

BRIHADISVARA TEMPLE, THANJAVUR

THE CONCEPT OF GOD IN SAIVA SIDDHANTA

Dr. S. N. KANDASWAMY

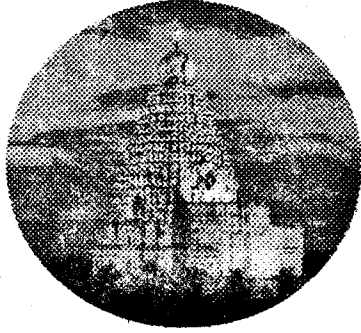
Professor and Head (Rtd.)

Department of Literature, Tamil University, Thanjavur-613 005.

Released on the occasion of
Sixth World Saiva Conference held in the Tamil University
Thanjavur on 19, 20, 21—12—97.

SAIVA SIDDHANTHA PERUMANRAM & THANJAI TAMIL SANGAM

THANJAVUR DISTRICT, THANJAVUR,
TAMIL NADU, INDIA.



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FOREWORD

To synchronize with the Sixth World Saiva Conference to be held at the Tamil University on 19-21 December 1997 the office bearers of the Saiva Siddhanta Perumanram of Thanjavur has brought this significant monograph on The Concept of God in Saiva Siddhanta, which according to Dr. G.U. Pope is the choicest product of the Dravidian intellect. The author with his rich experience and erudition has written this book with authentic source materials in a language marked by clarity and lucidity. He deserves our appreciation.

It is heartening to note that the World Saiva Conference is to be held in the historical city of Thanjavur, the capital of the Imperial Colas, among whom Rajaraja - I (A.D. 985 — A.D. 1014) has ever been remembered not only for his victorious military expeditions to the expansion of his empire all over India, Srilanka and South East Asia, but also for his significant service of retrieving the hidden treasures of Saiva Tirumurais from the shrine of Chidambaram and their dissemination all over the country and for the magnificent temple, Rajarajeswaram, named after him.

The Saiva Siddhanta Perumanram owes its existence due to the munificence and endowments, instituted by the late Thiru U. Subramaniam, I.A.S., an eminent administrative officer in the Tamilnadu Government Service. He has also established the Tamil Sangam of Thanjavur and patronised many authors. His research book on Tamil religion and Temples won the prestigious award of the Tamil University in 1991. The present members of these two cultural bodies, especially Thiru N. Sarangan, Major A. Krishnamurthy and Dr. V. Gurunathan, follow closely the illustrious founder in rendering significant social service to our people at large. I appreciate their interest and deep involvement in bringing out this book on the occasion of the Saiva Conference and it gives me much pleasure that the copies of the book are to be gifted to the participants.

Thanjavur - 613 005
Dt : 14.12.97

K. KARUNANKARAN
Vice - Chancellor
Tamil University

PREFACE

The members of Saiva Siddhantha Perumanram and Thanjavur Tamil Sangam are very happy to bring out the Book with the title "The Concept of God in Saiva Siddhantha" written by Dr S.N. Kandaswamy on the memorable occasion of the **Sixth World Saiva Conference** being held in the Tamil University on 19,20 and 21-12-97.

They express their sincere thanks to Dr. K. Karunakaran, the Vice Chancellor of Tamil University for his appreciative foreword to this Book. Thanks are also due to Dr. S.N. Kandaswamy for his kindness in offering the Book for our Publication. He is an eminent scholar in writing books on various subjects and in writing reviews on books in The Hindu etc. Sivathiru. N. Sarangan, President of the Saiva Siddhantha Perumanram, Er. S. Rajendran, Vice President, Sivathiru Kavingar Arangamuthumani, Secretary and Dr. V. Gurunathan, Associate Professor of Literature in Tamil University have taken the initiative to publish this Book. They deserve the appreciation of our Perumanram.

Thiru P. Maravarman M.A. (Eng), Proprietor of Manickam Printers has spared no pains to bring out this Book neatly and perfectly with in due time. The Perumanram expresses heart felt thanks to Manickam Printers.

Thanjavur - 613 005
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The Saiva Siddhantha Perumanram

THE CONCEPT OF GOD IN SAIVA SIDDHANTA

Dr. S.N. KANDASWAMY

Introduction

The Philosophical system of the Tamils, based on the *Saiva Agamas*, *Upanisads*, *Tirumurais* and *Meykanta sastras*, is known as *Saiva Siddhanta*. *Siddhanta*¹ literally means the established conclusion, and in its extension of meaning it denotes any system of philosophy. *Saiva Siddhanta* indicates the philosophy of those who worship Lord Siva as the Supreme Being. This system of philosophy has been very popular in South India as evidenced from the great temples dedicated to Lord Siva and the mine of source materials embedded in the Tamil language.² It is a living system taking its origin in the Indus Valley Civilization.

As opposed to *Vedanta* (i.e. the Conclusion of the *Vedas*), *Saiva Siddhanta* is called *Agamanta* (i.e. the Conclusion of the *Agamas*). The primary *Saiva Agamas* are twenty-eight in number. Early available references to the *Agamas* are found in the *Santiparva* of *Mahabharata* and Badarayana's *Vedanta Sutra*³. A.P. Karmarkar is of the opinion that the *Agamas* are older than the *Vedas*⁴. Tirumantiram (500 A.D.) preserves the quintessence of the *Saiva Agamas* and it is the earliest extant Tamil treatise on *Saiva Siddhanta*. The name 'Saiva Sid

1. "That which stands many tests and is finally established is known as *Siddhanta*." Vide, M. Arunachalam, *Saiva Siddhanta Journal*, Volume III (Madras, 1968), p. 91.

"*Siddhanta* means proved doctrine ... According to Uddyotakara, *Siddhanta* means the knowledge in the specific form of 'ascertaining the true implication of a system' (*Sastrartha-niscaya*). Vide, Debiprasad Chattopadhyaya, *Gautama's Nyayasutra* and *Vatsyayana's Bhasya*, Part I (Calcutta, 1967), p.18.

Though *Siddhanta* is a common name denoting any system of philosophy, it is generally used to denote the *Saiva Siddhanta* only. Vide, *Tirumantiram*, 8.15.1, 17, 25, etc.

2. "Dr. Pope, who gave much thought to this system, regards it as 'the most elaborate, influential, and undoubtedly the most intrinsically valuable of all the religions of India' The earliest Tamil works, like *Tolkappiyam* refers to *Arivars* or the seers who chalked out the path to freedom and bliss... The twenty eight *Saiva Agamas*, especially the parts dealing with *jnana* or knowledge, the hymns of the Saiva saints, and the works of the later theologians form the chief sources of Southern Saivism."

Vide, S. Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. II (London, 1971), pp. 772 - 3.

3. R. Ramanujachari, *Saiva Siddhanta*, (Annamalainagar, Annamalai University, 1948), p.2.

4. A.P. Karmarkar, *The Religions of India*, (New Delhi, 1951), p. 276.

dhanta' occurs in this text for the first time⁵. Tirugnana Campantar (7th century A.D.) extols Lord Siva as 'Akamac Celvar' (the Rich One who revealed the *Agamas*)⁶. He also mentions that the people of Kokaranam (a place in the Karnataka state in South India) professed the faith of *Saiva Agamas*⁷. His contemporary Saint Tirunavukkaracar points out in one of his hymns that the Lord revealed the *Agamas* to His consort beneath the *marutam* tree in the shrine at Tiruvitaimarutur.⁸ Cuntarar (8th century A.D.) praises the Lord as the 'Ancient One' who revealed the *Agamas* to the celestials.⁹ He also refers in one of his last hymns to the chanting of Sivanama by those who were well-versed in the *Agamas*.¹⁰ In one of his inscriptions, Rajasimha Pallava (691 - 729 A.D.) is mentioned as 'akamappiriyan' (*lover of Agamas*) and 'caiva cittantattir perarivu utaiyavan' (one, who has immense knowledge in Saiva Siddhanta).¹¹ References to *Agamas* are many in Tiruvacakam.¹² In this work, the author Manikkavacakar (800-900 A.D.) mentions that the Lord revealed the *Agamas* to His consort in the Mount Mahendra.¹³ He has also indicated the superiority of the *Agamas* over the Vedas

5. *Tirumantiram*, 5.1.3.

6. *Tevaram*, 3.57.10.

7. *Ibid.*, 3.79.6.

The Karnataka state is the centre of Vira Saivism, a cult especially based on Vira *Agama*, one of the nine *Agamas* mentioned in *Tirumantiram*. Campantar also mentions that the *Vedas*, *Angas* and *Agamas* are compiled by Siva Himself. Vide, *Tevaram*, 3.23.6. Further, he differentiates between *Agamas* and *Mantras* which denote the *vedas*. Vide, *Ibid* 3.39.2.

8. *Ibid.*, 5.15.4.

9. *Ibid.*, 7.84.8.

10. *Ibid.*, 7.100.8.

11. i. M. Iracamanikkanar, *Pallavar Varalaru* (Madras, 1956), pp. 152—3.

ii. T.V. Mahalingam, *Kancipuram in Early South Indian History*, (Madras, 1968), p. 123.

"This is the earliest epigraphical reference to *Saiva Siddhantamarga*." *Ibid.*, p. 123, f.n.

12. *Tiruvacakam*, 1.4, 2.9—10, 17—20.

The *Agamic* concepts such as *mummalam*, *iruvina oppu* etc., are also found in the text. Vide, *Ibid.*, 2.111—3, 19.7, 30.7, 43.2, 51.9; 30.1. Reference to the five-fold *malas* is also found. *Ibid.*, 6.29.

13. The Second hymn of *Tiruvacakam* (i.e. *kirtti Tiruakaval*) enlists the sacred places of Siva. Among them, Mount Mahendra tops the list. The Lord is known as *Makentira verpan* (2.100—101), and 'Coti Makentiranatan' (43.9) Professor Paul Wheatley has identified this mountain in South East Asia. Vide, *His Lecture on "The Kings of the Mountain"*, (Kuala Lumpur, University of Malaya, 1980), pp. 1—2.

But the traditional scholars on the authority of *Ramayana* of Valmiki and of Kampan and also Sivadharmotra considered that the said Mount existed somewhere in the south of Potiyil Hills.

Vide, K.S. Navanitikiruttina Parati, *Tiruvacakam araycci Perurai*, (Madras, 1954), p. 74.

According to Maraimalai Atikal, the Mount Mahendra is found somewhere in the Andhra Pradesh. Vide, *Tiruvacka Virivurai*, (Madras, 1948), p. 79.

in the *Civapurāṇam*, the preface to *Tiruvacakam*.¹⁴ In the opening portion of this hymn, he says that the Lord Himself is the *Agama* conferring the bliss on His votaries. In a subsequent passage of the same hymn, he declares that the Lord transcends the triple dimensions of height, breadth and depth untouched by the *Vedas* assuming the subtlest form.¹⁵ References to the *Agamas* in the *Meykanta Sastras* are many.¹⁶

The *Saiva Siddhanta* is mainly the outcome of *Agamic* tradition. But, this does not mean that it rejects the Vedic tradition.¹⁷ The *Vedas* are held to be the general source for almost all the systems of Indian philosophy including *Saiva Siddhanta*. The *Agamas* form the special source for this system. Most of the *Agamas* contain four portions dealing with *cariya*, *kriya*, *yoga* and *jnana*. It is essential to note that the *Pinkalantai Nikantu* (800 A.D.) a metrical lexicon in Tamil, categorically states that *Agama* means *jnana*.¹⁸ From this, it may be understood that the *jnana* portion of the *Agamas* is very significant as it actually deals with the basic principles of *Saiva Siddhanta*.

Chronologically speaking the *Sangam* classics (300 B.C. to 300 A.D.) are older than the *Tirumurais* (500 A.D. — 1200 A.D.) and the *Meykanta Sastras* (1200 A.D. — 1400 A.D.) They bear ample testimony to the spiritual supremacy of Lord Siva.¹⁹ Some of the principles of *Saiva Siddhanta* would be traceable in them. In the Buddhist Tamil epic, *Manimekalai* (450 A.D. — 500 A.D.), there is a chapter that deals with the various schools of Indian Philosophy which were current during the period of its author, Cattamar. Among them, the *Saiva* system

14. *Tiruvacakam*, 1.14.

15. *Ibid.*, 1.34—5.

16. i. *Tirukkallirupattiyar*, 5.

ii. *Civanana cittiyar*, 1.2.46; 8.2.13, etc.

According to Civanana munivar, *Civananapotam* is a translation of *jnana-pada* of *Raurava Agama*. But, modern scholars differed from him and suggested that it should be an original work in Tamil

17. *Tirumantiram*, 8.15. 28.

There is a Tamil verse of unknown authorship stating the close relationship of the various scriptures. The substance is this: "The Veda is the cow and the *Agamas* are its milk; the *Tevaram* and *Tiruvacakam* is the extracted ghee and *Civananapotam* of *Meykantar* is the relish of that ghee."

Tirunanacampantar also praises the Lord as *vetavetantan*, i.e. the essence of *Vedas* and *Upanisads*. Vide, *Tevaram*, 3.35.4.

18. *Pinkalantai Nikantu*, (Madras, 1890), p. 236.

19. *Akananuru*, 181.

Purananuru, 6.17—18, 55.1—6, 56.1—2, 11, 91.5—6, 166.1—4.

Maturaittanci, 453—455.

is also included.²⁰ The exponent of this system is known as *Saiva vadi* (one who debates or argues for the cause of Saivism) and through him Cattamar expressed some of the doctrines of *Saiva Siddhanta*. It is interesting to note that Madhva (1238 A.D.) in his *Sarvadarśana Samgraha*, presented the principles of *Saiva Siddhanta* under the caption, 'Saivadarśana'.²¹

The heyday of *Saiva Siddhanta* is the period of the Imperial Colas. The temples, being the centre of arts and religion, were constructed in accordance with the prescriptions of the *Saiva Agams*. Gnaminratam (12th century A.D.) a classical text on *Saiva Siddhanta* was written by Vakka Munivar in the style of *Sangam* Tamil.²² Subsequently, two more works viz., *Tiruvantivar* and *Tirukkalirrupattiyar* were composed respectively by Uyyavantatevar of Tiruvivalur and of Tirukkatavur. Then commences the renowned *Meykantar* school of *Saiva Siddhanta*.

Meykantar (13th century A.D.) is highly esteemed to be the first systematic exponent of the *Siddhanta* philosophy. His immortal treatise *Civajñanapotam* and its metrical commentary *Civajñana Cittiyar* by his disciple Arunanticivam form the foundational bedrock upon which the edifice of the existing *Saiva Siddhanta* is erected. Another great exponent Umāpaticivam (14th century A.D.), the disciple of Marainana Campantar, nurtured the system by his contribution of eight works on the subject.²³ Among them, *Civappirakācam* and *Tiruvāratpayan* are held in high esteem. Civanana Munivar (1800 A.D.), the commentator of the *Siddhanta* canonical works, is respected to be the official interpreter of the system.

Saiva Siddhanta is a theistic philosophy. It contains both religion and philosophy. It is also known as pluralistic realism, since it accepts more than one reality to be eternal entities. It deals with the three eternal realities, viz., *Pati*, *Pasu* and *Pasa*. All categories that are perceived and conceived are brought under these three. *Pati* indicates the Supreme Lord. *Pasu* denotes the myriad souls. *Pasa* refers to the triple bonds of *anava*, *karma* and *maya*. All the three realities are ever-existing. Like God, *pasu* and *pasa* are not created. Among the three, *pati* alone is independent, ubiquitous, omniscient and omnipotent. The soul's faculties are restricted and constricted from the very beginning due to the envelopment of the root evil, *anava*. In order to eliminate this evil, the Lord out of His mercy

20. *Manimekalai*, 27.86—95.

21. *Sarva darsana samgraha*, Chapter VII.

22. This treatise has been critically edited along with the old commentary and with valuable comments by the *Siddhanta* scholar, Avvai, S. Duraisamy Pillai and published by the Annamalai University in 1954.

23. Among his eight works, *Unmainerivilakkam* is ascribed by Professor Anavaradavinayagam Pillai to Tattuvanatar of Cirkali.

creates the world from *maya*, the primordial matter and provides the desolated souls with the necessary equipment just to enable them to engage in activities with the ultimate purpose of casting away the evil and to gain eternal union with Him.

With this background, an attempt is being made here to outline the concept of God as found in *Saiva Siddhanta*. Only after having understood the existence of God, one would aspire to know about His nature in order to develop a sense of devotion to realise and reach Him. First, let us consider the important proofs for His existence.

Proofs for the Existence of God

Saiva Siddhanta is firmly rooted on revelation. Like all other theistic schools, it gives due importance to Scripture to prove the existence of God. The biography and literature of the *Saiva Nayanmars* disclose the fact that they came into direct communion with God. For them, God was not a subject of investigation, but an object of experience. Their personal experience with the Lord is beautifully portrayed in the emotional outpourings of their devotional literature. But there are some systems of Indian philosophy which do not accept verbal testimony as a valid source of knowledge. To them, citations from the religious hymns do not carry any weight. God is held to be transcending all limits of our knowledge. He is super - sensuous. So, sense - perception is naturally to be eliminated to prove His existence. Some other means agreeable to both the parties are to be sought. Inference is admitted as a sound source of valid knowledge by all systems except Carvaka. So, the exponents of *Saiva Siddhanta* endeavour to establish the existence of God through inference that leads one from the seen to the unseen.

Cosmological argument

Vakicamunivar, the author of *Gnanamirutam* presents cosmological argument based on inference to prove the existence of God.²⁴ According to this argument, the aggregation of the gross elements commencing from earth and various objects like mountain that constitute the universe should have a creator, because these components are products without comparison. The example given to support the proposition is that of a pot. The syllogism of this argument requires some elucidation. A product is one which is subject to division and which undergoes changes. Each one of the contents of the phenomenal world is divisible and mutable. Since the products are inert and non-intelligent, they require an all-intelligent being for their division and changes characterised by production, existence and destruction. Since the intelligence of the souls is limited and they get the knowledge only after

24. *Gnanamirutam*, 57.1—3.

getting a body, they could not effect the changes and classification all by themselves. Any product for its inception requires the co-operation of three causes, viz., the material cause, the instrumental or auxiliary cause and the efficient cause as evidenced from the empirical experience. For the production of a pot, clay is the material cause, the potter's wheel and other instruments are the auxiliary cause, while the potter is the efficient cause. The world is a product and its production also involves three causes. *Maya*, the primordial matter is the material cause. Siva's inseparable Sakti and the root *karma* of the souls form the auxiliary cause, while Siva Himself is the Efficient Cause. Siva through the instrumentality of His Sakti causes the universe to emerge from *Maya*.

According to *Saiva Siddhanta*, God does not create the souls or the primordial matter which are eternal like Himself. Eternity does not mean equality. Just like the potter who cannot create clay but can effect only the pot, so also the Lord creates only the manifested world and not its primal core, i.e. *maya* which is ever existing. In *Saiva Siddhanta*, creation means the *karana rupa* (i.e. the causal form of *maya*) assuming the *karya rupa* (i.e. the effected form of *maya*), while destruction means the *karya rupa* returning to its original state of *karana rupa*. There is no complete destruction. *Karya rupa* is fleeting and ephemeral, while *karana rupa* is a reality.

Though the cosmological argument attempts to prove the existence of God, it is not free from defects. Standing from the side of a novice, the author of *Nanamirutam* finds some drawbacks in the theory of causation. The first remark is as follows:²⁵

A man, who has noticed the co-presence of a pot and its maker at one place, notices only the pots at a different place and not their maker. His previous knowledge of concomitance of the potter and pot educates him in the second instance to infer that there should be a potter, even though he was not seen there. But with regard to the universe, if one has ever seen the creator and the universe existing side by side, then if he happens to witness a different universe without the presence of its maker, he could very well infer the existence of its author. This riddle is resolved by the author through an illustration.²⁶ A person observes the concomitance of a small column of smoke and fire in a kitchen and similar places. In a different situation, he happens to notice a large column of smoke on the summit of a mountain. It is reasonable for him to infer the existence of large fire in the invisible part of the mountain. Despite the difference in the volume of smoke, the common feature in both cases being smoke, which is always con-

25. *Ibid.*, 57.4—8.

26. *Ibid.*, 57.9—18.

comitant with its cause viz., fire, forms the symbol of inference. If it is admitted that the world is a product, then there is little hesitation to account for its creator. Whether the product is a small one like the pot or a stupendous one like the universe, it requires a producer. Further it is to be understood that analogy is always partial and one should not read complete agreement between the objects of comparison and objects compared. The purpose of the above comparison is to indicate that every product, whether it is small or big, requires causal agency and to exhibit the known in order to infer the unknown.

However, the reality of God cannot be grasped completely by cold logic or subtle philosophical theories which only provide the clue of understanding the absolute reality.

The second remark²⁷ is with regard to the nature of ether which is incorporeal (*arupa*) and hence would not be a product, even though it forms part of the universe. But, Vakicamunivar rejects this view stating that even the ether is undoubtedly a product, since a product is characterised by its quality and ether has sound for its quality. Further, the sound potential, being an aspect of ether, is mingled in the remaining four gross elements (i.e. air, fire, water and earth). For this reason, these elements are said to be the constituent members of ether. So, ether is divisible. What is divisible should be a product. Since these products have origination, they are subject to decay and their changes account for an efficient cause.²⁸

The Meykantar School

The cosmological argument advanced by Vakicamunivar is further developed in the Meykantar school, as noticed in *Civajnana potam* and *Civajnana cittiyar*.²⁹ The first aphorism in *Civajnana potam* purports to prove the existence of God through analogical reasoning.

The world is inert and non-intelligent. It undergoes three operative functions viz., production, maintenance and destruction. Among the three, through the first two functions it assumes *sthularupa* (i.e. concrete, visible form), while through the last one, it resolves into its original *suksmarupa* (subtle, invisible form). Since the world is inert, it cannot dissolve into its causal form and also it cannot manifest again all by itself. So, the reality of the phenomenal world comes out of the ground of God whither it is resolved and whence it re-emerges. The reason for the

27. *Ibid.*, 57.19—20.

28. *Ibid.*, 57.21—23.

29. i. *Civajnanapotam, Cirrurai*, (Madras, kalakam edition, 1981), pp. 8—20.

ii. *Civajnanacittiyar*, (Madras, kalakam edition, 1973), 1.1—17.

dissolution is to give rest to the wearied souls and for the recreation is to enable them to exhaust their *anava*. The cosmic changes could be effected only by one who is changeless. From the seen world, the reality of its author viz., the unseen God, is to be inferred.

The first aphorism like the rest is terse and cryptic. It contains three parts known as *adhikarana*, each of which is formulated in a syllogistic form. Let us consider them one by one.

First Adhikarana (Part I)

The proposition or thesis (i.e. *paratijna* or *svapaksa*) is that the phenomenal world, identified as he, she and it, undergoes threefold changes viz., production, maintenance and destruction.

The *prima facie* view or antithesis (*purvapaksa* or *parapaksa*) questions the validity of the above statement raising the doubt whether the universe undergoes the afore-said changes.

This member of the syllogism represents the view of the opposing systems. The *Lokayatas* of the Non-Vedic group and the *Mimamsakas* of the Vedic group envisage that the world is eternal and it is improper to state that it suffers changes and for this reason it requires an intelligent agent known as God.

The rejoinder to this objection to pass for a conclusion is known as *Siddhanta* which is supported by two other members viz., reason and example. To establish the original proposition, the following three reasons are adduced by the *Saiva Siddhantin*.

1. The sense-perceived universe is made up of various parts. It is a composite whole. A composite is conditioned by a cause or causes. The component parts that constitute the universe are conveniently classified on the principle of gender, i.e., masculine, feminine and neuter. A particular object in the universe is a 'he', or 'she' or 'it.' 'He' or 'she' denotes only the physical features of the sentient beings for there is no gender in the soul, while 'it' indicates the in-organic and non-sentient beings. This sort of classification or division, regularity and design could not be self-made. Therefore, it is suggested that there must be a classifier or designer.

2. Each one of the component parts in the entire universe differs from one another. There is difference between two men, two women and two things. There is no sameness even between two homogeneous things. There are innumerable kinds of things belonging to inert matter. Manifoldness and materiality are the significant features of the phenomenal world which could not self-exist. *Saiva Siddhanta* postulates the difference in the *karma* of the individuals for the difference in their being. There should be an intelligent cause to effect the diversity and mutability of things in the universe.

3. The sense-perceived objects that constitute the visible universe are liable to undergo changes and transformations. That which is cognized through the means of determinate perception is known as *acetanapirapancam* (insentient material universe) which is classified as he, she and it. These things being the object of determinate perception are subject to change. So, the phenomenal world as it appears could not be considered as an entity, since an entity could not be divided into parts, and also it should not suffer change which occurs only in that which is made up of parts.

To sum up, since the phenomenal world is classified into three broad divisions, each of which is manifold and different from one another undergoing transformations and also becoming the subject of determinate perception, there must be an omniscient being to effect the changes.

The example to support the aforesaid reasons is that of a cloth. In the cloth, the manifold inert yarns constitute the warp and woof which, being the component parts of the cloth, suggest the existence of its weaver. The weaver of the universe is God.

This syllogistic inference is admissible only to the *Mimamsakas* who accepted *anumana* as a valid source of knowledge. But, the *Lokayatas* (the Indian materialists) do not accept *anumana*. Their only source of valid knowledge is perception. In order to convince them, the *Saiva Siddhantin* employs *pratyaksa* (perception) to establish his original proposition viz., that the universe is subject to threefold changes. The adduced reason is as follows:

“Because origin and end lay on the sides of the existing thing”.

Without origination, the particular thing could not have come into existence. So existence indicates its previous position of origination, for without origination existence is impossible and inconceivable. It is followed by destruction. Mere observation or perception is enough to instruct the *Lokayata* that the senseperceived things undergo three-fold changes as mentioned above. Since the component parts are subject to change, the universe being the whole should naturally undergo the same changes. To explain this point, an analogy is given:

A particular kind of plants, fruits or insects appears in a particular season and goes out of existence at the end of it. This process is repeatedly seen. So also, the phenomenal world which is ephemeral comes into existence, stays for some period and again resolves back to its original state.

Second Adhikarana (Part II)

This *adhikarana* is intended for those, especially the *Samkhyas*, who admit that the universe undergoes changes, but do not accept an intelligent agent to effect the changes. The members of the syllogism pertaining to this second part of the argument are the following :

Proposition	:	'The world exists.'
Reason	:	Because there is no origin to that which does not exist.
Example (Negative)	:	Like the hare's horn.

In the calf of a cow and in the young one of a hare, the horn is not found. When the calf grows, the horn is seen visibly in its head. But, in the case of the hare, the horn is absent completely at all times. This indicates that which is not could not come into existence like the hare's horn, and also it implies that what were already there in abstract and unseen from (*sukṣma*) is evolved into a concrete and visible form (*sthūla*) like the calf's horn. The effect is emanated from its cause in which it existed already implicitly. The essence of effect is not different from its cause. This concept is known as *Satkaryavada* in *Saiva Siddhanta*. The rational basis of this concept may be exemplified. From clay only a pot could be produced and not a cloth. From a timber, a chair could be made and not a jewel. The Significant relationship between the cause and effect is to be considered.

The *Satkaryavada* out of logical necessity postulated the existence of the primordial entity (the material cause) known as *maya* — the seed principle out of which the parts that form the universe are evolved and into which they again resolve. *Maya* is a very subtle entity in which the phenomenal world exists implicitly before its manifestation, just like a big banyan tree is latent in a minute, tiny seed, prior to its evolution.

Next, the *Saiva Siddhantin* proceeds to postulate the existence of the efficient cause and instrumental cause. The syllogism for this postulation is as follows:

Proposition	:	The existing world has a creator.
Reason	:	Because that which exists could not be produced without a creator.

The *Samkhyas* held that the world would evolve by itself from the primordial matter, and hence no need for a creator. Though they accepted *Satkaryavada*, they did not accept an efficient cause. The *Saiva Siddhantin* points out the defect in their argument and stresses on the necessity of threefold causes for the production of anything that we have already noted. One could amplify the examples. A pot requires a potter, a chair a carpenter and a book an author. But one cannot question who is the creator of God, for it would lead to infinite regress. That is why the Absolute is depicted in the Tamil devotional literature as one having no father and mother.³⁰

30. i. *Cilappatikaram*, 5.169.

ii. *Tiruvacakam*, 12.3.

After proving the existence of God, the *Saiva Siddhantin* proceeds to propound that the efficient cause should be the Universal Destroyer. The syllogism for this argument follows thus:

Proposition : There is no evolution except in dissolution.

Reason : Because it (the evolved world) becomes dissolved there (in involution).

Even if one accepts the efficient cause for the creation of the world, views differ with regard to the agency in the theistic schools. The *Pancaratra*s held that the protecting agent, Vasudeva should be the efficient cause, while the *Brahmavadins* maintained in its place the creating agent, Brahma. According to *Saiva Siddhanta*, these are petty deities and they are only the evolved souls. By virtue of their accumulated merit, they obtained the authority from the Mahadeva (Lord Siva) to create and to protect. Further, the elements and worlds existing in the *five kalas* viz., *Nivrtti*, *Pratistha*, *Vidya*, *Santi* and *Santiyatita* are respectively absorbed by Brahma, Visnu, Rudra, Ananda and Sadasiva under the mandate of Lord Siva who actually actuates the Mahasamhara (the Great Cosmic involution) through the agency of Sadasiva. So, the operative agents stand to Lord Siva what the ministers to the emperor. There may be many directed agents to carry out the various activities; but, Lord Siva is held to be the directing overall agent. K. Sivaraman in his dissertation explains this concept of Supreme God thus.³¹

“The entire universe with its creators, conservers and destroyers is under Siva's control even as dried leaves whirl under the control of a stormy wind... The Destroyer is the only transcendent Being (*tattvatita*), transcending all *tattvas*.... The designation of the Supreme Reality as Destroyer is metaphysical as it is also mystical. The Concept of Destroyer represents God as the Universal Being. Every thing is ‘nought’ (*sunya*) before Being. God is not something or someone which exists along with the totality of beings. He is Being itself ... The Destroyer stands for eternity which truly transcends temporality ... Only the Destroyer is the Death of Death (*kalakala*), the realm beyond the realm destroyed, and is the ultimate foundation of ontological courage in the face of anxiety of transitoriness.”

During the period of *Mahapralaya*, the whole universe with all its contents including the aforesaid minor gods are dissolved in Him. Hara (another name for Siva) is the Universal Destroyer who is the ground of the dissolved universe. The Phenomenal world is resolved in its material cause, *Maya*, which takes its ground under the feet of the Lord. The relation ship between the material cause (*maya*) and the

31. K. Sivaraman, *Saivism in Philosophical Perspective*, (Delhi, 1973), pp. 47—50.

efficient cause (the Lord) is described as *abbinnabhava*, i.e., inseparable union like that of Vyapaka and Vyapya (the Pervader and the Pervaded) and that of *adhara* and *adheya* (the Supporter and the Supported)

God as the Material Cause

The material cause *maya*, its product the world, and the ground of *maya*, viz., Lord's Sakti, are compared to the seed, its shoot and earth.³² If the seed comes into contact with the moist earth, it becomes capable of manifesting a shoot. So also, if *maya* reposing at the feet of the Lord receives the Divine Will of His Sakti, it becomes capable of manifesting the world. If there is no moisture in the earth, the seed could not shoot. Likewise, if there is no will of Lord's Sakti, then *maya* could not evolve. The world is evolved from *maya* with the will of Lord's Sakti which functions in accordance with the individual's *mala* to endow the concerned souls with the different types of psycho-physical organisms.

But some passages in the *Tirumurais* and *Agamas* reveal that the world is emanated from God Himself.³³ These portions are taken in a literal sense by some people who argue that God forms not only the efficient cause but also the material cause.³⁴ Such misunderstanding would go against the same literature which describe Him to be immutable. Though the Lord transcends all the elements that constitute the universe, He is simultaneously immanent in them. His immanence should not be mistaken for material causality. Civajnanamunivar,³⁵ the able exponent of *Saiva Siddhanta* submits an illustration to explain the figurative expressions in the texts. The lotus actually germinates from its root and not from the mud though it gets the name *pankayam* which really means that which is born of mud. Similarly, the world is evolved directly from its root *maya* and not from God. Nevertheless, it is figuratively said that the world is proceeded from God who actually provides the ground for *maya*. So, the material universe (i.e., non-intelligent principle) could not originate from the Intelligent Principle, viz., God.

If God is held to be the material cause, the product (i.e., world) also should resemble Him in content and quality. Since there are many imperfections and

32. *Sivajnanapotam*, pp.15—16.

33. i. *Tiruvacakam*, 3.44, 4.137—141, 5.15, 70; 22.8, etc.

ii. *Civajnanapotam*, p. 16.

34. i. *There can be only one final conclusion*, (Hawaii, Kauai Aadheenam, The Saiva Siddhanta Church, 1983), pp. 11—12

ii. *Monism and Pluralism in Saiva Siddhanta*, (Ibid., 1984), pp. 16—20.

35. i. *Civajnanapotam*, p. 16.

ii. *Civajnanacittiyar*, 1.2.48, and its commentary by Civajnanamunivar.

defects in the world, they are also to be accounted from the material cause. Since God is conceived to be absolutely perfect, impeccable and immutable by nature, He could not be postulated to be the material cause which is subject to changes. The defects and diverse features are due to *anava* and *mulakarama* of the souls.

However, K. Sivaraman attempts to explain the material causality in order to reconcile the two views in the following passage of his dissertation.³⁶

“The intelligent agent of the world is not as such the material cause of the world but only as related to the non-intelligent *maya* ... It is efficient cause which is also material cause by virtue of its being inseparably qualified by *maya*... Just as the hair and the nails, etc., are not born of the body alone (insentient) or the soul alone (sentient), so the universe is born not of *maya* alone or Mahesvara alone, but of the Embodied Unity which is accordingly described as the ‘womb of all elements’ and also as the Supreme Lord, the Mighty etc...” His interpretation obviously confirms the sole causality of God.

Third *adhikarana* (Part III)

This *adhikarana* is devoted to clarify whether the efficient cause of the universe is one or many. Saiva Siddhanta advocates monotheism, and so it does not subscribe to the view of polytheism. The syllogism is as follows :

Proposition : The Universal Destroyer is the Primal
Mover of the universe.

The second *adhikarana* concludes that the primary God to the universe is the Universal Destroyer. This *adhikarana* examines the view of the polytheists. They argue that the production of a chariot involves many carpenters and the creation of a more wonderful and stupendous universe naturally should require more than one God. But their concept is refuted by the *Saiva Siddhantin* maintaining his proposition.

Reason : Because the souls that cognize things through determinate perception have no independence without the Universal Destroyer who transcends such a kind of perception.

Saiva Siddhanta subsumes all the minor gods and the spiritually elevated souls under the category of *pasu*. There are also the defective souls. They are all dependent on Lord Siva who alone is independent, omniscient, omnipotent and

36. K. Sivaraman, *op. cit.*, pp. 112—115.

omnipresent. Though there are many carpenters in fashioning a chariot, all of them are directed by one master carpenter. So also, the deities are not autonomous and they discharge the assigned duties under the overall supervision and direction of the Supreme God Siva. The released souls which obtained godliness (sivatvam) would not be accounted for the cosmic functions, for they are held to be in constant enjoyment of eternal bliss of the Lord which is the summum bonum of their spiritual sojourn.

Another Version of Cosmological Argument

There are many types of cosmological arguments propounded by the western thinkers to prove the existence of God. One of them is the argument from motion. It is as old as Plato and Aristotle and it is fashioned by St. Thomas Aquinas.³⁷ According to this argument, the things in the universe are movable and they require a mover. There are two kinds of movers, viz., the primary and secondary. If there is no primary mover, then there is no subsequent movers. For instance, the book is moved by hand which in turn is moved by the consciousness of one's self. To avoid infinite regress, it is postulated that there should be a First Mover who causes everything to move, but Himself is not moved by anything. Movement of an object indicates passing from one place or condition to another. It is always associated with variation, mutation, limit and contingency. The ultimate force or Prime Mover should be free from mutation, limitation and temporality, and that is the eternal reality.

According to Plato, the power that generates motion should be logically anterior to the power that gets it and passes it on. This primal force is the un-caused cause. His disciple, Aristotle envisaged that change implied an unchanging absolute source of motion which could be designated as God.

This sort of cosmological argument is not unknown to Saiva Siddhanta.³⁸ The Commentator (before 1700 A.D.) of Gnanamirutam presents from the contents of the text the following five-membered syllogism:

- Proposition** : The universe should have a creator.
- Reason** : Since it is inert, its evolution and resolution would become impossible without an intelligent being.
- Example** : Like the vehicles such as a chariot etc.
- Application** : The vehicles could not move by themselves.
They require a driver to move them.
- Conclusion** : So also, the universe requires a mover who actuates it in accordance with the Moral Law.

37. John Hick, *Philosophy of Religion*, (New Jersey, 1973) pp. 71—73.

38. *Gnanamirutam*, 58.4—7.

Thus, the existence of the Primal Mover is established.

However, the author from the standpoint of a novice produces two examples to propose that even inanimate objects possess the force of motion. They are:

1. Cow's milk is inert. But it nurtures the calf to grow.
2. The insentient magnet attracts the inanimate filament of iron.

Nevertheless, the author exposes the folly of the examples pointing out that the milk is possible only from a sentient cow, and an intelligent agent is essential to bring the magnet and iron in close quarters, thus making the original proposition tenable and reasonable.³⁹

In this context, it is appropriate to quote Tirikutaracappakkavirayar (1700 A.D.), a great Saiva poet who beautifully portrays that the Lord set all the worlds in motion and they revolve like toys without thread (by the mere will of God).⁴⁰ The concept of God as the Prime Mover is further attested in one of the poems of Tayumanavar (18th century A.D.), who declares that even an atom could not move without Him.⁴¹ This idea has also reference in *Kenopanisad*.⁴²

Moral Argument

The supplementary argument adduced in favour of the theistic hypothesis is known as the moral argument. The cosmological argument attempts to prove the efficient cause of the universe. The purpose of the moral argument is to point out that the Lord is also the Moral governor of the universe who effects orderliness in the life of individuals on the basis of their actions. This argument stands on the doctrine of *karma*, Saint Cekkilar⁴³ enumerates four cardinal tenets of Saivism viz., 1. the soul performing the *karma*; 2. the performed deeds; 3. their effects and 4. the Lord who allots the fruits of the deeds to the respective souls. These four aspects⁴⁴ are further attested by Umapaticivam and they are very important to apprehend the moral argument. In order to exhaust the potency of *anava*, the soul is invested with a body, a habitat and objects of experience. In the embodied

39. *Ibid.*, 58.8—17. It seems that the author refutes the view of the Samkhyas. Vide, John Davies (Td.), *the Samkhya Karika of Iswara Krishna*, (Calcutta, , 1957) p. 48, p. 66.

40. *Tirukkuralakkuravanci*, (Madras, 1962), p. 119.

41. *Tayumanavar Tiruppatal Tirattu*, enkum niraikinraporul, 1.

42. *Kenopanisad*, 3.1—12, 4.1—3. Radhakrishnan translation. In this Upanisad, the supremacy of Lord Siva over the Vedic gods is established beyond doubt.

43. *Tiruttontar puranam*, 34.5.

44. *Tiruvarutpayan*, 53.

condition, the soul is capable of engaging in multifarious activities which may be good or bad, but they are forgotten or neglected. According to Saiva Siddhanta, everyone is conditioned and governed by the doctrine of *karma*. Nobody can escape the consequences of one's own deeds. The law of *karma* is relentless and inexorable. "As we sow so we reap" is the Tamil proverb. Though the doer ignores or forgets his actions, they are taken into account by the Unseen Absolute Observer who distributes the deserts to the individual. The present life of a person is the outcome of his deeds in the past birth and also it prepares for the future. The Lord leaves free will to the individual either to make or mar his future. In this sense, the man is held to be the architect of his own self.

The Jains uphold that the *karma* itself can yield fruits and there is no need for God. They give a fine simile to explain their view. In the herd of cows, a particular calf, if released, would search and reach its own mother to suckle the milk. So also the fruit of *karma* by itself would identify and join its doer in the midst of many.⁴⁵ But the folly of this analogy is noted by the Saiva Siddhantin. The *karma* is insentient, while the calf is sentient. So, a sentient being is not a comparison to an insentient object and hence the analogy is fallacious. Civajnanacittiyar also refers to a similar comparison. One may say that *karma* can fructify all by itself just like an arrow travelling by itself. But it has been pointed out that this analogy is equally shortsighted, since without an archer the travel of an arrow is impossible. The Tamil proverb says that there is no point in blaming the arrow when there is an archer. So, Saiva Siddhanta concludes that the *karma* becomes inert and insentient and hence it cannot remember or identify its doer to join him. Then, it follows that there should be an Omniscient Being to administer the fruits of *karma* to the concerned doer. The Absolute Being is held to be the Legislator and Executor of moral law.⁴⁶ He is the Divine Justice who is impartial in enforcing the law. The God as moral governor is compared to the king, physician and parents. If the subjects go astray, they are penalised by the king. If they do some signal service, they are rewarded. The Lord is the Ruler of the universe. If there is any upset in the natural course of the universe, He sets it right. The *puranic* stories of punishing the atrocious demons and raksasas are ample evidence for the Lord's moral administration. He punishes the wicked in order to make them realise the folly of their conduct and to instruct the need for undertaking a virtuous way of life. All such actions are reformatory in character. He showers

45. *Nalatiyar*, 101.

46. Rev. G.U. Pope in his translation of *Tirukkural* (Vide, *The Sacred Kurral*, New Delhi, 1980), pp. 188, mentioned that every Hindu enumeration omitted justice as one of the attributes of God. But, it is a wrong observation, for God is praised as Justice in many hymns of Tirumurai, e.g. *Tevaram*, 2.28. 2; 5.33.4, 94.6; 6.9.5, 8; *Tiruvacakam* 29.1.

grace on the virtuous people offering all benevolence. The chastening of the Lord is meant for the betterment of the souls. Saiva Siddhanta classifies Lord's grace into two, viz., virtuous grace (*arakkarunai*)— this is meant for the virtuous souls, and heroic grace (*marakkarunai*)—this is directed towards the vicious souls.

God is also compared to the physician. “The physician doctors the body, whereas God doctors the soul.” The concept of God as a healer or physician is also found in Buddhism and Christianity. The physician administers at times bitter medicines to the patient and also prescribes sugar-coated pills in order to relieve him from physical ailments. Similarly, the pains and pleasures being the consequence of one's won deeds are carefully given as medicine by God as a remedy to the malady of transmigration which is considered as a great disease. Saint Tirunavukkaracar⁴⁷ extols the Lord to be the great physician who alone could cure the incurable disease of birth.

God is also compared to the parents. He is the parent patronizing all kinds of beings in all ages at all places. If the children are mischievous, it is the duty of the parents to correct them. *Civajnana Cittiyar* ⁴⁸ says, “Parents thrash their children for disobedience and handcuff them - punishing them, not because they hate their children but because they love them though it may not appear to be so.” They actually derive much pleasure on hearing the rare achievements of their children. Like the parents, God treats the souls through punishment and reward, with the sole purpose of liberating them from the clutches of mundane life.

God is also compared to the washerman.⁴⁹ The washerman smashes the cloth against the washing stone not to tear it, but to cleanse it. The pain inflicted by God is merely the bleaching powder to wash the impurity of the soul.

The concept of God as a moral governor is very old in the Tamil tradition. *Tolkappiyam*⁵⁰ (500 B.C.) designates the Lord as ‘Fate deciding God’ (*palvaraitteyvam*). The same idea is preserved in *Tiruccirrapalakkovaiyar* of Manikkavacakar.⁵¹ The ancient Tamil ethics, *Tirukkural* (100 B.C.—100 A.D.), denotes God as ‘*vakuttan*’ meaning Apportioner. “Those who have accumulated wealth could enjoy nothing but what the Divine Disposer has apportioned to them,”⁵²

47. *Tevaram*, 6.54.8.

48. V.A. Devasenapathi, *Saiva Siddhanta*, (Madras, University of Madras, 1974), p. 89. Also vide, *Civajnanacittiyar* 2.2.12—16, 30—35.

49. S.N. Kandaswamy, *Tamilum Tattuvamum*, (Madras, 1976), pp. 331—332.

50. *Tolkappiyam*, Col. 57.

51. *Tiruccirrapalakkovaiyar*, 8.

52. *Tirukkural*, 377.

declares Tiruvalluvar. From this couplet, it is crystal clear that Tiruvalluvar represents the Tamil tradition which preserves firm belief in the Divine dispensation.

Thus it is evident that *Saiva Siddhanta* postulates the fact of absolute God in order to account for the fact of ethical order.

After having understood the existence of God, let us proceed to know about His nature, functions and forms, His relation with the souls and the ways of realising Him as evidenced from the *Saiva* lore.

Nature of God

Saiva siddhanta identifies two-fold nature of God known as *Svarupalaksana* (*Cirappu iyalpu*) and *Tatasthalaksana* (*Potuiyalpu*). *Svarupalaksana* denotes His essential and intrinsic nature, while *Tatasthalaksana* refers to His general or accidental nature that arises due to His relation to the souls. God in His essential nature is static, immutable and immeasurable by the limits of time and space. He transcends all the sources of empirical knowledge. He has no name and form. Manikkavacakar⁵³ refers to this nature of God in his *Tiruvacakam* as “*orunamam oruruvam onrum ilan*”, “*etu avan ur? etu avan per?*” etc. God is the Pure Being (*Sat*), the very source of all knowledge (*Cit*) and eternal bliss (*Ananda*). The *Saiva Agamas* mention eight divine qualities to be His essential characteristics, as identified by Parimelalakar, a staunch *Vaisnavite* in his learned commentary on *Tirukkural*.⁵⁴ They are the following:

<i>Tamil</i>	<i>Sanskrit</i>	<i>English equivalent</i>
1. Tanvayattan atal	Svatantra	Self-dependence
2. Tuyautampinan atal	Visuddha deha	Immaculate Body
3. Iyarkai unarvinan atal	Anadhi bodham	Natural understanding
4. Murrum unartal	Sarvajnata	Omniscience
5. Iyalpakave pacankalin ninkutal	Niramayam	Eternally free from bonds
6. Perarulutaimai	Nityaluptasaktitva	Infinite grace
7. Mutivil arral utaimai	Anantasaktita	Infinite potency
8. Varampil inpam utaimai	Nityatriptaka	Infinite bliss

53. *Tiruvacakam*, 11.1; 7.10.

54. *Tirukkural*, with Parimelalakar's commentary, (Madras, Kalakam edition, 1956), p.6.

Since the Lord is associated inherently with these eight divine features, He is known as 'enkunattan'; this term occurs in the ninth couplet of the first chapter in *Tirukkural* (i.e., *katavul valttu* — The Praise of God) and hence one commentator ably attempted to isolate the eight qualities under reference in the first eight couplets of the same chapter.⁵⁵ Some considered the third and the fourth qualities may be counted as one as well as the second and fifth as one. Thus the Lord is said to possess six divine characteristics and hence He is known as 'Pakavan' which name occurs in *Svetasvatara Upanisad*, *Tirukkural* and *Tevaram* to denote Lord Siva.⁵⁶ However, Manikkavacakar reminds one that the Lord's auspicious qualities are innumerable.⁵⁷

God in His essential nature is called as *Parasivam* or *Svarupasivam*, and His inseparable energy is known as *Parasakti*.

Out of His boundless compassion towards the souls, He becomes dynamic through His will of Divine energy, assuming various forms and names for the benefit of the souls. "The Real appears in diverse ways. But the appearances are of the Real. The appearances, while not exhaustive of the Real, are adequate for the purpose for which they are manifested and are wholly satisfying to the persons concerned... While the Infinite in its Grace is pleased to make Itself available to souls, It cannot be possessed in its fullness by the souls."⁵⁸ These forms are not material, but they are out of His Grace, which is otherwise known as *Sakti*. In this state, God becomes *Sivam* and *Sakti* to commence the cosmic functions. *Tatastha* forms of God become the object of worship. So, it is held that *Tatastha* form is not illusory and it is as real as *Svarupa* form.

Svarupa and *Tatastha* concept of God should not be equated respectively with the concept of *Nirguna Brahman* and *Saguna Brahman* of *Vedanta* philosophy. *Nirguna Brahman* is devoid of any quality or attribute and it is a mere abstraction. But *Svarupasiva* has countless divine qualities. *Saguna Brahman* of *Vedanta* has material qualities and it is only fictitious like a snake in rope, water in mirage etc. But, *Tatasthasiva* is a reality of the Absolute. However, in the Saiva Tamil devotional literature, God is depicted as one who has no quality or symbol which means that He is devoid of material qualities and forms.⁵⁹ It is worth mention-

55. *Tirukkural* with *Tantapani Pillai's commentary*, (Madras 1956), pp. 1—8. "enkunattan" being an epithet to Lord Siva occurs in *Tevaram*, 5.89.8; 6.16.4; 6.98.10; 7.40.3.

56. i. *Svetasvatara Upanisad*, 3.11. Radhakrishnan translation.
ii. *Tevaram*, 1.121.1.

57. *Tiruvacakam*, 2.3.

58. V.A. Devasenapathi, *Of human bondage and Divine Grace*, (Annamalainagar, Annamalai University 1963), pp. 16—17.

59. *Tiruvacakam*, 6.46, 18.1, 22.4, 40.4, 41.6, etc.

ing that Tirumular praises the Lord as one who is bereft of the triple material *gunas*, viz., *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* (*Mukkuna nirkkunan*).⁶⁰

Transcendence and Immanence

The spiritual experiences of the Tamil *Saiva* saints as recorded in the devotional literature reveal the Lord's transcendental as well as immanent features. Let us briefly present some of these features.

God transcends description. He is beyond the word and its content.⁶¹ He transcends the five-fold sense-perception.⁶² He is beyond the ken of thought.⁶³ He is impenetrable even by the Scriptures.⁶⁴ He is inconceivable not only to the deities but also to the Hindu Trinities.⁶⁵ He surpasses the limits of beginning, middle and end of things.⁶⁶ He transcends all the elements (*Tattvatita*). He has no origin and so no decay.⁶⁷ He is eternal and immutable.⁶⁸ He is free from bondage and liberation.⁶⁹ Before His greatness, even the universe is but an atom. Before His subtle state, even an atom would become the magnificent universe.⁷⁰ His greatness cannot be exhausted. He is Omniscient.⁷¹ Though God transcends everything, He pervades all objects. He is immanent in all animate and inanimate beings. He is their indweller and inner ruler. This feature of God is known as *antaryamitva* which occupies a supreme place also in the *Vaisnava* theology.⁷²

60. *Tirumantiram*, 8.9.1

61. *Tiruvacakam*, 3.40, 111, 27.4, etc.

62. *Ibid.*, 3.113, 5.76, etc.

63. *Ibid.*, 1.24, 3.41, 4.204, 7.7, 10.16, etc.

64. *Ibid.*, 3.49, 5.95, 11.4.

65. *Ibid.*, 4.1—9, 5.30, 43, 8.2 11.14, 41.1, etc.

66. *Ibid.*, 1.41, 73.

67. *Ibid.*, 4.133, 5.70, 7.1, etc.

68. *Ibid.*, 5.91, 22.5.

69. *Civajñanacittiyar*, 1.44.

70. i. *Tiruvacakam*, 3.5—12.

ii. *Nanamirutam*, 55.21—23.

71. *Tiruvacakam*, 1.38, 40, 4.107, 5.50, 25.10, etc.

72. S. Radhakrishnan, (Tr.), *The Brahma Sutra — The Philosophy of Spiritual Life*, (London, 1960) pp. 53—54.

The Lord abides everywhere without leaving any space.⁷³ He⁷⁴ is immanent in the five gross elements (viz., earth, water, fire, air and ether) and in the sun, moon and the souls (collectively known as *Astamurta*). He is seated in the consciousness and also in the organs of knowledge.⁷⁵ He is the soul of all souls.⁷⁶

His immanence with the souls and matter is compared to the inseparable relationship of body and soul, word and its meaning, fragrance and flower, relish and the fruit, oil and sesamum, etc.⁷⁷ He is the fire concealed in the wood; he is likewise the ghee in the milk and the brilliance in the great gem. If one churns in his consciousness with the stick of intense devotion entwined by the rope of knowledge, the immanent God becomes transparent to the devotee.⁷⁸

The description of the immanent nature of Siva by the Tamil devotional poets seems to be similar to that of the Upanisadic seers. A significant parallel is given below from the *Svetasvatara Upanisad*:

“As oil in sesamum seeds, as butter in cream, as water in the dry bed of a stream, as fire in friction sticks, so is the Self (God) seized in one's won soul if one looks for Him with truthfulness and austerity.” “The self which pervades all things as butter is contained in milk, which is the root of self-knowledge and austerity, that is the Brahman, the highest mystic doctrine. That is the highest mystic doctrine.”⁷⁹

Siva and Sakti

The static state of the Absolute is Siva and its dynamic state is Sakti. Siva and Sakti are like the sun and its rays. They are similar to the substance and its quality (*guna gunibhava* i.e. *Samavaya sambandha*). The two are inseparably connected like a tree and its hard core.⁸⁰ Like fire which is red in colour and hot in quality, the One God becomes Siva and Sakti. There is no substance without quality and no quality without substance. So also, there is no Siva without Sakti and no Sakti

73. *Tiruvacakam*, 3.116—117.

74. *Ibid.*, 15.5.

75. *Ibid.*, 33.5, 34.4, etc.

76. *Ibid.*, 1.69, 2.2, 22.4.

77. i. *Tevaram*, 3.105.1, 34.4.

ii. *Tiruvacakam*, 1.44; 3.116—7, 20.7; 5.46.

78. *Tevaram*, 5.90.10.

79. *Svetasvatara Upanisad*, 1.15, 16. Radhakrishnan translation.

80. *Civajnanacittiyar*, 1.3.67.

without Siva. This sort of relationship is also known as *Tatatmya* (i.e., the relationship of two things which are really two aspects of one thing).

The Lord's grace is personified as His consort Sakti.⁸¹ Sakti is the embodiment of Pure Intelligence.⁸² Siva's Sakti is One only known as *Parasakti* (the Supreme Energy). But due to the variation in the cosmic activities, It becomes many. Volitional Energy (*Ichha Sakti*) is the supreme love of the Lord concerned with the removal of the impurities (*malas*) of the souls. Through Cognitive Energy (*Jnana Sakti*) the Lord knows the needs of the souls and through Conative Energy (*kriyasakti*) He creates the universe to distribute their deserts.⁸³

The Cosmic Functions

The Lord discharges the cosmic functions through His Sakti without any exertion or effort, by His mere Will. That is why they are described in the devotional literature as His sports.⁸⁴ Here, sport does not mean a pastime or an amusement. Surely, He would not derive any pleasure at the expense of untold miseries to the souls by subjecting them to undergo under cosmic functions. So, it is clear that the word sport indicates that He performs all the activities with effortless ease. The purpose of these functions is to bestow on the souls all the earthly and celestial happiness and finally when the ripe time dawns, granting them the everlasting eternal bliss from which there is no return to the temporal abode of empirical life. The five cosmic functions are as follows:⁸⁵

	<i>Tamil</i>	<i>Sanskrit</i>	<i>English equivalent</i>
1.	Pataippu	Srsti	Creation
2.	Kappu	Sthiti	Protection
3.	Alippu	Samhara	Destruction
4.	Maraippu	Tirobhava	Obscuration or concealment
5.	Arulal	Anugraha	Bestowal of Grace

Let us briefly consider them one by one:

81. *Ibid.*, 5.2.9.

82. *Ibid.*, 1.3.62.

83. *Ibid.*, 1.5.63.

84. i. *Tiruvacakam*, 7.11, 12.

ii. *Civajnanacittiyar*, 1.2.36.

85. i. *Tirumantiram*, 2.9.1—10; 2.10.1—10; 2.11.1—10; 2.12.1—10; 2.13.1—10.

ii. *Civajnanacittiyar*, 1.2.37.

1. *Creation*

God creates the universe from the material cause, *Maya* through His *Cit-Sakti* for the betterment of the souls, providing them with psychophysical organisms, and the world for habitation. Creation is intended to enable the souls to engage in activities and to get various kinds of experiences so that the potency of the root evil, *anava*, would be exhausted.

2. *Protection*

Protection or maintenance is exercised by the Lord through His *Sakti* with the sole purpose of making the souls experience the yields of their *karma* accrued in various births. The Lord protects the souls in such a way that they should not miss the experience due to them, whether it is pleasurable or painful depending upon the nature of their *karma*. He protects the souls according to the Moral Law.

3. *Destruction*

According to the law of *karma*, the souls embark on transmigration vested with various kinds of bodies in various births. In experiencing the fruits of *karma*, their energies get tired and their physical frames become like the worn out clothes. In order to give them rest, destruction takes place. It is often compared with sleep that recoups one's energies for the task of the following birth. God destroys only the contact of soul with the matter.

4. *Obscuration*

The souls are eternally in conjunction with *anava*, the spiritual darkness which has the potency to veil the soul from having a clear knowledge of the three realities, viz., *Pati*, *Pasu* and *Pasa*. Only by making the obscuring power of *anava* to fully function, its evil could be extirpated. So, *Tirodhana Sakti* of the Lord works through *anava* to enchant the soul to earthly pursuits and sensual enjoyment, till its power is completely emptied. At this stage, the soul develops a sense of indifference towards the yields of *karma* and also a sense of equanimity in adversity and prosperity resulting in *karma-samyā* (*iruvinaṭ oppu*). So, the purpose of obscuration is meant for the maturation of *anava mala*. As soon as the power of *anava* is destroyed, the soul is open to have the vision of God.

5. *Bestowal of Grace*

Observing the ripening of *anava* and the spiritual progress of the souls, the Lord appears in the form of *Guru* (Preceptor), purifies them through performance of some rites known as *dikṣa* and imparts Divine Wisdom (*Patijnana*) which illumines the souls to realise their oneness with the Lord. Through *Anugraha Sakti*, God bestows grace on the souls.

The first three functions are with particular reference to the physical aspect of the souls, i.e., God creates only the physical body, protects it and destroys it. But the last two actions are directly concerned with the souls. He conceals the souls from Him in order to make them mature by exterminating their impurity (i.e., *anava*). On the perfected souls He showers grace which is really the grant of eternal freedom. The first four actions culminate in the final one. Anugraha is the aim and end of all souls. All His five actions are actually the acts of His *Sakti* which is otherwise known as grace. These five cosmic functions of God are symbolically and artistically reflected in the beautiful image of Lord Nataraja.⁸⁶ Sometimes, protection and bestowal of grace are considered to be one action, while concealment and destruction are one. Thus, the Lord's functions are also known as three (*muttolil*). All His functions are actually the acts of grace.

The Ground of His Activities

Next, the question arises with regard to the place where God could station Himself to commence His cosmic functions. The potter places himself on earth before starting the production of pot. Likewise, is there any ground for the Lord to inaugurate His functions? If it were essential to station Himself in some place, then that space exists before His creation work. If He would not create, there could be no place. To this circular argument, the *Agamas* present a clear explanation through the analogy of the Time principle.⁸⁷ It is the lapse of time that causes the production, maintenance and destruction of the seven worlds. But time does not require to station itself somewhere for bringing about the aforesaid changes. Like the time principle, the Lord requires no stand to place Himself, for He performs the functions through His Will, otherwise known as *Sakti*. This analogy is only partial, for *Saiva Siddhanta* considers that time is a product of impure matter (*Asuddha maya*), and so it is inert. It could not function automatically. It is employed as an auxiliary cause for the Lord's cosmic functions.

Does God undergo any changes?

The next doubt arises whether the Lord is affected by His cosmic activities. The *Agamas* dispel this doubt again through analogy. In the presence of sun-shine, the lotus is blooming (creation), the sun-glass emits fire (protection) and the pool water evaporates (destruction). Though the sun is held responsible for these changes, they do not effect any change in the sun. The Lord is like the sun. He

86. Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, *The Dance of Shiva*, (New Delhi, 1971) pp. 66—79.

87. i. *Nanamirutam*, 62.4—7.

ii. *Civajanacittiyar*, 1.2.37.

is not disturbed by His functions that take place in His mere presence.⁸⁸ The sun analogy gets a fresh interpretation in *Gnanamirutam* which states that though the sun causes some lotus-buds to bloom, the other flowers like lily to fade and the old ones to wither, these changes do not hit the sun. So also, God is untouched by any change due to His cosmic functions.⁸⁹ He does not suffer any weariness due to His activities. If He were only immanent in the things, surely he would be affected. But, He is simultaneously transcendent and hence no change is possible. Only those who act with physical body would be affected. Since God acts through His Sakti, He is least affected. He is eternally immutable (*avikari*). Also it is to be noted that through His Will, the five modifications known as *Siva tattvas* are emanated from the *Suddha maya* (pure matter) and they form the ground for the Lord's cosmic activities which are actually assigned to His inseparable *Sakti*.

Two more analogies are given in *Civajnana Cittiyar*.⁹⁰ Though the different states of wakefulness, dreaming, dreamless sleep etc. arise and merge in the soul, they do not affect the soul. Though the words and their sense as understood in the books subside in and reemerge from the soul's consciousness, they do not affect the soul. So also, though the worlds are evolved and resolved in Him, He is not affected by them. He stands with the world being united and at the same time not united. One more analogy is worth mentioning. The three realities viz., *Pati*, *Pasu* and *Pasa* are respectively compared to ether, sea and salt. God is like the ether that provides space for the waters of the sea which are compared to the souls. The triple bonds (*pasa*) that go with the souls and not with God are like the salt that clings to the water and not the space occupied by the sea. Thus, God remains unaffected though He is inseparable from the souls and matter.⁹¹

In *Civanerippirakacam* some more illustrations are found. Though the air that does not leave the ether mingles with the fragrance, heat and cold and moves in the ether, it does not affect the ether. The snake is not afflicted by the poison, though it possesses it. Though asafoetida kills any tree that comes into its contact, it will not kill the tree on which it grows.⁹² These comparisons are sufficient to maintain that God is not at all affected by the triple bonds and He is eternally independent.

88. *Civajnanacittiyar*, 1.2.33.

89. *Gnanamirutam*, 63.1—4.

90. *Civajnanacittiyar*, 1.2.31.

91. i. *Civajnanapotam*, 7.3.44.

ii. *Civajnanacittiyar*, 7.3.

92. V.A. Devasenapathi, *Of Human Bondage and Divine Grace*, pp. 23—24.

Next, let us proceed to deal with the relationship of God with the souls as found in the *Saiva Siddhanta*.

God's relationship with the souls

Tevaram and *Meykantasastras* denote three kinds of relationship of the Lord with the souls.⁹³ Accordingly, He is one with them (*onray*), different from them (*veray*) and along with them (*utanay*). These are illustrated through some analogies.

1. The soul and the body

The Lord becomes one with the souls in actuating them to undergo the five fold functions. To illustrate this sort of relationship the usual simile is that of the soul and body. Like the soul that animates the body, the Lord animates the soul. Though the soul and the body are one due to their combination, they are different in substance. So also the Lord and the soul are one due to their intimacy, but they are different categories. This sort of oneness is known as *Advaita* or *Ananya* (non-difference). The intimate and inseparable contact of two things which makes them appear to be one is recognised as *Advaita* (or *abheda*) in *Saiva Siddhanta*. *Advaita* does not mean that God and soul are one as held in *Vedanta* philosophy of *Samkara*.

2. The Sunlight and the eye-sight

Though the soul and the Lord are inseparably connected, they are not of the same content. Their difference is just like the sunlight and the eye-sight. The eye cannot perceive things in its own right. It requires the help of an external power viz., the sunlight. The souls are like the eyes, while the Lord likens the sun. This analogy proclaims the concept of *bheda*.

3. The finite-consciousness and the eye-sight

The third comparison to explain the Lord's relationship with the souls is that of the finite consciousness and the eye-sight. In the former illustration, the eye-sight requires external light for its perception. Here, it is in need of inner-light known as *atman's cit-sakti* (i.e. the soul's finite consciousness). It is purely internal and pervades the eye-sight in illuminating the objects. Like the soul's consciousness to the eye, the Lord's consciousness-force stands to the soul. He is the

93. i. *Tevaram*, 1.11.2.
ii. *Civajnanapotam*, 2.1.
iii. *Civajnanacittiyar*, 2.1.,
iv. *Tirukkqalirrupattiyar*, 86.,

life of the souls. Here, in this relation, he is one with the soul and at the same time different from it. Hence, this relationship is known as *bhedabheda*.

Thus, *Saiva Siddhanta* propounds three kinds of relationship of God with soul, viz., 1. *abheda* like body and soul, 2. *bhedha* like the sunlight and eye-sight, and 3. *bhedabheda* like the finite-consciousness and eye-sight. But other theistic schools prefer only one among the three and adduce different illustrations to maintain their view-points. The *Kevaladvaita* of *Samkara* interprets the word *advaita* to mean one reality, and that is why it is known as monism. This school treats God and soul as the different modes of the same stuff like the gold and its ornament. The *Dvaita* of *Madhva* advocates dualism considering that the word *advaita* means more than one reality. According to this school, God and soul are completely different categories like light and darkness. The *Pancaratra*s, a sect of *Vaisnavism* propounds the concept of *bhedabheda* taking the two like word and its sense. All these ideas are presented here according to the commentary of *Civajanapota*m. It seems that *Saiva Siddhanta* did not agree with these views. Its concept of *advaita* is known as *Suddhadvaita*, i.e. pure *advaita* as explained through the three analogies cited earlier.

The relationship of God and soul is further explained in *Saiva siddhanta* through a fresh analogy derived from the alphabetical system.⁹⁴ 'A' is the first vowel sound in the alphabetical series. It is an independent sound, pronounced by the mere opening of mouth. Since all sounds - let them be vowels (*uyir*, also means soul) or consonants (*mey* - also means body) are to be pronounced only after mouth-opening, the influence 'A' is naturally mingled in them. Its influence is implicitly found in the vowel series, whereas the consonants require the help of 'A' for their pronunciation. This is the position in the Indian languages. The *Saiva Siddhanta* develops an analogy from this source to elucidate the relationship of God with the souls and matter. God is like 'A'. He is the Primary Being. Souls are like the vowels, and the matter like the consonants. He pervades not only the souls (*uyir*) but also the matter (*mey*). If there is no 'A', there are no vowels and consonants. Likewise, if there is no God, there are no souls and matter. This *Siddhantic* concept has its root in the very first couplet of *Tirukkural* which illumines that like the alphabets having 'A' as their primary sound, so also the world has the Lord, *Atipakavan*, to be its Prime Head.

94. i. *Unmaivilakkam*, 29.

ii. *Civajanapota*m, 2.1.7.

iii. *Civajanacittiyar*, 2.1.1.

iv. *Tiruvartupayan*, 1.1.

This analogy has already gained currency in the *Tirumurais*.

Vide, i. *Tirumantiram*, 7.5.1.

ii. *Tevaram*, 1.88.5; 6.28.5; 7.3.7.

Please see, *Bhagavad Gita*, 10.33.

The Forms of God

The *svarupa* state of the Lord denotes that He is the Absolute of philosophy, while His *Tatastha* state indicates that He is the God of theism. It is natural to anticipate that the Lord who actuates the cosmic functions should possess some form. Some would think that if He had a form, He should be treated one among the people. Others would argue that if he had no form, the cosmic functions could not be carried out. In reply, *Saiva Siddhanta* expatiates that the Lord can function even without form just like the soul that has no form, but animating the body. The Lord manifests Himself in some form not because that He cannot function without form, but because the souls would be benefited of His form. The Lord condescending from His absolute nature comes to the reach of the souls. This simplicity of the Highest Being is known as *elivartul* in *Tiruvacakam* and *Saulabhya* in *Visistadvaita*. "The devotee feels that God is closer to us than breathing and nearer than hands and feet"

He reveals Himself in various manifestations to His devotees under different situations. He even takes the form of a mother-pig at His own Will to feed her young-ones when they lose their mother. Nevertheless, the concept of incarnation (*avatara*), one of the central tenets in *Visistadvaita* is not admissible in *Saiva Siddhanta*. An erudite scholar in the system of *Visistadvaita* observes:

"The vast *puranic* literature is said to be singularly free from any account of Siva's birth in flesh and blood. It is contended that the author of evolution cannot himself be subject to that process."⁹⁵

It is said that the Lord appears and disappears at His own Will. His forms are radically different from those of the mortals whose forms are the products of matter (*maya*). Since the souls are fettered by *anava* - type of *pasa*, they get their bodies from the *maya* - type of *pasa*. Since the Lord by nature is free from the three types of *pasa* (viz., *anava*, *karma* and *maya*), His form has no connection with *maya*. His own *sakti* manifests His form. All His forms are the forms of *sakti* which is grace, intelligence and brilliance all at once. Tirumular declares that love is God.⁹⁶

All the objects have one of the three forms, viz., corporeal form (*rupa*), incorporeal form (*arupa*) and corporeal-cum-incorporeal form (*ruparupa*). *Arupa* is not subject to sense-perception like the ether. It could be knowable through inference. *Rupa* form is perceptible like earth. *Ruparupa* form is sometimes perceived and at other times inferred like the air and vapour. Likewise, the Lord's

95. R. Ramanujachari, *op.cit.* p. 13.

96. *Tirumantiram*, 1.18.1.,

forms are also held to be threefold.⁹⁷ There are nine variations in the manifestation of Siva, due to the variation in the substrates where he stays for performing the cosmic functions. They are collectively known as '*navam taru petam*' in *Civajnanacittiyar*. They are classified into three groups. *Siva*, *Sakti*, *Nada* and *Bindu* constitute the *arupa* forms. *Sadasiva* is the *ruparupa* form and it is represented in the form of *Sivalinga*. *Maheśvara*, *Rudra*, *Viṣṇu* and *Brahma* are the fully manifested forms (*rupa*). From *Siva*, *Sakti* arises; from *Sakti*, *Nada* arises; from *Nada*, *Bindu* arises and so on. Among these nine, *Sakti* and *Bindu* are the variations of *Sakti tattva*. Corresponding to the variations in the form of *Siva*, the manifestations of *Sakti* also vary. Thus, *Siva* and *Sakti*, *Nada* and *Bindu*, *Sadasiva* and *Manonmani*, *Maheśvara* and *Maheśvari*, *Rudra* and *Uma*, *Viṣṇu* and *Mahalakṣmi* and *Brhma* and *Sarasvati* form the Divine couple to initiate the cosmic activities.

It is to be borne in mind that *Rudra*, *Viṣṇu* and *Brahma* under reference belong to *Sambhupakṣa* (i.e. the variations of *Siva*) while the *Trimurtis* belong to *Amupakṣa* (i.e. the group of spiritually evolved souls.) This sort of classification is also found in the *Tirumurai*s.

Threefold Murtas

All the corporeal forms that the Lord has assumed for the deliverance of the souls are classified into three kinds, viz., *Bhoga*, *vega* and *Yoga*.⁹⁸ *Bhoga* means enjoyment. In this manifestation, the Lord with His consort, *Sakti* is known as the Divine Father and Mother (*Ammāi Appar*). *Umamahēśvara murta* belongs to this kind. This form is symbolic of enjoyment, conferring on the souls the earthly pleasures. The Lord Himself sets an example to all species of living beings to live in conjugal life. Saint *Tirunāvukkaracar* had the vision of God in the pairs of birds and animals when he was exposed to the sacred shrine at *Tiruvaiyaru*.⁹⁹ The significance of this *murta* is also pointed out by *Tirunanācampantar* and *Manikkavācakar*.¹⁰⁰ *Vega* means anger. *Vega murta* is symbolic of His righteous anger to correct the vicious and wicked people. Among his many heroic deeds, eight are important. They are portrayed in *Tirumantiram*.¹⁰¹ They include the burning of the triple flying fortress of the *Asuras*, the kicking to death of *Yama*, the

97. *Civajnanacittiyar*, 1.2. 38, 55.

98. *Ibid.*, 1.2.50.

99. *Tevaram*, 4.21—31.

100. i. *Ibid.*, 3.24.1.

ii. *Tiruvācakam*. - 12.9.

101. *Tirumantiram*, 2.2.1—8.

killing of Jalandhara, the subjugation of Ravana, etc. *Yoga* means meditation. The Lord takes *Yoga murta* also. He becomes an ascetic of a very high order. He also becomes an ideal preceptor to instruct the matured souls to attain salvation. The best example of this *murta* is the form of Daksinamurti which is referred to in *Kalittokai* and *Cilappatikaram*. In this form, He revealed the *Vedas* and *Agamas*.

Though the Lord assumes these manifestations, He transcends the universe. Even the *puranic* story that narrates the arduous but vain attempts of Brahma and Visnu (*anupaksa*) in search of His origin and end (literally His head and feet) indicates that He alone is the only transcendental Supreme Being.

Astamurta

The Lord's eight-fold form (*astamurta*) is a recurrent theme in the *Tirumurais*. It includes the five gross-elements, the sun and moon besides the manifold souls. The first seven are material products in which the Lord abides as the inner principle. He is also the inner ruler of the souls. Through this form, His omnipresence is symbolically conveyed. The concept of *astamurta* is very ancient.¹⁰² It is noticed in the religion of the Indus Valley Civilization. *Paripatal* and *Manimekalai* are the early extant Tamil literature to refer to this form. Kalidasa also extols this form of Siva.

Adhvamurti

The concept of God as *adhvamurti* is also worth mentioning.¹⁰³ *Adhava* literally means pathway or steps leading one to progress. The *Agamas* mention six *adhvas*, viz., *mantra*, *pada*, *varna*, *bhuvana*, *tattva* and *kala* to be His manifestation. Thus he is known as *adhvamurti*. Since He pervades all these six material products, they are figuratively attributed to be His form. Among the six *adhvas*, *mantra adhva* is His special form. So, He is also known as *Mantramurti*. *Mantras* are the modifications of the pure matter (*suddhamaya*). They are meant for the contemplation of the devotees to secure happiness and release. Even among the *mantras*, the five constitute His significant form, since they are the primary ones emanating before all other *mantras* from *Suddhamaya*. So, He is also known as *Panca Brahma mantra murti*. This form is hinted in *Manimekalai* also.¹⁰⁴

102. S.N. Kandaswamy, *Paripatalinkalam*, (Annamalainagar, 1972), pp. 34—35.

103. i. *Civajnanacittiyar*, 1.2.56—59.
ii. *Kantarkalivenpa*, 60—62.

104. *Manimekalai*, 27.91.

Realisation of God

The *Meykanta Sastra* mentions two kinds of knowledge to be the means of realising God.¹⁰⁵ They are the knowledge of the Divine Grace and the knowledge of the *Agamas*. The first one is to be directly derived from God. He chooses the ripe soul to impart divine knowledge known as *Patijnana* or *Sivajnana*. This is also known as *Tiruvaraulhanam* as per the commentary of *Civappirakacam* which clearly mentions that the *Tevaram* Trio, Karaikkalammai and others received this kind of divine knowledge. *Agamajnana* is to be obtained as a result of a close study of the *Saiva Agamas*. However, this is only indirect knowledge of God. The *Santanakuravars* are the recipients of this kind of *jnana*.

The limitations of bookish knowledge are clearly pointed out in the Tamil devotional literature. The knowledge of the texts is of little use to the realisation of the Absolute. It is just like seeing a city in a map. *Tiruvacakam* declares that the bookish knowledge does not make one to apprehend the Reality. His is far away from the sixfold sources of knowledge (i.e. *pramanas*) which are like boats to cross the ocean of *Vedas and Agamas*.¹⁰⁶ He could not be adequately understood through the principles of epistemology. Intense devotion towards God is a preliminary requisite to realise Him. It is followed by the prescribed ethical preparations. The devotional hymnists have realised Him through devotion and meditation leading to Divine Grace. Because of their spiritual perfection, a thorough transformation took over their body which also attained divinity. It is said that God spoke through them. Their words are the true expression of their divine experience. They are held to be the trustworthy words being the only *pramana* for the existence of God.

Tirunanacmpantar advises the people not to investigate God through logical means, since he is Self - Effulgent.¹⁰⁷ Tirunavukkaracar declares : "How could I deny the existence of God who has thrust Himself into the circle of my consciousness."¹⁰⁸ *Tirumurais* and the life of the Nayanmars reveal that sincere service to God and society is the pathway to reach Him. *Meykantasastras* mention that knowledge obtained through *pramanas* is only *pasajnana* (i.e. material knowledge). It is only through *Patijnana* that realisation of God is made possible. Manikka-vacakar proclaims that he saw God with his won eyes (perhaps after being

105. *Civappirakacam*, (Madras, kalakam edition, 1975), pp. 39—42.

106. *Gnanamirutam*, 55.24—27.

107. *Tevaram*, 3.54.5.

108. *Ibid.*, 4.98.1.

possessed by Him).¹⁰⁹ He mentions in many contexts that he received *Patijnana* directly from the Lord.¹¹⁰ He indicates also the manner by which he was initiated with the divine wisdom by the Lord Himself in the form of a *Guru*. He says that there is a way of seeing the reality. It is known as *kanumaru kanal*, i.e. seeing in such a way as to grasp the Reality. This way is clearly elaborated in the 11th aphorism of *Civajnanapotam* and its commentaries.¹¹¹

Without the guidance of the soul, the eye could not see an object. The eye serves only as instrument. It cannot see itself. It is inert and a product of matter. If it could see all by itself without the guidance of the soul, the eye in the dead body also should see. It is not so. It is actually the consciousness-force (*atman's cit-sakti*) that is inherent with the soul pervades the eye to cognize a thing. Though it is commonly said that the eye sees, actually it is the soul that sees through the eye. The eye is the window of the soul. Thus, the soul helps the eye in two ways, viz., showing and seeing an object (*kattum upakaram* and *kamum upakaram*). God is to the soul what the soul is to the eye. Lord's grace known as *sakti* pervades the soul, illumines it and reveals the Lord who is the life of the soul. In one of the hymns of *Tevaram*, Divine Grace is extolled to be the eye of the soul (*avan arulekan*).¹¹² The luminosity of soul's consciousness-force becomes explicit due to the on-set of Divine Grace. The lord creates an unquenchable desire (*sivaraga* or *sivakama*) in such souls to experience Him, and through this desire manifests Sivananda, the eternal bliss.

Conclusion

Saiva Siddhanta is a theistic philosophy based on revelation. It has a long history and rich literature. Though the *Meykantasastras* employ logical means to establish the existence of God, the devotional hymns of the Nayanmars are the authentic source to understand His existence and nature. His intrinsic as well as related characteristics, transcendence and immanence, static and dynamic features, His cosmic functions etc., are delineated in the Tamil devotional hymns and *Meykantasastras*. Through intense devotion and meditation one could get Divine Grace which alone could unfold the mystery of God.

109. *Tiruvacakam*, 3.58.

110. *Ibid.*, 1.32, 2.102, 3.117—124, 5.43, 44, 84—5, 95, 8.12, 18, 10.4, 30.1—7, 31.1—10, etc.

111.i. *Civajnanapotam, cirrorai*, pp. 142—154.

ii. *Civajnanacittiyar*, 11.1—6.

112. *Tevaram*, 6.97.10.

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