrined in the Athiceswaran Temple built by the Sangam in 1937 (referred to in the enactment as Sivan Temple) for the purpose of maintenance and propagation of the Saiva Faith in accordance with the principles embodied in tablets installed in the shrine of the said temple and expressed in Tamil and English in terms are set out in the second schedule to this enactment.

Hence, Siddhanta is all comprehensive and the True End and we pray—

"Oh Thou Lord of Every people and every country,
Adoration
 Adoration to Thee who maintaineth effaceth
 Adoration to Thee who removeth all obstacles that
hindereth

Adoration to Thee who blotteth out the troubles of
those who worship Thee
Downhearted Thy servant Thine own, Adoration
Oh Thou mountain of Grace who has ever enfolded me
in Thy Love from days of yore, Adoration
Mayest Thou now say Fear Not, Adoration
Adoration Victory have I won, Adoration