



UNIVERSITÀ DI NAPOLI
L'ORIENTALE

DAAM
DIPARTIMENTO ASIA,
AFRICA E MEDITERRANEO

University of Naples “L’Orientale”
Department of Asian, African and Mediterranean Studies
XXXV cycle
PhD Coordinator: Prof. Michele Bernardini

**THE ROLE OF ŚAIVASIDDHĀNTA
IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF TAMIL CULTURAL AND ETHNO-LINGUISTIC IDENTITY
IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY TAMIL NADU
WITH A FOCUS ON MU. ARUṆĀCALAM’S CAIVA CAMAYAM**

Supervisor

Prof. Francesco Sferra

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CONTENTS

NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION

INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER I THE BRITISH RULE AND THE RELIGIOUS REVIVAL IN TAMIL NADU	5
1.1 Cultural and religious developments during the British Rāj	5
1.2 The political awakening: pan-Indian and regional forms of nationalism	14
1.3 The revival of Tamil language and Śaivasiddhānta	20
CHAPTER II THE PARADOX OF ARUNACHALAM: LIFE AND THOUGHT OF AN UNEXPLORED SCHOLAR	57
2.1 Arunachalam: life and works	57
2.2 <i>Tamiḷ Ilakkiya Varalāru</i>	61
2.3 Arunachalam, the Cholas, and Śaivism in Tamil Nadu	70
2.4 Arunachalam and the Śaiva saints	86
2.5 Arunachalam's Śaivasiddhānta between Sanskrit and Tamil: sources and worship	94
CHAPTER III ARUNACHALAM'S CAIVA CAMAYAM	104
3.1 <i>Caiva Camayam</i> : transliteration and translation	107
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS	208
BIBLIOGRAPHY	212
Tamil Sources	212
English Sources	213
PHOTOGRAPHIC ADDENDUM	222

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Arunachalam's desk in his home office in Tiruchitrambalam.	222
Figure 2. Arunachalam's personal library in his home office.	223
Figure 3. Arunachalam's personal library in his home office.	224
Figure 4. Open view of Arunachalam's personal journal library.	225
Figure 5. A section of Arunachalam's personal literary collection.	226
Figure 6. A section of Arunachalam's personal literary collection.	227
Figure 7. A closer view on two sections of Arunachalam's personal literary collection.	228

NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION

The Tamil transliteration scheme follows that of the Madras Tamil Lexicon system.

City names and places (Chidambaram, Dharmapuram Adhinam, etc.) have been given in their standard English spelling, but the literal spelling is included the first time that little-known ones are cited. Names of revivalists and scholars (Maraimalai Adigal, Arunachalam, etc.) have been given in their anglicized version with the Tamil transliteration when occurring the first time. The names of the Tamil canon's authors and those of the cited Tamil sources are in their Tamil transliteration.

In the transliterations of Tamil works, letters are capitalized according to citation standards but are kept in lowercase letters in all the other cases.

Tamil religious terminology has been rendered in its Sanskrit form when deriving from Sanskrit.

All translations from Tamil are my own unless otherwise indicated.

INTRODUCTION

Mu. Aruṇācalam (1909-1992), hereafter Arunachalam, is regarded as a key scholar of the last century. The *Tamiḷ Ilakkiya Varalāru* (“History of Tamil Literature”) represents his *opus magnum* and most appreciated work, remaining an unmatched source on the wide-ranging Tamil literature that occurred from the ninth to the seventeenth century for the evidence provided, especially concerning the religious domain. The details he gave about the authors – both well-known and unknown –,¹ the historical and cultural context in which they lived, and the accounts of their works with related editions and eventual commentaries became a main reference for the scholarships in the literary field of Tamil studies, marking a crucial breaking point with his contemporaries’ contributions on literary history that mostly consisted of uncritical and uncontextualized lists of writers and books. This is particularly true for Śaivism, which during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries came to be mostly associated with the Śaivasiddhānta tradition. Arunachalam, who was a worshipper of Śiva, did not simply give prominent space to Śaiva literature in these volumes but shed light on it – especially the one written in the fourteenth and the fifteenth centuries – constituting the basis from which the project of this collection was developed and realized. Moreover, Śaivism’s history, theology, saints, and the main features of the worship are the subjects of many more books and articles, both in Tamil and English, which he wrote throughout his life.²

Nevertheless, the religious-literary field was not the only one that benefited from his scholarly research, as the topics of Arunachalam’s works spanned from literature and language to education, music, and horticulture, leaving a significant mark in each sphere of competence.³

Despite the due consideration he is taken into, there is a paradoxical gap between the value of his legacy and the difficulty in finding works written by him and about him. While his most famous books on literary and religious matters are nowadays mostly available both in libraries and in digitalized form, getting hold of those that had a narrower circulation, not to mention his articles, is a demanding task to which often one of the easiest remedies, ironically, is collecting them from his office in his hometown, Tiruchitrambalam (Tiruccirāmpalam), where his son lives.

However, the problem of the considerably small number of books and articles about his activities and works remains unsolved. The scholarly contributions accessible about him are all in Tamil language and, even in those cases, the only two available books entirely dedicated to him are:

¹ See, for example, Cuṭarvīḷi (2019, 81).

² For a list, see Pālacuppiramaṇiyaṅ (2009).

³ Cuṭarvīḷi (2019, 28) mentions that Arunachalam received public recognition for his contribution to education and music.

the *Tiruccirāmpala Aruṇācalaṅār Nūrrāṅṅu Malar* (1909-2009) by Ula. Pālacuppiramaṅiyan (2009), who provided lists of Arunachalam books in Tamil and English, information for the majority of them, and lists of material collected by him and later donated to the Roja Muthiah Library in Chennai by his son for their better maintenance; and the *Paṅmūka āḷumai Mu. Aruṇācalam* by Je. Cuṭarvīḷi (2019), who provided accounts of Arunachalam's life, an overview of his activities and commitments, and whose study is mainly focused on his innovative research methodology and editorial works. Apart from these, what all we get are quotations and scattered comments devoid of an accurate analysis, which still circulated in a very restricted environment, thus being mostly unavailable to non-Tamil scholars.

The scenario is even more discouraging when searching for material in English, both in a strictly academic context or in a less pretentious one: even finding a brief account of his biography would turn into a vain or disappointing attempt at best.

It is a matter of fact that contemporary scholarships are more focused on the investigation of the Caṅkam and the pre-Modern literary, linguistic, and historical phenomena. Although during the last two decades the attention towards the developments of the twentieth century had increased, scholars' research tends to focus on more public and "noisy" personalities. Despite the role that such charismatic figures have played, influencing and shaping the thought and perceptions of the intelligentsia as well as of the common people, the fact that Arunachalam clearly preferred a more private dimension does not imply that he had a less incisive impact and the broad use that is made of his volumes are a clear proof of it. Understanding his vision and stands becomes, thus, of primary importance considering such reliance on the material he produced.

Arunachalam's work, appreciated for its distinctive scientific approach, carries clear imprints of his thoughts and beliefs, sometimes slightly hinted, some other times carved in the pages. As they lay in the background, they shape the discourse and, thus, influence the reader. This is particularly true when it comes to Śaivism due to his deeper involvement in the topic. Therefore, a closer look at his interpretation of the history and peculiarities of Śaivism is not only necessary but even dutiful. This dissertation represents a first effort to reconstruct these aspects on the basis of the available material collected during a field survey in Tamil Nadu, in particular in Tiruchitrāmbalam and Chennai.

The first chapter provides a brief reconstruction of the historical and cultural context of the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries, necessary to better contextualize Arunachalam's thought on the social debates teeming in Tamil Nadu, his criticism of the Śaiva revivalists, his interpretation of the past, and the image of Śaivism that he provided.

The Indian history of that period and, in particular, the rise and developments of the nationalistic movements, has been analyzed through the lenses of several approaches, heading to different schools of thought: the Cambridge school, the Marxist and neo-Marxist school, the Post-colonial school, the Subaltern studies, and so on.⁴ Nevertheless, the interpretations provided by these schools often seem to shape the historical events to fit within the framework of their specific points of view, thus forcing them into rigid schemes. Despite not being a very recent investigation on the topic and assuming a clear Subaltern approach, the analysis of Aloysius in *Nationalism without a Nation in India* (1997) appears to offer a comprehensive and critical understanding of Indian nationalism, being of the main references for the reconstruction of facts. Other primary sources were the contributions of Arooran (1976) and Irschick (1969, 1986). Among the more recent works on the analysis of this historical period, the manual of Kulke and Rothermund (2004) has represented an important reference source for the historiography of the modern period.

New attention was recently paid to by scholars of Tamil studies on the cultural changes that occurred in Tamil Nadu during the twentieth century as a consequence of the British dominance. *Navīna Tamilakam: Moḷi, Matam, Aṭaiyālam* is a collection of articles edited by Vaithees and Stanislaus (2022) that focuses on the ideological developments that affected the linguistic and religious domains and the repercussion on the definition of identity during the colonial and modern periods. These works offer a different viewpoint in the study of such dynamics.

Several are the contributions that tried to define the religious environment of the time. The works of Prentiss (1996, 1999, 2019) and Rangaswamy (1959) were the primary sources on the rise and growth of the *bhakti* movements. While Sumathi Ramaswamy (1997, 1998) offers an overall view of the innovations registered on a historical, religious, linguistic, and literary point of view in Tamil Nadu, we still lack a holistic analysis of the developments that occurred specifically within the Śaiva context. Despite slowly increasing in quantity, current studies on the topic generally focus on specific personalities. Two examples are the research of Srilata Raman (2022), focused on Ramaswami Adigal (Irāmaliṅka Aṭikaḷār), and that of Ravi Vaithees (2015, 2022), analyzing the role and activity of Maraimalai Adigal (Maṛaimalai Aṭikaḷ). Among the Tamil contributions, a mention of the Caiva Cittāntap Perumaṅṅam (Chennai), which still publishes work of and about crucial revivalists, with a particular focus on Comacuntara Nayakar (Cōmacuntara Nāyakar). Nevertheless, their magazine numbers don't have a wide circulation, thus remaining mostly unavailable. All the aforementioned

⁴ See Aloysius (1997, 5-15) and Vaithees (2015, 5-12).

contributions have been taken into consideration for a general reconstruction of the developments registered within the Śaivasiddhānta tradition.

The second chapter is centered on Arunachalam. After giving an account of his life, mentioning the events that have influenced his thoughts and careers (sourced from the works of the aforementioned Pālacuppiramaṇiyaṅ and Cuṭarvīḷi), accounts of his interpretation of the Tamil past and stands on Śaivasiddhānta were pointed out through the analysis of selected works, books and articles, in both Tamil and English.

The third and final chapter provides a translation of Arunachalam's book *Caiva Camayam*, published in 1969, where the author gave accounts of what he believed to be the basics everyone should know about Śaivism.⁵ The choice of translating this particular book was made because of the personal insights of the author emerging through the pages, offering an important testimony of his interpretation not only of this religion but even of the social context he was living in.

In the introduction to the book Arunachalam also mentioned the intention of writing an English version of this material. Despite not being mentioned by Pālacuppiramaṇiyaṅ in his survey on Arunachalam's work, the book in question should be the one entitled *Outlines of Saivism*, published in 1981. Nevertheless, the difficulty in sourcing a copy of this book – that I could not find in Arunachalam's library in Tiruchitrambalam, while a copy should be stored in the library of the EFEO in Pondicherry – makes it not possible to state it precisely. Indeed, the translation of the *Caiva Camayam* presented in this thesis will allow a future comparison with this and possibly other retrieved copies.

⁵ Note that Arunachalam (1969c, 127-135) added an appendix at the end of the book with quotes from the *Tirumurai* and the *Meykaṇṭa Cāttiraṅkaḷ* to support the notions conveyed throughout the text. Since this material was only meant to be a support to the main text, it was not included in the translation work.

CHAPTER I

THE BRITISH RULE AND THE RELIGIOUS REVIVAL IN TAMIL NADU

1.1 Cultural and religious developments during the British Rāj

The history of India during the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries has witnessed the British penetration and rule, political consciousness awakening, cultural revival, social turmoil, and religious fervor. Kulke and Rothermund (2004, 224-283) have highlighted how the decline of the Mughal Empire in the eighteenth century opened the way to a period of internal political struggle, making the Subcontinent a fertile land for the British to gradually gain a foothold on it through military intervention and trades, while Aloysius (1997) underlined how the British Rāj (1858-1947) further consolidated its political and economic control through the annexations of tribal territories, alliances with the emerging regional powers, the monopolization of the trades, and the construction of a vast network of railways.

The cultural confrontation between the British and the Indians was marked by strong tension between the opposing factions of Orientalists, who were interested in studying Indian traditions, and Anglicists, who demised those same traditions.

The emergence of Orientalism was responsible for the beginning of the studies of the Indian civilization since the end of the eighteenth century, thus before the establishment of the Rāj.⁶ Kulke and Rothermund (2004, 246) have mentioned how Hastings, having become the governor-general of the East India Company in 1774, had a major role in the development of the interest in Indian languages, laws, and customs by sponsoring the beginning of Indology and supporting the foundation of the Asiatic Society in Calcutta by Sir William Jones. This was just one among the many institutions established between the last decades of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century that constituted the cradle of the study of Indian culture.⁷

As Dirks (2001, 142) and Bergunder (2004, 59) mentioned, the relationship between Sanskrit and Greek, Latin, German, and Celtic languages, publicly stated in 1786 by Sir William Jones,⁸ was used as a theoretical foundation for the reconstruction of the Indian pre-history and the formulation of the Aryan migration theory. Both scholars also remarked that Max Müller, who supported the

⁶ Nevertheless, Dirks (2001, 38) stressed that their influence started fading after the opening decades of the nineteenth century under the attacks of the Evangelicals and the Anglicists.

⁷ Other important ones were the Sanskrit College at Banaras, founded by Jonathan Duncan in 1794, the Fort William College at Calcutta, founded by Wellesley in 1800, and the College of Fort St. George at Madras, founded in 1812 by F. W. Ellis. About the latter, see Ebeling (2009).

⁸ This theory was later demonstrated by Franz Bopp (1791-1867) and Rasmus Rask (1787-1832).

thesis of a common culture and race among all the speakers of Indo-European languages, later provided that theory with a racial articulation by suggesting that Aryans had been responsible for the civilization of the Subcontinent and were still carrying this process on by means of their progeny.⁹

Moreover, other Indian intellectuals, like Debendranath Tagore (Dēbēndranātha Ṭhākura, 1817-1905) and Keshab Chandra Sen (Kēśabacandra Sēna, 1838-1884), used the theory of Müller to advocate equality and unity between Britons and Indians (Dirks 2001, 142).

The British adopted such a theory, which made both of them and the Brahmins as descendants of the Aryans, to provide a historical legitimation for their rule in India. Aloysius (1997, 50-55) had also previously highlighted how they avoided interfering in the *status quo* – since their interests were mainly economic than political, with their priority being the land revenue – and adopted what is commonly called a non-interference strategy. This conduct implied approving the actual structure and distribution of power in Indian society, with Brahmins at the top, and conferring a secular legitimacy to the sacral hierarchy. The endorsement of such hierarchy led Dirks (2001) to understand caste – as we know it today – as a modern phenomenon, suggesting that under the British domination it became the core symbol of Indian society, the measure of all social things, thus permeating all the public realms of life: ritual, socioeconomic, political.

In a more recent essay, Muttumōkaṇ (2021, 36) mentioned how the notion that Sanskrit was the oldest language of the world brought to the belief that it was also the vehicle of the oldest religion. In this context, the Vedas were evaluated as the first Aryan texts conveying the divine message, with this conferring an even higher status to the language of Brahmins and enhancing the sacral legitimization of their ideology. Moreover, Aloysius (1997, 51) further emphasized that this situation was compounded by the codification of the Hindu law during the British rule, through which Brahmins could extend their ideological domination even to those sections of people who had resisted it till that moment.

When the colonial regime was established, the management and control over the different religious traditions teeming in India represented one of its most significant challenges, especially in the colonialists' attempt to strengthen the spread of the Christian faith.

During this period, all the various traditions and practices animating the Indian Subcontinent, constituting worship systems on their terms, were merged and gathered together under the one name of *Hinduism*.

⁹ See Müller (1847, 349), as cited by Bergunder (2004, 60): "... it is remarkable to see, how the descendents of the same race to which the first conquerors and lords of India belonged, return ... in order to complete the glorious work of civilisation which their Aryan brothers left unfinished".

There are still many debates about when and where the construction of Hinduism started, whether it was a Western invention or the result of an internal anti-colonial attitude aiming to recover a pre-existing religious self-consciousness. A collection of essays on these matters were published in 2010 in Ester Bloch, Marianne Keppens, and Rajaram Hegde (eds.), *Rethinking Religion in India: The Colonial Construction of Hinduism*. Nevertheless, their writings presented a series of criticalities, sprouting from the authors' profound influence of Christian theological categories, that had aroused dissent among other scholars, who also underlined that they actually did not provide new research approaches although the aim of the book was re-conceptualizing the given topic.¹⁰ Less recently, Pennington (2005) understood the emergence of Hinduism as the result of a colonial encounter, thus recognizing an Indian agency in the process of its creation that earlier scholarships denied.

Although this was not the first time that different cults were absorbed into the frame of a dominant Hindu sect, in the nineteenth century there was the construction and stabilization of a dominant, majority religion, identified with the Advaita Vedāntic tradition, that allowed the devotees of the different traditions sprouting from the Vedic scriptures to make a common front against Christianity. As a consequence, it represented the foundation for the development of a modern national agenda (Kulke and Rothermund 2004, 287).

Literature became one of the most critical battlegrounds between Christians and Hindus, especially from 1835 when, thanks to the Press Act, Indians gained ownership of presses and could start using them even for religious purposes. On the one hand, scriptures could be transferred from palm leaves to printed books and circulate, made more understandable through new commentaries. On the other hand, anti-Christian literature could circulate too.¹¹

The confrontation with the Christian threat started way before the nineteenth century through the missionary activities, which were not directly linked to the colonial regime but rather operated on an independent path. Nevertheless, both missionaries and the Anglicists of the regime had the common aim of defeating the idol worship, which they intended to accomplish in different ways.

¹⁰ See, for example, Fort (2010) and Fuller (2010).

¹¹ Stein (2010, 258) stressed the role of the development of an indigenous publishing industry during the first half of the nineteenth century even as an incentive to reading for the non-elite groups, who were already soughing literacy for social mobility. A clearer picture of this innovation is given by the data he reported about Bengal, where the first Indian-owned presses were established: in 1853, it counted forty-six presses producing over 250 books and pamphlets in Bengali, besides nineteen newspapers. Later, an Indian press were started in Bombay (1861) and local newspapers begun to be published in Madras (1868), Allahabad (1860s), and Lahore (1870s). Stein also mentioned that the British concern for the proliferation of Indian-owned newspapers was manifested through the Vernacular Press Act of 1878. It is not by chance that this measure set limitations about political, racial, and religious contents: as Stein pointed out, the content of the Indian press gradually became political and nationalistic, while the Indian newspapers, both in English and Indian languages, often provided criticism of the administrative measures and opposition to the Christian propaganda. See also Arooran (1976, 3-4).

Missionaries, besides the spread of Christian divine message and the conversion plans, had put the religious traditions of the Subcontinent in a comparative scheme with Christianity and established their inferiority or inclusion with respect to it on the matter of theology, means of salvation, afterlife notion: this made of Christianity the point of reference in the process of defining a given religious tradition as a coherent religion or as a superstition, thus exercising a significant influence in the innovations later introduces in the religious domains.¹²

Anglicists, who understood Hinduism as a set of superstitions and backward beliefs with no exceptions, sought to adjust its practices with the introduction of an English education system: becoming familiar with the Western sciences and the European Enlightenment notions would have led Indians to get rid of their superstitions and backward beliefs and exalt more rational theological aspects. Kulke and Rothermund (2004, 255) stressed the influence of Thomas Macaulay in this context: arrived in Calcutta in 1835 as a law member on the council of the governor-general, he supported the need for the introduction of the English education for Indians, aimed at forming Indian civil servants.

The English education system was the main responsible for spreading the ideas of liberalism and democracy, the concepts of freedom, human rights, dignity, and equality; it is not by chance that the social and religious reformers who emerged in the nineteenth century were people who had benefited from it. Although not open to all the social classes, the public debates and discussions about social and economic equality carried out by the regional political parties could reach the ordinary people, who started aspiring for those ideals for their motherland too. The need for better living conditions and the awareness of chances to obtain them resulted in reform movements meant to take distance from practices and customs, which did not comply with the concept of a modern and equal society. Moreover, the Indian appropriation of modern liberal and secular ideas, emphasizing the role of science vis-à-vis the transcendental, made blind faith falter. Nevertheless, it did not result in a decay of religions in India but rather led the sacral ideology to be expressed in secular terms.

Therefore, starting from the nineteenth century, Hinduism lived an important phase of changes and developments, marked by the efforts to rediscover a form of worship devoid of superstition and idolatry, which are usually referred to as revival. This term does not imply an earlier phase of less involvement in religious life or of a faltering faith that was later restored among the Indian people. It

¹² Županov (2005) gave detailed accounts of the interpretation of idolatry among the Jesuit missionaries during the seventeenth and eighteenth century and highlighted that idolatrous practices were generally considered to be associated with the tropical climate. As the scholar mentioned (2005, 26), this theory was particularly supported by Montesquieu, who considered the weakness of the body caused by the heat to be responsible for the weakness of the mind. Nevertheless, Županov (2005, 267-9) also pointed out the different position of Roberto De Nobili (1577-1656), who understood idolatry as “messy social practices”.

rather refers to the efforts to adapt those traditions to the modern world, an intellectual awakening that led to speak of the nineteenth century as the Renaissance period in India (Arooran 1976, 1). Neo-Hinduism, emphasizing the achievements of Indian people through rationality and ignoring the metaphysical level, was nevertheless affected by the impact of foreign models, namely the Western sciences and the interest of the Orientalists on the one hand and Christianity on the other. The scriptures, commentaries, and translations which were now published and made available to a broader segment of the population both thanks to the work of the Orientalists and the press innovation made Indians appreciate and evaluate their history and traditions, whose core was found in the Vedas and Upaniṣads. These were, from that moment, considered the emblem of Indian civilization's golden age. Aware of their past, they felt the need to return to such illustrious times, devoid of backwardness and social discrimination.

It is not by chance that, in this context, the Vedāntic religion in its Advaita declination came to represent the dominant religion since it appeared as the one that best adapted to the new demands of modernity thanks to its prevalence of knowledge over other forms or tools to free the mind, although they too are contemplated. Therefore, the path to liberation is a path of clarification of the mind, made gradually purer, as knowledge is first and foremost awareness. Supporting a monotheistic system was a strategy intended to contest Christianity on equal terms, and the logic governing it was seen as a sign of superiority compared with Christian dogmas.

As religion was deeply interlinked with the social structure, reforming religion by challenging the superstitious practices implied the introduction of social reforms too. The religious reformers who stood up from the nineteenth century onwards were, indeed, concerned about the social struggles of society and willing to reform it too, playing an essential role in the awakening of the common people. This process would have enabled India to become strong and culturally independent enough to achieve political Independence. If, in fact, on one side, the cultural tradition of the West had materialism and science as its points of reference or the rejection of everything that had to do with metaphysics, on the other side, spirituality and religiosity kept on having a privileged role in Indian society, despite the rambling modernity.

The first phase of Neo-Hinduism witnessed the emergence of different religious reform movements, which Kulke and Rothermund (2004, 284) presented as a defensive reaction resulting from the confrontation with Christian missionaries that aroused the quest for a new creed among the Hindus. In this context, particularly significant were the *samaj* movements, which were marked by social idealism. Nevertheless, their investigation usually does not find a consistent space in recent scholarships, which tend to focus more on the single reformer when mentioning the reform

movements. Among the less recent contributions, the works of Sarma (1956), Natarajan (1959), and Heimsath (1964) are those that contain a broader analysis of the activities of these associations and their founders.

The Brahma Samaj (Brāhmo Samāj) was founded in Calcutta around 1828 by Raja Ram Mohan Roy (Rāja Rām Mohan Rāy 1772-1833), who is recognized as one of the greatest reformers of the nineteenth century. This association represented the first organized effort made by educated Indians to reform the Hindu social system, as its members did not support caste divisions; it played a significant role in spreading awareness about the necessity of reforming both the Hindu religion and society. On a social level, the abolition of the *satī* practice, the widow's immolation on her husband's pyre, was one of the main fights of Raja Ram Mohan Roy (Heimsath 1964, 12; Sarma 1956, 66; Natarajan 1959, 37). It was declared illegal and punishable in 1829. Sarma (1956, 66), in particular, mentioned that for the construction of his opposition against the *satī*, he engaged in a deep study of all the *smṛiti* texts, thus fighting the Hindu law by means of its own scriptures. Moreover, Ram Mohan Roy strongly supported the English education, which he considered the gateway to equality with Westerners, as Heimsath mentioned.

On a religious level, he condemned idolatry and supported a rationalistic theism by making selective use of the Hindu scriptures, implying a denial of the Vedas' infallibility (Copeland 1967, 202). Nevertheless, he advocated the importance of Vedas in unifying all religions. Caravaṇaṇ (2021, 62-63) highlighted that his main concern was the building and spreading of a monotheism based on the principle of a single and unique god devoid of any attributes, which should have been used as the basis for the construction of a national identity.¹³ This form of monotheistic religion, aiming at the unification of Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity, gained the favor of both the Mughals in Bengal, who awarded him with the epithet of "Rāja" ("king"), and the British, who appreciated his efforts to uniform India.¹⁴ The reform activities of Ram Mohan Roy made the emancipation of Indian women the first principle of the social reform movements in India. Among his Bengali followers, Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar (Īśbara Candra Bidyāsāgara 1820-1891) particularly focused on the crusade against child marriage¹⁵ and polygamy, besides the quest for widows' re-marriage¹⁶ and the improvement of women's conditions through education.¹⁷

¹³ In 1815, Ram Mohan Ray had already started the Atmiya Sabha ("Association related to soul"), which was strongly marked by contestation of the Christian concept of Trinity, to which it contrasted the concept of a single god (*ibidem*). The association became inactive in 1823.

¹⁴ See Caravaṇaṇ (2021, 58-105).

¹⁵ Child marriage was abolished only in 1929, when the Śārādā Act made marrying a girl below fourteen years and a boy below eighteen years illegal.

¹⁶ The measure enabling Hindu widows to marry was introduced in 1856.

¹⁷ See Heimsath (1964, 79-88).

Ramakrishna Paramahansa (Rāmakṛṣṇa Paramahansa 1834-1886) was another leading representative of Neo-Hinduism, who believed that all the world religions were only different ways to reach the same God. Sarma (1956, 125-147), who is the more detailed source of information about him – despite not being devoid of subjective impressions – described Ramakrishna as both a *bhakta* and a *jñānin*: although not holding much education or scholarship, he is portrayed as a true Hindu, a saint who had traversed all kind of *sādhanas*. His thought highly influenced his disciple Swami Vivekananda (Svāmi Vivekānanda, 1863-1902). As a result, Swami Vivekananda gave a distinctly religious and mystic imprint to the reform movements he initiated, which he named Ramakrishna Mission (Kolkata, 1897) and Ramakrishna Math (Belur, 1898), after his *guru*.

Swami Vivekananda became one of the most important spokesmen of Neo-Hinduism and the inspirer of Independence, which had to be gained through religion itself. Deeply influenced by Western sciences, his activities showed a mixture of social idealism and religious reformatory spirit. The two organizations he founded were deeply concerned with philanthropic activities. They emphasized the need to implement the educational program for the common people, assist the poor, remove the caste system and its discriminations, and respect women. In the religious context, Caravanṇ (2021) highlighted that while Ram Mohan Ray did not explicitly identify himself as a Hindu but rather tried to unify all religions under the principle of one God, Swami Vivekananda openly supported the Advaita Vedānta as the religion which includes all the other ones in a hierarchical inclusivism marked by universal tolerance. The theme of tolerance in Vivekananda was also investigated by Rigopoulos (2019), who pointed out the vision that the reformer had of Vedānta as the most sophisticated and ancient religion and, therefore, the essence of Hinduism and the mother of all the other religions. In this way, Swami Vivekananda bestowed Hinduism with the superiority that Hindus sought to prove. Rigopoulos also stressed that the kind of Vedānta he sought to spread was both a practical one, dedicated to caring and acting in favor of others, and a mystic one, which promised the attainment of the unity of the individual soul with God.

The thought of Vivekananda was broadly accepted in Madras Presidency, where his followers even financially supported his missionary campaigns (Natarajan 1959, 76). One of the reasons for this might have been his intervention in the racial discourse that had developed in the nineteenth century. Bergunder (2004, 61-62) mentioned his tendency to minimize the racial difference between Aryans and non-Aryans, namely Brahmins and non-Brahmins – the latter being called Śūdras by the Brahmins – which was preventing the mobilization of the common people. Although Vivekananda did not deny the invasion of the Aryans, he emphasized that they were a mixture of two races: a

Sanskrit-speaking one, making this language the father of the Aryan race, and a Tamil-speaking one, with Tamil as its mother.

The Prarthana Samaj (Prārthanā Samāj) was founded in Bombay in 1864 and was defined by Sarma (1956, 83) as an off-shoot of the Bengali Brahmo Samaj.¹⁸ Therefore, most of its remarkable reforms concerned an improvement of women's status in Indian society and the demise of caste. Among its members, Mahadev Govind Ranade (1842-1901) is described by Sarma as a man of massive intellect and saintly character. Both Sarma and Heimsath (1964, 105-8) highlighted that Ranade and the Prarthana Samaj, in general, did not advocate a new sect of Hinduism but rather aimed to continue the religious tradition of the Maharashtra saints, whom Ranade put in comparison with Luther and Calvin for the commonness of their aims.¹⁹ The reform, therefore, did not have to break with the past radically.

The Arya Samaj (Ārya Samāj) was founded in Bombay in 1875 by Swami Dayananda Sarasvati (Svāmī Dayānanda Sarasvatī, 1824-1883), who, unlike Ram Mohan Ray, insisted on the infallible authority of the Vedas and rejected all the religious principles which conflicted with it. As Heimsath (1964, 41) highlighted, the Arya Samaj aimed to purify Hindu beliefs and practices by establishing a new systematic creed based on a more rational interpretation of the Vedas with the lead of Western-educated secular leadership.

The movement he founded, thus, showed a fierce intolerance towards the conversions of Hindus to Christianity and Islam, and, in the wake of this, it was engaged in their reconversion to Hinduism. By doing so, the Arya Samaj carried out a proselytizing activity that was uncommon for Hinduism, thus being described by Sarma (1956, 104) as the “church militant in the Hindu fold”. The fights of the Arya Samaj were focused on reforming religion and its social implications in North India, as the use of the Hindi language in the writings and preaching of his founder and members showed.²⁰ Since it promoted a spirit of self-respect and self-reliance among the people, it had a crucial role in the emergence of national movements.

Concerning the social reforms, Sarma (1956), Natarajan (1959, 18), and Heimsath (1964) particularly highlighted the condemnation of untouchability, especially in its preventing people from

¹⁸ Even Heimsath (1964, 105) stressed this influence, for which Keshub Chandra Sen, a Brahmo Samajist, was the main responsible. Both the scholars mentioned that he visited Bombay in 1864, where he inspired the people with his missionary enthusiasm.

¹⁹ See Sarma (1956, 83-91).

²⁰ As Heimsath (1964, 116) mentioned, Dayanand preferred Hindi to secure a wide circulation of the works. The scholar also added (1964, 123) that Dayanand was advised to speak in Hindi during the meetings of the association, in order to gain a wider audience and avoid misunderstandings. See also Natarajan (1959, 72-3) about the program of national Hindi-medium education of Dayanand.

having direct access to God. The movement, thus, promoted equality and national education (Sarma 1956, 99).

In the Madras Presidency,²¹ the reform movements developed considerably later. This aspect was emphasized by Arooran (1976, 1-8), who provided different argumentations to justify its slow reaction when compared to the Bengali context. The first reason for the lack of initiatives till the first decade of the twentieth century has political connotations: Bengal had been under the sovereignty of the British since the second half of the eighteenth century, with Calcutta being chosen as their capital till 1911, hence being characterized by a more sophisticated urban lifestyle. This implied that the impact of the British rule was stronger in Bengal than in Madras, which became part of the British India from 1801. The second reason deals with economic matters: while Bengal had big commercial houses that led to industrialization and helped the newspaper industry, Madras Presidency was still depending on an agricultural system devoid of developed trades, a situation that was compounded by an under-developed transport system. The third reason deals with literacy: the fact that the first High School was started in 1841 and the first College organized from 1853 caused an educational backwardness which implied the lack of a decisive leadership. The fourth reason pointed out by Arooran deals with the religious composition of the Madras Presidency: as its population was mainly Hindu, it did not experience a real menace from Christian and Islamic encounters, thus not developing a discourse aimed at opposing them. Finally, the rigid caste system generally discouraged opposition to the authority: while in Bengal and Bombay the industrialization and more effective introduction of the English education had led to social mobility, in Madras, which did not witness such innovations, the gap between Brahmins and non-Brahmins was vast. It is not by chance that when social movements emerged in the Madras Presidency, they were mainly focused on the rivalry between these two categories of the society.

Nevertheless, Madras still witnessed some social reform queries during the nineteenth century, even if on a lower scale. Heimsath (1964, 109) has stressed that the few movements which emerged during the last decades of the nineteenth century were mainly initiated by members of Brahmo or Prarthana Samaj, with the latter having a more significant missionary impact.

Particularly significant was the activity of the Theosophical Society. As Sarma (1956, 113) pointed out, Colonel Olcott and Madame Blavatsky – namely, the President and Corresponding Secretary of the association – first arrived in Bombay, where they had contacts with the Arya Samaj, and then established their headquarters in Adyar, Madras, in 1882. As the Theosophists encouraged

²¹ The Madras Presidency, having Madras as its winter capital and Ooty as the summer one, included the whole Tamil Nadu, parts of Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Karnataka, Telangana, Odissa and the union territory of Lakshadvip.

the study of comparative religion, philosophy, and science, thus constituting an important bridge between the West and the East, their headquarters developed into a cultural center (Natarajan 1959, 78). Nevertheless, the society was usually associated with occultism, which represented their biggest weakness.²²

Moreover, as Irschick stressed (1969), the evaluation of the Brahmanical past of India filled with racial sentiments that the Theosophical Society carried out, especially under the lead of Annie Besant, aroused opposition among the non-Brahmans.²³

Even though the Western models highly influenced the developments and reforms occurring in the religious environment, religion kept on representing an aspect of indigenous culture that differed well from the foreigners' one. Therefore, it is not surprising that, in the context of nationalist fervor, it became an essential element to be recalled in delineating a national identity.²⁴ This is one of the reasons why it was necessary to emphasize the idea of a majority religion, which could accommodate within itself as many traditions as possible, and unify them under a single voice. In this context, many political parties started using religion as their emblem. It is not surprising, therefore, that Neo-Hinduism was a founding element during the first phase of the development of national independence movements.

1.2 The political awakening: pan-Indian and regional forms of nationalism

The social impact of the British policies in India was fundamental in awakening political consciousness, starting from the lower castes. Aloysius (1997) extensively talked about their agitations and revolts occurring everywhere in the Subcontinent, highlighting their different aims: peasants asked for an equal distribution of powers in religious, educational, administrative, and economic realms; the untouchables urged to escape the hierarchical religious and cultural framework they were crushed by and acquire a new and recognized identity and role in society, namely gain political democracy or citizenship; tribals aimed to assert their territory-related identity and the quest for autonomy. As the scholar emphasized on many occasions, although these forms of opposition never developed into unified protest movements, the mass emergence significantly impacted the British rulers, as it was the key for them to acknowledge the need for an intervention to ensure the

²² See Sarma (1956, 112-124).

²³ See Irschick (1969, 26-44).

²⁴ Even then, the same changes that were made to modify Hinduism and make it modern continued to be a reflection of European perceptions and notions, their concept of natural religion, and their interpretations of Sanskrit texts. The reformers themselves were none other than members of that new class of English-educated Indians, whose knowledge was therefore based on works and translations authorized or made by Western scholars (Viswanathan 2003).

continuance of their regime, whose political power had been weakened by granting administrative power to their upper caste allies. This implied guaranteeing partial support to the lower castes in their claims for equal opportunities and the downsizing of the powers they had conceded to the upper castes. In short, they were gradually forced to abandon the non-interference policy, even in the wake of the social reforms occurring in some areas of the Rāj.

Thus, new measures were taken with this aim: the prohibition of the employment of more than one family member in the same government department in Madras Presidency in 1851; the abolition of the patronage system of employment (1853), the opening of mass education in 1854; the replacement of the caste-based Gentoo Code of 1776 with a new criminal law in 1861, thus marking the end of Brahminic pre-eminence in juridical matters; and the acknowledgment of the vernacular education priority in 1870 (Aloysius 1997, 116). When they saw that their privileged position in the socio-political order was being threatened by the patronage granted to the lower castes, Brahmins started harboring anti-colonial sentiments.

The situation was further compounded by the attacks that they received in the religious domain: despite adopting the non-interference strategy even when religion was concerned, in their attempts to modernize the Indian society the British had to introduce some of the measures that were incited by the nineteenth-century socio-religious reformists and which were perceived by most Brahmins as a threat to their sacred monopoly. Some of them are mentioned by Aloysius (1997, 108): the abolition of the *sati* practice in 1829; the abolition of the thuggee practices in the 1830s; and the passing of the Caste Disabilities Removal or Lex Loci Act in 1850, which abolished the laws affecting conversion rights. Moreover, European missionaries similarly represented a danger for the Brahminic dominance, as Christianity had always vehemently condemned the hierarchical social order of Indian society, considered archaic and brutal, thus challenging the sacred role of Brahmins.²⁵ Although missionary activities started centuries before and were all along independent from the Rāj, the idea of their conspiracy spread when the British introduced the socio-religious reform. The fear of this collusion meant to eradicate the Hindu religion was enforced by the fact that missionaries had meanwhile opened schools opened to women and lower castes in the hope that deeper knowledge and understanding of Christian scriptures and theology would have led to the Hindus' conversion.

As a reaction to the dangers to their socio-political and religious dominance, nationalist sentiments arose among Brahmins, which were thus essentially dependent on their interest in perpetuating their traditional socio-religious hierarchy within the society. In this phase of

²⁵ It's not by chance that the mass conversion of the nineteenth century mostly meant the conversion to various forms of Christianity.

confrontation with the British, previously mostly appreciated as the ones who had brought modernity and modernization in India, they were now perceived and depicted as a threat to their culture and traditions.

Aloysius (1997) emphasized that while both the lower castes and the upper castes wished for the downsizing of the foreign power, thus animating different forms of nationalist awakening, their aims were different and leaned in opposite directions: the lower castes wanted to move forward a homogeneous distribution of power, which had been exacerbated by the power legitimacy given to the upper castes; the upper castes, on the other hand, intended to head back to the traditional hierarchical order of society, which they meant to perpetuate.

The scholar also highlighted that what differentiated the nationalist movement of the upper castes during the nineteenth century from the earlier anti-colonialism discontent and protests was its claim to stand for the interests of Indians as a whole, thus characterizing itself as a pan-Indian phenomenon with national demands. While it is possible to state that the nationalist movement was pan-Indian in reference to its spread all over the Subcontinent, as it was articulated by a homogeneous group sharing the same political, economic, social, and religious interests, the commonality of the goals they talked about was, indeed, shared only by the elites. Thus, what they preached to be all-India interests were the interests of a single spectrum of Indian society that, in fact, represented the main reason for social division. Nationalists did not take on the lower castes' needs and aspirations, as they were in stark contrast with their own.²⁶

Another form of anticolonial sentiment in India came from regional groups, which developed into regional nationalist movements. What was shared by all the regional forms of nationalism was the notion that a nation was defined by a shared language, culture, race, territoriality, and history. In the context of the regional communities, protecting one's ethnic group often meant antagonizing the spread of Brahminic dominance. In such cases, the masses and regional forms of nationalism, despite having developed from different struggles and despite aiming at various achievements – social egalitarianism on the one hand and self-determination as a distinct ethnicity on the other – overlapped on an ideological level, marked by anti-Brahminic sentiments. Moreover, as in regional contexts the interpretation of the nation as a geographically circumscribed territory implied a sub-territorial loyalty, it was generally perceived as a threat to the all-India unity.²⁷

²⁶ The pan-Indian nationalist movement found political expression in the Indian National Congress, founded in 1885. It became the principal leader of the Independence movement, especially after 1920, under the leadership of Gandhi.

²⁷ Despite regional nationalist movements did not prevent the realization of an all-India unity, which was symbolized by the attaining of Independence in 1947, in some cases the phenomenon of regionalism challenged that unity during the post-Independence with the development of secessionist tendencies and demands. See Sanmathi Kumar, "Regionalism vs

The severe gap between the conditions of Brahmins and non-Brahmins occurring in the Madras Presidency was the main responsible for the development of a regional form of nationalism there. Irschick (1986) highlighted that when the British Rāj was established in India, the new rulers had to deal with a complex culture, especially on social terms, of which they had little and confused knowledge. For them to administer the new territory, there was an urgent need to have a clearer understanding of its social mechanism. The census was a strategy they adopted for this aim: categorizing the society consented them to have deeper control over it by figuring out its structure and intrinsic power distribution. Census allowed them to identify both communities that needed to be restrained for representing possible threats in the stabilization of their power and indigenous dependent allies to whom they could distribute the power for the management of the other groups by granting them government jobs and a position in the educational system. Moreover, the census was a useful measure for a report on the conformation of the territory and its lands, with the subsequent introduction of taxes and other administrative practices.

Irschick (1986, 24) also emphasized that by classifying the society hierarchically on an administrative level, the British exacerbated the social diversity of the Subcontinent and transformed castes into political categories. In particular, he mentioned the transformation occurring in the lists of population categories of the administrative papers from 1870 to the 1880s, when they were reduced to the simple dichotomy of Brahman and non-Brahman.

The struggle for power against Brahmins was particularly felt in the Tamil-speaking area – which in the nineteenth century comprehended eleven administrative divisions of the Madras Presidency –, where they represented the two larger groups of society, together with the untouchables. Here the discontent of the non-Brahmin upper castes towards the Brahmin group’s dominance in the social and religious environment was not new.²⁸ Nevertheless, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it crossed over those domains and affected even the economic and political ones.

The most relevant opponents of Brahmins were the Velalars, a Tamil Nadu rural caste usually involved in trade and commerce, besides being employed as revenue collectors. Irschick (1969, 7) highlighted how the social mobility favored by the land tenure measures introduced under the British rule had brought to their emergence as important landholders, who were now challenging the hierarchical distribution of economic power. Moreover, while till the beginning of the twentieth century Brahmins had held the highest positions in politics and the legal and teaching professions as

Nationalism in India”, in: *International Journal of humanities & Social Science Studies*, Volume III, issue V, March 2017, 120-128.

²⁸ Just think of what happened in monastery complexes like the Thiruvavaduthurai Adhinam, where the establishment of a non-Brahmin lineage of priests was a strategy to displace Brahmins leadership in the religious domain.

the primary recipients of the new education system, when the non-Brahmin castes benefited from a rise in literacy, the new educational advance brought them to aspire to administrative jobs. Seeing the chance to access it as more realistic, Velalars started to oppose Brahmins' almost exclusive dominance in the political sphere.

The British regime period was characterized by ambivalent confrontation for Tamil people, continuously oscillating between the admiration of some missionaries and scholars and the general criticism of British rulers in their collaboration with Brahmins, which ranged between linguistic, social, racial, and religious discourses.

Thus, it is not surprising that the nationalist movement which developed in the Tamil-speaking area was animated by both anticolonial and anti-Brahmin sentiments.

Tamil nationalism expressed itself in different ways during its history, being shaped and reshaped according to the changing needs and demands of Tamil people. Unlike what happened on the pan-Indian front, where political awakening was the first factor that characterized the nationalist sentiments, in Tamil Nadu, nationalism initially arose as a reaction to the cultural denigration that its people suffered from both foreigners and Brahmins. Therefore, it developed from racial discourse and, in the first phase of its development, it was mainly focused on a reevaluation of Tamil language as a symbol of the Dravidian culture and on a reform of religion itself.

Indeed, it was only in a second moment that Tamil nationalism assumed more formal and political connotation and identity, with the spread of associations talking about the need to construct a non-Brahmin political consciousness²⁹ and the formation of socio-political organizations like the Justice Party³⁰ and its release of the *Non-Brahmin Manifesto*.³¹ The role of journals and magazines

²⁹ The Madras Dravidian Association (formerly Madras Non-Brahmin Association), started in 1912 by the two government functionaries M. Purushotham Naidu e P. Subramanyam, was the spokesman of the non-Brahmin needs and the promoter of the construction of a non-Brahmin political consciousness, thus representing a predecessor of the Justice Party.

³⁰ The political agenda of the Justice Party, which came to power in 1920, stood in opposition to that of the Congress and comprehended several legislations aimed to enlarge the role of the non-Brahminic castes and ensure them a more suitable representation in public life. Some of their arguments concerned civil marriages, franchise for women, Hindu religious endowment, and the reduction of educational fees for Muslims. Its anti-Brahmanical ideas were partly shaped by the Śaivasiddhānta movement, as Maraimalai Adigal represented a great inspiration to them.

³¹ The South Indian Liberal Federation, called Justice Party afterwards, was a political party which opposed the Indian National Congress, mainly aiming at the abolition of castes and the ending of Brahmin preeminence in government and educational jobs. Started by T. M. Nair e P. Theagaraya Chetty in 1916, in that same year the party issued a document known as *The Non-Brahmin Manifesto*, which is considered to be the non-Brahmins *Magna Carta*. The *Manifesto* examined the conditions of such social group and indicated the directions for their progress, inviting them to join in the struggle against the domination of the Brahmins for their retaliation in politics, education, and society. The document showed a kind of tolerance towards British hegemony, for which they also provided a justification: if the non-Brahmins had obtained enough economic power and educational skills, they could free themselves from the yoke of both the British and the Brahmins. The central government, on the other hand, was dealing with the growing power of the Indian National Congress, born to challenge the British Rāj. In such a context, it started supporting the non-Brahmin organizations in their effort to limit their old allies' influence. The Justice Party was one of those.

founded with the aim to inform the people about the need to spread education in the struggle against Brahmins monopoly in social and political life was fundamental for this and the subsequent developments. Despite being focused on reviving Buddhism, one of the first and most influential weekly magazines in the fight against the caste system was the *Tamiḷan* (formerly *Oru Paicā Tamiḷan*), founded by Iyothē Thass Pandithar, (Ayōttitācar, 1845-1914) in 1907 and released until his death. The *Tamiḷan* spread the concepts of social emancipation, rationalism, anti-Brahmanism, nationalism, and modern politics, carrying out the emergency of the new Tamil-Dravidian identity (Dickens 2017).³²

Finally, from the late 1920s, Tamil nationalism lived a more rationalistic and radical iconoclastic phase marked by the activities of Periyar (Periyār, 1879-1973) and his Self-Respect Movement, which initiated the Dravidian movement properly called, followed by the establishment of the Dravida Kazhagam (Tirāvida Kaḷakam).³³ What distinguished this phase from the previous ones of religious, cultural, and political awakening was the significant participation it received from the people. The Dravidian movement of the 1930s and 1940s became a pervasive mass movement, gaining the support that not even the Justice Party could rely on. The major developments of this phase were the anti-Hindi protests³⁴ and the emphasis on the reinterpretation of the Aryan migration theory.³⁵

It is the first phase of Tamil nationalism that will be taken into account, during which both language and religion were the main focus of the nationalists.

Literature was the common means for supporting both causes by conveying the ethnic discourse. Linguistic, socio-political, and religious movements of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries made of the literary tradition perhaps the primary means to strengthen and rework the concept of ethnicity, to express it, and support the priestly authority of the Dravidian population.³⁶ In the nineteenth century, therefore, a large number of Tamil texts of epic, moral, and religious literature,

³² Iyothē Thass was a central figure for the social and religious awakening of both Dalits and Buddhists. In 1898 he established the *Tēṇṇintiya Cākkiya Pautta Caṅkam* (“South India Buddhist Association”), an organization aiming at inaugurating a new and regional Buddhism, depicted as the religion of Tamil Dalits, despite adopting and adapting the Tamil Śaiva concept of compassion, *cīvakāruṇya*, which in those same ages characterized one of the focal points of Ramalinga Adigal doctrine. See Raman (2022, 112-116) and Bergunder (2004, 67-75).

³³ In the light of its complex history, the Tamil nationalism has been subjected to different interpretations. See Vaitees (2015, 5-12) and Aloysius (1997).

³⁴ See Ramasamy (2005) and Arooran (1976, 217-255).

³⁵ See Bergunder (2004, 80-84).

³⁶ A process that Pandian (1997, 546) called *ri-ethnogenesis*.

before the Christian era and until then preserved on palm leaves, started to be printed and became accessible to a more significant number of people, leading to what is referred as Tamil Renaissance.³⁷

Arooran (1976, 23) highlighted that the availability of these texts, many of which belonged to the Cankam literature, stimulated new interest in Tamil literature and language, which coincided with attempts to rediscover and re-evaluate the origins of Tamil civilization. The literary, linguistic, and racial discourses, thus, started overlapping. It is important to note that while Irschick (1969) considered Tamil Renaissance and the non-Brahmin movement as separate phenomena, Arooran (1976), emphasized their relationship and, in particular, the role of Tamil Renaissance to the origin and development of Dravidian nationalism, as it encouraged the view of a national identity for Tamil-speaking people.

1.3 The revival of Tamil language and Śaivasiddhānta

Whether it is the awareness of having a common language that gives birth to nationalist sentiment or it is the growth of nationalist sentiment that endows a language with political importance, especially that spoken by social and intellectual élites, has long been a subject of controversy. Nevertheless, the two statements are not mutually exclusive.

From a historical point of view, language has been an essential constituent element of nations: the national sentiment, based on a shared cultural heritage, a common history, and a common ancestry, is expressed in a distinct language, and it is through that particular language that it is generalized to become an essential factor in social cohesion (Safran 1999). The link between language and nation is exemplified by the fact that language has often been invoked as a unifying and defensive factor in cases where threats to national identity are perceived, and we can clearly see how this applies to India too.

In regional environments, such as the Tamil Nadu of the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries, the concept of nation was strongly linked to the sense of commonness, which is first of all found in the communication through the same idiom. Moreover, if we consider that the attention which was given to languages' historicization and confrontation processes in that period led to the interpretation of a language as the essence of a people's culture, it is possible to state that the awareness of a common language was undoubtedly indispensable for the rise of national sentiment.

³⁷ Ebeling (2009) pointed out the role of the College of Fort St. George in the changes occurring in the linguistic and literary domains.

After the discovery of Sir William Jones, Sanskrit gained the keen interest of Orientalists as the most ancient language of the Indo-Aryan family and the sacred language of the Brahmins; in this context, systematic processes of historicization, standardization, and classification of the Indian languages occurred, causing frictions within the society.

Racial sentiments further compounded the social intolerance between the two groups of Brahmins and non-Brahmins with the spread of the Aryan migration and race theory. Dirks (2001, 142-3) highlighted that British writers even made use of this theory to support the idea of the inferiority of the Dravidians. In particular, he mentioned Henry Maine and Meadows Taylor, who emphasized the barbarity and superstition of the early Dravidians, accused of having destroyed the purity of the Aryan society, and James Fergusson and R. H. Patterson, who advocated the caste system, which had made Brahmins and the other upper-castes more progressive by preventing the intermarriage between Aryans and non-Aryans.

Ramaswamy (1997, 36-7) underlined that the designation of Sanskrit as a classical language implied its superior and more complex capacity of expression, arousing a general discontent among the people whose mother tongue was classified as vernacular despite having a long history and a rich literary production. This is particularly true for the Tamil speakers, who, as a result, developed a vehement attachment to their language and struggled to uplift its status. Categorizing Tamil, a Dravidian language, as a vernacular meant acknowledging its inability to express complex and abstract concepts, thus implying a condition of cultural, moral, and social inferiority of their speakers. This different categorization of Sanskrit and Tamil also carried racial nuance, as we read in Ramaswamy (1997, 14):

Thus Tamil's devotees waged their battles on a colonial (and colonized) terrain where Sanskrit loomed loftily as a “classical” tongue, and Tamil was reduced to a mere “vernacular”; where Sanskrit was the language of the “fair” and “noble” Aryans, Tamil the tongue of the “menial” and “dark-skinned” Dravidians.

The acknowledgment of Tamil as a classical language was and remained one of the main goals of Tamil nationalism throughout its history, besides the aim to transform it into the language of politics and education.³⁸ The vernacular nature assigned to Tamil instilled the idea of a phase of

³⁸ Contemporary scholarship distinguishes three phases in the history of this language: Old Tamil, comprising the earliest developments till 1000 AD, and further split into the three stages of Early Old Tamil, Middle Old Tamil, and Late Old Tamil; Middle Tamil, from 1000 to 1900 A.D.; and Modern Tamil, from the nineteenth century onwards.

language decline, besides the need for measures to prevent its complete degeneration. It led to two main consequences.

On the one hand, it caused an amplification of the aversion to the *vaṭamoli* (“Northern language”, namely Sanskrit): the corrupted state in which Tamil was considered to dwell was attributed to the influences of other Indian languages on it, especially Sanskrit.

During the first millennium B.C., Sanskrit was used exclusively for ritual purposes in connection with the liturgy of sacred texts and systems of knowledge associated with it, such as grammar. This condition of being an exclusive language, almost inaccessible, defined by Pollock (2006, 39) as “sacerdotal isolation”, began to change starting from the first centuries of the first millennium A.D., when the limits of its ritual dominion crumbled: Sanskrit asserted itself as a language of power through its use in the inscriptions of the ruling dynasties, and its dominance was also imposed on the discursive or literary level, with the flourishing of the *kāvya* (“ornate poetry”) genre. These connotations were enforced during the Pallava, Chola, and Pandya dynasties of the Middle Ages, where the hegemony of Sanskrit in the linguistic, literary, political, and ritualistic spheres was total. In fact, in the area of our concern, a Sanskritization of Tamil language occurred, together with the diffusion of Brahminic models of power and worship. The result of its ancestral consideration as a language of excellence is its dominance in the academic field, even in contemporary India.

As in the nineteenth-century languages were seen as the emblem and essence of a people, praising Sanskrit meant praising the Brahminic culture; thus, it exacerbated the already existing anti-Brahmin sentiments.

On the other hand, it led the Tamils to enhance their cultural heritage, starting with the language as a defense mechanism. Before the nineteenth century, Tamil was considered by its native speakers as a means through which they could dispose of the divine powers it was impregnated with. Despite this devotional function, however, there was no literature production centered on it and its role. The nineteenth-century Tamil Nadu saw instead the rise of a narrative that encouraged the Tamils to restore the honor of their language, acquire a new awareness of it, and free it from its corruption.

Ramaswamy (1997, 6) highlighted that in this context, the concept of *tamilpparru*, “Tamil devotion”, emerged, implying feelings of adherence, support, and devotion to their mother tongue. This unconditional love, triggered by the historical, political, and social changes linked to Colonialism, was moreover encouraged by the birth and diffusion of new literary genres, newspapers, and magazines, results of the press revolution, and developed together with the rising state

nationalism. While previously Tamil was praised for its ability to exercise control over divinities and their powers, from the nineteenth century onwards, it was mainly valued as an instrument of communication between people, citizens' education, and the ruling of the people. It kept its salvific function, but for a different reason: as it is the essence of the Tamil people, their birth and maintenance depended on it. Ramaswami also pointed out that, according to this new interpretation, the native speakers need to nourish the bond with it as an inviolable one: Tamil became a tangible and personal asset that needed to be preserved since the future of the Tamil community depended on its transmission from generation to generation.³⁹

Moreover, the movements of national pride and their effort for the re-appropriation of indigenous traditions starting from the language, which affected the entire Indian Subcontinent in the nineteenth century, have resulted in the birth of a process of personification of the language and, moreover, to the association of the mother tongue with the figure of the mother, providing its speakers with the tools to live and interact with others. Thus, in the second half of the nineteenth century, when the *tamilpparru* had already developed, the new concept of *Tamiḷttāy* ("Mother Tamil") spread, where Tamil is a mother who has given birth to her devotees and who nourishes and feed them (Ramaswamy 1997, 17).⁴⁰ Soon a rich imaginary of the mother Tamil covered with wounds for the corrupted state of the language developed: it was the duty of her devotees to take care of it and save it. This included the activities to purify it from other languages' influences. Moreover, by taking care of her, the native speakers would have saved their entire community, as the body of the *Tamiḷttāy* was none other than their own land.

Moreover, the new awareness of the value of Tamil led to the rise of linguistic-purity movements aiming to eradicate all the other languages' impact on it, especially Sanskrit as representative of Brahmin culture and power. Sanskrit, indeed, was not the only language that had somehow changed the lexicon and syntax of Tamil. The Madras Presidency of the early nineteenth century had two of its peculiar characteristics in multilingualism and multi-ethnicity, which resulted

³⁹ In the most extreme form of *tamilpparru*, all the members of such a community must be willing to sacrifice themselves for its preservation, as not even life is considered too high a price for the cause of Tamil, as we read in Ramaswamy (1997, 6): "Body, life, self: all these dissolves into Tamil. Devotion to Tamil, service to Tamil, the sacrifice of wealth and spirit to Tamil: these are the demands of *tamilpparru* at its radical best".

⁴⁰ The concept of *Tamiḷttāy*, which got strengthened through the literature production of the century, became even more complex. It came to imply a personification of Tamil not only as a mother, but even as a queen and a goddess, to whom songs are poems are written. A peculiar example of this is the *Maṇḍḥmanḍyam*, a hymn written by Sundaram Pillai in 1891 calling for unity on the basis of language. The hymn represented an important innovation: while until that moment authors used to invoke deities at the beginning of their works, this was the first composition where an invocation to the language was made. In particular, he compared Tamil with the "eternal God", thus being a superior living language (Kailasapathy 1979, 26). In 1970 the hymn was recognized as the State anthem of Tamil Nadu in its official version known as *Tamiḷttāy vāḷttu*, "Invocation to mother Tamil".

in the development of new linguistic registers, in which Tamil was clearly influenced by languages such as Arabic, Farsi, Urdu, Telugu, and Kannada, as well as Portuguese, German, and English (Ramaswamy 1998). Ebeling (2010, 13-14; 26) pointed out that it is possible to speak of several Tamil idioms on the basis of the specific linguistic influence affecting them. In such an environment, the choice of a particular variation of written Tamil was determined and justified by the message or concept intended to be expressed. Thus, for example, Sanskritized Tamil was preferred in conveying concepts of Western origin, while the new modern Tamil, which emerged as a consequence of contact with English speakers, was more suitable for Western-style administration and education.

Finding a way to recover Tamil language and restore it to its former glory was necessary. The development of classicism and the revival of religion were two strategies adopted with this aim and can be thus seen as two tendencies through which *tamilpparru* expressed itself.

While during an early phase classicists aimed to prove a condition of equality between Tamil and Sanskrit, during the first decades of the twentieth century, the primary approach was asserting Tamil superiority in terms of both antiquity and complexity, stating its eternal nature. This justified the proliferation of theories and works that supported the antiquity of Tamil language and literature and, above all, its Independence from Sanskrit, which has its highest achievement with the works of Caldwell. In fact, the activity and writings of missionaries praising Tamil language, culture, and religion, play an important role in the emergence of Tamils' attempt to re-evaluate and enhance their culture and language, serving as supporting sources.⁴¹

The writings of missionaries advocating Tamil culture played a crucial role in advocating the value of Tamil language and culture, thus having great circulation. This also led to a new re-evaluation of the works of Europeans who had studied and written Tamil language during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, especially those of Beschi.

Constanzo Beschi (1680-1747) wrote grammars of different registers of Tamil language, dictionaries, and poems. The *Tēmpāvāṇi* (“The Unfading Garland” or “The Jewel of Sweet Poems”), an epic poem on the life of Saint Joseph, is considered to be his masterpiece.⁴² Trento (2022, 155) highlighted the aim of this text to provide a local model of Catholic kingship by representing a European king, Leopold I of Austria, as a Tamil king, thus displaying Beschi’s attempt to gain political influence.

⁴¹ Manonmaniyam P. Sundaram Pillai, who participated in the Orientalist debates and borrowed many of the ideas of missionaries like Caldwell and G.U.Pope, was the first intellectual to make use of their contributions.

⁴² For a detailed analysis of this work, its features, and reception see the recent work of Trento (2022). See also Zvebil (1974).

Ebeling and Trento (2018) highlighted that Beschi showed such a mastery of Tamil to be recognized as a *pulavar*, a poet-scholar known by the name of Vīramāmuṇivar, the “great heroic sage”. Nevertheless, as Trento mentioned (2022, 173), there was a stream of scholars that questioned Beschi’s authorship of the works attributed to him, including the *Tēmpāvaṇi*. Arunachalam was one of them, ascribing his works to the poet Cupratīpakkavirāyar, whom Beschi took as his teacher and patron, especially for the courtly character of the language. Moreover, mentioning the release of a work in the name of one’s patron as a common practice since past centuries,⁴³ Arunachalam (1974, 277) firmly stated that the sophistication of thought emerging from his alleged works could only be a product of Cupratīpakkavirāyar’s mind, whom he refers to as a genius, being it inaccessible even to Tamil scholars of average intelligence. Thus, in his view, the role of Beschi was merely suggesting the books to his teacher and issuing them in his name due to Cupratīpakkavirāyar blindness and infirmity.

Although the authorship of his works has been questioned, during the nineteenth century, they became a particular object of interest to other missionaries, as well as to South Indian intellectuals and colonial administrators, for their power in encouraging to explore the Tamil culture and appreciate its language, which led to their printing by the end of the century. Meanwhile, Beschi was recognized as a pioneer philologist by the European Orientalists, who had an essential role in interpreting Tamil literature and explaining Tamil language (Ebeling & Trento 2018).

Particularly influential for the development of nationalist movements were the works of Caldwell and Pope, praising Tamil culture and dealing with racial and religious discourses, which represented an important basis for the development of nationalist movements.

The Scottish missionary Robert Caldwell (1819-1891) became particularly influential in Madras, where he arrived in 1839.⁴⁴ He had a crucial impact on Tamil scholars, starting a pervasive circulation of notions that would have led to the delineation of Dravidian ideology, which will be the starting point of all the articulation of its political, social, and linguistic expressions, including the *Tanittamil Iyakkam* (“Pure Tamil Movement”), the Justice Party, and the Self-Respect Movement of the early twentieth century.

Dirks (2001,141) underlined that the strong antipathy of Caldwell to caste, which he considered to be the primary enemy of conversion, was perceived mainly as anti-Brahmanism. In *A Comparative Grammar of Dravidian or South Indian Family of Languages*, he formulated the theory

⁴³ It was indeed a practice in use even during the nineteenth century. We know, for example, that even Comacuntara Nayakar published some books under the name of his disciples (Vaithees 2015, 45).

⁴⁴ As a symbol of such influence, in 1968 his statue was erected in Marina Beach in Madras, to honor his role as a Dravidian linguistic pioneer.

of the independent origins of the pure, non-Brahmin, South Indian culture as well as the first philosophical analysis of the linguistic affinities among the South Indian languages. He considered the name Brahmin as a synonym for Aryan – and so did other scholars after him – and condemned the Brahmins’ imposition of the name Śūdra on the Tamil natives while supporting their literary, cultural, and social superiority: their culture had a separate and independent existence before the Brahmins invaded Southern India.⁴⁵

Caldwell (1875, 51) not only denied an origin from Sanskrit of the Dravidian languages,⁴⁶ but he also argued that Sanskrit had been spread in Southern India by the Aryan settlers along with a particular type of religiosity which involved idol worship that contaminated them. Dirks (2001, 143) also pointed out that Caldwell’s praise of ancient Tamil – which the missionary considered higher than the contemporary one as it was less affected by Sanskrit – was one of the reasons for his influence in Madras.

Unlike the attitude towards Beschi’s contributions, Arunachalam (1974, 278) recognized G.U. Pope (1820-1907) as the first foreigner who made attempts to deeply understand the Tamil sensibility in terms of ethics, poetry, and devotion. Pope authored Tamil dictionaries and grammars and gained huge esteem from his contemporaries for his translations of critical Tamil works on different topics. Among them particularly significant were: the translation of the *Tiruvācakam* of Māṇikkavācakar (1900), the translation of the *Tirukkural* of Tiruvaḷḷuvanāyaṅār (1886), considered one of the greatest works ever written on ethics and morality containing aphoristic teachings on virtue, wealth, and love; and the translation of the *Nālaṭiyār* (1893), a didactic work written by Jain monks.

As Vaithees pointed out (2015, 35), Pope was one of the earliest advocates of Tamil Śaivism, which he defined as the guardian of Tamil language. In particular, Pope considered Tamil Śaivism a synonym for Tamil Śaivasiddhānta,⁴⁷ which he thought to be the most elaborate religion of South India, a product of Dravidian intellect existing since prehistory, thus preceding the Aryans. He insisted on the commonality of values between Śaivasiddhānta and Christianity, which justified his evaluation of the Śaiva faith and, in particular, of the contributions of poets and saints like Umāpati

⁴⁵ Dirks (1996, 272; 2001, 140) stressed Caldwell’s belief that Brahmins made the Dravidians accept the appellation as Śūdra by persuading them it represented a title of honor.

⁴⁶ Caldwell coined the word “Dravidian” to refer to that culture and its different languages on the basis of the term *drāviḍa* by which ancient Sanskrit literature referred to the population of that area of the Subcontinent.

⁴⁷ The strict identification of Tamil Śaivism with the specific Śaivasiddhānta tradition was a development of the nineteenth century, whose foundations is to be searched in the missionaries works, which praised this tradition as the most sophisticated one. Tamil nationalists resented a lot of their influence about this, to the extent that even in their agenda the Viraśaiva and Smārta tradition, representing the other two main Śaiva currents, were disregarded.

and Māṇikkavācakar, but which he also used as a pretext in his proselytizing mission to convince Śaivas to convert.⁴⁸

Although missionaries were active in South India, among other territories, since the sixteenth century, it was only two centuries later that they started to get a more organizational form: by the beginning of the nineteenth century, in the wake of the Evangelical Revival, which was occurring in the West, they had formed a total of five associations⁴⁹ involved in proselytizing activities like holding seminars, the establishment of educational institutions, and the spread of printed Christian material.

When the number of converts among the Hindus began to increase during the first half of the century, the Madras Presidency⁵⁰ saw both the rise of associations – like the Hindu Literary Society (the 1830s) and the Sadur Veda Siddhanta Sabha –, which had the aim to contain it and prevent further devotees' loss,⁵¹ and the starting of new journals – like the *Crescent*,⁵² which was also involved in opposing and criticizing the colonial politics.

These developments suggest that in the early stage of religious revival, Tamil Nadu registered a phase of Neo-Hindu fervor disconnected from the enhancement of a specific sect but rather focused on making a common front against the spread of Christianity.

Nevertheless, by the end of the nineteenth century, while in the rest of India the intellectuals emphasized the tradition of Advaita Vedānta as the unifying tradition of all the religious systems, Tamils refused to give support to traditions based strictly on the Sanskrit scriptures and instead promoted the Śaivasiddhānta as the Tamil religion, of which the non-Brahmins or Velalar were the protectors (Bergunder 2004, 76). It was thus imbued with racial and political meanings, serving as one of the bases of Tamil nationalism.

While language can be seen as the matrix of the discourses about national unity and identity, it was in religion and from religion that nationalists in Tamil Nadu sought a path to unify the people and react to the threats moved against their culture during the very first phase of its developments. Dirks (2001, 142) mentioned that nationalist leaders like Dayananda Saraswati, Vivekananda,

⁴⁸ See G.U.Pope, “Manicka Vachakar’s Morning Hymn”, in: *The Siddhanta Deepika*, June 1897, Vol.1, no.1, 11.

⁴⁹ Namely Propagation of Gospel, London Missionary Society, Church Missionary Society, Wesleyan Mission, and the Free Church Mission of Scotland (Suntharalingam 1980, 33).

⁵⁰ Madras, Tinnevely, and Travancore were the cities which were the most involved in the opposition to missionaries, while in the rural areas there was not considerable organization.

⁵¹ These associations counted both Brahmins and non-Brahmins among their members, as well as various Dravidian communities. One of the strategies they adopted in their fight against missionaries was starting schools. The High School of the Madras University (1841) was one of these (Suntharalingam 1980, 36).

⁵² Founded in Madras in 1844 by Kasulu Latchuminaracu Chetti, it was the first newspaper owned by an Indian. He later founded the Madras Native Association (1852), which was one of the earliest Indian political associations, venting for Indians rights.

Ranade, and Annie Besant used “Aryan” less as a racial term than as a gloss for ancient Indian religious tradition, urging that the Aryan faith, which had united the north and the south in ancient times, be used once more to bring India together.

On the wake of the momentum that Śaivism gained from the end of the nineteenth century, a new interpretation of Śaivism as the authentic and monolithic religion of Dravidians, which culminated in the *Meykaṇṭa Cāttiraṅkal*,⁵³ emerged, having its highest and more sophisticated expression in the Śaivasiddhānta tradition.

The position of prominence which was given to Śaivasiddhānta in the context of national awakening in Tamil Nadu was the final result of different historical developments, both internal and transnational. Its being deeply entangled with linguistic, social, and racial discourses was what transformed it into an important marker of Tamil identity, carrying both anticolonial and anti-Brahmin implications.

The Neo-Śaiva reformers, who were primarily Velalars or other non-Brahmins castes, spread a different interpretation of prehistory in opposition to the Aryan migration theory, which would have established the superiority of Tamil religion, culture, and language, of which the Velalar were the rightful protectors.⁵⁴

According to their version of history, Tamils are the direct descendants of the Dravidians, the original inhabitants of the Indian Subcontinent, whose religion was not a primitive animism, as their opponents claimed, but the sophisticated and monotheistic Śaiva religion, and whose language was already existing long before the arrival of the Aryan-Brahmins. When they invaded their territory in the fifth century B.C., they brought social and religious changes that led to the decline of Tamil society, culture, and religiosity,⁵⁵ such as the establishment of the caste system and the imposition of the term Śūdra in reference to all the Dravidian people. In Ramasamy’s words (2009, 6):

Thus the Aryans (Brahmins) who came to the Tamil land were well received by the kings and people in general and granted lands and wealth to settle down here. But in return they introduced the caste system, which was till then

⁵³ This concept, implying that Umāpati Civācāriyār (fourteenth century), the last author of the Tamil canon, represented the culmination of the pre-modern Śaiva tradition, had as a consequence a general disregard towards the sectarian traditions within Tamil Śaivism, thus towards the literary production and activity of authors who lived during the late Medieval ages and who were exponent of other form of Śaiva faith, namely the Vīraśaiva, the Smārta, and the Śivādvaita. See Steinschneider (2016) and Fisher (2017).

⁵⁴ This does not mean that there has not been the emergence of reinterpretations of history outside the religious domain. In fact, other social reformers who had no specific link with or interest for the revival of local religious traditions proposed a different version to the Aryan migration theory. One of the earliest was Jyotirao Govindrao Phule (1827-1890). See Bergunder (2004, 62-67).

⁵⁵ In the context of religious changes, Tamil Nadu intellectuals rejected the notion that the Dravidians adoption of Vedic religion meant copying it. It, instead, was a process of adaptation. See Sundaram Pillai (1895, 24).

unknown to the Tamil society. As centuries passed on, the caste system became more and more rigid, placing Brahmins on top of society and pushing down the native Tamils, branding them as Sudras, to the lower level.

The result was the emergence of a dominant neo-Śaiva ideology which was inextricably linked to the new Dravidian ideology, namely the theories of Dravidian history, the claims for their cultural, linguistic, and religious superiority. Thus, during the first and second decades of the twentieth century, in Southern India the term *Dravidian* gained both a linguistic and racial connotation: Dravidians are not simply individuals who speak a language of the homonymous family but who also possess a racial heritage that unites them as opposed to the North Indian Brahmins.

Sundaram Pillai (1855-1897) was the earliest Śaiva reformer to adopt and promote a neo-Śaiva reading of the Tamil past by opposing it to the Sanskrit tradition at the basis of the Aryan-centric narratives. Sundaram Pillai praised the ancientness of Tamil literary sources and insisted on the importance of relying on them for a correct and complete reconstruction of the past.⁵⁶ Criticizing at the same time the Orientalists who made use of the solely Sanskrit textual tradition for the recovering of historical information, Sundaram Pillai considered the claims of the Brahmins about their civilization and religious superiority as a distortion of the past, resulting from the avoidance of Tamil literary tradition, which was independent and superior due to its intrinsic rationalism.⁵⁷ Both Kailasapathy (1979, 26) and Arooran (1976, 26) mentioned that he was the first to assert that Śaivasiddhānta was corrupted by Brahmins – puranic writers in particular – who had tried to reconcile the Vedas and the Āgamas.

There are different contributing causes to the emergence of Neo-Śaivism in Tamil Nadu during the late nineteenth century and its flourishing in the next century.

In the first place, it was a reaction to Europeans' perception of Dravidian religious expressions and its subsequent criticism. Dravidian religiosity, and particularly Tamil, was indeed defined by them as primitive, crude, and dominated by crude animism (Ramaswamy 1997, 26). In their Aryan-centric interpretation of history, due to its inferior sophistication, it was then conquered by the purer and philosophically superior Vedic religion, of which the Brahmins of the North were the custodians. When the appeal to return to a rational form of worship arose in the Tamil people, the Śaivasiddhānta perfectly fit the rational demands that the new concepts of modernity requested, thanks to the importance that the Tamil *ācāryas* had given to knowledge.

⁵⁶ Vaithees (2015, 69) stated that he owed his interest for ancient Tamil literature to his Tamil pandit, Narayanasamy Pillai, who was particularly engaged in the rediscovery of classics. It is not by chance that even Maraimalai Adigal, whom also studied with Narayanasamy Pillai during his young ages, developed the same preferences.

⁵⁷ See Vaithees 2015 (52-56).

Secondly, in the wake of linguistic criticism, religion was seen as the proper domain in which the sacrality of Tamil could be asserted. In other words: Tamil is to be considered a sacred and superior language by virtue of its being the language in which God's message has been written and transmitted.⁵⁸ Śaivasiddhānta was suitable for proving the sacredness of Tamil thanks to the claim of its true Tamil origins, i.e., thanks to the fact that its scriptures were Tamil works that were independent of the Vedic tradition, thus free from the Brahmin influences. Supporting the Śaivasiddhānta, therefore, implied supporting the non-Brahmin groups in their struggle against the Brahmins.⁵⁹ Moreover, as the influential Śaiva monasteries had established educational institutions, they were considered an authority, especially in matters of language and literature.

Thirdly, it was a consequence of the general emphasis that the pan-Indian nationalist movements had placed on Indian religions as an instrument of communion and struggle against foreigners.⁶⁰ In the wake of their anti-Brahmins sentiments, Tamil reformers did not accept to support a religion that had the Vedic textual tradition as its sacred scriptures, as it would have meant recognizing Brahmins' superiority and accepting their lead. On the contrary, thanks to the century-lasting Tamil *ācāryas* lineages and their textual production in Tamil, Śaivasiddhānta could be claimed to be totally independent of the Sanskrit scriptural production.

Finally, starting from the first decades of the twentieth century, the Śaiva monasteries founded numerous training institutes, ranging from early childhood to universities. This allowed them to consolidate their authority on religion and language, thus being perceived as a crucial platform for validating nationalist and anti-Brahminic ideas. In particular, political and social movements, such as the *Taṇittamiḷ Iyakkam*, saw in the language of the liturgy an excellent opportunity to oppose the Brahmins and Sanskrit through the celebration of rites exclusively in Tamil language. This was their request, as well as greater dissemination of religious material in Tamil.

The reaction of the monasteries was not univocal, being crushed by both the political context, which required the use of Tamil to the exclusion of Sanskrit, and by their own tradition, which required the use of both languages. While it is true that some have embraced this nationalized and anti-Brahminic view of Śaivasiddhānta and have begun to use only Tamil as the language of the liturgy, others – even very influential like the Thiruvavaduthurai (Tiruvāvaṭuturai) and the Dharmapuram Adhinam (Tarumapuram Āṭṭiṇam) – continued to use both Sanskrit and Tamil to propagate the religion, recognizing the implicit sacredness in both of them.

⁵⁸ The reference, in particular, goes to the *Tirumuṟai* and the *Meykaṇṭa Cāttiraṅkaḷ*.

⁵⁹ Something which was done, for example, in the case of Justice Party, whose *Manifesto* showed an informal alliance with the British regime.

⁶⁰ This view is particularly emphasized by Muttumōkaṇ (2021).

For all these reasons, Śaivasiddhānta, which was often an object of interest of missionaries and Orientalists for its intrinsic rationalism, was strongly nationalized and lived an important phase of reform starting from the end of the nineteenth century.

In the foreigners' works, it was indeed described as the tradition that could redeem Dravidian religiosity, as considered the essence of the Tamil religion, whose principles are enshrined in the scriptures in Tamil, subsequently rendered impure by the spread of Brahminism and Sanskrit texts.⁶¹

In the nationalists' discourse, Śaivasiddhānta was claimed to be a pre-Arya phenomenon that the Brahmins had appropriated, transfiguring it through the introduction of the caste system. Moreover, it had to be considered the essence of Tamil religion, its purest form. Ishimatsu (1999, 572) highlighted how, consequently, the Sanskrit scriptures were now declared to be translations or corruptions of original Tamil sources, and all the elements of the tradition which could be ascribed to or derived from the Brahminic religion had to be condemned and eradicated.⁶²

The question of the true origin of this tradition has played a fundamental role in the political debates concerning the creation of a Tamil identity also because it represents the way through which the Velalars claimed their cultural and religious leadership. Temples and monastic complexes historically had always been characterized by the conflict between Brahmins and non-Brahmins, which could be clearly inferred even by the different organization of the spaces inside the places of worship, depending on the caste to which they belonged. However, the antagonism they registered was of a purely religious and social nature, linked to the ascription to one or the other class. There was no explicit conflict based on the use of Sanskrit for the performance of the rituals: despite the availability of Tamil scriptures and the foundation of non-Brahmin *guru* lineages in monastic complexes that had gained considerable power and influence, the use of Sanskrit for liturgical purposes was unquestioned.

The conflict that was now unfolding went beyond the tension between castes, having racial connotations and also including the linguistic dimension, leading to two contrasting theories of the origins of this tradition.

Ishimatsu (1999) also pointed out that the anti-Brahminic sentiments and the belief of Śaivasiddhānta as the purest form of Tamil religion got so much rooted in the Tamil-speaking area

⁶¹ The reason for the general acceptance of Tamil *intelligentsia* of the religion of Śiva as synonym for Tamil religion instead of the Vaiṣṇava one, was probably that even after the production of its Tamil sacred scriptures, the *Nālāyira Divya Prabandham* ("Four Thousand Divine Hymns") – also referred to as *Dravida Vedas* –, the Sanskrit scriptures still co-existed with the Tamil production, maintaining its theological and practical importance. In the case of Śaivasiddhānta, instead, the Tamil textual tradition was not only claimed to be independent of the Sanskrit Āgamic production, but even antecedent to it.

⁶² One of the arguments given to prove the Tamil origin of the cult is represented by the continuity of literary production in Tamil, which was made possible thanks to the assimilation of devotional literature, in particular the *Tirumūrai*.

of this period that soon Śaiva became a synonym for Tamil, and Tamil had already become a synonym for non-Brahmin.

In the context of the revival, the Thiruvavaduthurai Adhinam and the Dharmapuram Adhinam depicted themselves as the mouthpiece of Śaivasiddhānta, supporting the activities of the revivalists by publishing and spreading their writings and even the writings of supporting missionaries and theologians.⁶³ It was indeed thanks to such authoritative centers' support that revivalists' activity had an even more deep impact.

The rise of Tamil Śaivasiddhānta revival between the end of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century was influenced by the Neo-Śaiva revivalism of Jaffna, in Tamil Sri Lanka.

Unlike what happened in Tamil Nadu, the Jaffna revivalism of the Śaiva faith emerged during the first half of the nineteenth century as a reaction to Christianity, thus being devoid of both the solid antagonism for Brahmins culture and language and of the opposition to the Vedāntic tradition which marked the mainland phenomenon.

Arumuga Pillai (Ārumuka Piḷḷai, 1821-1879), who later would be known as Arumuga Navalar (Ārumuka Nāvalar), was a key figure for the start – and lead – of the Jaffna revivalism. His educational formation was rich. Son of a Tamil poet, he received a Tamil education, thus gaining a deep knowledge of Tamil literature. On the verge of his twenties, as a member of a non-Brahmin high caste, he entered a Christian mission school to study English (Hudson 1992). It was there that Navalar became a student of the Reverend Peter Percival (1834), who in 1841 appointed him as his assistant for a translation of the Bible. Navalar worked with Percival till 1848, when he completely devoted himself to the Śaiva cause.

Navalar got committed to studying Sanskrit in order to read and fully understand the whole Āgamic literature, of which he became a specialist.⁶⁴ His deep knowledge of the Śaiva scriptures and hence orthodoxy led him to attack not only Christians but even Hindu priests who did not rely on the Āgamas, thus following a popular Śaiva religion, namely a form of ritual practice which was not derived strictly from the scriptures but that, instead, was embedded with regional customs. Moreover, it convinced him of the necessity to rely on both the Sanskrit and Tamil scriptures (Klöber 2017, 18), as they reflected a more sophisticated theology, devoid of popular practices⁶⁵ that Śaivas had adopted

⁶³ This is particularly true in the case of the Dharmapuram Adhinam, which published the writings of Nallaswami Pillai and the American missionary John Piet among the others. See Klöber (2017, 11-14).

⁶⁴ Vaithees (2015, 22) pointed out that one of the main characteristics of the Jaffna revivalism is, indeed, its being strictly *Āgama*-centric.

⁶⁵ The reference particularly goes to animal sacrifices and the worship of terrific gods. See Hudson (1992).

over time and for which Śaivism had been attacked, and provided with a wiser interpretation of temple worship (Hudson 1992). Klöber (2017, 19-20) emphasized that according to Navalar, the *Tēvaram* and the *Tiruvācakam* were to be understood as the *Tamiḷ Vētaṅkaḷ* (“Tamil Vedas”) among the Tamil sources; reciting their hymns and those contained in the *Periyapurāṇam* represented, therefore, an opportunity to grasp the whole Āgamic literature essence without accessing the texts directly.

The need to provide a correct knowledge of Āgamas and a return to their orthodoxy arose in him, leading to his first classes on the topic. Such courses laid the foundations for establishing schools in Jaffna and Tamil Nadu and printing presses. Education for young Śaivas in their religion was felt as necessary, and so was the providing of printed books written in a language that everyone could understand while preserving an appropriate elegance for conveying Śaiva principles. Navalar established his first school in Vannarpannai, Sri Lanka, in 1848 (Caivappirakāca Vittiyācālai, “School of Śaiva Splendor”), and his printing press in Madras in 1849. During one of his visits to Madras for the establishment of his press, he got invited to Thiruvavaduthurai Adhinam as a specialist of Āgamic scriptures, and there he was awarded the epithet *Navalar*, “the great orator” or “the learned”.⁶⁶

Meanwhile, the presses represented once again an important means and platform for religious discourse and clashes between different religions, providing them with the possibility of both attacking their opposing theologies and philosophies in a continuous and vigorous back and forth and promoting their respective ones. Jaffna revivalists, beginning with Navalar, were highly active in spreading Śaiva material in print form. Feeling that people needed a clearer understanding of their religion, circulating prose versions of the most essential Śaiva works was one of their most considerable merits: thanks to their use of a simple language aimed at making the texts accessible to a broader community, they are considered the forerunners of the modern Tamil prose style. The contribution of Navalar was significant on this front: his prose version of Cēkkiḷār *Periyapurāṇam* (1852), which he published through his Madras printing press, earned him the title of “father of modern Tamil prose”.⁶⁷

Navalar opened the way to the establishment of schools, printing presses, associations, and journals in both Jaffna and Tamil Nadu, thus extending his influence on the mainland: it was thanks to such activities that his role as an authoritative Śaiva reformer was recognized even in Tamil India, granting him the patronage of local elites. The schools, associations, and printing presses started in

⁶⁶ Arumuga Navalar had strong ties with the Thiruvavaduthurai Adhinam, where he was appointed as scholar for some time (Klöber 2017; Hudson 1992).

⁶⁷ Arumuga Navalar was indeed one of the earliest scholars to perceive the need of the creation of a modern, standard Tamil, which could be more effective and simpler, and to carry it out in the prose genre. Kailasapathy (1979, 33) mentioned that, similarly, his contemporary Subramania Bharati (1882-1921) tried to do same in the poetry domain, using a popular language, thus being considered the father of the modern Tamil poetry.

the mainland by him and other Jaffna revivalists who followed his example, in particular, functioned as important centers and tools for the spread of Neo-Śaivism and the emergence of religious consciousness, serving as an inspiration to Tamil Nadu Śaivas and reformers.

One of the main reasons for the Jaffna neo-Śaivism to exert such influence on them was its being led by Velalars,⁶⁸ a factor that in the mainland context, where social enmity was a prominent issue by the end of the nineteenth century, gave the non-Brahmin an essential input for rising.⁶⁹ In fact, the names of Tamil Nadu's earliest Śaiva associations recall those established decades before in Sri Lanka, while many are the mentions that the mainland reformers did in their works, showing gratitude towards the Jaffna Śaiva revivalists, as will be discussed below.⁷⁰

On the other hand, some critical Tamil revivalists vehemently opposed Navalar and his successors. Among those, the most influential was Ramalinga Adigal (1823-1874): the controversy which involved them in 1869, traditionally known as *Aruṭpā-Maruṭpā*,⁷¹ was crucial for the delineation of two strands among the Śaivasiddhānta tradition, with one being more conservative, and the other being characterized by gradually more radical ideas.

Ramalinga Adigal, commonly known as Vaḷḷalār,⁷² was a poet-saint, a mystic who was considered to have earned incredible *siddhis* through his yogic practices.⁷³ The reactions to his alleged *siddhis* were ambivalent. On the one hand, the claim that he had acquired unbelievable powers like deathlessness and the awakening of the dead raised the skepticism of many other religious people and reformers, like Navalar himself. On the other hand, it had a substantial proselytizing effect, as the hope to attain those same powers attracted the people.

In her recent book, Raman (2022) made the religious ideology of Ramalinga Swamigal the main focus of her research, emphasizing his ambivalent role as both a poet-saint and a Dravidian nationalist social reformer. She highlighted that many hagiographies were written in his name, where he is compared to the Nāyaṇmārs. One of the common topics of such a narrative is Ramalinga's bodily metamorphosis and immortality, based on the assertions he made in his writings (Raman

⁶⁸ Navalar himself was a Velalar.

⁶⁹ The same Navalar was born in a Velalar family, belonging to an elite that had strong and ancient links with the sacred topography of Tamil Nadu Śaivasiddhānta. Not by chance the first school he established in Tamil Nadu was located in Chidambaram. This was, indeed, one of the factors that explains his acceptance in the mainland.

⁷⁰ See Vaithees (2015, 24).

⁷¹ Vaithees (2015) particularly dealt with it, highlighting that in occasion of a public meeting organized by the temple priests of Chidambaram – who had been victims of his criticism for not relating to the scriptures, Navalar was object of defamation. He, thus, started a legal action against him and Ramalinga Adigal, who had intervened too. The debate had a second outbreak in 1903, when the stands of Ramalinga and Navalar were taken by Maraimalai Adigal and Katiravel Pillai respectively.

⁷² Raman (2022, 25-26) mentioned that his disciple Velayutananar Mudaliyar, who edited a compilation of Ramalinga's poems, was the one who attributed him the name of *Tiruvaruṭpirakāva Vaḷḷalār*, the “great benefactor who radiates grace”.

⁷³ For details about his life see Raman (2022).

2022, 58). According to this material, he had made his body gradually pure till the obtainment of a body made of knowledge, which would coincide with a process of its dematerialization. Ramalinga Adigal, indeed, believed in the importance of the human body as it is inhabited by the divine and in its capacity to resurrect.

Ramalinga Adigal established both religious and charitable associations, as he was concerned about the conditions of poor people and the need to provide them help and education too.⁷⁴ Two of the most important organizations he started were the Camaraca Vēta Caṅmārkkka Caṅkam (“Association of the Egalitarian, Vedic Path of Truth”, 1865), which supported both the Sanskrit and Tamil scriptural traditions of Śaivasiddhānta, and the Camaraca Vēta Taruma Cālai (1867), a charitable feeding house. It was during the inauguration of this latter association that Vaḷḷalār doctrinal text entitled *Cīvakāruṇya Oḷukkam* (“Conduct of Compassion towards Living Beings”) was read, signing his shift from a traditional devotionalism to a new concept of religion, marked by universalist connotations (Raman 2022, 26). In fact, unlike Navalar, who insisted on the necessity to go back to a more orthodox worship, especially in temples, during the last decades of the nineteenth century Ramalinga Adigal took distances from the Tamil Śaivasiddhānta orthodoxy. In particular, Irschick (1986, 86) mentioned his thought that the orthodox religion, namely relying on the sacred Sanskrit texts, would have only brought despair due to the division they created in society. He proposed a new kind of religion carrying a messianic connotation: he preached the descent of God, seen as a principle of universal love, on earth where there would have been the removal of all religious and social divisions.

The central tenet of Ramalinga Adigal doctrine was the emphasis on the *cīvakāruṇya*, “compassion”, a concept that developed between the fifteenth and the seventeenth centuries in the Tamil Śaivasiddhānta and Vīraśaiva traditions and emerging from their textual productions centered on *ñāna* as the purest path to liberation. In such context, *cīvakāruṇya* comprehends two different meanings. On the one hand, *cīvakāruṇya* is one of the needed qualities for *gurus*, as they manifest Śiva: the *guru*’s compassion corresponds to God’s grace, *aruḷ*. On the other hand, it is an ethical prescription of daily practice which consist in not harming or killing any lives, however small it may be, thus implying vegetarianism too. In both cases, *cīvakāruṇya* is considered a prerequisite for attaining liberation.

⁷⁴ Raman (2022, 26) states that there was the plan to establish other kind of institutions and organizations, counting schools and newspapers, but such projects were never completed due to the lack of funds.

As Raman (2022) emphasized, Ramalinga Adigal offered a reinterpretation of *cīvakāruṇya*,⁷⁵ which represents the directly responsible quality for the existence of wisdom and love, the source for the flourishing of both worldly and otherworldly conduct, as it allows devotees to recognize and see their inner light and thus obtain the grace of God. The means to gain it is by helping those who suffer from hunger and the fear of being killed (*paracīvakāruṇyam*) and by removing their other afflictions (*aparacīvakāruṇyam*), like providing clothes or a place to stay. The goal that is achieved through it is both non-supreme happiness (*āparā inṇam*) and supreme happiness (*parā inṇam*).

The emphasis of Ramalinga Adigal on the need to provide assistance and help to the poor, and to abolish the caste system in order to create an equal society, were fundamental in his rediscovery during the first half of the twentieth century. Starting from the 1920s, nationalists like Periyar, Tiru. Vi. Kaliyanasundara Mudaliyar (Tiru.Vi. Kaliyānacuntara Mutaliyār 1883-1953), and Ma.Po. Civañāṇam (1906-1995) rediscovered him, and thus his vision, thoughts, and teachings gained momentum. One of the aspects of his thought that were found particularly interesting was his belief in the body's capacity to resurrect, which tended to be interpreted as a metaphor for a possible rebirth in society.⁷⁶

The history of Tamil Nadu revivalism of the Śaiva tradition was marked by the activity of many personalities, ranging from mystic or religious reformers to intellectuals and scholars. Though all of them agreed about the necessity to reform the tradition, they did not always share the same vision nor aimed at the same goals. In fact, it is possible to distinguish two streams in Tamil Nadu revival: the radical stream, strongly influenced by nationalist concepts and marked with anti-Brahminic and anti-Sanskrit sentiments; the conservative stream, where the Sanskrit and Tamil scriptural traditions kept on being rewarded with the same sacredness, being more similar to the Jaffna revivalism. Although the radical or populist stream happened to be the dominant one due to the historical and social context of Tamil Nadu, both of them can count on important reformers whose authority is still acknowledged.

Comacuntara Nayakar (1846-1901) was one of the first important Tamil Nadu spokesmen of Śaivasiddhānta during the latter half of the nineteenth century and one of the first Tamil religious reformers to consolidate a monolithic interpretation of Tamil Śaivism. Maraimalai Adigal (, 1876-

⁷⁵ It is important to mention that the concept of *cīvakāruṇya* transcended the boundaries of the Śaiva context, and during the late nineteenth century underwent two different reinterpretations, one done by Ramalinga, and the other done by Iyothee Thass. See Raman (2022, 77-149).

⁷⁶ See Irschick (1986, 87).

1950) and Nallaswami Pillai (Jē. Em. Nallacāmi Piḷḷai, 1864-1920) represent the primary sources about him.⁷⁷

Comacuntara Nayakar was a member of the low caste of the Vanniyars, a peasant community of Northern Tamil Nadu. Caravaṇaṅ (2021, 74), giving some biographic accounts about him, highlighted that he was born in a Vaiṣṇava family and was first trained in the Vedāntic tradition by the ascetic Ekampara Civayoki, also known as Accutāṅantar. Having found unacceptable contradictions in the Vedānta concepts (Pukaḷēnti 2019, 45), he later approached the Śaivasiddhānta tradition and converted around the 1870s. Moreover, he started to promote it in 1881 through his writings, lectures, and teachings. Most of his works were published in the monthly journal *Cittāntaratnākaram* (“The Ocean of the Siddhānta”), for which he was later responsible (Vaithees 2015, 46).

According to Maraimalai Adigal (1957, 29), his social background has been a key factor in his conversion. In the context of the clash between the Aryan and Tamil identities, where Vedānta arose as the emblem of the superiority claims of Brahmins over the Śūdras and the Śaivasiddhānta was emerging as the Tamil religion, conversion for non-Brahmin Tamils was perceived as an unavoidable result. At the same time, belonging to a low caste had a significant impact on his interpretation of this tradition too, making him the first Tamil author to directly connect Śaivasiddhānta tradition with anti-Brahmin and anti-Sanskrit sentiments, thus forerunning what nationalists did few decades after (Vaithees 2015; Steinschneider 2018).

Moreover, he was the first Tamil Nadu author to make use of exquisite prose in his religious works, whose main content concerned the defense of Śaivasiddhānta from other religions’ attacks. Indeed, Comacuntara Nayakar is mainly known for his vehement opposition to Advaita Vedānta, which earned him the title of *Vaitika Śaiva Cittānta Caṅṭa Mārutam*, the “Fierce Whirlwind of the Vaitika Śaivasiddhānta”⁷⁸ (Caravaṇaṅ 2021, 58).

For the promotion of Śaivasiddhānta and for opposing the criticism of it, Comacuntara Nayakar strictly relied on the devotional literary production and the works of the *cantāṅcāryas*, which were devoid of the later influences of Advaita Vedānta of the popular stream tending towards

⁷⁷ Nevertheless, the biography by Maraimalai Adigal, dated at 1957, is incomplete, while Nallaswami Pillai published a short obituary notice. See Nallaswami Pillai, “The Late Sri Somasundara Nayagar”, in: *Siddhanta Deepika*, vol. IV, no. 9, Madras, February 1901, pp. 204-206, and Maraimalai Adigal (1957). See also Vaithees (2015, 41-51) and Caravaṇaṅ (2021, 58-105).

⁷⁸ The expression “Vaidika Caivam” assumed antithetical interpretations in the nineteenth century on the basis of the specific religious context it was used in (in particular among the Śaivasiddhānta and Advaita Vedānta traditions), in the effort to demonstrate the universality and inclusiveness of one or another tradition. In a Śaivasiddhānta context, it identifies a tradition that is rooted in the Vedas but that is fully revealed in the Āgamas. The term, therefore, exemplifies the universality of this tradition. See Steinschneider (2016, 92-121).

a monism. The most important work of Nayakar on the *cantāṅcāryas*, whom he simply called *nālvar* (“the four”), is the *Ācāryap Pirapāvam* (“The Splendor of the Teachers”), written in 1889. These poet-saints, being Śiva’s representatives and having protected his sovereignty, have set his victory over the other traditions. Moreover, these traditions are put into a hierarchical order which culminates with the Śaivasiddhānta, whose universalism is thus formulated: it represents the highest doctrine among the Vedic and Āgamic traditions, their final product, and teaching.

Inserting the other traditions in this hierarchy justifies their existence despite their defeat: since they too were created by Śiva, the *cantāṅcāryas* just demonstrated their less sophistication without eradicating them (Steinschneider 2016, 73-74).

Three significant contrasts are emerging from the *Ācāryap Pirapāvam*.

The first contrast is set between Śaivasiddhānta and Advaita Vedānta, realized through the confrontation between Tiruñāṅcampantar,⁷⁹ of whom Comacuntara Nayakar was an ardent devotee, and Śaṅkarācārya. Relying mainly on the *Periyapurānam*, Nayakar presented Tiruñāṅcampantar as the hero of Śaivasiddhānta, the divine child who was born with no bond: he is an earthly manifestation of Murukaṅ (Caravaṅaṅ 2021, 81-82);⁸⁰ as such, all the Śaivas have to accept and recognize his leadership. This association was made to debunk the Advaita Vedāntin idea of Śaṅkarācārya as an incarnation of Śiva.

The second contrast portrayed in the *Ācāryap Pirapāvam* is that between Brahmins and non-Brahmins. Using the friendship between Tiruñāṅcampantar, who was a Brahmin, with a low-caste musician who accompanied him during a pilgrimage as a pretext, Comacuntara Nayakar criticized the way Brahmin priests treated the non-Brahmin and conveyed the message that one’s devotion transcends the caste distinctions. He thus supported temple and idol worship, which he considered a beneficial and necessary spiritual practice (Vaithees 2015, 46).⁸¹ He insisted on the importance of correctly performing the śaiva ritual, thus giving instructions about the different aspects of the worship. Such emphasis aimed to provide the practitioners with proper knowledge and tools to both

⁷⁹ While Steinschneider (2016, 89) tries to figure out the reasons why Comacuntara Nayakar chose Tiruñāṅcampantar among the four Śaiva poet-saints as the hero of Śaivasiddhānta, this choice is not uncommon indeed. Even Sundaram Pillai (1895), who was his contemporary, had recognized the authority of Tiruñāṅcampantar, whom he considered the greatest of the Śaiva *riṣis*, who mastered Tamil language in his hymns, visited every village of the Tamil area, and whose entire life was marked by miracles although he was an historical personality. Tiruñāṅcampantar is indeed considered among the Tamil school as a crucial saint who, through his devotional hymns, had protected Śaivasiddhānta from the threats of Buddhism and Jainism. In this perspective, thus, the assimilation of the *pakti* movement was an answer to the spreading influence of these two religions. See Pukaḷēnti (2019, 48).

⁸⁰ This association is not new and, in fact, Comacuntara Nayakar quotes different sources in its support, among which we find the *Periyapurānam*. See Steinschneider (2016, 77-81).

⁸¹ In doing this he opposed the contemporary neo-Hindu associations which were promoting an aniconic form of worship, like the Brahmō Samaj.

distinguish the Śaivasiddhānta rituals from those pertaining to other religious traditions – especially the ones which recognized the privileged status of the Brahmins –, thus preventing Śaivas from engaging in them and patronizing the non-Brahmin priests by learning how to distinguish them from the Brahmin priests.

The third contrast is between Tamil and Sanskrit, which are respectively representative of Śaivasiddhānta and Advaita Vedānta on the one hand, and non-Brahmins and Brahmins on the other. Comacuntara Nayakar supported the equal prestige and sacredness of both languages as created by Śiva. Nevertheless, in order to establish Tamil superiority, Nayakar asserted a hierarchy between the two, according to which Sanskrit is included in Tamil.

Establishing the superiority of Tamil was one of the main concerns of Comacuntara Nayakar. Interesting are the two definitions he gives of Tamil as *pitru pāṣa* (“father tongue”) and *kailāca pāṣa* (“language of Śiva”).⁸² According to Nayakar, the concept of mother tongue would imply the notion of creation, therefore stating that Tamil is a mother tongue would mean accepting its origins from Sanskrit. Instead, since Tamil is an independent and separate language, it has to be considered a father tongue.

Moreover, if we consider the definition provided by Pāṇini of Sanskrit as *devabhaṣya* (“language of the gods”) and of Tamil as *ṛṣibhaṣya* (“language of the sages”), then the superiority of Sanskrit emerges. Nevertheless, if we consider the definition of Sanskrit as *devanākaram*, the language which was uttered by the gods in the heavenly worlds, then Tamil, which was uttered by Śiva on mount Kailāca, should be called *kailāca bhāṣya*, the “language of Kailāca”). As that is the abode of lord Śiva and the place where works like the *Tiruvācakam* were written, then the superiority of Tamil is set.

Comacuntara Nayakar is considered a forerunner of the later Tamil nationalism thanks to his works in defense and praise of Śaivasiddhānta as the universal religion founded in the superior Tamil language, where castes are abolished. He inspired some of the most important revivalists who reshaped the Śaivasiddhānta: P. Sundaram Pillai (Cuntaram Piḷḷai, 1855-1897), J.M. Nallaswami Pillai (1864-1920), Maraimalai Adigal, Tiru. Vi. Kaliyansuntara Mutaliyar.

In the Nallaswami Pillai’s biography he wrote, Balasubramaiaam (1965) described him as a sincere devotee of Śiva since a young age whose sole interest throughout his life was studying the Śaivasiddhānta religion and spreading it through his works. Disciple of Comacuntara Nayakar, unlike

⁸² See Caravaṇaṇ (2021, 81).

other reformers or revivalists of the tradition Nallaswami Pillai, did not support a Śaivasiddhānta seen through the lenses of Dravidian ideology. In fact, he was not moved by anti-Brahmin or anti-Sanskrit sentiments, unlike the majority of his contemporaries, including other disciples of Nayakar. Nevertheless, he represents a key personality in the revival of Śaivasiddhānta and one of the intellectuals more committed to spreading its literary production.

Since he considered it shameful that the primary sources for gaining knowledge about Indian religion, literature, and history in the contemporary era were the works of foreigners, namely Orientalists and missionaries (Balasubramaiaam 1965, 37), for Nallaswami Pillai providing Indians with notions about those and, in particular, supplying South Indian literates with a proper understanding of the Śaivasiddhānta, Tamil history, literature, and sciences was a mission and a duty. With this aim, he started the *Siddhanta Deepika*, a monthly journal published in English from 1897 to 1914.⁸³

The journal saw the contributions of many intellectuals, both South Indians and Europeans, proving that he recognized the importance of their activity. G.U. Pope, whom Nallaswami admired and considered a friend (Vaithees 2015, 58; Balasubramaiaam 1965, 86-92), was one of the regular contributors to the journal. The contents of his articles mainly concerned translations of Śaiva saints' hymns, especially those of Māṇikkavācakar, and other classics like the *Maṇimēkalai* and the *Puranānūru*.

Nallaswami published his translation works on the *Siddhanta Deepika*. Among his works, the major was an English translation with commentary of the *Civañṅapōtam*. While working on it, Nallaswami was informed of a previous translation by the American missionary H.R. Hoisington (Balasubramaiaam 1965, 31-33; Vaithees 2015, 57) and published in 1854, which he could consult thanks to Caldwell, who lent him his copy.⁸⁴

Other important translation works of Nallaswami Pillai published in the volumes of the *Siddhanta Deepika* were: the *Civapirakācam* by Umāpati Śivācārya; the *Civañṅacittiyār* of Aruṅnanti Cīvācāriya; the *Tirumantiram* of Tirumūlar; the *Caivacamayaneri Viḷakkam*.⁸⁵

⁸³ Later a Tamil version of the journal was published under the name *Unmai Viḷakkam Allatu Cittānta Tīpikā*, edited by Maraimalai Adigal.

⁸⁴ Balasubramaiaam (1965, 33) stressed on the importance of Nallaswami translation, despite it was not the first attempt to provide an English version of this fundamental product of the Tamil Śaiva literature. Despite recognizing the importance of Hoisington attempt, he defined it as “not literal” and “free”.

⁸⁵ See Balasubramaiaam (1965, 36).

As mentioned above, Nallaswami was not a spokesman of anti-Sanskrit sentiments⁸⁶ and, in fact, he relied on Sanskrit textual tradition too to study Śaivasiddhānta, not supporting the idea that it was a specific South Indian tradition:

Despite the opinion of a few European and Indian scholars, who would trace Śaiva Siddhānta to a purely South Indian source, we have all along been holding that Śaiva Siddhānta is nothing but the ancient Hinduism in its purest and noblest aspects; and it is not a new religion nor a new philosophy, and lit can be traced from the earliest Vedas and Upanishats. We do not hear of anyone introducing Śaivism at any time into India, and the majority of Hindus have remained Śaivaites from before the days of the Mahābhārata (Nallaswami 1911, 224).

Nevertheless, this did not suggest a minor attachment to Tamil language or Tamil Nadu than his contemporaries,⁸⁷ nor that he had a moderate interpretation of Śaivasiddhānta, as has been often stated (Bergunder 2010, 31-32).

As Klöber (2017, 6) pointed out, Nallaswami Pillai was deeply entangled with both Orientalist and pan-Indian discourses on the religions of his time. He tried to demonstrate that Śaivism is a theistic religion that is the direct heir of an ancient popular philosophy, from which the six Indian philosophical systems sprouted by relying on both Sanskrit scriptures and Orientalists' writings.⁸⁸

Thus, on the one hand, the quoted passages from the Vedas, the Upaniṣads, the Purāṇas, and other Sanskrit literary production, including the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa*, giving them a new interpretation through the lenses of Śaivasiddhānta to prove its being rooted in those texts.

On the other, he relied on the available translations of the Orientalists and often on their interpretations too of religious texts and their philosophical notions – on the topic like the concept of a personal God, the qualities of God, the eclecticism of Śaivasiddhānta –, thus trying to legitimize his interpretation of Śaivasiddhānta through the contemporary Indological research.⁸⁹

In short, he tried to demonstrate that Śaivasiddhānta was rooted in both the Vedas and Tamil sources and, as directly descending from the popular ancestral philosophy, was superior to the other religions.

⁸⁶ See Irschick (1969, 292-293).

⁸⁷ See, for example, Balasubramaiam (1965, 61): "Religion with him was a 'life-and-death question'. It was not merely a question of opinions to be changed and shaped at random to suit anyone's taste or to fit in with one's own fancies. The luxury of loving a particular language to the exclusion of all others could not be afforded by a student of genuine thirst for beatitude."

⁸⁸ See Nallaswami Pillai (1911).

⁸⁹ Nallaswami commonly quoted Max Muller, G.U. Pope, F. Goodwill, F. Goudie. See Bergunder (2010, 32-51).

Bergunder (2010, 39) mentioned that Nallaswami Pillai considered Śrīkaṇṭha,⁹⁰ who equated Śiva to Brahman, as the one who established the link between Śaivasiddhānta and the Sanskrit scriptural tradition, considered the Śivādvaita system which he exposed as similar to Śaivasiddhānta.⁹¹ The influence of Śrīkaṇṭha's system emerges clearly even just by the fact that he usually quoted him in his writings.⁹² The two aspects of Śivādvaita that he mainly supported were the equation of the Supreme Brahman with Śiva and the interpretation of the relationship between God and the soul as similar to the link existing between the soul and the body.⁹³

Taking up the division that Christian theologians and Western historians of religions operated between universal or missionary religions on the one hand⁹⁴ and local or ethnic religions on the other hand, on the basis of their diffusion and proselytizing activity, Nallaswami Pillai defined the Śaivasiddhānta as an eclectic philosophy and universal religion. Nevertheless, he attributed a new meaning to the term “universal”: it did not refer to the transnational diffusion of Śaivasiddhānta but to its capacity to include all the other religions within itself, to not conflict with any other religion as their teachings are contained in Śaivasiddhānta. Therefore, Nallaswami claimed that all the other religions could reconcile within the Śaivasiddhānta, as they too are from God and acceptable to him, despite their claim of divine or human origins (Nallaswami 1911, 349). Moreover, he considered all of them necessary to carry out the progress of a devotee's moral, intellectual, and spiritual development.⁹⁵

⁹⁰ His dating is uncertain but he is generally considered to have been active between the ninth and the tenth centuries.

⁹¹ In fact, while the emphasis that the Śivādvaita put on Śiva as the chief among the gods was a useful argument in that particular historical context for the claims of Śaivism superiority, the theology of these two traditions has substantial theological differences. In particular, the Śivādvaita considered both the individual soul and the matter as parts of God, the result of its transformation; moreover, while in the Śaivasiddhānta *pati* is the *nimittakāraṇa* of the activities of creation, maintenance, and resorption of the universe, while *māyā* or the substrate of matter is the *upadānakāraṇa* of the creation, according to Śrīkaṇṭha's philosophy God is both its instrumental and material cause of creation, which is performed with no other purpose than a game. Nallaswami strongly opposes this concept. See for example Nallaswami (1911, 201): “So that when God willed to create this earth and the heavens, it was not the result of a mere whim or play, it was not for his own improvement or benefit, it was not for his self-glorification or self-realization, but he willed out of his Infinite Love and Mercy towards the innumerable souls, who were rotting in their bondage, enshrouded in *Āṇava mala*, without self-knowledge and self-action, that they be awakened out of their *kevala* condition and move into the cycle of evolution, births and deaths, whereby alone they can affect their salvation”. It is important to note that for Nallaswami Pillai it is not *māyā* to constrain the soul, but *āṇavamala*, which inhibits knowledge and action; he treats the two as different, while the scriptures consider *āṇavamala* as one of the three impurities of *māyā*.

⁹² See Nallaswami Pillai (1911).

⁹³ See Nallaswami Pillai (1911, 226) and Bergunder (2010, 39).

⁹⁴ According to them Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism were recognized as universal religions. Nevertheless, in last analysis Christianity was considered as the only one being universal in all aspects.

⁹⁵ We have thus to see this interpretation of Nallaswami Pillai not only as an effort to establish the superiority of Śaivasiddhānta over the other Indian religious and philosophical systems, but even over the other religions, as he was involved in the global discourse on religion. In fact, he attended the interreligious conferences through which the world religions discourse gained institutional expression. In the occasion of the “Convention of Religions in India”, which was organized in 1909 in Calcutta, Nallaswami as a representative of Śaivism presented the article “The Saiva Religion and Saiva Advaita Siddhanta Philosophy”, which was later published on the *Siddhanta Deepika* (1909, vol. IX) and in Nallaswami Pillai (1911, 273-315). See Bergunder (2010, 54-56).

Similarly, Nallaswami provided an inclusive and progressive interpretation of the four paths to the salvation of Śaivasiddhānta as different stages to suit the different spiritual needs of the devotees: they are all needed to reach Śiva.⁹⁶

Moreover, as he was concerned about the Orientalists' and missionaries' discourses on religion, he often compared Śaivasiddhānta with Christianity⁹⁷ and tried to provide a definition of Śiva, which could suit the Christian understanding of God. Therefore, recalling the definition that the theologian Westcott had given of the trinity as *Spirit, Light, and Love*,⁹⁸ he adopted the terminology of *Being, Light, and Love* to qualify Śiva:

Sat denotes God as a Pure Being, in which aspect He can never reach us; Chit or Arul or Love denotes His aspect in which He can reach us, and we can know Him. Sat is the sun, which we can never comprehend. Chit is the Light, one ray of which is enough to remove our darkness and enlighten us; and but for that one ray of light, we can never know the Sun (Nallaswami Pillai 1911, 227).

According to Nallaswami Pillai, Śiva has no material form, as that would imply being limited; for the same reason, he has no *avatāra* either. He is, instead, a pervasive universal element, the infinite Being, which was not generated nor will die (Nallaswami 1911, 241-242). At the same time, he is not formless either: he can appear in human form for the love of his devotees; nevertheless, that form is not material but just a product of his love or grace (Nallaswami 1911, 298).

Nallaswami Pillai claimed that the Śaivasiddhānta should be defined as *advaita*. Nevertheless, we should not understand this term to indicate a monism, or a oneness between the three ontological entities of *pati, paśu, and paśa*, or their mutual convertibility; it rather indicates their inseparability, just like it is not possible to separate vowels and consonants:

The vowels are those that can be sounded by themselves but the consonants cannot be pronounced without the aid of the vowel. The consonants cannot be brought into being unless the vowel supports it; and in union, the two are inseparable; and *One* is the word used in the oldest Tamil Grammar to denote the union of the two. A vowel short has one mātraī, a consonant (pure) half a mātraī; and yet a vowel-consonant has only one mātraī, instead of one and a half. But the vowel is not the consonant nor the consonant the vowel. God is

⁹⁶ See Nallaswami Pillai (1911) and Bergunder (2010, 49-51).

⁹⁷ The similarities between Christianity and Śaivasiddhānta he emphasized are the ideal of Godhead, the relation between God and man, the doctrine of love and grace, and the necessity for a divine teacher. See Nallaswami Pillai (1911, 354-356).

⁹⁸ See Bergunder (2010, 41).

not one with the soul and the Universe, and yet without God, where is the Universe? (Nallaswami Pillai 1911, 311).

Therefore, *advaita* is a synonym for *ananya*: Śiva is both one with the world and different from it.

Finally, Nallaswami Pillai did not pay much attention to the ritualistic aspects. He believed that salvation is based on the fact that Śiva is Love, and in order to become like him, the individual soul must love him too: loving Śiva represents the true worship indeed.⁹⁹ *Ñāna* is an essential requisite for loving Śiva, as it makes the individual soul realize its nearness to him; thus, the more knowledge it gains, the more love it feels for him (Nallaswami 1911, 214). He considered the four paths to salvation as adjusted in an ascending scale to suit the gradual elevation of the devotee on an intellectual, moral, and spiritual level, thus implying their inclusiveness and progressiveness.¹⁰⁰

Nallaswami's theory of Śaivasiddhānta as an inclusive and universal religion clashed with the interpretation of Maraimalai Adigal, who strongly linked this religion to the Dravidian ideology, thus being considered the central ideologue of the Dravidian movement.

Maraimalai Adigal, born Vedachalam Pillai, is considered the most important spokesman of a Śaivasiddhānta deeply entangled with the Dravidian ideology, as he articulated a nationalism that was strongly marked by anti-Brahmin sentiments and, at the same time, rooted in religion. The works by Vaithees (2009, 2015) particularly highlighted that he marked the transition from a mainly conservative stream of Śaivasiddhānta to a radical one. Consequently, he is both referred to as the central ideologue of the Dravidian movement and the champion of Śaivasiddhānta.¹⁰¹

The peculiarity of Maraimalai Adigal's remaking of Śaivasiddhānta was its variability during time: it gradually changed, moving towards a more pronounced radical and liberal interpretation.

Vaithees (2015) mentioned that the key event which signed the beginning of his formation and emergence as a Tamil scholar and revivalist was the meeting, during his young ages, with Madurainayakam Pillai, an influential revivalist who was active in Nakappattinam, where Adigal lived. Having him as his mentor provided Adigal with the chance to meet further key exponents of the Tamil neo-Śaivism, beginning with Sundaram Pillai and Comacuntara Nayakar. They both had a

⁹⁹ See Nallaswami Pillai (1911, 213): "What is Siva? It is Love. What is worship of Him? Loving Him. How can we love Him, whom we do not know? Nay, we can know Him and do know Him though. We do not perceive each other's souls or minds and yet, we love each other. It is the body we know, and it is on each other's body we manifest all our love. We do willing service to the body only of our elders, masters, teachers and parents. It is on that body we love, we lavish all our wealth and labor. So can we worship and love Him by loving His Body which is the whole universe of Chētana and Achētana".

¹⁰⁰ Nallaswami Pillai (1911, 312-313). See also Bergunder (2010, 50-51).

¹⁰¹ It is not by chance that the majority of works on him are Tamil biographies written in a hagiographical perspective (Vaithees 2015, 63).

significant impact on him: on the one hand, Sundaram Pillai was crucial for his adoption of Western historical methods and perspective in researching and writing about Tamil literary and religious past; on the other hand, Comacuntara Nayakar trained him on Śaivasiddhānta theology and represented his spiritual guidance, besides mentoring him in the oratory art (Vaithees 2015, 72-74;79-82).¹⁰² They were indeed responsible for Maraimalai Adigal's method of combining the commitment to reforming Śaivasiddhānta and the adopting of a Western research and analysis approach, which he carried out by both recovering the Tamil classics and getting inspiration from and utilizing the Orientalist's writings.

Moreover, they were responsible for developing the aims that Adigal ought to accomplish throughout his life, despite the mutability of his approach.

Besides the reliance on Western contributions and scientific approach, Adigal owed Sundaram Pillai the attempt to identify the Śaivasiddhānta with Tamil history. Sundaram Pillai's criticism of Orientalists' usage of solely Sanskrit sources for the reconstruction of Indic civilization and his emphasis on the value and contribution of Tamil literature for that exact purpose represented an essential inspiration for Adigal's deployment of Tamil language and Śaiva literary production for the reconstruction of the Tamil past as separate and independent from the Aryan civilization, depicting it as Śaiva and non-Brahmin. It was in the wake of his teachings that the Tamil Śaiva literature became the basis for recasting Śaivasiddhānta and advocating a reform of Tamil society, which consisted of a return to its ancient traditions as they were reflected in the classics. This implied restoring a pure form of language – a project which Adigal will more accurately articulate during the first decades of the twentieth century – by means of the Tamil classics and Orientalists' philological writings too, which demonstrate Tamil language autonomy from Sanskrit.

As per Comacuntara Nayakar, his oratory teachings and his training on Śaivasiddhānta theology were such formative for Adigal to make him emerge as his heir in the revivalist scenario, being acknowledged as such even among the masses. It was not by chance that in 1901, right two months before Comacuntara Nayakar's death, Maraimalai Adigal established the Vētākamōkta Caivacittāntam Capai, an association that formally made of him Comacuntara's successor, through its claims of being a revival of another organization founded by Nayakar three decades before. Adigal used the Vētākamōkta Caivacittāntam Capai to coordinate the other religious associations active in the Tamil region.

¹⁰² Maraimalai Adigal owed Comacuntara Nayakar even a further network of contacts with other exponent of the Śaivasiddhānta revival. One of them was Nallaswami Pillai, who provided him with a testing ground for articulating religious discourse through the methods he had learned by publishing his articles on the Siddhanta Deepika, besides appointing him as translator and editor of the Tamil version of the journal in 1897.

Thus, in Maraimalai Adigal clearly emerge the dimensions of Śaivasiddhānta as the guardian of Tamil language and of Tamil language as the key to the articulation of Tamil civilization as independent.¹⁰³

To consolidate his position as its spokesman, in 1902 Adigal launched a scholarly Tamil magazine, the *Ñānacākaram* (“Ocean of Wisdom”), which became the official organ of the association. Though its final aim was to prove the superiority of the Śaivasiddhānta, the magazine represented an important platform for confrontation between different religions, philosophies, and languages. In fact, until the very end of the nineteenth century, Adigal’s efforts were mainly directed in two directions: on the one hand, he wanted to provide the Tamil people with a reinterpretation of the Tamil past, language, and literature, establishing their superiority; on the other, his religious discourse was centered on both the criticism of the neo-Vedāntic revivalism which had taken place on a pan-Indian level – thus resenting of the influence of his spiritual teachers –, and the demonstration of the Tamil origins of the Śaivasiddhānta, implying its independence from the Brahminical tradition and its distinction from all the other Hindu religions.¹⁰⁴ For both aims, Adigal relied on the Tamil literary production – especially the *Tolkāppiyam* and the *Tirukkural* – as well as on the philological writings of Orientalists and missionaries – with those of William James being the most influential.¹⁰⁵ By combining the two literary productions and adopting a Western style of literary criticism, Maraimalai Adigal highlighted the uniqueness of Tamil poetry, whose purity and originality were a sign of its ancientness and autonomy from the Aryan and Sanskrit tradition.

Maraimalai Adigal tried to establish Śaivasiddhānta rationality by putting it in relation to the Sāṃkhya system.¹⁰⁶ Adigal described the Sāṃkhya as the true philosophy among the five *darśanas*, the oldest, more sophisticated, and rationalistic one, thus being considered the repository and faithful exponent of ancient Indian beliefs and traditions. Therefore, stating that the Sāṃkhya and the Śaivasiddhānta are identical (1913-14, 213) implied establishing that the Śaivasiddhānta, among all other religions, not only had preserved that rationality but was even equally ancient. In comparing them, Adigal emphasized that they both recognized the existence of matter and individual souls as separate ontological entities. Nevertheless, a problem arises: as the sage Kapila, who is considered the founder of the Sāṃkhya *darśana*, did not allude to the existence of a Supreme Being, it was

¹⁰³ The emergence of this argument will which will slowly lead to consider language as a wider basis for the construction of the national unity than religion, a development which will be crucial in dropping Śaivasiddhānta’s role in the emergence of national sentiments which characterize the Dravidianism.

¹⁰⁴ The two goals were strictly entangled: Śaivasiddhānta had emerged as the guardian of Tamil language, and Tamil language had become the wider basis for the construction of the national unity than religion could be.

¹⁰⁵ See Vaithees (2015, 195).

¹⁰⁶ See Maraimalai Adikal (1913-14, 174–188, 208–215; 1908b, 10-11).

traditionally defined as atheistic. For this reason, asserting its relation with Śaivasiddhānta was pretty uncommon among the other revivalists.

Nevertheless, Maraimalai Adigal (1913-14, 212) bypassed the issue by stating that it is not possible to know whether Kapila was an atheist or not, as he focused on an analysis of the physical and intellectual planes, which are both within reach of our experience and reasoning faculties. God's nature, instead, transcends the reasoning powers of men, thus it is not possible to prove his existence relying on reason alone: it was for this reason that Kapila did not make any mention of him:

That God is beyond the comprehension of all finite intelligence is also of universal acceptance and even religions contradicting amongst themselves invariably admit this. laid therefore under the difficulty and impossibility of proving the existence and nature of God from reason alone, as Kapila went silently away without even touching on this extremely intricate problem, it is quite unsafe to advance any theory regarding his attitude towards that ultimate question. Further it would be an unwarranted assertion to say anything definitely on the religious inclination of Kapila, while we are in the dark having no means of ascertaining it.

With these same arguments, Maraimalai Adigal indirectly asserted the superiority of Śaivasiddhānta over the Sāmkhya system, where the “extremely intricate problem” of God's existence had been ignored.

Among the Tamil works and in regards to the rejection of the Vedic and Āgamic roots of Śaivasiddhānta, in particular, Adigal relied not only on classics like the *Tolkāppiyam* and the *Tirukkural* but even on the more recent writings of revivalists and saints like Ramalinga Adigal. Ramalinga's theories had a considerable impact on Maraimalai Adigal, representing the starting point and main inspiration for the development of his gradually more radical interpretation of Śaivasiddhānta, despite the differences between the two.¹⁰⁷

While the acquaintance with intellectuals and religious personalities involved in the Neo-Śaivism revivalism provided Maraimalai Adigal with an extensive network of contacts among its propagandists, he also got more exposed to English and cosmopolitan influences when he moved to Madras, where he worked as a Tamil scholar at the Madras Christian College (MCC) between 1901 and 1911. The College itself was particularly active in opposing Hindu nationalism by means of its

¹⁰⁷ As Vaithees (2015, 170; 201-203) has noted, Ramalinga Adigal belonged to a previous generation of revivalists who despite showing the first signs of Western influence were not yet involved in reforming religion as the basis of regional identities construction and crystallization. One consequence was that he did not reject the Sanskrit tradition, despite criticizing its excessive ritualism and casteism. In the case of Maraimalai Adigal, instead, there emerges a strong identification between the Śaivasiddhānta with the Tamil race, history, and language.

magazine, *The Christian College Magazine*, which published articles of propagandists and supporters of both Tamil literary production and Śaivasiddhānta, like those of Sundaram Pillai, Caldwell, and G. U. Pope. Moreover, it encouraged the establishment of associations promoting Tamil language and literature, which Adigal joined by presiding over them or by delivering lectures for its members and public.¹⁰⁸

In Madras, Adigal got exposed to the Western intellectual trends of the time not only on religion, language, and literature but even on race and theories about the Indic civilizations. The claims of personalities like Caldwell and Pope represented a model for his future writings attempting to reconstruct Tamil literary and religious past and articulating a Dravidian ideology.

Moreover, while in Madras Adigal matured an interest in more spiritual and mystical practices, thus developing a more radical and liberal interpretation of Śaivasiddhānta. He nourished this interest by starting to practice yoga and by reading writings on spiritualism, mysticism, and psychology by Theosophists and neo-Hindu revivalists, taking distance from the ritualistic and highly doctrinaire aspects of Śaivasiddhānta. So, in 1908 Adigal launched the English monthly magazine entitled *Oriental Mystic Myna*, from which his interest in occult science, hypnotism, and mesmerism emerged: he indeed understood mysticism as necessary for intellectual progress (Vaithees 2015, 105-6). The aim of the magazine, as it is stated in its first issue (1908a, 9-12), is to elucidate the “occult side” of Śaivasiddhānta and give an account of its “secret works” on yoga practices which are known only by saints, teachers, and adepts – though without violating its privacy.¹⁰⁹ At the same time, the magazine shows how the interest in the Orientalists’ and, in general, English writings had influenced both his research methods and approach through the continuous confrontation with the Orientalists’ claims and the effort to analyze the topics in a scholarly way.

After he retired from the MCC in 1911, Maraimalai Adigal completely committed himself to recast Śaivasiddhānta by founding a radical ascetic order and monastery, the *Camaraca Caṅmārkkā Nilayam*, which highly resented of Ramalinga Adigal influence,¹¹⁰ and through which he intended to spread both a liberal Śaivasiddhānta and Tamil revival. Adigal performed the ceremony to become

¹⁰⁸ See Vaithees (2015, 86-90).

¹⁰⁹ It is particularly interesting how he related the mesmeric trance with the *nirmala avastā*, the state in which the self loses its objective consciousness while gaining a gradually clearer subjective consciousness (See Maraimalai Adigal 1908a, 5-7; 1908b, 17-21; 1908c, 18-21).

¹¹⁰ The name of the order itself was recalling that of *Camaraca Vēta Caṅmārkkā Caṅkam*, the order founded 1865 by Ramalinga. The name of Ramalinga order was later changed in *Camaraca Cutta Caṅmārkkā Cattiya Caṅkam* in 1872. Despite the impact that Ramalinga’s ideas had on Maraimalai Adigal, important differences still emerged between the two. The first and most important one is that Ramalinga did not reject the Sanskrit scriptures, thus he did not preach the Tamil genealogy of Śaivasiddhānta, nor he got involved in the articulation of Tamil nationalism. Moreover, Ramalinga Adigal’s preaching focused on the external aspects of religious worship, thus emphasizing the importance of body discipline and of the devotional practice, while Adigal was more concerned with the internal or intellectual aspects of it.

an ascetic, and after that he lived as an itinerant lecturer in the whole of the Subcontinent and as a propagandist of both Śaivasiddhānta and Tamil language. Vaithees (2015, 110) pointed out the unconventionality of the ceremony for becoming an ascetic, which was not performed by a qualified *guru* but rather by his *yoga* teacher, without using the necessary *mantras* and rituals. This was a clear sign of his departure from the tradition.

Vaithees (2015, 209) also mentioned that the aims of the order pertained to both the linguistic and religious domains, as Maraimalai Adigal ought to both illustrate the more spiritual aspects of the Śaivasiddhānta, like the concept of *cīvakāruṇya*, which Ramalinga had emphasized, and promote a pure Tamil, both as a way to educate the people and to unite the Tamil community by eradicating the Brahmins influences on the language.

The intense activism of Adigal as both a Śaivasiddhānta propagandist, advocate of Tamil language, and ideologue of Dravidianism through his magazines, lectures, and associations had earned him considerable popularity. One key factor which guaranteed his success among the masses was his oratory skills, gained by working with Comacuntara Nayakar.

The period between the 1910s and the 1920s was crucial for the emergence of Adigal as the leading exponent of Tamil and Śaivasiddhānta revivalism. Two, in particular, were the events that marked a turning point.

The first one was the rise of the Justice Party. The Justice Party, formerly South Indian Liberal Federation (SILF), which marked the beginning of a more rational phase of Tamil nationalism as previously stated, had an anti-caste and anti-Brahmin agenda and thus represented the first political organization of the Dravidian ideology, owing a lot to the writings of missionaries like Caldwell and Pope. Among their demands, they stressed the importance of equal education for all people.

Vaithees (2015, 121) highlighted that while Adigal was not directly involved in it, he was still connected to it. He shared the aims and concerns of the Justice Party, among whose members there were his friend and students of Adigal. Since Adigal was already an important exponent of the Dravidian ideology and popular through his writings – which were being published in both English journals, like the *Justice*, and Tamil journals, like the *Dravidian* –, his participation in Dravidian associations, and his efforts for the official declaration of Tamil as a classical language (Vaithees 2015, 125), he represented an inspiration for the party's members. Therefore, the emergence of the Justice Party strengthened his popularity.

The second factor which made him emerge as the prominent ideologue of Dravidianism was the inauguration of the *Taṇittamiḷ Iyakkam* (“Pure Tamil Movement”), of which he is considered to be the “father”. It was a movement of linguistic purism that aimed at eradicating especially Sanskrit,

English, and Persian loanwords and replacing them with native elements to restore the classic language of the Caṅkam age. Their task was deeply challenging, especially due to the spread of a highly Sanskritised idiom, namely the *maṇippiravāḷam*, during the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries, of which even non-Brahmins had made extensive use (Kailasapathy 1979, 32). Nevertheless, the urge to purify language derived from the idea that languages are the basis of a civilization, thus protecting them is vital for preserving races.

While Adigal is considered to be its chief architect, besides his contribution and those of Sundaram Pillai, even the writings of Devaneyya Pavanar, Pavalareru Perunchithirananar, and Paratitacan were crucial for starting the movement. The monthly magazine *Tenmoḷi*, established by Pavalareru Peruncittirananar and Parithimar Kalaignar, played an important role in promulgating the movement.

It was after the start of the movement and following its aims that changes were made in the names of its members, their associations, and their newspapers, starting from Adigal: his name changed from Vedachalam Pillai to Maraimalai Adigal; his order, the *Camaraca Caṅmārkkā Nilayam*, was renamed as *Potunilaik Kaḷakam*; and the *Ñāṇacākaram* was retitled as *Aṟivukkaḷal* (Kailasapathy 1979, 28).

The task of the movement presented, however, critical issues: the creation of a standard and self-sufficient Tamil which could suit the modern society represents a challenging process, especially if one considers the diglossia which characterizes it and the fact that many words, namely neologisms, which were introduced during the nineteenth and the twentieth century were results of the changing society and had foreign origins, thus not having Tamil corresponding words.

This represented, indeed, the movement's weakness, becoming more evident when efforts were made to produce new glossaries and dictionaries, especially those containing technical words.¹¹¹

The rise and indirect support of the Justice Party on the one hand, and the success of the Pure Tamil Movement on the other, increased Adigal's popularity among the masses, thus enhancing the spread of his ideas and allowing him to get a vast basin of financial support for their accomplishment

Another crucial factor that helped in legitimizing them was Adigal's collaboration with Tiruvarangam Pillai (Tiruvaraṅkam Piḷḷai), who founded the South India Saiva Siddhanta Book Publishing Limited in 1920, also known as *Kaḷakam* through which he published books on Tamil and Śaivasiddhānta, and the monthly journal *Centamiḷ Celvi* in 1923. Besides being the spokesmen of the

¹¹¹ It was with this aim that in 1934 the Committee for Scientific and technical terminology was constituted with the patronage and support of the Madras Presidency government, which gave rise to a new set of controversies or school of thoughts, having different opinions about the adoption of foreign words for technical words. See Kailasapathy (1979, 34-35).

Tamil and Śaivasiddhānta revival of Adigal, who represented an inspiration for both of them, the two initiatives helped him mobilizing not only scholars but even lay followers (Vaithees 2015, 206).

Although the Justice Party and the Pure Tamil Movement were not officially connected, they were indeed complementary in their attempts to free non-Brahmin Tamils from the Brahmins' influence on a socio-political and linguistic level, respectively. Therefore, for this reason, the success of one of the two also had repercussions on the other. The two decades between the 1920s and the 1940s were favorable, with the ascent of the Justice Party in the Presidency and the writing productivity of Adigal. Nevertheless, this did not mean that there was no challenge for both of them: while the Justice Party had to deal with the different opinions and needs of its members, who had different social backgrounds, thus showing a lack of harmony within its members, Adigal had to confront with both the conservatives and the Self-Respect Movement.

Nevertheless, what clearly stressed his predominance as a propagandist of the Dravidian ideology and Śaivasiddhānta, marking the prevailing of its radical or "Dravidian" strand (Vaithees 2015, 178), was the second outbreak of the *Arutpā-Marutpā* controversy. Started at the beginning of the twentieth century (1902-1903), a primary attack that Adigal's conservative contemporaries moved on him and the other radicals was their reliance on and usage of Western research and writings, which the conservatives perceived as a symptom and proof of their misinterpretation of the Śaivasiddhānta practices. As the controversy continued for decades, their accusations became gradually more focused on a personal attack to Adigal rather than the Dravidian dimension of the stream he represented, a sign of his general acknowledgment among the Tamil community. Around the 1920s, what they mainly questioned was Adigal's credibility as an exponent of Śaivasiddhānta and as an ascetic, especially due to the nationalistic sentiments which were emerging from the pages of his *Ñānacākaram*. Maraimalai Adigal's articles, indeed, were largely used as a primary inspiration by both the contemporary political parties, like the Justice Party, and the emerging atheistic Dravidian movement known as *Cuyamariyātai Iyakkam* or Self-Respect Movement, founded by Periyar in 1925. While the conservatives' attacks went on and depicted Adigal and his followers as mere nationalists who were using religion for their social and political purposes, at the same time they highlighted how much the radicals' support basin had increased, determining the dominance of the Dravidian recasting of Śaivasiddhānta.

Nevertheless, as already mentioned, the Self-Respect Movement represented a challenge for Adigal, maintaining an ambivalent attitude.

Dedicated to the goal of getting rid of both British and Brahmins' oppression, and giving non-Brahmins a sense of pride based on their Dravidian past and constructing a Dravidian nation,¹¹² it signed the beginning of a new phase of Tamil nationalism, namely the Dravidian movement *stricto sensu* or Dravidianism, which will have its main expression in the anti-Hindi agitations of the 1930s and 1940s, the establishment of the Dravida Kazhagam ("Association of Dravidian", Periyar, 1944), and the split of the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (Tirāviṭa Muṇṇērrak Kaḷakam, "Dravidian Progress Association", Annadurai, 1949).¹¹³

Periyar, born E.V. Ramasamy Naicker, preached that human actions must be based on rational thought, which represents the basis for the discernment of right and wrong; irrationality, instead, leads to a condition of slavery. According to these assumptions, freedom means, above all, respecting the thoughts and actions founded on reason, which are thus righteous. Acting according to reason and refusing irrationality implied the categorical rejection of the caste system, on which the inequalities that afflicted much of Indian society depended, and devotionalism.¹¹⁴

The idea that religion establishes discrimination in both social and economic life, being made out of falsehoods, led to Periyar's aim to destroy the existing Hindu social order in its entirety and to create a new rational society without castes and religions where equal human, social, and economic rights are established.¹¹⁵ No expenditure was to be incurred for worship, no priest was to be employed as an intermediary between the people and the gods, and public funds were not to be used for the propagation of religious scriptures or the construction of new temples but for the promotion of technology and the development of industry and education. Thus, they supported an iconoclastic atheism which found expression in the critical attacks on all the Hindu traditions,¹¹⁶ including Śaivasiddhānta, for the "absurdities" found in its scriptures, like the *Periyapurāṇam* (Veeramani 1982).

¹¹² The agitation for a Dravidian State never became part of the British agenda, and was totally eclipsed on the verge of Independence. A crucial issue which determined the failure of this demand was the lack of support from the non-Tamil Dravidians of the Madras Presidency.

¹¹³ For a history of the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam see Ramasamy (2009).

¹¹⁴ Appealing to the government, Periyar called for the abolition of castes and restrictions on access to all public roads, reservoirs, wells, schools, places of welcome for pilgrims and travelers, and temples, for non-Brahmins. He announced the cancellation of the title of his caste, Nayakkar, from his name, and also asked for the abandonment of suffixes, terminologies, and signs on any part of the body that denoted a specific caste or sect. The attack to devotionalism included even the criticism of the *tamilpparru*, as a form of divinization. According to Periyar the devotion towards Tamil was a threat for the construction of a Dravidian nation comprehending all the Dravidian people of the South (Ramaswamy 1997, 64). Nevertheless, this did not imply that the Self-Respecters did not support the cause of Tamil language and the struggle for its re-evaluation.

¹¹⁵ See Veeramani (1982).

¹¹⁶ Periyar's struggle against the rule of the Brahmins and the Hindu religion in general was marked by a particular event. In 1904, at the age of twenty-five, he went on a pilgrimage to Varanasi. The difficulty encountered in obtaining a meal at the pilgrim inns that fed exclusively the Brahmins had forced him to fight with stray dogs for the leftovers thrown into the street.

Periyar's movement represented a threat, especially for the intellectuals and religious personalities belonging to the more conservative stream of the Śaivasiddhānta, who accepted the Sanskrit tradition, and all that it represented in the twentieth century. Nevertheless, even the more radical stream was not spared from their attacks, despite the claims of its Tamil origins and essence, and the claims that the Sanskrit scriptures were only copies of the Tamil sacred texts.¹¹⁷

Nevertheless, Self-Respecters and Maraimalai Adigal did not really antagonize each other, as they shared the same goals and vision when it came to social transformations to accomplish for the sake of Tamils. In fact, Self-Respecters found Adigal's writings inspirational and utilized some of his claims, particularly in reference to the reconstruction of the Dravidian past: even when formally rejecting Śaivasiddhānta in all its declinations, making use of Adigal's writings meant, in practice, giving notoriety to his religious stands, as it was not possible to split or separate them from Adigal's articulation of Tamil past.

At the same time, Adigal criticized their rejection of Śaivasiddhānta by even providing the reasons why he found their opposition as nonsense: the Śaivasiddhānta revival was the key factor that gave voice to the need for social reform and nationalist sentiments, functioning as a basis for its emergence and organization, thus the Self-Respecters were attacking the very foundations of their movement; both Śaivasiddhānta and Self-Respecters wanted to uplift Tamil people, especially the oppressed castes, by opposing Brahmins.¹¹⁸ Therefore, Adigal concluded that the movement of Periyar and Śaivasiddhānta were not conflicting in their objective in the last analysis, thus the Self-Respecters' stand was needless and inconsistent.

A further step Maraimalai Adigal took was attempting to downsize the repercussion of their declared opposition on the momentum of Śaivasiddhānta and justify the contacts he nevertheless maintained with them.

During the late 1920s, he denounced the state of emergency for Śaivasiddhānta, which he said (1930) to be threatened by two different groups of people who were lacking in grasping its principles: on one side, some claimed to be Śaiva who had fully realized the truth of Śaiva religion and to protect it, namely the conservative stream of the tradition; on the other side, those who thought that the doctrines that the previous group was preaching were Śaiva, and because such doctrines were not

¹¹⁷ While the Self-Respecters were oriented towards the creation of a separate Dravidian State rather than a Tamil nation, a central issue was their reluctance in defining the whole Tamil community as Śaiva, since it would not only would have been exclusive of the other religious groups, but it would had moreover created new inequalities, going against the essence of the movement itself. Thus, as atheists, they did not even embrace the interpretation of Śaivasiddhānta as a universal religion.

¹¹⁸ The demands for social reforms aimed at opposing the inequality among classes was one element which Adigal particularly stressed for pointing out their seek for the same goals.

conducive to the progress of the Tamils, they presented a threat for them and needed to be uprooted, namely the Self-Respecters.¹¹⁹ Thus, the false or blind Śaivas, *kuruttuc caivarkal*, who relied on the scriptures of the Aryans reflecting their involvement in murders, sacrifices, and robbery, and who were thus sticking to casteism, were the reason why Periyar and his followers wanted to eradicate Śaivasiddhānta. By defining the conservatives as blind, Adigal indirectly identified himself as the proponent of the true Śaivasiddhānta, which, in the last analysis, was not clashing with the objectives of Periyar.

By the beginning of the 1930s, Maraimalai Adigal had reached the peak of his success, indirectly thanks to the disputes that saw him as one of the main actors. His religious stands at that time had become increasingly entangled with the social demands and aspirations: the efforts of recasting a religion for Tamil non-Brahmins completely matched those to reform the society for the construction of a Tamil nation for and of the non-Brahmins.¹²⁰ To accomplish such aims, the moral and financial support of the elites within society was his target; the requests for the building of printing presses, libraries, and Universities were publicized through the journals and associations he owned, managed, and collaborated with.¹²¹

The symbol of his success was the celebration of the twentieth anniversary of his order in 1931, on whose occasion Maraimalai Adigal organized a four days convention. On that occasion, a list of social and religious reformist resolutions was proposed and approved.¹²² One of the main topics was the promotion and cultivation of pure Tamil in the religious domain – through the performance of rituals only in Tamil –, in the social realm – through the establishment of a Tamil university –, and in the scholarly writings – through the use of the language devoid of loanwords.

The demands for language purism reflected Adigal’s engagement with Tamil literature, which represented his source of information and inspiration throughout his life and activity. The use of the

¹¹⁹ See Adigal (1930, 1): “avviruvēru kūṭṭattinaril oru pakuti yār tammaic caivar aṇavun tāmē caivavamayattiṅ unmaiyaṁ murrum iṇarntu atāṇaip pātukāppavōṇavuṅ kūrikkolḷuvōrr āvar; marāvarō, iccaivakkuḷuvinar kūruvaṇavē śaiva camayakkōṭṭpātukaḷākumeṇap pīraḷa uṇarntu, akkōṭṭpātukaḷ tamiḷar muṇṇērrattirku iṭantāmal atarkuk kēṭṭupayappaṇavāyirukkalāl, avai tammai vēroṭu kaḷaiyakkatavēmeṇa maṭikaṭṭi nīrpavar āvar”. See also Vaithees (2015, 150-2).

¹²⁰ This particularly emerges in one of his last works, *Tamiḷar Matam*, published in 1941. In this work, Adigal presents the excavations of the Indus Valley civilization as an unequivocal proof of an advanced pre-Aryan Dravidian culture. This implies that at their arrival in the North-west of the Indian Subcontinent, Dravidian languages were already present and spoken.

¹²¹ Among those even the *Kaḷakam* founded in 1920 by Tiruvarangam Pillai, which in the 1930s had embraced the cause of anti-Hindi agitations, becoming an important tool for the mobilization of masses.

¹²² One of the main topics was the rejection of casteism, which had to be accomplished by the all-castes equality in the performance of rituals, the promotion of intercastes unions, and the widows’ remarriage. Adigal was always very concerned about the topic of the mixed-castes marriages, as he himself was born from such a union, with his mother being a Cenaittalaivar Cettiyaṇ and his father being a Velalar. He equally criticized arranged marriages, which were established on the basis of caste origin, and which he considered as a source of misery among the society (Vaithees 2015, 65-66; 246-247).

Tamil Śaiva scriptures and classics was indeed crucial for linking the Śaivasiddhānta revival with the quest for a Dravidian identity and nation, as Adigal gradually presented the religious history they portrayed as *the* history of the Tamils.

Maraimalai Adigal represented one of the most influential personalities in the process of reforming Śaivasiddhānta, and for sure, he was the revivalist who, more than anyone, established and succeeded in spreading the theory of this particular religion as the essence of Tamil people. It was mainly through his efforts that the identification of Tamils as non-Brahmin, Śaiva Dravidians took hold in Tamil Nadu, filling the air with the demands for more acknowledgment among the pan-Indian and international environments.

If the legacy of radicals like Adigal was the emergence of a different awareness of religion and of the socio-political meaning it can carry, of a sense of pride of being Tamil and Śaiva, of a more enthusiastic participation in religious life and activities for the aims which could be accomplished through it, the conservative stream and its reliance on the traditional practices represented an interrupted and stable point of reference for the masses when the social and political enthusiasm lessened – and then vanished – with the lack of charismatic personalities leading it, both religious and intellectuals.

By the 1940s, indeed, the Tamil nationalist movements had lost their commitment to the religious domain, being now focused on the political arena. Not only religious revival and reform were no longer on the propagandist agenda, but there was a general denial of the role that religion – and Śaivasiddhānta in particular – had played for their very emergence and developments, as was already seen in Periyar's movement.

Nevertheless, the previous predominance of the radical stream of Śaivasiddhānta did not imply a flattening of the contributions from the conservative, more orthodox stream, especially if we consider the intellectuals supporting them. Nor did the masses' support provided to the radicals mean that there was no commitment to the traditional practices or that the temples and monastic complexes which had gained power during the centuries had lost their authority or were less active in their effort to spread the orthodox tradition. In fact, even when the radical stream had lost its last main leader and the new socio-political agenda did not seek the support of religion for its accomplishment anymore, the conservative stream – that until that moment had been highly threatened by their rivals – did not lose more than it had already lost. It was among its supporters, indeed, that the activity of important intellectuals was located, testifying the surviving commitment of the people beyond all the social and political excitement.

M. Arunachalam is one of the most recent scholars who supported the Śaivasiddhānta valorization.

CHAPTER II

THE PARADOX OF ARUNACHALAM: LIFE AND THOUGHT OF AN UNEXPLORED SCHOLAR

2.1 Arunachalam: life and works

M. Arunachalam left a significant mark on Tamil studies through his literary, grammatical, and philosophical research. He graduated in Mathematics at the Chidambaram Meenakshi College, and it was only later that he established himself as an important editor, scholar, historian, and social activist who got committed entirely to writing innumerable articles and books on Śaiva religion, literature, linguistics, music,¹²³ education, Gandhism, and even gardening.¹²⁴ His emergence as a complex personality was mainly due to his encounter with different charismatic scholars and religious men during different phases of his life.

In her recent book, Cuṭarvīli (2019) mentioned some biographic information about the author, highlighting his background and how his research focus changed throughout his career as a writer, an activity he carried out until the very end of his life.¹²⁵ As she pointed out on several occasions, among the people who had a profound impact on the shaping of his thought and the direction of his interest, three are those who happened to be particularly influential: Vaiyapuripillai (Vaiyāpuri Piḷḷai 1891–1956),¹²⁶ T.K.Chidambaranatha Mudaliar (Ṭi. Kē. Citamparanāta Mutaliyār, 1882–1954), and Gnaniyar Adigal (Ñāṇiyār Suvāmikaḷ, 1873–1942). The stories of the meeting with these personalities – among others – or some accounts about their relationship were provided by Arunachalam in *Kumariyum Kāciyum*, a collection of articles he wrote over the years, published in 1959.

Arunachalam met Vaiyapuripillai around 1933 or 1934 in Chennai (Arunachalam 1959, 164) after he had moved there from Tiruchitrambalam (Thanjavur area) in 1931 for a government office position (Cuṭarvīli 2019, 17-8). It is not surprising that Arunachalam was fascinated by him, considering the great recognition that Vaiyapuripillai gained as an editor and scholar. This clearly

¹²³ Arunachalam wrote four books on Tamil music, of which two – *Tamiḷ Icai Ilakkiya Varalāru* and *Tamiḷ Icai Ilakkaṇa Varalāru* – were published post-mortem by Pālacuppiramaṇiyaṅ in 2009. See Cuṭarvīli (2019, 49-52).

¹²⁴ A list of his books is found in Pālacuppiramaṇiyaṅ (2009). It can be supposed that the reason beneath Arunachalam's writings on gardening was the influence that Gandhi's basic education had on the author; according to his philosophy of education, gardening was one of the basic crafts that needed to be taught in schools for developing the child's intelligence and general knowledge. See Gandhi (1951).

¹²⁵ *Nammālvār* and *Śrī Kumaraḡurupara Suvāmikaḷ* are the last two books he published, in 1990, namely two years before his death.

¹²⁶ The story of this encounter is provided by Arunachalam (1959, 164-5).

emerges from Wilden's words (2014, 34), who defined him as "one of the fascinating figures in the second generation of Tamil scholars after the Tamil Renaissance" and an "*anathema* in the Tamil academic establishment".

The two main works which gained him such fame were a reconstruction of the Caṅkam literary history, which he published in 1940 with the title *Caṅka Ilakkiyam*,¹²⁷ and the work as chief editor of the Tamil Lexicon for the Madras University (1926-1936), financed by the Madras government.¹²⁸

Moreover, he had a keen interest in collecting manuscripts,¹²⁹ a feature that Arunachalam probably inherited from him.

Although Vaiyapuripillai was still working on the Lexicon in 1934, Cuṭarvīli (2019, 18) pointed out that Arunachalam started collaborating with him on the edition of another work, namely the *Purattirattu*, an anthology of the fifteenth century of didactic verses (Wilden 2014, 288).¹³⁰ This collaboration aroused in him a keen interest in Tamil literature, which Arunachalam nourished by joining the University of Madras as Vaiyapuripillai's student when he became the Head of the Tamil Department in 1936 (Cuṭarvīli 2019, 19).

This represented a further occasion for Arunachalam to be exposed to Vaiyapuripillai's expertise, thus collaborating on the edition of other works. It was under the lead of Vaiyapuripillai that Arunachalam published his first edition of a literary text, the *Mukkūṭarpaḷḷu*,¹³¹ in 1940, the year during which he also graduated.¹³²

T.K.C. was a Tamil scholar who mainly focused his research on studying the poet Kamban (Ramaswamy 1997, 116). Cuṭarvīli (2019, 19) mentioned that Arunachalam met him between 1937 and 1938, when T.K.C. moved to Arunachalam's neighborhood in Chennai. Despite the commitment of Vaiyapuripillai to the literary field, according to Cuṭarvīli (2019, 19), T.K.C. was primarily responsible for Arunachalam's development of an aesthetic taste for literature. Although there is no

¹²⁷ Wilden (2014, 33-34) emphasized that this was the first complete edition of this literature, were all the poems were listed according to their authors' names. Wilden (2014, 100) also emphasized the importance of the introduction of this book, which contains a detailed account of the sources he examined. For a list of the other editions of this literature see Wilden (2014, 101).

¹²⁸ Arooran (1976, 140-1) stressed that the necessity of undertaking such a project was pointed out at the beginning of the twentieth century by missionaries and scholars involved in Tamil studies – among whom he mentioned G.U. Pope – who, thus, seem to have played a significant part in the government choice to bring out a Lexicon in Tamil. For an overview of the different phases of the Lexicon's publication, see Arooran (1976, 106-141).

¹²⁹ As Wilden (2014, 100) mentioned, his collection went to the National Library in Kolkatta.

¹³⁰ Arunachalam (1959, 165-166) gave a brief account of the structure of this book and the work done for this edition.

¹³¹ Zvelebil (1974, 226) mentioned that the *paḷḷu* were poems referred to the culture of Pallas, an untouchable agricultural community. As they were a product of this specific culture, the hero of this literature was generally a landlord and, if not, a god. The scholar described the *Mukkūṭarpaḷḷu* as the most famous work of this genre, written during the latter half of the seventeenth century by Ennaiyappulavar. See Cuṭarvīli (2019, 146-151).

¹³² For a list of other works he edited and information about them see Cuṭarvīli (2019, 145-172).

proper article in *Kumariyum Kāciyum* dedicated to him,¹³³ some bits of information are found here and there in the book, from where this scholar's impact on him is clear.

Although Arunachalam was born in a Śaiva family and was, hence, in contact with important monasteries like the Thiruvavaduthurai Adhinam and the Thiruppanantal Adhinam, meeting Gnaniyar Adigal was crucial for his commitment in the study of Śaivism and writings about its practices and philosophy (Cuṭarvīli 2019, 22).

Gnaniyar Adigal was a well-known personality in Tamil Nadu: not only was he the fifth head of the order of the Thirukovalur Adhinam in Thirupathiripuliyur (Arunachalam 1959, 185), but he was also the founder of the Caiva Cittānta Makā Camājam,¹³⁴ (Cuṭarvīli 2019, 21), an association which he started in 1907 intending to spread Śaivism and knowledge about its philosophy and practice. This task was carried on mainly through its magazine, *Cittāntam*. The involvement in this association presented a further occasion for Arunachalam to meet religious personalities and revivalists who wrote in its magazine.¹³⁵

The esteem that Arunachalam felt for Gnaniyar Adigal as a pious person strongly emerged from the description that the author made of him (1959, 182-3) as a religious lamp, *tīpam*, that was burning in the heart of thousands of people in the general context of political and social instability of the Tamil land. The Śaiva propaganda that Gnaniyar Adigal carried out was enhanced by his mastery of Sanskrit, which he used during his public sermons to support his views, and English. Arunachalam (1959, 184) described his public sermons as events lasting not less than three hours, attended by all kinds of people without distinction of age, education, and social status.¹³⁶ He was utterly fascinated by his oratory.

Nevertheless, what had a crucial part in Arunachalam's increasing interest in Śaivism from a more academic perspective were, more than his sermons, the religious classes on the Śaiva Śāstras that Gnaniyar Adigal led (Arunachalam 1959, 185).¹³⁷ The author referred that Gnaniyar Adigal was particularly careful in explaining the tenets of the Śaiva religion to his audience before getting them involved in the study of the philosophical scriptures of the corpus to provide them with the instruments for their correct understanding. Singing Śaiva songs was one of his effective strategies:

¹³³ In the introduction to the book, Arunachalam (1959, 7) justified this mentioning that he feared about not bringing justice to his greatness as a scholar. This was also mentioned by Cuṭarvīli (2019, 20).

¹³⁴ Today it is known as Caiva Cittānta Perumaṅṅam, led by Nallur S. Saravanan, who is also the Head of the Śaiva Siddhānta Department at the Madras University.

¹³⁵ One of those was Maraimalai Adigal, who worked as its secretary for many years.

¹³⁶ This aspect was particularly emphasized by Arunachalam. He, for example, mentioned (1959, 188-9) that even his son who was just one and half year old used to listen at him with crossed legs for the whole duration of the speech, totally captured by him.

¹³⁷ The author mentioned (1959, 185) that Gnaniyar Adigal was requested by him and "some friends", twenty people in total, to conduct such classes.

not only were they explicative of religious notions, but they also triggered an emotional involvement in those who heard him, leaving them with teary eyes (Arunachalam 1959, 186). In this context, one of the merits of Gnaniyar Adigal, according to Arunachalam (1959, 190-2), was the creation of a new style for religious preaching that, besides being followed by others, was responsible for a big-scale religious upheaval in the ordinary people. The author was, undoubtedly, one of those captured by his charm.

After meeting Gnaniyar Adigal, Arunachalam started being involved in the activities of the Caiva Cittānta Makā Camājam in 1940, becoming responsible for the publishing of commentaries to the Śaiva Śāstras (Cuṭarvīli 2019, 22) and also taking care of the magazine *Cittāntam* for nineteenth years, that is from 1963 to 1971, and from 1980 to 1990 (Cuṭarvīli 2019, 43).

As Cuṭarvīli (2019, 27) pointed out, publishing with the *Cittāntam* and other magazines that followed¹³⁸ made Arunachalam emerge as a Tamil scholar, a status that became officially established through the academic positions he covered after that: Professor of Philosophy at the Kashi Hindu University for two years (1944-6),¹³⁹ Director of the Tamil-Sanskrit Institute set up by Raja Sar Muthiah Chettiar (1974-9), and finally Head of the Department of Lexicography at the Thanjavur Tamil University (1983-6). Cuṭarvīli (2019, 27) also mentioned that Arunachalam did not complete his work as the Chief Editor of the Tamil Dictionary at Thanjavur University due to disagreements with its Vice-Chancellor; this was the last time that Arunachalam worked for an educational institution.

The two years spent at Kashi University signed another turning point in his life. There, Arunachalam was exposed to Gandhian thought and ideals, especially regarding the importance of basic education.¹⁴⁰ As Cuṭarvīli mentioned (2019, 24), the impact that such notions had on Arunachalam was so profound to lead him to resign from his professorship in 1946 to join the Hindustan Ptolemy Sangam in Sevagram, a city in Maharashtra, where he received the proper training to establish and manage primary education institutes based on Gandhi's ideals.¹⁴¹ The direct outcome

¹³⁸ Some of the magazines are mentioned by Cuṭarvīli (2019, 38). Among those there are the *Tamiḷ Muracu* and the *Centamiḷ*, which promoted the principles of the Tamil reform movement.

¹³⁹ Cuṭarvīli (2019, 23) mentioned that it was Radhakrishnan, the vice-chancellor of the University, to appoint him as Professor due to his expertise on Śaivism, the knowledge of Sanskrit and English, besides his degree in Tamil studies.

¹⁴⁰ Gandhi (1951) believed that literacy was only one of the many aspects of education, which has to be considered as a synonym of development. Such development must concern both the mind and the body of the child; this implied both the teaching of handicrafts, which would have also taught them the concept of the dignity of job and to regard it as an integral part of their intellectual growth, and that of the personal care, particularly focused on hygiene.

¹⁴¹ The experience at this association also put Arunachalam in contact with other Gandhians. One of them was Vinoba Bhave (Vinōpā Pāvē, 1895–1982), a well-known Gandhian activist and spiritual successor of Gandhi. Arunachalam (1959, 125-153) wrote a long article about their meetings and talks. As the scholar reported, one main topic of their meeting was the discussion on Śaiva texts, both in Marathi and Tamil, Sanskrit and Tamil writers, and Tamil grammar. One of the things that Arunachalam appreciated the most about Vinoba Bhave was his commitment in studying not only

of this experience was the involvement in service works in Tiruchitrambalam, his hometown: the founding of the Gandhi Vidyalayam (Kānti Vittiyālayam), a primary education and middle school and a girls' high school; the establishment of an orphanage; a training institute for teachers (Cuṭarvīli 2019, 24-5; 36-7; Pālacuppiramaṇiyaṅ 2009, 63). Moreover, such commitment to the development of his community also brought Arunachalam to publish, starting from 1946, a considerable number of articles focused on welfare and education (Cuṭarvīli 2019, 25) as long as books, both in Tamil and English.¹⁴² Among those, there are also books that Arunachalam wrote for the formation of teachers, thus centered on the explanation of teaching methods.

Nevertheless, his research interest in Tamil literature and Śaivism did not interrupt. In particular, during the 1960s, he was mainly involved in the writing and publishing of articles¹⁴³ and books about the Śaiva philosophy and practices,¹⁴⁴ while starting from 1969, he was engaged in the publishing of the *Tamiḷ Ilakkiya Varalāru*.

2.2 *Tamiḷ Ilakkiya Varalāru*

The Tamil Renaissance occurring in the last decades of the nineteenth century had conferred literature the role of advocating the ancientness of Tamil civilization and the complexity of its culture. As already mentioned, a crucial factor in delineating this cultural phenomenon was the rediscovery of ancient texts, which started to circulate thanks to print innovations. Emmrich (2011, 599-600) pointed out that the rediscovery of one particular text led the way to the development of modern studies on Tamil literary history. This text was the *Cīvakacintāmaṇi*, a Jain hagiography classified as an epic (Zvelebil 1974, 136; Wilden 2014, 31; Trento 2022, 170) that, according to Zvelebil (1974, 136), was not earlier than the tenth century.¹⁴⁵ In particular, this text was edited and translated (1907) by U. Ve. Caminataiyar (U. Vē. Cāminātaiyar, 1855-1942), a Tamil scholar coming from a family of musicians of Kumbakonam, collector of manuscripts, and associated with the Thiruvavaduthurai Adhinam (Wilden 2014, 29-30). Emmrich (2011, 600) emphasized that the work on the

the North Indian languages, but even the four main Dravidian ones – Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam – with the belief that such knowledge would have led to unity among Indians. He, thus, did in action what Gandhi had preached with words. Nevertheless, when talking to each other, Vinoba spoke in Hindi, while Arunachalam spoke in Tamil, with both of them paying attention to use a simple language to make the other understand (Arunachalam 1959, 150).

¹⁴² A later English book on this subject was *Education in Tamil Nadu*, published in 1969. See Pālacuppiramaṇiyaṅ (2009, 65-6).

¹⁴³ Many of those were published on the Caiva Cittānta Makā Camājam magazine.

¹⁴⁴ See Pālacuppiramaṇiyaṅ (2009) for a list of his books on Śaivism.

¹⁴⁵ Zvelebil (1974, 173) and Prentiss (1999, 117) mentioned that Cēkkiḷār wrote the *Periyapurāṇam* as a reaction to this epic, praised by king Koluttunga II, in the attempt to expose its false beliefs. See Zvelebil (1974, 136-8) for an account of its content. Moreover, Zvelebil (1974, 159) also mentioned that the *Cīvakacintāmaṇi* was taken as model by Beschi for writing the *Tēmpāvaṇi*. See also Trento (2022, 170; 192-4).

Cīvakacintāmaṇi, which he said to be the first text examined in that period, represented the foundation for the cultural project of writing a history of Tamil literature, which many scholars attempted.

Arunachalam's *Tamiḷ Ilakkiya Varalāru* stood out in this context. Considered his masterpiece and a milestone in studying Tamil literature, it was the first work recording Tamil literary history from the ninth to the sixteenth century in eleven volumes.¹⁴⁶ They were published from 1969 to 1977 by different presses: the Manikkam Press of Chennai, the Jemini Printing House of Kumbakonam,¹⁴⁷ and Arunachalam's Gandhi Vidyalayam.¹⁴⁸

The employment of the Gandhi Vidyalayam resources was attributed to the difficulties that the author faced during the publication of some volumes, which caused considerable delays. Such inconveniences are mentioned on several occasions by Arunachalam. In the introduction to the ninth century literary history book (1975a/2005, xiii-xiv), he wrote:

*ippittakam 1973ilēyē veḷivantirukka vēṇṭum. itai yām koṭuttirunta accakattār
ōrāṇṭu mēl oru vēlaiyum ceyyāmaiyaḷ, puttakattait tirumpapperru vēru
accakattil koṭuttu accu vēlaiyai naṭanta vēṇṭiyiruntatu. munṇamē
veḷiyākiyiruntāl celavu evvaḷavō kuraintirukkum. eṇ ceyvatu? nalla nūl
veḷiyiṭa muyalvōrukku ivai pōṇra tunpaṅkaxl pala. [...]iṭaiyil kākitam
ciṭaikkāta nilaimaiyum oṇrukku iru maṭaṅkukkum atikamāka vilai koṭuttu
vāṅka vēṇṭiya nilaimaiyum cērntu koṇṭaṇa. entak kākitamāvatu kiṭaittāl
pōtum eṇra nilaimaiyum kūṭa. eṇavē aṇparkaḷ kākitattiṇ tarattaiyum
veḷiyiṭṭiṇ tāmatattaiyum, piḷaikaḷaiyum aṇpukūrntu poruttuk koḷḷa
vēṇṭiyavarkaḷ.*

This book must have been published in 1973. As the publisher to whom I had given it did not do any work for more than a year, he had to return the book and I gave it to another publisher to carry out the printing work. If it had been released earlier, the cost would have been much lower. What can I do? Those who try to publish a good book have many sufferings of this sort. [...] In between, the situation of not getting paper and the situation of having to pay more than twice the price occurred. It is also a situation where any paper is available. So the dear ones have to kindly bear with the quality of the paper and the delay in the publication and the errors.

However, the publications' delays were not the only criticality that Arunachalam highlighted. In the preface to the eleventh-century literary history (1971a/2005, xviii), he strongly criticized the

¹⁴⁶ In 1974 Arunachalam also published *An Introduction to the History of Tamil literature*, which was meant to convey some information to the English readers.

¹⁴⁷ See Arunachalam (1972/2005, xv).

¹⁴⁸ The prints that Arunachalam made through his institution are the one available today.

presses of the time for the lack of attention towards the quality of the works they published, the readability of the script of the provided material and also the poor quality of the paper they employed. In this context, Arunachalam (1971a/2005, xviii) praised the Manikkam Press, which published the first four volumes of this collection in order of writing, namely the literary history of the fifteenth, fourteenth, thirteenth, and eleventh century. Nevertheless, Arunachalam mentioned (1972/2005, xv-xvi) that this publishing house was closed in mid-1971, causing delays in the publication of the tenth-century literary history volume (Arunachalam 1972/2005, xv-xvi).

Considering these events, it is not surprising that Arunachalam, who at that time had gained experience as an editor through the collaboration of Vaiyapuripillai and all the activities that followed, decided to cure even this aspect of his editorial's projects.

The *Tamiḷ Ilakkiya Varalāru* volumes were reprinted by The Parkar in 2005 under the editorship of V. Karunanidhi, with the permission of A. Chidambaranathan, and the assistance of Ula. Pālaccuppiramaṇiyaṅ.

The reprint work was not only aimed at restoring the availability of the books that were previously published, as Chidambaranathan mentioned in the preface inserted in every volume, but also at implementing the collection with those that Arunachalam didn't fulfill issuing.¹⁴⁹ Thus, the number of volumes increased to fourteen with the addition of the second part of the ninth-century literary history (1990a/2005), the seventeenth-century literary history (1990b/2005), and a volume containing miscellaneous tables of contents taken from the other volumes (2005).¹⁵⁰

The attempts to search for the missing volumes were triggered by the declared intentions of the author to publish such material.

So, in the introduction to the ninth-century volume, part one, Arunachalam (1975a/2005, xiii) stated that he would have published the literary history of that period in three parts due to the richness of the produced material:

*9ām nūrrāṅṅu ilakkiya varalārrārāycciyai mūṅṅu pākamāka veḷiyiṅṅa eṅṅi,
ippōtu mutal pākattai muṅṅu taṅṅiputtakamāka veḷiyiṅṅukirōm. aṅṅuttu*

¹⁴⁹ See, for example, the publication note by Karunanidhi contained in the seventeenth century literary history (1990b/2005, viii): *ivvaralārrut tokutikaḷ mottam 14 nūlkaḷāka veḷivarukiṅṅraṅṅa. āciryar 11 tokutikaḷai veḷiyiṅṅiruntār. mēlum iraṅṅu tokutikaḷiṅṅ pakutikaḷ 'nammālyār', eṅṅa periyalilum 'śrī kumarakurupara cuvāmikaḷ' eṅṅa periyarilum nūl vaṅṅivil emakkuk kiṅṅaittatāl avarrai muraiyē 9ām nūrrāṅṅu, pākam 2, 17ām nūrrāṅṅu, pākam 1 eṅṅa cērttuḷḷōm. 14vatu tokutiyaḷāka mēṅṅpaṅṅi nūlkaḷil uḷḷa varalārru aṅṅṅavanaikaḷ muṅṅṅuraikaḷuṅṅa cērttut tokukkappaṅṅuḷḷaṅṅa. // "These volumes are published in total of fourteen books. The author had published eleven volumes. Also, parts of two volumes have been found in texts with the title "Nammālyār" and "Sri Kumaragurupara Swamikal", so we have added them as ninth century, part 2, and seventeenth century, part 1, respectively. the historical tables in the above books have been compiled along with prefaces and published as the fourteenth volume".*

¹⁵⁰ This particularly include historical content tables, dynasties genealogies, list of the books analyzed in the volume, lists of the authors and the periods of their activities.

*nammālvār, māṇikkavācakar iruvaraiyum āykinra āyvu iraṇṭām
pākamākavum, cintāmaṇi kamparāmāyaṇam parriya āyvu mūnrām
pākamākavum veḷivarum.*

Thinking to publish the research on the literary history of the ninth-century in three parts, we are now finishing and publishing the first part as a separate book. Next, the study on Nammālvār and Māṇikkavācar as second part, and the study on Cintāmaṇi and Kampar's Rāmāyaṇa as third part will be published.

Nevertheless, in the editorial note to the second part of Arunachalam's ninth-century literary history (1990/2005, vii-viii), Karunanidhi specified that the author never issued such volumes. However, he added that in *Nammālvār*, a book published in 1990, Arunachalam gave instruction to consider such work as the first section of the second part of the ninth-century literary history. Therefore, it was published by The Parkar as its second volume. As per the second section of this second part, announced to be on Māṇikkavācar, and the third part, they were never published by Arunachalam, nor were their drafts recovered by his son and Karunanidhi, who jointly searched for them in the author's library.

Similarly, Arunachalam (1971a/2005, ix-x) mentioned the willingness to publish the literary history of the seventeenth century. As reported by Karunanidhi in the editorial note to this century's related volume,¹⁵¹ the author published another book in 1990, *Śrī Kumaragurupara Suvāmikaḷ*, which was defined in the introduction as the first part of the seventeenth-century literary history volume. Thus, The Parkar published it as such following this indication.¹⁵²

Finally, it is noteworthy that Arunachalam (1971a/2005, ix-x) also mentioned the writing and publication of literary history for the seventh, eighth, and eighteenth to the twentieth century. However, the related drafts were never found.

Although the extensiveness of this collection alone might give an idea of the valuable contribution it gave to the study of literary production in Tamil, their innovative character was further emphasized by the approach that Arunachalam adopted, which marked a profound difference between him and his contemporaries: his investigation was organized in a century-base content system, whereas traditionally the literary discourse in this kind of works was centered around the poets. His choice of this different approach was triggered by his general dissatisfaction with his contemporaries' contributions in this field, both in Tamil and English, which he clearly expressed in the preface to *An*

¹⁵¹ See Arunachalam (1990b/2005, vii).

¹⁵² See also Cuṭarvīḷi (2019, 32-33).

Introduction to the History of Tamil Literature, a book that the author published in 1974.¹⁵³ The criticalities that he pointed out, as emerging from the analysis of that material, were several.

First, the poet-centered approach mainly produced mere lists of authors and their works devoid of any scientific analysis. A case in point is Simon Casie Chitty's *Tamil Plutarch*, published in 1859 in Jaffna (Arunachalam 1974, xiv); despite recognizing the interesting character of the book for the accounts it gave of almost two hundred writers, Arunachalam lamented its lack of historical and scientific nature, as the mentioned subjects were simply arranged in alphabetical order. This prevented the reconstruction of the changing ideas, thoughts, and trends in literature over time.

The lack of historical reconstruction is one of the points that Arunachalam emphasized, in contrast with the titles that many works produced starting from the late 1920s, as their titles referred to a *history* of Tamil literature.¹⁵⁴ This did not mean that before Arunachalam, no one had adopted a historical approach. Nevertheless, the author highlighted that even when some authors had resorted to some historical criteria for their works, some inadequacies were to be found there. One example among the English works is Purnalingam Pillai's *Tamil Literature*, 1929, which is said by the author (1974, xiv) to be the earliest one to attempt a historical reconstruction; unfortunately, the writer had an insufficient quantity of sources to rely on, leading Arunachalam to describe the achievement of his work as obsolete.¹⁵⁵ Among the works in Tamil, instead, Arunachalam (1974, xvi) mentioned V. Selvanayakam's *Tamiḷ Ilakkiya Varalāru*, published in 1951. He was one of the first authors to provide a division of history into six main periods,¹⁵⁶ a merit that Arunachalam recognized him. Nevertheless, he also emphasized that due to the political imprint that his classification had, Selvanayakam's work did not return a correct frame of the literary trends. The last one in this category is Vaiyapuripillai's *History Of Tamil Language And Literature*, published in 1956, which Arunachalam (1974, xv) defined as incomplete since it covered the history of the first ten centuries after Christ; nevertheless, the main criticism he showed towards this book was the employment of foreigner's contribution for the study of Tamil literature.

The inadequacy of the sources employed is one of the weak points that Arunachalam found in his contemporaries' contributions, be it because they were scant, like in the case of Purnalingam Pillai, or because they were not completely reliable. The latter is the case of C. and H. Jesudasans

¹⁵³ As Arunachalam (1974, xiii-xiv) mentioned, this book was not meant to give an exhaustive account of all the Tamil literary production, which would have been an impossible task to accomplish in a single book; nor it is organized on secular basis. Nevertheless, it meant a providing an account of every literary genre. Supposedly, with this work Arunachalam also intended to offer a more valuable alternative to the earlier contributions in English on this matter.

¹⁵⁴ See the footnote in Arunachalam (1974, xv).

¹⁵⁵ See also Arunachalam (1969a/2005 ix-x).

¹⁵⁶ See Arunachalam (1974, xvi).

where for their *History of Tamil Literature* (1961), among the forty-six employed for their bibliography, some were a pure “collection of legends” (Arunachalam 1974, 347), thus making judgment errors in selecting their source, especially in reference to data of religious character (Arunachalam 1974, xv).

Finally, a work towards which Arunachalam expressed appreciation was K.S. Srinivasa Pillai’s (Kē. Es. Cīnivācap Piḷḷai) *Tamil Varalāru*, published in 1927. He described the author as unparalleled (1974, xvi), mainly for his literary criticism, despite the poor sources’ availability.¹⁵⁷

However, Arunachalam was not the first to write a century-based Tamil literary history. As the author mentioned (1969a/2005, xii), this merit goes to Somasundara Desikar (Cōmacuntara Tēcikar), who, in his *Tamilppulavar Varalāru (16ām nūrrāṇtu)* published in 1936, analyzed the history of the poets active in the sixteenth century; nevertheless, the work lacked an analysis of the literary trends and developments.

Arunachalam’s volumes provided a broad-spectrum analysis that also took into account the historical and cultural context, biographies of writers, and details about the structures, editions, and other characteristics of the texts mentioned. The author stressed the reasons for the need for this approach on several occasions (1972/2005, vii-viii; 1979/2005, 2-3): besides offering an overview of the literary production that occurred in a given century, his volumes sought to be a historical sourcebook to help students in carrying out their research, especially when they involved texts that were unavailable to them.¹⁵⁸ In this context, the author believed that it was impossible to write a clear and compelling history of literature without taking into consideration the environment in which it was produced, the philosophical and religious trends of the time, the inscriptional evidence, and the developments occurring in the political and social domains.¹⁵⁹ Therefore, it was necessary to gather all such helpful information related to literature and its grammar. Moreover, according to Arunachalam (1973a/2005, x), a century-based record of Tamil literature would have also helped fix an unresolved problem that emerged from his contemporaries’ works: the confusion aroused from authorship uncertainties of certain works and homonymous writers who lived in different periods. In this perspective, establishing the period in which a work was written based on its internal data could help avoid such criticalities.

Another peculiarity of Arunachalam’s methodology was carrying out critical research on the contents he spoke about, which often caused him to undermine and disprove firm opinions among his

¹⁵⁷ For other mentioned works see Arunachalam (1974, xiii-xvi).

¹⁵⁸ This attempt for facilitating their learning is furthermore clear if considering that a constant tool that Arunachalam resorted to in each volume was providing tables which summed up the texts examined and glossaries.

¹⁵⁹ See also Arunachalam (1974, xvii-xviii).

contemporary scholars.¹⁶⁰ According to him, the general trend among the other literary historians was judging the texts mainly based on their tastes, without providing any analysis or objective facts which could support their stands. He made a mention of this matter in the preface to the tenth-century literary history (1972/2005, v-vi), where he wrote:

ilakkiya varalāru eṇpatu verum nūlkaḷiṇ paṭṭiyal allatu āciryar paṭṭiyal eṇpatāka maṭṭum iruntāl payaṇillai. tīraṇāyvu eṇru ikkālattār colkiṇra ilakkiya vimaricaṇamum ērra ceytāl tāṇ varalārrarīvu pūrttiyākum atarkup poruḷum uṇṭu. potuvāka nūlkaḷaip parrik karṛōriṭai nilavum karuttu oṇru, nuṇuki ārāyumu pōtu atu vēṛātalum kūṭum. vēṛātalukku aṭippaṭaic cāṇrukaḷ āṅkāṅkuc collappaṭukiṇraṇa. avarrai accāṇrukaḷ koṇṭu matippiṭa vēṇṭumēyanri, viruppu veruppu eṇru maṭṭum eṇṇuvatu poruntātu.

Literary history is useless if it is merely a list of books or a list of authors. Historical knowledge can only be complete and meaningful if literary criticism, which nowadays is called critique, is applied to it. An opinion that is generally accepted among the scholars about the texts, when examined with more attention can turn out to be different. The basic evidence for the difference is said here and there; they must be judged by that evidence, and not just according to [personal] esteem or dislike.

One of the authors that Arunachalam (1969a/2005, x) accused of giving too much space to his personal “likes and dislikes” was Ka. Su. Pillai, with a particular reference to his *Tamiḷ Ilakkiya Varalāru*, published in 1930. Although defining him as a brilliant author, Arunachalam also criticized the book's structure and the use of historical sources.

Arunachalam did not write or publish these volumes following the chronological order, but he perhaps started from the history of the fifteenth century and went backward; moreover, the delays encountered during the publishing phases of the volumes also caused a disorder in the sequence. Thus, the publishing order of the books was as follows: fourteenth century (1969a), fifteenth century (1969b), thirteenth century (1970a), eleventh century (1971a), tenth century (1972), twelfth century (1973), ninth century (1975a), and sixteenth century (1975b, part 2; 1976, part 3; 1977, part 1).

¹⁶⁰ See Cuṭarvīḷi (2019, 86-8).

As the author mentioned (1973a/2005, xi-xii), the choice of not starting to write the history of Tamil literature from the first centuries onwards was due to the uncertain data about authors and works of that period.

The scant evidence about the earliest centuries of literary production was in stark contrast with the abundance of material dated between the fourteenth and the fifteenth century available to Arunachalam. In the preface to the fourteenth-century literary history, the author (1969a, viii-ix) explained that he could collect the related sources thanks to his activity at the Caiva Cittānta Makā Camāja, which was editing commentaries to Śaiva Sāstras during the 1940s. Arunachalam got involved in editing a fifteenth-century Madurai commentary to Umāpati's *Civappirakācar*. Arunachalam described this text as a precious source of information about the religious literature of that time, besides being a valuable commentary.¹⁶¹ Nevertheless, the input for starting writing his first volumes was a statement that he read sometime after that discovery in a publication entitled *13-15 Nūrrāṇṭukaḷiṅ Tamil Ilakkiya Varalāru* of an unspecified author, according to which there was no literary development in those centuries. Knowing that this information was not correct and considering that it was sprouting from a lack of deep research, Arunachalam started working on the available material. It first took the form of a speech about the Śaiva literature during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries (*14-15ām Nūrrāṇṭukaḷil Caiva Ilakkiyam*) held in 1961 for an annual festival of Caiva Cittānta Makā Camāja, then transformed into an article published on *Cittāntam* in 1962, and finally expanded into the volumes of the *Tamiḷ Ilakkiya Varalāru*.¹⁶²

As per the source material for the other centuries, the author inserted a dedicated bibliography at the end of each volume.

It is known that during his activity as an editor, scholar, and writer, and the association with both academic institutions and prominent scholars he got acquainted with, Arunachalam collected a considerable number of books, manuscripts, journals, and documents of different natures, thus being able to count on a rich library. Cuṭarvīḷi (2019, 26; 64-5) reported that it contained more than fifteen thousand sources, which provided the material for writing these literary works and even the other books he authored. In 2012, around eight thousand of this material was donated by Arunachalam's son, A. Chidambaranatha, to the Rōjā Muttaiyā Āyvu Nūlakam in Chennai (Cuṭarvīḷi 2019, 29). A part of these was listed and provided by Pālacuppiramaṇiyaṅ (2009, 145-292). As emerging from his

¹⁶¹ See Arunachalam (1969a/2005, viii): *nūlai paricōtittum, accu vēlaiyai mērpārkkum poruppu emakku vantatu. paricōtittu vantapōtu, maturai civappirakācar urai, mikka ciṟappuṭaiya maṭṭumaṇṇri, akkālac camaya ilakkiya varalārai uṇarttum opparṛa ṍr ātāra nūlāka iruntataiyum yām kaṇṭōm* // I got the responsibility of proofreading the text and checking the printing job. While examining it, I found that the Madurai's commentary to the *Civappirakācar* was not only very special, but also a unique source book reflecting the religious and literary history of that time.

¹⁶² About this topic see also Cuṭarvīḷi (2019, 57-63).

list, the Tamil sources included: literary work,¹⁶³ literary history books,¹⁶⁴ devotional literature books,¹⁶⁵ *prabhandas*,¹⁶⁶ grammar books,¹⁶⁷ religious and philosophical books,¹⁶⁸ Gandhianism, and others. Moreover, Arunachalam’s library also counted a significant number of English books; they mainly dealt with religion and Gandhi.¹⁶⁹

Among the sources that Arunachalam employed the most: the first (1934) and second (1940) editions of the *Meykaṇṭa Cāttiram*, the editions of different volumes of the *Tirumurai* (1933, 1940), and the magazine *Cittāntam* edited by the Caiva Cittānta Makā Camākam; Vaiyapuripillai (1930, 1936, 1954, 1956, 1957); Arumuga Navalar’s editions of Śaiva texts; primary sources, especially for the twelfth century, like the *Peripapurāṇam*, the *Kaliṅkattupparaṇi*, and *Ñāṇāmirta*; U.Ve.Ca; and Somasundata Desikar.

Besides the reconstruction of the historical period taken into consideration and the related cultural context, other elements that deeply distinguished the volumes of Arunachalam from those of his contemporaries was that in his research he also took into consideration the religious literature, whereas it was generally believed that religion was not supposed to be discussed in a specific literary domain (Cuṭarvīli 2019, 77-8). The reason for this choice – besides the fact that the project of these volumes originated from the writing about the Śaiva literature of the fourteenth and fifteenth century – is that religion and, more specifically, religious exponents have influenced the thought of people during history; therefore, to understand the developments and trends occurring in each century, an investigation on this matter was felt as necessary by the author.¹⁷⁰ Therefore, along with the records about Śaivism, Arunachalam’s volumes will also investigate the Vaiṣṇava, Jaina, and Buddhist literature. Other sections of the volumes explore the grammar literature, *prabhandas*, Purāṇic literature, and commentary literature.

¹⁶³ Among them, different editions of and commentaries to the *Tirukkural*, *Kuṟuntokai*, *Aiṅkuṟunūru*, and Kampar’s *Irāmāyaṇam*.

¹⁶⁴ These include the works by Somasundara Desikar and Ka. Su. Pillai.

¹⁶⁵ A substantial part of these is related to the *Tēvāram* and other Śaiva scriptures, like the *Tiruvācakam* and the *Tirumantiram*. A considerable amount of this material was published by the Thiruvavaduthurai Adhinam.

¹⁶⁶ Different editions of the *Kaliṅkattup Paraṇi* and other *Paraṇis* are included in this category, as well as Purāṇas.

¹⁶⁷ Many of them are related to the *Tolkāpiyyam*.

¹⁶⁸ They are mainly Śaiva books, mostly published by the Thiruvavaduthurai Adhinam.

¹⁶⁹ Note that a list of the only Tamil sources donated to the Rōjā Muttaiyā Āyvu Nūlakam is available on the online catalogue of the library.

¹⁷⁰ See Arunachalam 1969a/2005, vi: *nām inku karutum kālam, teyvika arputaṅkaḷilē mikka nampikkai nilaviyirunta kālam. ākavē, arputac ceyalkaḷum campavaṅkaḷum pōla, paramparaiyāka varupavarraic colliyē āka vēṅṅiyirukkīratu; tavirkka muṭivatillai.* // “The period we are considering here was a period of great faith in divine miracles. Therefore, things that have been transmitted from generation to generation, like miraculous deeds and events, have to be told; it cannot be avoided”.

2.3 Arunachalam, the Cholas, and Śaivism in Tamil Nadu

tamiḷnāṭṭu varalārril iccōlar āṭcikkālamē mikac ciṟanta oru por̥kālam en̄patai pulappaṭuttavē innūrrāṇṭil vāḷnta cōlar varalāru in̄ku inta aḷavu uraik kappattatu. caṅkakālam en̄ru collukiṇṇra kālattil maturaiyil pāṇṭiyar caṅkam vaittuṭ tamiḷ vaḷarttatu uṇmaiye. āṇāl kaḷappirar āṭciyil avaiyellām oṭuṅkiya piṇṇar, tamiḷai vaḷarttavarkaḷum nāṭṭai vaḷarttavarkaḷum camayattai vaḷarttavarkaḷum tamiḷar nākarikattaip pēṇiyavarkaḷum, cōḷamaṇṇarē. oṇpatām nūrrāṇṭu mutal paṭṭiṇmunrām nūrrāṇṭiṇ iṟutivarai (845-1275), nānūrumuppatu āṇṭuk kālattil perumpakuti tamiḷnāṭṭu muḷumaiyum oru kuṭaikkīḷk koṇṭuvantu, ulaka varalārril tamiḷar en̄rāl kōyir ciṟpattil vallōr en̄ru peyar vāṅku māru ceytōr cōḷamaṇṇarē.

The Chola history of this century has been narrated to this extent to show that this Chola ruling period was a golden age in the history of Tamil Nadu. The Pandya poets indeed developed Tamil in Madurai during the so-called Caṅkam period. But after all these were suppressed during the rule of Kalabhras, the Chola kings were the people who developed Tamil language, developed the country, developed the religion, and maintained the civilization of the Tamils. From the 1st century to the end of the thirteenth century (845-1275), it was the Chola kings who brought the whole of Tamil Nadu under one umbrella in a period of four hundred and thirty years and changed the name of Tamils in the world history as masters of temple sculpture.

Arunachalam 1973a/2005, xxxvi

Arunachalam (1975a/2005, xxi; 1973a/2005, xxx) divided the history of Tamil literature into five main periods, among which he listed the Chola dynasty phase, ranging from 850 to 1330.¹⁷¹

Nevertheless, the strong evaluation of this dynasty, which is intensified when mentioning some specific rulers, transcends the quality of the literary output that occurred under their rule and is one of the features that emerge from reading the author's works.

¹⁷¹ The other four are; the Caṅkam period (300 BC to 250 AD): the hymns production period, which he split into two phases (250 to 600, and 600 to 900), the first one coinciding with the Kalabhras rule; the religious ferment period, which includes the three moments of production of Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava Śāstras (1150-1550), Purāṇas (1450-1700), and devotional literature (1650-1800); and the contemporary period, which witnessed the foreign dominance (1800-1900), the struggles for independence (1900-1950) and the post-independence developments (1950 onwards).

However, praising the Cholas is not a peculiarity of Arunachalam's thought. The Cholas' rule is traditionally regarded as a period of massive development in South India; as such, many scholars have highlighted the changes they introduced and their impact on several domains. Among the most recent research works, we find those of Cox (2019), who reconstructed the political and cultural environment of the eleventh and twelfth century and focused on the figure of Kulottunga I (r.1070-1120); Shulman (2016, 150-194), who mainly analyzed the innovations occurring in literary production and linguistic context; Kulke (2009), who investigated the Cholas' maritime expeditions; and Kulke and Rothermund (2004, 113-133, 122-125), who gave an overview of their rule.

However, during the twentieth century, a particular emphasis on the Cholas as the ideal kings is recorded, as it is also possible to notice from Arunachalam's contemporaries, like S.R. Balasubramaniam. Despite his works (1971, 1975, 1979) having as main focus the temples built in different periods by this dynasty, an apparent enthusiasm and pride for their rule are conveyed by his words, usually expressed employing comparisons with other dynasties. See, for example, Balasubramaniam (1975, 1):

The Cholas were one of the greatest and most gifted of the dynasties which ruled in India; they held sway for a continuous period of about 430 years (A.D. 850-1280). In comparison, the Mauryas ruled only for about 137 years (B.C. 322-185), and the Guptas for about 223 years (A.D. 320-543). The Vijayanagara empire lasted for about 340 years (A.D. 1336-1676) with claim to greatness only for the first 200 years thereof, i.e., till A.D. 1565.

Moreover, a few decades before Arunachalam's works, Nilakanta Sastri (Nīlakaṇṭha Cāstiri, 1892-1975) carried out what he defined as the "first systematic study" of their ruling period in *The Cholas* (1935), where he pointed out all the contributions they brought to the Tamil culture and social life. Even just the introductory words of the preface give a clear account of the esteem they are kept into, summing up the core points of their merits:

In the age of the Cōḷas, the most creative period of South Indian History, the whole of South India was for the first time brought under the sway of a single government, and a serious attempt made to face and solve the problems of public administration arising from the new conditions. In local government, in art, religion and letters, the Tamil country reached heights of excellence never reached again in succeeding ages; in all these spheres, as in that of foreign trade and maritime activity, the Cōḷa period marked the culmination of movements that began in an earlier age, under the Pallavas.

The political conduct that the Cholas adopted – from the promotion of the fine arts to the establishment of more structural empowering measures – created a generally wealthy environment over the four and a half centuries of their rule. As we read in Arunachalam (1973a/2005, xxxi):

āṭciyiṅ cīrappu, eṅṅarṛa peruṅkōyilkaḷiṅ amaippu, avarṛil viḷākkal, avarṛiṅ nirvāka murai, icai naṭaṅkaḷ, pala nīrppācaṅat tiṭṭaṅkaḷ, kalvic cālaikaḷ, ātular cālaikaḷ, ūrppaṅcāyattu murai, icai vaḷarcci mutaliya palavum iṅku kāṅkiṛōm. vaḷarntu vanta cōlaruṭaiya ceyaltiraṅai uṅarttum meykkīrttikaḷaik kāṅumpōtu, iṅrukūṭa nam maṅattil oru porumika uṅarcci talaiyeṭukkīratu.

We noticed here that the special features of the regime were many, like the establishment of innumerable temples, their festivals, their administration, the music shows, the several irrigation projects, the educational institutes, the medical structures, the village panchayat system, the development of music, etc. Even today, a feeling of pride rises in our minds when we see the royal eulogies that explain the prosperous achievements of the Cholas.

Among the innovations they introduced and the benefits that arose from them, the factors that a twentieth-century Tamil was inclined to appreciate were the creation of a central State ruling the whole South, the promotion of Tamil as a language of power, and the support to religions, especially Śaivism.

The theme of political unification was more than ever in vogue during the last century in Tamil Nadu, animated both by the nationalist sentiments of those who wanted India as independent from the colonial regime and also by the vehemence of those who wanted Tamil Nadu itself as free and independent from the rest of India. Despite the category one belonged to, the need for union and cohesion, especially among the Tamils, was universally shared. The political expansion carried out by the Cholas implied the unification of the Tamil-speaking areas, hence representing the moment when the Tamil people were gathered within one single kingdom for the first time: they were finally provided with a model of power to get inspiration from and to follow. This factor was particularly marked by Arunachalam (1973a/2005, 2) when exploring the reasons for the Cholas always being the heroes of the *paraṅis* abounding in the twelfth century, thus showing even an awareness of the deliberate evaluation of this dynasty:

koppattup paraṅi, kūṭal caṅkamattup paraṅi, kaliṅkattup paraṅikaḷ yāvum cōla maṅṅaruṭaiya pōraiṅum verriyāiyum paṭukiṅraṅa. taṅṅār tamilaḷikkum taṅpāṅṅi nāṭu eṅṅa āyirru? cīrpakkalai vaḷarttu pallava nāṭu eṅṅa āyirru? pōrukkoṅṛē cīrappu vāyṅta kāṅṭarṅiṅitākiya yāṅaiyuṭaiya paṭai peṛra cēra

*nāṭu enna āyirru? annāṭṭu manṇar anaivarum tamil manṇarkaḷallavā?
avarkaḷ ātaravil ēṇ oru paraṇikūṭat tōṇriyatāka varalāru illai? ēṇ ellāp
paraṇikaḷum cōlanaiyē pāṭukinraṇa? cōlar maṭṭuntāṇā perum pōr ceytārkaḷ?
cōlar maṭṭuntāṇ pulavarukku ātaravu tantārkaḷ?
itaṅku viṭai eḷitu. piṛa tamil vēntarkaḷ tamilaḷakam muḷumaiyum entak
kālattilum oru kuṭaikkīḷk koṇṭu vantatillai.*

The *Koppattu Paraṇi*, the *Kūṭal Caṅkamattup Paraṇi*, and the *Kaliṅkattup paraṇikaḷ*: all describe the wars and victories of the Chola kings. What happened to the “Pandyan kingdom, nourishing and promoting the profound genius of Tamil”? What happened to the Pallava country that developed sculpture? What happened to the country of Cheras, which had an army of elephants, special for war? Weren’t all the kings of those countries Tamil kings? Why is there not even one *paraṇi*s in literature in their favor? Why do all the *paraṇi*s praise the Cholas? Only the Cholas fought a great war? Only the Cholas supported poets?

The answer is simple: the other Tamil kings had never brought the whole Tamil land under one umbrella.

As it is possible to deduce from the author’s words, a primary but crucial factor that enhanced the evaluation of the Cholas was their origins: the fact that they were Tamils led not only to their recognition as legitimate rulers but – in the light of the achievements they made – even as a symbol of exemplary political leadership. This ethnic element resents of the historical context of Arunachalam’s times, when the concept of Tamil identity developed and the feeling of pride towards Tamil as a language, community, culture, and space intimately took hold of both literate and illiterate people, whether in a conscious and displayed way or an unconscious and internalized one. The work of Sumathi Ramaswamy (1997) offers a detailed analysis of the emergence and developments of these phenomena and, in particular, of the manifestations and uses of the *tamilpparru*, highlighting how deeply rooted these sentiments grew and how extreme the choices and actions that Tamil people took in its name could be.

It is not by chance that two of the innovations occurring under the Cholas’ rule, which are usually underlined, are the increased employment of Tamil language in their inscriptions and the flourishing of literature which, for its part, furthermore enhanced the development of the language.

Thus, between the ninth and the twelfth century, the literary realm benefited from a rich succession of writers who enriched both domains thanks to royal patronage.¹⁷²

The use of Tamil as a language of power or, in Shulman's words (2016, 150), as the language of kings and gods was shown as a change when compared to the other dynasties that generally preferred Sanskrit for more pretentious tasks, especially when the context of the inscribed text was a literary or political one.

The importance given to the Tamil origins of the ruling kings and the political valorization of Tamil language emerges in a passage found in the first volume of the ninth-century literary history of Arunachalam (1975a/2005, xxii), where the unfulfillment of these requirements by the other dynasties ruling in Tamil Nadu is given by the author both as a justification for the less space given to them and as the reason for the Cholas' praise:

*cōlap pēraracu enru tanippattuttip pēca iyalvatu pōlap pira aracukalaip
pēcum vāyppu illai. pāṇṭiyar āṭci kunri kaḷappirar enra anniya iruḷ cūḷntu
ninra nilaiyāl, anku ilakkiya vaḷarccikku araciṅ ākkam maṅki viṭṭatu.
pallavar vaṭamoḷiyaiyē peritum pōrriyavarkaḷ. avarkaḷ kālattil tamīlukku
uyarnilai avarkaḷiṭattil vāykkavillai. eppaiyō mūṇrām nantivarman oruvanē
tamīlaip pōnriyavaṅkākaḷ kāṇappatukirāṅ.*

There is no chance to talk about other kingdoms like we can speak of the Chola Empire. As the Pandya regime collapsed and the darkness of the foreigner Kalabhras arose, the government's contribution to literature development faded. The Pallavas were great admirers of Sanskrit. They did not keep Tamil in high consideration during their reign. Somehow only Nandivarman III is seen as a [supporter of] Tamil.

The Kalabhras (c. III-VI centuries) are very contested rulers still immersed in a veil of mystery. Little is known about their exact origins: while some wanted them as Tamils,¹⁷³ Ayyangar and Rao (1922, 53-56), taking into account the Velvikudi grant, evidence from the *Periyapurāṇam*, and the Sendalai inscriptions where they are mentioned, concluded that they came from Karnataka. This is the most accepted theory (Gillet 2014, Stein 1980), also shared by Arunachalam, who in 1979 published a book about them in an attempt to shed light on their history and the impact they had on the political and social orders utilizing epigraphic and literary evidence.¹⁷⁴ According to him, in

¹⁷² See Arunachalam (1975a/2005, 1972/2005, 1971a/2005, and 1973a/2005).

¹⁷³ One of those who supported it is Aravanan (1974), as reported by Arunachalam (1979, 34).

¹⁷⁴ In the preface to the book (1979, 4-5) he highlighted that the investigation on this historical period was aimed at resolving the problems occurring in the Tamil literary history which sprouted from the uncertainty covering this dynasty.

particular, they were a predatory tribe whose place of origin was the area around the Sravana Belgola hills (1979, 31-34) and whose language was an early stage of Kannada.¹⁷⁵ Moreover, it is noteworthy that when listing the reasons for their non-Tamil origins, Arunachalam mentioned even the fact that they were followers of Jainism and Buddhism.¹⁷⁶

The fact that they were traditionally given the image of a tribe that arose from obscurity, whose rule created turmoil that gained it the definition of *interregnum* (Kulke and Rothermund 2004, 105; Prentiss 1999, 93; Stein 1980, 77; Arunachalam 1979, 4), justifies the way Arunachalam referred to them not only in this passage but almost anytime he mentioned them, namely *anniyar*, foreigners. Marking their status as outsiders was a common thing among historians; for example, we can see that Sastri (1935, 121) defined them as *interlopers*.

However, while their damage to the Tamil culture has been traditionally emphasized – Arunachalam, for example, highlighted the damage they brought to the music¹⁷⁷ and the status of women¹⁷⁸ –, more recently, Gillet (2014) has pointed out that the notion of their devastating effect was mostly an exaggeration. This theory seems to be shared by Shulman (2016, 86). Moreover, according to Monius (2001, 3), such a negative definition of the period comprised between the fourth

In fact, despite not showing appreciation for the Kalabhras, especially when it comes to the religious domain, Arunachalam believed that every century had something to offer, and that “dark age” is a definition that highlights the lack of knowledge of historians about a given time period, rather than the deficiency and negative records attributed to him. He clearly pointed this out in the concluding lines to the eleventh century literary history volumes’ introduction (1971a/2005, xxxiv-xxxv): *ilakkiya varalārrārāycciyālar palar iruḷil mikkamōkam koṅṭirukkīrārkaḷ.taṅkaḷukku viḷaṅkātaṅa iruṅṭa kālam eṅru paṭṭam cūṭṭukīrārkaḷ. nūrrāṅṭu nūrrāṅṭāka nam ārāyṅtu varumpōtu, entak kālamum iruṅṭa kālamākat teriyavillai. [...] nūlkaḷ kālakatiyil irantuvīṭṭaṅavē eṅru varuntavēṅṅiyirukkīratēṅri, iruṅṭa kālamēṅṅaiyūm yām kāṅavillai. eṅkum pēroḷiyaik kāṅum pērraiyē iraiyaṅ emakku aruḷiyirukkīrāṅ. // “Many literary historians are obsessed with darkness, and they call it the Dark Ages. As we examine century after century, no era seems like a dark age. [...] It is to be regretted that the books have died in time, and we have not seen the dark slate. God has blessed us with the grace to see the light everywhere”.*

¹⁷⁵ See Arunachalam (1979, 33): “It is said that Kannada was taking shape as a separate language even from the first century A.D. It might have been just then emerging from Tamil with Sanskrit influence through Prakrit and Pali. The Kalabhras who marched on Madurai had as their spoken tongue this new emerging language along with some Prakrit, while for their administrative and religious purposes they would have used some kind of Prakrit or Pali, with Sanskrit, both of which were developed languages when compared with the new emerging Kannada of the period”.

¹⁷⁶ See Arunachalam (1979, 21): “They were followers of Jainism in some places and of Buddhism in others. Hence they are correctly thought to be aliens on the Tamil soil”.

¹⁷⁷ See Arunachalam (1971a/2005, xxxiii): *kaḷappīrarum avar mūlam vanta caiṅamum tamīlai aḷittu vantārkaḷ. icaiyūm nāṭakamum aṭiyōṭu aḷintaṅa. icaittamīlai aḷiyātu kākkum poruṭṭē tiruṅṅānacampantar camaṅattai vērarukka vēṅṅiyatāyīrū // “The Kalabhras and the Jainism which penetrated through them destroyed Tamil. Music and drama were completely destroyed. Tiruṅṅānacampantar had to root out Jainism in order to preserve the music”. See also Arunachalam (1972/2005, 24-25): *ki.pi. mūṅrām nūrrāṅṅiṅ toṭakkattil kaḷappīrar pāṅṅiya nāṅṅil pukuntu aracaik kaiṅṅarri aṅku cumār ki.pi.550 varai āṅikkam vakittārkaḷ. avarkaḷ tamīlukkum ataṅ ilakkiyam kālai nākarikam camayam mutalāṅa aṅṅaittukkum anniyar, caiṅar; tiṅṅamiṅṅu ivarrai aḷittārkaḷ. icaiyūm peṅkaḷum maṅṅitaṅṅait tāḷṅṅupavai eṅra koḷkaiyūṅaiyavarkaḷāḷalāl, avarkaḷ akap poruḷaiyūm icait tamīlaiyūm aḷittārkaḷ // “At the beginning of the third century AD, the Kalabhras entered the Pandya kingdom, conquered it, and ruled there till about 550 AD. They were foreigners, strangers to Tamil and its literature, early civilization, and religion; they deliberately destroyed these. Because of the belief that music and women are inferior to men, they destroyed the *akam* poetry and the Tamil music”.**

¹⁷⁸ See, for example, Arunachalam (1973b/2005, 2).

and the seventh century was a product of the later dominant Śaiva tradition and due to the previous prevailing of Jain, Ajivika, and Buddhist communities in those centuries.

The importance of the linguistic factor, on the other side, is highlighted by the definition of Nandivarman III (r. 850–869) as the only Pallava king who can be recognized as Tamil or supporter of Tamil, that has to be attributed to his traditional image of a king who signed a breaking point with the earlier Pallavas who made a massive usage of Sanskrit. This topic has been highly debated in the last two decades. When analyzing the royal inscriptions of the Pallavas (c. IV–IX centuries), Pollock (2006) pointed out that the languages they employed in the publicly inscribed texts were mainly Prakrit during the first century of their rule and then Sanskrit from the beginning of the fifth century onwards since king Śivaskandavarman (r. 330–50). Despite ruling on a Tamil country, according to Pollock, the role they gave to Tamil language in the public discourse was minimal, as we read (2006, 121-2):

For the first three centuries of Pallava rule, Tamil, the everyday language of their realm, was denied all political function. When it, at last, appeared in inscriptions, Tamil was wholly restricted to factual communication and would long remain so. [...] It is an arresting fact that in six centuries of Pallava rule not a single inscription was produced in which Tamil does any work beyond recording the everyday— remitting taxes, specifying the boundaries of a land grant, and the like.

Pollock's stance that the Pallavas employed Tamil in literary and political records only exceptionally has been later criticized by Orr (2009) and confuted by Francis (2013), both of whom pointed out his general underestimation of the Tamil records falling in those realms. Francis, in particular, analyzed the dynastic and local inscriptions of Pallava kings and those of their feudatories and supported the multiple uses of Tamil in panegyric discourse, providing evidence for it. Nandivarman III is presented by him as the king who played a crucial role in the fostering of literary Tamil at the Pallava court – which developed its own conventions and themes, thus becoming independent from the Sanskrit model – and the first one to adopt a specific Tamil epithet in the local inscriptions.¹⁷⁹ Although Arunachalam made no further mention of this king, we should assume that here he was referring to this change registered in the political discourse starting from Nandivarman III's rule.

¹⁷⁹ The epithet *tellārr'erinta*, a relative clause which appears with variants, and that Francis translated as “who vanquished [the enemies] at Tellāru”. See Francis (2013).

The third and foremost factor which characterized the Cholas' greatness, as also emphasized by Arunachalam, was their support of Śaivism. In his volumes on the tenth (1972/2005, 9-13), eleventh (1971a/2005, xxv-xxvi), and twelfth (1973a/2005, xxxii-xxxviii;) centuries, the author provided records of the emperors who ruled in that span of time, to which he provided further details throughout the books. He stated that the improvement of its literature exemplifies the developments registered in the religious domain. Among the mentioned rulers, four are those said to have played a crucial role in the uplift of Śaivism: Gandaraditya (r. 949–957), his wife Sembiyan Mahadevi, Rajaraja I (r.985–1014), and Kulottunga II (r.1133–1150). It is mainly due to the impact of these rulers on the growth of Śaivism that Arunachalam (1971a/2005, 235-237) described the Cholas' period as the second Golden Age for it – the first one being the period from the fifth to the ninth century, during which the Śaiva saints caused Jainism to be subsided through the chanting of their hymns.¹⁸⁰ In particular, the author saw the richness – both qualitative and quantitative – registered during the ninth to eleventh century as a gateway to the excellence occurring during the twelfth century.¹⁸¹

In a previous article that the author wrote, *Sembiyan Ma-devi, the unsung royal saint*, which was later collected with other articles in the form of a book (1970b), Arunachalam presented Sembiyan Mahadevi and Gandaraditya as the rulers who have played a significant role in the “religious

¹⁸⁰ See Arunachalam (1971a/2005, 236): *ki.pi. 5ām nūrṛāṅṅtu mutal 9ām nūrṛāṅṅtu varaiyil tamil nāṭṭil oru perum kiḷarcci tōṅṇiyatu. caiva camaya ācāriyarkaḷum, vaiṅava camaya ālvārkaḷum tōṅṇip perum veḷḷamāka aruḷ pācurāṅkaḷaip pāṭiṅṇarkaḷ. akkālap pakutiyaṅṅ toṭakkattil tamil nāṭṭāṅṅatu oruvakaiyil aṅṅiyar āṅṅicikku utpaṭṭu allahurṛatu. 'kiḷappiraṅ eṅṅum kali yaracaṅ' pāṅṅi nāṭṭiṅṅuḷ pukuntu nāṭṭiṅṅ camayattaiyūm, paṅṅpāṭṭaiyūm, kalaiyaiyūm nācam ceytāṅ eṅṅu pāṅṅiyar cācaṅaṅkaḷ kurikkiṅṅraṅa. anta nācam cōḷa pallava nāṅṅukaḷiḷum paraviyiruntatu. atait taṅṅuttu niṅṅuttum caivap perum caktiyāṅṅatu campantar eṅṅum, appar eṅṅum vaṅṅivu koṅṅatu. iruvarum muraiyē pāṅṅi nāṅṅiḷum, pallava nāṅṅiḷum pukuntirunta camaṅkaḷ kalaiyaiḷ kaḷaintu caivap payir taḷaiḷkkaḷ ceytārkaḷ. miṅṅṅum tamilar camayamum, paṅṅpāṅṅum talai eṅṅuttu ōṅkaḷāyīṅṅa. itu tamilar camayattīṅṅ mutar poṅṅkālam // “From the 5th to the 9th century A.D. a great [religious] upsurge arose in Tamil country. The Śaiva *camaya ācāriyas* and the Vaiṅava *ālvār* appeared and chanted hymns in great abundance. At the beginning of that period, the Tamil country was in some way under foreign rule. The Pandya inscriptions indicate that the 'Kalabhras or Kaliyaracaṅ' entered the Pandya country and destroyed the religion, culture, and art of the country. That devastation had spread to the Chola and Pallava countries as well. Campantar and Appar were the embodiment of the great Śaiva power that arrested it. Both of them removed the Jain weeds that had invaded the Pandya and Pallava countries respectively and planted a Śaiva crop. Once again, the Tamil religion and culture took the lead. This was the first golden age of the Tamil religion”. See also Arunachalam (1970a/2005, 361): *varttamāṅṅa makāvīraṅṅ ki.mu.aintāṅṅ nūrṛāṅṅiḷ vaṅṅa nāṅṅiḷ, tōṅṅri ahimcā paramō tarma: eṅṅra tamatu cittaṅṅtattaip parappiṅṅar. nāḷaṅṅaivil avar pōṅṅitta caīṅṅa tarumam terku nōḷḷi paravi, ainnūru āṅṅṅukaḷiḷ tamil nāṅṅiḷum aṅṅukivantatu. piṅṅṅum ainnūru āṅṅṅukaḷiḷ pallava, pāṅṅṅiya nāṅṅukaḷ muḷumaiyūm viyāpittu, pīra āṅṅṅika camayaṅkaḷukku iṅṅaiyūru ceyyavē, appar, campantar pōṅṅra aruḷāḷar tōṅṅri, camaṅṅar kurumpaṅṅakki caivattai miṅṅṅum nilai nāṅṅiṅṅarkaḷ.// “Vardhamāṅṅa Mahāvīra appeared in the North in the 5th century B.C. and spread his ideology of Ahimāsā Paramo Dharma. In the course of time, the Jaina doctrine he had taught spread towards the South and reached Tamil Nadu in five hundred years. In the next five hundred years, saints like Appar and Campantar appeared in order to interfere with the other atheistic religions which had spread everywhere in the Pallava and Pandya kingdoms, defeated Jainism and restored the position of Śaivism again”.**

¹⁸¹ See, for example, Arunachalam (1972, 9): *ivvāru oru tokuppāyṅṅ pārkumpōtu, tamil nāṅṅiṅṅ poṅṅkālam eṅṅru ariṅṅār kūriyarum 12ām nūrṛāṅṅiṅṅ ciṅṅappukkaḷ palavarriḷ ilakkiyac ciṅṅappukku, innūrṛāṅṅiṅṅ varalāru oru nuḷaivāyilāy amaintu iruppatu naṅṅku pulappaṅṅum. // “Looking at it as a summary, it is clear that the history of this century is a gateway to literary excellence among many of the excellences of the twelfth century, which the scholars call the “Golden Age” of the Tamil country”.*

persuasion” to Śaivism among ordinary people. Gandaraditya, in particular, did not distinguish himself from the other Chola rulers for his warrior skills but, rather, for his religious and philosophical temperament, exerting a strong influence on his wife, Sembiyan Mahadevi, who was much younger than him. Arunachalam described Gandaraditya as a magnanimous king, who not only carried out many activities for the good of other Śaivites, but who also supported other religions, for example, by building Vaiṣṇava and Jaina temples, and who rendered several good public services to ordinary people (Arunachalam 1972/2005, 488; 1970b, 19-20). Furthermore, he is said to have written a poem on Śiva Nataraja, of whom he was an ardent devotee, that was included as the twentieth *patikam* of the IX volume of the *Tirumurai*, the *Tiruvicaippā* (Arunachalam 1970b, 17; 1972/2005, 11-12).

Nevertheless, although Gandaraditya was the ruler who aroused a “great flood of devotion”, as Arunachalam underlined (1972/2005, 283; 498-9), it is Sembiyan Mahadevi who emerged as the more charismatic one, extending her influence on the other Chola kings. In particular, Arunachalam described her as the one who forged the personality of Rajaraja I, her grandson, thus being partly responsible for the greatness he subsequently achieved as a ruler and as a Śaivite (Arunachalam 1970b, 17-18; 1972/2005, 441-442).¹⁸² The critical role attributed to this queen in supporting Śaivism and its spread and her dedication to this cause is made clear by the article's title, where Arunachalam referred to Sembiyan Mahadevi as a saint.¹⁸³ Hence, the intense disappointment of the author in considering how little justice was given to her as a queen, how little her name was known among Indians, and how little the Tamil students were attached to her image as an iconic, influential figure if compared to other regents ruling overseas or in North India. Arunachalam's words show a strong criticism not only towards the education system of Tamil Nadu – which, according to him, was prioritizing the study of foreign countries and dynasties – and Tamil historians but even towards the Śaivites, who did not hold a deep knowledge of their saints.

The name of Sembiyan Mahadevi might not have particularly resonated within the history books' pages, and her deep devotion to Śiva probably has not been marked enough; nevertheless, Arunachalam seems to speculate on such devotion making precise statements that are casually presented with a shroud of doubt, but whose very mention represents a strong stance influenced by his religious affiliation. An example of such a pattern emerges when the author attempted to investigate Sembiyan Mahadevi's choice to keep living as a widow after Gandaraditya's death in 957 rather than burning on his pyre according to the common practice of their times (1970b, 21):

¹⁸² The same is mentioned even by Balasubramaniam (1975, 2).

¹⁸³ Arunachalam (1970b, 32-33) specified that the reason why Cēkkiḷār did not list her among the tradition of Śaiva saints – thus “unsung” – in his *Periyapurāṇam* despite having lived more than a century after her is due to the fact that the hagiologist based his work on the *Tiruttonṭaittokai* of Cuntarar, who lived during the eighth century.

Sembiyanmadevi seems to have been cast in a different mold. Her husband's life of dedication to Śiva seems to have inspired her with a noble mission, than that of a passive ideal wife. Perhaps her husband (whose end had not been clearly recorded) advised her to live on and guide the royal family on the oath of devotion to Śiva. We do not know.

This speculation of Arunachalam was meant to emphasize how she devolved her life to patronizing Śaivism, primarily through the construction of new temples, the renovation of old brick ones, and the gifts for their endowment (1970b, 23-9). These are aspects that were later investigated by Venkataraman (1976), who gave a more detailed account of the queen's contribution to the Cholas' temple art, and by Dehejia (1990), while more recently the queen's temple patronage has been the main focus of Cane research (2019, 29-60; 2016, 347-384); finally, Barrett (1974) and Gillet (2022) mentioned the activity of Sembiyan Madevi in the context of their investigation of the practice of temples' reconstruction that emerged as a trend by the middle of the tenth century.

While Gandaraditya and Sembiyan Madevi are presented as the first figures who deeply instilled a devotion to Śiva in Tamil Nadu by giving the example of faithful devotees, it was Rajaraja I who ensured its spread on a transregional level. The first description Arunachalam (1970b) gave of him is that of a great warrior, the main responsible not only for the unification of the Tamil-speaking lands but even for conquering overseas territories.¹⁸⁴ As such, he was highly praised even by Balasubramaniam (1971, 1), who once again pointed out his value by comparing him with other kings:¹⁸⁵

Rajaraja I can legitimately claim to have laid the real foundations for the glory and longevity of the Chola empire. He was a great soldier and general like Alexander of Macedon, Julius Caesar and Hannibal.

The greatness recognized to this king is due to his two main achievements: the spread of Tamil culture through his lands' conquest and the spread of Śaivism enhanced by such political expansion. The king mainly expressed the commitment to the Śaiva religion through the building of new temples in granite, which visually exemplified the spread of Śaiva doctrine and practices, a factor that Arunachalam emphasized (1970b, 18):

¹⁸⁴ See Kulke and Rothermund (2004, 123-125) commenting on the theories for the maritime expeditions.

¹⁸⁵ It must be noted that, in this case, Balasubramaniam mentioned as terms of comparisons only foreign kings, who are similarly stereotyped as ideals of leadership. This seems to imply an indirect but strong belief: none of the other kings who ruled on Indian soil was worthy enough to be compared to Rajaraja I Chola.

Rajaraja channelized all this wealth into the construction of temples in Tamilnad. He did not spend much on his own palaces or comforts, but built scores of palaces to the King of Kings. His work was also an inspiration to later generations of the ruling Cholas.

Although the contribution of this king to both the constructions of Śiva temples and their endowments is notorious,¹⁸⁶ the words of the author show, once again, how his being a Śaivite made him tend towards the exaggeration of facts; sometimes his statements appear like mere speculations, especially when no evidence is reported in their support, like in this case.¹⁸⁷

Nevertheless, one of the most significant merits attributed to Rajaraja I was ordering the recovery of the hymns of the three most prominent Śaiva Tamil saints living between the seventh and the eighth century – namely Campantar (seventh century), Appar (seventh century), and Cuntarar (eighth century), also referred to as *mūvar*, “the three” (Prentiss 1999, 9) –, a task which Nampiyāṅṭār Nampi fulfilled. Besides Arunachalam (1971a/2005, 237), many scholars recalled the story provided by the *Tirumuṛaikanṭa Purāṇam*, according to which a king heard stray verses of the Śaiva saints' hymns and, driven by the desire of listening to all of them, ordered their collection; among them, Rangaswamy (1959), Shulman (1990), and Prentiss (1996, 1999), whose works on the devotional literature helped to frame its key figures within the history and development of Śaivism, by highlighting their peculiarities.¹⁸⁸

The hymns collected by Nampiyāṅṭār Nampi were set to music and sung in all the temples throughout Tamil Nadu;¹⁸⁹ they were later to be known as *Tēvāram*,¹⁹⁰ constituting the first seven volumes of the *Tirumuṛai*,¹⁹¹ the Tamil Śaiva canon which was systematized by Umāpati Civācāryār (late fourteenth century) defined by Arunachalam (1981a, 13) as “the cream of *Tamil lyrical poetry*

¹⁸⁶ See, for example, Kulke and Rothermund (2004, 140): “Thus Rajaraja, the king who built the great Temple at Thanjavur, donated altogether the equivalent of 502 kg of gold to this temple until the twenty-ninth year of his reign (1014)”. For a more detailed account of the temples he got constructed see Balasubramaniam (1975).

¹⁸⁷ However, while the establishment of new places of worship arouse a sense of pride in Śaivites, including Arunachalam, the author mentioned (1981a, 14) that this phenomenon was tendentially criticized during the nineteenth century, especially by foreigners: “The number of such large temples has caused foreign critics to remark that ‘the Tamils are a race of temple builders’. No higher tribute to the universality of the Saiva faith can be paid”.

¹⁸⁸ Shulman (1990), in particular, besides providing the translation for all the hymns of Cuntarar as collected in the *Tēvāram*, highlighted the features that distinguished him from Appar and Campantar and his self-characterization as a slave of Śiva.

¹⁸⁹ See Arunachalam (1972/2005) and Prentiss (1996, 241).

¹⁹⁰ Shulman (1990, xix) mentioned that the title *Tēvāram* was associated to this collection of hymns only in the late medieval period, while it was previously referred to as *tiruppatiyam* or *tiruppatikam*. Similarly, Rangaswamy (1959, 33-5) stated that before the fifteenth century the name *Tēvāram* was used to refer to the hymns of Appar only, while it gained a usage comprehensive of all the three saints' hymns only by the seventeenth or eighteenth century.

¹⁹¹ Of these seven volumes: the first three contain the hymns of Campantar, the volumes forth to sixth contain the hymns of Appar, and the seventh volume contains the hymns of Cuntarar.

and also of *its devotional music*” for the depth of love and abandonment to Śiva contained in them.¹⁹² This statement represents another clear example of the value judgments that the author made by the influence of his religious affiliation, which was probably aimed for its part to influence the consideration in which this literary production was kept.

Finally, the author described the twelfth century as a Golden Age for both Tamils – in reference to the political stability that occurred after the land expansions – and for Śaivites. Again, the Chola dynasty represented the means through which this was made possible: it was thanks to king Kulottunga II, who appointed Cēkkiḷār as his chief minister, that the poet wrote the *Periyapurāṇam* (1139-1140), providing the hagiographies of the sixty-three Śaiva saints or Nāyaṇmārs. Moreover, the hymns sung by Campantar, Appar, Cuntarar, and Māṇikkavācakar, who by the nineteenth century were called *nālvar* or “the four” (Prentiss 1999, 79), were responsible for both the spread of devotion to Śiva among the common people, for whom the saints represented an essential model of life, and the support of every Chola kind to Śaivism. See, for example, Arunachalam (1985, 12):

No wonder their hymns had become the greatest thing in the lives of the people, greater than anything in life possessions, kith and kin, and even God Himself. Such was the magic spell of the hymns interwoven with deep piety and the mystic God-experience of the authors themselves, of course couched in the most poetic language.

(1981a, 13-4):

They had influenced the Chola emperors who ruled the Tamil country from the ninth to the thirteenth centuries that they studded the country with temples for Siva in granite, which are now existing in all their glory, even after the lapse of a thousand years.

And (1970b, 14):

The major part of the hymns had been sung in the temples situated in the Chola country. This fact had a tremendous impact on the religious policy of the Chola monarchs. Many of them had a large empire, including overseas possessions. We find all of them, for a period of four centuries and a half,

¹⁹² Prentiss (1996) particularly highlighted the role of Umāpati in the constitution of the *Tirumuṟai* as we know it and in an overlap between the two distinctive lineages of Śaiva philosophers and religionists.

followers of Siva. History tell us that the hymns had inspired the Chola Emperors...

Finally, according to the author (1971a/2005, 198-9), the royal patronage of the Cholas to Śaivism further enhanced the development of religious literature in Tamil, which was produced uninterruptedly up to the twentieth century.

Despite the Cholas showing tolerance towards other religions,¹⁹³ starting from Gandaraditya and Sembiyan Mahadevi, such traditions did not meet equal growth during the medieval period. However, important works in their domain were produced from time to time. Thus, in the author's understanding, the uplift of Śaivism not only implied the development of Tamil language and literature but, in some cases, was also the main responsible for the scarcity of valuable literary production from non-Śaivas. This is the case of what Arunachalam described as the withdrawal of Jaina poets from the literary scenario while Śaivism was at its peak in the eleventh century, as even the absence of records about the Cholas from Jain historians is noticed. We read, for example (Arunachalam 1971a/2005, xxxi):

caiṇa camayap periyarāyiruntōr pīra ulaka vāḷkkaiyiliruntu taṅkalai aṭiyōṭu otukkik koṇṭu, taṅkaḷ paḷḷikkul pukuntu aṭaṅkiviṭṭārkaḷ; ulakattaiyē marantuviṭṭārkaḷ enru collavēṇṭum. illaiyāṇāl patiṇorām nūrrāṇṭil peruñciṛappuṭaṇ tañcaiyilum kaṅkai koṇṭa cōlapurattilum, irācarācamannanum avaṇ makaṇ irācēntiraṇum nilaiperruttiya cōlar āṭciyaip piratipalikkum kurippō pāṭalō oruvari kūṭa ivarkaḷ nūlkaḷilum uraikalilum kāṇappaṭāṭṭarṅku kāraṇam colla muṭiyātu. caiṇam oṭuṅkiya uṭaṇē, ivvācīriyarkaḷ aṇaivarum tāṅkaḷākavē ulakattai pārkka virumpāta kāntāri pōla ākiviṭṭārkaḷ. nāṭṭiṇ perukkattai (caivacamayap perukkattaiyum araciyaḷ vāḷvil perukkattaiyum)kaṅkoṇṭu kāṇa virumpāṭapaṭi kaṅṅaik kaṭṭikkoṇṭu, ivarkaḷ taṅkaḷ conta vēlaiyākiya ilakkaṇa varampu kōlutal enra onraiye mēṛkoṇṭārkaḷ pōlum. ilakkiyattiṇuḷ ivarkaḷ piravēcikkavillai. piravēcittāl caivar taṅkaḷaip pātikkum enra accam pōlum! ākavē inta nūrrāṇṭil caiṇa ilakkiyam enru taṇiyākac colluvataṅku etuvum kāṇappaṭavillai.

The great men of the Jaina religion had withdrawn themselves entirely from the rest of the world's life and refuged into their schools; it should be said that they had forgotten the world itself. Otherwise, there would have been no

¹⁹³ Monius (2001) emphasized that the study of religion in South India has adopted an enduring historical narrative in which Jains and Buddhists are seen as alien and anti-Tamil traditions; as such, their contributions to the history of religions has been mainly ignored for long time, despite the abundance of inscripational, archaeological, and literary evidence testifying their active role. Her work represents an attempt to reverse this trend in regard of the Tamil-speaking Buddhists. Similar attempts have been made for Jains too. See Cort (1998) and the more recent contribution by Balbir (2018).

reason why no single note or song reflects the Cholas' rule established by king Rajaraja and his son Rajendra in Thanjavur and Cholapuram along the Ganges in the eleventh century. After the decline of Jainism, all these authors became like Gandhari, who did not want to see the world by themselves. It seems that they had turned a blind eye to the growth of the country (both the growth of Śaivism and the political life) and had taken up only their grammar tasks. They did not enter [the realm of] literature. As if they feared that the Śaivites would have affected them if they had entered it! Thus, nothing can be found in this century that can be called independent Jaina literature.

Even in the Vaiṣṇava context, Arunachalam's general comment is that writers did little for Tamil literature since they wrote mostly in Sanskrit (1971a/2005, 198).

The records of Arunachalam reflected the crucial innovations that occurred in the history of Śaivism between the ninth and the twelfth century: the establishment of a strong link with the political power and the assimilation of the devotional tradition within the doctrinal and theological context of the prevailing Śaivasiddhānta tradition, which before the ninth century held a more esoteric asset due to its Tantric origins. The works of Sanderson (1998, 2001, 2006, 2009, 2014, 2019) have shed light on the complex developments of the Śaiva traditions sprouting from Tantrism, clarifying the connections, similarities, and distinctions between them, giving detailed accounts of the respective literature, and registering the changes occurring in the religious life of practitioners. His contribution regarding the dominance of Śaivism during the early medieval period represents a leading source of information about the new dimension of monarchs within the religious domain. While epigraphical and literary evidence testify that during the seventh century there was already the practice of appointing Brahmin *ācāryas* as royal preceptors, who were responsible for the king's proper initiation into the Śaiva religion, by the tenth century, at the latest, the kings emerged as a new kind of initiates who were exempt from the post-initiatory duties¹⁹⁴ because of the overburden of their royal responsibilities and who had to receive a specific consecration which was added within the Saiddhāntika context, the *rājyābhiṣekaḥ*,¹⁹⁵ as protectors of the *varṇāśrama* system.¹⁹⁶ Therefore, as Sanderson pointed out (2009, 2019), they were required to adhere to the Śiva's lay devotees' duties,

¹⁹⁴ Their initiation was therefore called *nirbījā* or "seedless". It should be noted that despite a *nirbījādīkṣa* was provided for women too in the same period, the reasons for these two categories to be exempt from their duties were different: while the kings were considered incapable of carrying out the daily rituals and prescriptions as they were already too busy with their royal responsibilities, women were considered as incompetent. See Sathyanarayanan (2015, 31-32).

¹⁹⁵ Sanderson (2009, 254; 259) mentioned that rulers were not the only ones to benefit from the introduction of these new rituals: the *rājyābhiṣekaḥ* was bestowed on their consorts and heirs too, while consecration rituals involving his vehicles and soldiers were performed for guaranteeing his military success. Moreover, Sanderson (2019, 29-34) described the *rājyābhiṣekaḥ* and its main features.

¹⁹⁶ This underlines how the consecration of a king was mainly including Brahmanical elements, rather than Śaiva ones. This aspect is underlined by Sanderson (2019, 29).

taught in the *Śivadharma* corpus.¹⁹⁷ The fact that the population witnessed the consecration ceremony of a king is a clear sign of how the Śaivasiddhānta tradition had developed a public dimension, further enhanced by the developments concerning Śaiva temples and the role they acquired within the community. The exoneration of monarchs from the several practices of worship prescribed for an initiated Śaiva was not the only aspect that mainly triggered their interest in this tradition: along with the process of legitimizing their rule through the *rājyābhiṣekah*, the *ācāryas* even ensured their well-being and that of the kingdom through a different set of post-consecration rituals, that even secured the continuous royal support to them. Such support had to be carried out through donations and rewards to the *gurus*. Sanderson (2009, 261-263) gave accounts of what these included: jewelry, as prescribed in the *Amṛteśadīkṣāvidhi*; the building of a residence for the *ācāryas* and their disciples; the donation or construction of monasteries; the donation of land grants with which the priests themselves constructed and endowed such institutions. The scholar also highlighted how the proliferation of temples,¹⁹⁸ both those donated by rulers and those established by the *gurus* with their resources, led to the formation of an extensive network of places of worship spreading the teachings of Śaivasiddhānta and, thus, to the emergence of a clerical hierarchy whose summit figures held a transregional authority: using the wealth they accumulated, these *ācāryas* started adopting a king-like behavior and were given imperial titles (Sanderson 2009, 2019).¹⁹⁹ This development also implied that these institutions flourished and established themselves as centers of power.

The Cholas were the greatest builders of temples in Tamil Nadu.²⁰⁰ While this phenomenon is recorded starting from the first half of the ninth century, a crucial example of the commitment of

¹⁹⁷ Sanderson (2019, 9-10) stated that this textual tradition wasn't produced by teachers of the initiatory systems, both Atimārga and Mantramārga, for gaining the laity's support, but were an independent and mainstream tradition on which they imposed their authority with royal patronage. This enabled the *ācāryas* of the communities of *sādhakas* to become the officiants of several institutions. While during the last decade there have been different studies on some aspects of this textual tradition, more comprehensive research on this corpus and related materials has been carried out in recent years by Florinda De Simini, PI of the SHIVADHARMA project, an European Research Council project no.803624 on "Translocal Identities. The Śivadharma and the Making of Regional Religious Traditions in Premodern South Asia". The SHIVADHARMA project currently counts two publications: Bisschop, Kafle, and Lubin (eds.) and De Simini and Kiss (eds.), both published in 2021.

¹⁹⁸ The proliferation of temples brought a series of developments along with them. As Goodall (2020b, 11-2) has noted, before the twelfth century, temples were not a main focus of Śaiva treatises, where their mentions mainly regarded the consecration that they needed to receive. This situation drastically changed starting from the twelfth century, when the liturgical life of these places of worship became the central focus of Śaiva texts. According to Goodall, one of the reasons for such development was the need of the *ācāryas* to regulate the large range of social and religious activities related to them, with which they had not deal with till that moment. The importance that the temples started to hold also led to the more prevalent role that from the twelfth century was given to the public worship in temples, the *parārthapūjā*, whose benefits were extended to the whole community, thus prevailing on the private rituals (*ātmārthapūjā*) aimed at the benefit of the individual. See Brunner (1990).

¹⁹⁹ These are cited by Sanderson (2009, 271-272).

²⁰⁰ In particular, the works of Balasubramaniam (1971, 1975, 1979) represent a detailed record of the temples built under the Cholas, divided in three phases of their ruling period, and of their inscriptions.

rulers to temple construction is that of Rajaraja I, who, among the others, ordered the establishment of the Bṛhadīśvara temple in Thanjavur, the capital city of the Cholas, in 1003. According to Davis (1991, 4-5), as the temple was given the epithet of *dakṣiṇameru*, the “mountain of the South”, the reason for ordering the construction of such an important structure was the desire to provide God with a house equivalent to Mount Kailāśa, where, according to tradition, he resides. The king, thus, held the role of a devotee of Śiva, for whom he had built a new dwelling, which dominated the kingdom of the Chola dynasty. Moreover, as Ishimatsu (1999, 573) pointed out, the epigraphic evidence records that both Rajaraja I and Rajendra I, who ordered the construction of the Gaṅgaikoṇḍa Cholapuram temple, requested the arrival at their temples of *ācāryas* from Northern India, Deccan, and Bengal, to whom they also gave large donations. This confirms the transregional authority that the Saiddhāntika *ācāryas* gained.

The popularity of Rajaraja I for both his political and religious conduct led to his formal identification with the king who ordered the recovery of the saints’ hymns, although there have been controversies about it, pointed out by Rangaswamy (1959, 22-23). Besides the *Tēvāram*, he was considered to have sponsored the recovery of other devotional songs which formed, respectively, volumes eight to eleven of the *Tirumurai*, including the *Tiruvācakam* of Māṇikkavācakar and the *Tirumantiram* by Tirumūlar. Therefore, he was given a crucial role in the systematization of the Tamil Śaiva canon that, in fact, he did not have through the predating of at least some of these materials. It is the case, among the others, of the *Tirumantiram*; its dating has been at the center of academic debate for decades, with different theories placing it between the sixth and the twelfth century.²⁰¹

However, while Shulman (1990, xix-xx) noted that the story of *Tēvāram* recalls that of other holy scriptures, Vedas included, thus following a formal – maybe fictitious? – pattern of loss, recovery, and restoration aimed at stressing the authority of the given texts. He also stated that there is no evident reason to disbelieve that the *Tēvāram* as we know it was arranged by Nampi Āṅṅār Nampi in the tenth century.²⁰²

The exaltation of the Cholas and, in particular, of Rajaraja I occurring in the last century still have strong resonances today, to the extent of being at the center of heated debates, thus illustrating to what extent this dynasty was elected a symbol of ideal rulers and proud emblem of Tamil identity. It is the case of the political controversy aroused after the release of the fictional movie on the life of

²⁰¹ Nevertheless, during an international summer school on Tamil Śaivism held in Procida from 19th to 30th September 2022, organized by Florinda De Simini and Margherita Trento in the frame of the Shivadharmā Project, scholars – counting E. Annamalai and Jim Mallinson as main discussants – collocated it in the thirteenth century.

²⁰² It seems to be supported even by an inscription of his times reporting the practice of composing new hymns by saints’ poets, as mentioned by Rangaswamy (1959, 18).

Rajaraja I entitled *Ponniyin Celvan:1* on 30 September 2022, which portrayed the image of the king as a Hindu. As reported by many Indian newspapers,²⁰³ this aroused the critics of the Tamil film director Vetrimaaran, who accused the filmmakers of *Ponniyin Celvan:1* of having erased his religiosity, which implies an appropriation of the Tamil icons and identity. The dispute escalated back and forth between the DMK and the BJP, which brought up queries about the construction of the concept of Hinduism and the construction of identity related to a politically delimited area. The controversy culminated on 2 November 2022, when the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin (DMK) announced that the birth anniversary of Rajaraja, falling on 3 November, will be celebrated as a government event.

2.4 Arunachalam and the Śaiva saints

While the reconstruction of the historical events and the tracing of the characters who had a leading role in their emergence might present several uncertainties, especially when religion and faith are entangled with them and influence both their transmission and interpretation, it is possible to state that between the tenth and the eleventh century the *bhakti* tradition constituted an important part of the religious life within the Śaiva context.²⁰⁴ Prentiss (1996, 239) suggested that this literature provided a precedent for Tamil compositions in praise of Śiva, hence representing a first step towards the creation of a Tamil lineage and a Tamil canon that developed starting from Meykaṇṭār a few centuries later. Nevertheless, the dividing line between Śaiva philosophers and Śaiva religionists was kept well marked, as Prentiss emphasized, and got crystallized in the two lineages of the *cantāṇa ācārya*, starting with Meykaṇṭār, and of the *camaya ācārya* (“the religious preceptors”), starting from the first three saints, respectively.

Although the chanting of the sacred hymns constituted a crucial part of the ritual worship in temples, Prentiss (1999, 135; 1996, 239) also highlighted that they were not propagating a specific form of temple ritual worship and that, in fact, the Tamil school of Śaivasiddhānta adopted a dissociation from such ritual tradition, thus marking a breaking point from the Sanskrit school. This implied a reduced role of *kriyā*, rituals, for the attainment of *mokṣa* and a main stress on knowledge, besides devotion, as the most efficient salvific path. Prentiss (1999, 135) also suggested that this also reflected the influence of the Advaita Vedānta on Śaivism, something that Nallaswami Pillai (1911)

²⁰³ Among those: The Hindu, Outlook India, India Today, India Herald, The Federal.

²⁰⁴ Prentiss (1999) offered a definition of *bhakti*: according to the scholar, the term “devotion”, which is the most common used one as its synonym, is elusive and therefore suggested to replace it with “participation”. Prentiss understands *bhakti* as a doctrine of embodiment, thus requiring an active engagement of the devotee in the worship.

and Arunachalam (1983, vii-viii) had already noted. In particular, the latter emphasized that the development of an Advaita current within Śaivism started taking place during the fifth century, when Tirumūlar and Kāraikkāl Ammaiyār²⁰⁵ were active, then reinforced during the seventh to ninth century with the *nālvar*, flowered between the ninth and the thirteenth century, and was evolved by the *cantāṇa ācāryas*. In particular, the author stated (1983, viii) that they, mostly identified as Velalars,²⁰⁶ developed an Advaita philosophy by assimilating the concept of *aham-bhramāsmi* and transforming it in the doctrine of *māyāvāda* or *ekātma vāda*, namely monism.²⁰⁷

The incorporation of the *bhakti* tradition was likely to reflect the social tensions between Brahmins, whose authority had gone far beyond the boundaries of the religious and ritualistic sphere, and Tamil Velalars, who did not tolerate such a limitation of their role within society: downsizing the necessity of rituals, on which Brahmins had complete authority, meant setting new limits to their power, a condition that was further enhanced by the fact that the devotional worship did not require the mediation of a *guru*. As a support to this interpretation, it can be noted that Prentiss (1999, 102) stated that it is likely that since the time of Rajaraja I the singing of the saints' hymns in the temples came to be associated with the Velala caste, despite the *mūvar* did not present the practice of devotionalism as a peculiarity or prerogative of this specific caste, or any other else.

Moreover, the chanting of the Tamil hymns in the temples signed a crucial contrast with the liturgy in Sanskrit. While the direct relationship between the devotee and God and the social integration inherent in the devotional world – where all the differences between castes are erased and everyone is given the same chance of communion with the God – increased the grasp that Śaivasiddhānta held on ordinary people, they also found in the Tamil hymns sung in temples by new professional figures, the *ōtuvār*,²⁰⁸ an emotional value that the Sanskrit literature could have never conveyed, especially thanks to the intimate tone and the use of colloquial terms in their poetic

²⁰⁵ Arunachalam particularly stressed the importance of the woman saint, who adopted severe austerity and whose hymns expressed the highest Śaiva philosophy (1970b, 6, 34-47). About her see also Prentiss (2019, 2011).

²⁰⁶ Note that the origins of Meykaṇṭār are not clear. While Ishimatsu (1999, 575) defined them mysterious, stating that he was whether a Brahmin or a Śūdra, Arunachalam (1970a/2005, 254) stated that he was a Velalar and that he belonged to the Karkatta community (1981a, 31). Even the caste of Aruḷ Namaccivāyar (1300-1330) is dubious. Ishimatsu (1999, 577), following Zvelebil (1975, 207), stated that he was either a Chettiar or a Brahmin, Arunachalam (1969a/2005, 160) identified him as a Chettiar, a subcaste generally involved in agricultural works and trades. However, left aside the uncertainties of some of the first *ācāryas* of the Tamil lineage, starting from early fourteenth century we see a regular transmission of teachings between Śūdras (Ishimatsu 1999, 577). This implied that Velalars received the consecration as teachers, so that a sort of sub-category of *ācāryas* was set in the tradition, as Ishimatsu stated: “They distinguish between the upadesha paramparā, or transmission of the teachings through the usual preceptors starting with Shiva and ending with Umāpati, Aruḷ Namaccivāyar, and Siddhar Shivaprakāshar, and the *abhiṣeka paramparā*, transmission through the Shūdra masters whose authority comes from undergoing the special Āgamic ritual called the *achāryābhiṣeka*”.

²⁰⁷ Nevertheless, Arunachalam (1981b, 28) further emphasized that such *advaita* doctrines did not refer to an abstract monism, but referred to the preaching of a monotheism.

²⁰⁸ See Flood (2003, 218-9). It is noteworthy that in 2021 for the first time a woman, Suhanjana Gopinath, was appointed as the first *ōtuvār* woman in Tamil Nadu, being associated with the Dhenupureswarar Temple in Chennai.

compositions (Prentiss 1999, 52). Arunachalam (1970b, 9-10) particularly emphasized the role of the hymns, which were sung with the accompaniment of music, in preserving the ancient music and in the development of the Karnatic music that, thus, has Tamil origins.²⁰⁹

The importance that the Tamil Śaivasiddhānta since that moment had given to the *jñānapāda* for salvation later became, during the twentieth century, a key element that consented the Śaiva revivalists to advance the claims of a rational religion, thus promoting it as a sophisticated system. Nevertheless, this even implied an insistence on its more theological and philosophical aspects, whose understanding was not within anyone's reach for its complexity. In this regard, an element that distinguished Arunachalam from his contemporaries was that he emphasized the importance of devotionalism (1969c, 90) by insisting on an image of a religion constructed and developed through men and women who were capable of glorious and miraculous actions, despite having different origins or occupations, physical handicaps,²¹⁰ violent or tame ways to manifest their faith to God.²¹¹ Some of them often cited in his works on Śaivism are Kaṇṇappar (seventh century), who was the illiterate son of a hunter (1985, 10-11; 1970b, 2-3; 1969c, 96), Caṇṭeṣa (seventh century), who grazed cows despite being a Brahmin (1985, 11; 1981a, 25; 1970b, 3; 1969c, 46); Nantaṇār (seventh-eighth century) and Tirunīlakaṇṭha Yālppāṇa (seventh century), who were Harijans (Arunachalam 1985, 16). The recurrent mentions of the social status of the saints in Arunachalam's writings, especially when these personalities did not belong to a high caste, were aimed at suggesting that the greatness of a person, of a devotee, was not determined by or intrinsic in one's birth (Arunachalam 1985, 16; 1970b, 7).²¹² This interpretation further involves two suggestions.

On the one hand, it reflected a far hope of living in a society that would have slowly get devoid of its caste divisions. This clearly emerged from Arunachalam's words (1985, 20):

The lives of the Saiva Saints give us, even in the 20th century, not only guidance and solace in the spiritual field, but hold before us noble examples of a casteless society, where men and women are equal, where there is tolerance to other religions, where manual labor is respected, where people live for certain lofty ideals, where symbols are as much respected as the

²⁰⁹ See Arunachalam (1971a/2005, xxxiii), already cited in note 54, about the role of Tiruñācampanantar in preserving music.

²¹⁰ Arunachalam (1985, 16-7) mentioned saint Taṇṭi, who was born blind.

²¹¹ Arunachalam (1985, 18) mentioned four saints whose devotion took violent forms: Eṛipatta, who slashed an elephant and its attendants for having stepped on flowers offered to God; Ceruttuṇai, who cut off the nose of a queen who had smelled a flower destined to God; Kōṭpuli, who slashed down the people who had taken rice meant to be offered to godly men; and Cakti, who cut off the tongues of the people who denigrated godly men.

²¹² See also Arunachalam (1977b; 1970c).

principles they symbolize. In short, the stories of the Saints are a synopsis of all that is best and noble and lasting in the one-world idea.

This leads us to conclude that even in Arunachalam's thought, incorporating the *bhakti* tradition was a way to find a new balance in society in the context of the castes' struggles. This seems to be confirmed by his words (1970b, 11):

The hymns had helped the community worship of the learned and the masses alike in the temples and had thus helped to bridge the gulf between them and to forge unity among all classes of the followers.

On the other hand, it implied that the Śaiva saints were not mere mystic or abstract figures who were not within ordinary people's reach but historical personalities, models of conduct and faith to follow: if they had attained the Lord's grace by the only means of their spiritual growth, any other ordinary person moved by intense devotion could achieve same.

The intention of presenting the *camayācāryas* as models is particularly marked in Arunachalam's writings. Many of his contributions about the saints – also called *aṭiyar* or “servants” (Arunachalam 1970b, 3) – and their hymns, written over time, were rearranged and collected in *The Śaiva Saints*, a book that the author published in 1985 and where he also offered a summary of the contents of the *Periyapurāṇam*. In this work, the author mentioned the traditional notion of the four *camaya ācāryas* as characterizations or exemplifications of the four paths for the attainment of *mokṣa* through their life conduct. The introduction of this notion, which was conveyed by the *Civañāṇa Cittiyār Cupakkam* (Prentiss 1999, 255; Rangaswamy 1959, 63), helped establishing a link between the two traditions of Śaivasiddhānta philosophers and saints. According to it, Appar typified the *caryāpāda* (Arunachalam 1985, 91; 1970b, 4), Tiruñānacampantar the *kriyāpāda* (Arunachalam 1985, 121; 1970b, 4), Cuntarar the *yogapāda* (Arunachalam 1985, 33; 1970b, 5), and Māṇikkavācakar the *jñānapāda* (Arunachalam 1985, 192; 1970b, 5-6). Even according to Prentiss (1996, 255) and Rangaswami (1990, 63-4), these associations implied a different way for the saints to live their relationship with God and worship him. In particular, Appar was said to represent the way of worshipping God as a slave, *tācamārkkam* (Arunachalam 1985, 12; 1969c, 37; Rangaswamy 1959, 63); Campantar represented the path of a son, *carputtiramārkkam* (Arunachalam 1985, 13; 1969c, 34), Cuntarar the path of a friend, *cakamārkkam* (Arunachalam 1985, 14; 1969c, 40), and Māṇikkavācakar the path of truth, *caṇmārkkam* (Arunachalam 1985, 14; 1969c, 42; Rangaswamy

1959, 64).²¹³ Nevertheless, Arunachalam (1985, 12) also emphasized that these paths were not mutually exclusive but overlapped: each comprises the elements of the other three.

These associations, which were fixed according to the life of the saints, likely provided a model to follow for the devotees in their path towards God, which was not only theoretical.

Moreover, Arunachalam (1970b, 9) highlighted that the crucial role of these personalities as guidance within the religious domain was not restricted to the Śaiva context; they were, instead, responsible for the development of all humankind on the spiritual level, and the passage from material values to spiritual values in the society; therefore, their influence among the Tamils is unbroken:

The Saiva people are today taking bolder steps towards a better understanding and application of their radiant and ecstatic hymns of adoration, confession and surrender, which have guided the prayers of large congregations, and the mediation of individuals, in Tamil Nadu and elsewhere, through the centuries. Miracles were worked by the hymns during the days of the singers. They continue to do so even today. The true stories of God's mercy secured through the singing of the hymns are many and are well known among the flock. People are now coming to have greater faith in them and are going to them in greater numbers for solace and guidance, even in these days of cold reason²¹⁴ and challenging skepticism.

Moreover, the statement about the “flock” rediscovering a stronger faith at that time also makes something clear: despite crucial Śaiva reformers of the twentieth century animated this tradition with political sentiments and were able to engage the ordinary people in movements that went beyond the religious domain, in a last analysis the debates between the two streams of conservatives and radicalists about the interpretation (or re-interpretation) of the Śaivasiddhānta were mainly restricted to an intellectual or academic context, while the people continued worshipping Śiva the way they had done till that moment.

Finally, in several works, Arunachalam highlighted the impact of the saints further transcended the religious domain and embraced a general cultural dimension. Not only they had a primary role in the development and protection of Tamil music, already mentioned, but according to Arunachalam (1970b, 15), they also safeguarded Tamil art and culture that had been threatened by

²¹³ For a general description of these paths and their implications, see Rangaswamy (1959, 63-64).

²¹⁴ It is noteworthy that the reference to the “cold reason” characteristic of the twentieth century is found also elsewhere (Arunachalam 1971c, 169). A closer analysis of these two articles suggests that what the author is referring about is the Vedānta, which was the other dominant tradition at that time.

“barbarian hordes” and of which they became the “sentinel”. Thus, they provided a valuable service to the Śaiva devotees and all the Tamil people.

According to Arunachalam, the saint that particularly succeeded in this mission was Campantar, who was responsible for Tamil language and culture *resuscitation* (1981a, 15), besides Śaivism. As the author wrote (1981a, 17-8):

Tiru Jnanacambandhar was a saint with a definite mission in life. The mission was relief of the suffering of mankind, propagation of the Saiva religion through his songs and the restoration of the Tamil culture and Tamil music also through his songs. He was the one person responsible for restoring all that is great in the three divisions of Tamil today, at a period when it was threatened with extinction by an alien clan.

Despite the traditionally well-marked distinction between the Śaiva teachers, who transmitted the essence of the saints’ philosophical thought by providing them with a logical exposition (Arunachalam 1981a, 19), and the saints themselves, Arunachalam suggested that Tiruñānacampantar escaped such division. The author pointed out (1981a, 18-9) that the accounts that Cēkkiḷār gave about Campantar’s life in the *Periyapurāṇam* portrayed this saint as the first *ācārya*, a notion that seemed implied in the emblems of a teacher that he obtained due to God’s grace – the feeding with the milk of supreme knowledge by Śakti and the gift of the palanquin, umbrella, and trumpet – and in the way Appar related to him. Moreover, as a result of his role in promulgating the Śaiva faith, Arunachalam (1981a, 33) defined his name as an inspiring one that “held the greatest fascination among all the Saivas in the land”, thus later adopted by others to recall that greatness.²¹⁵

According to Arunachalam, the most considerable merit of Campantar was having defeated Jainism (1985, 113; 1971a/2005, xxxiii, 236; 1970a/2005, 361; 1970b, 95) and also Buddhists (1970b, 95), leading the author to describe him as “the greatest apostle of Śaivism” of all time. Nevertheless, Arunachalam also emphasized that his achievements in the sociological and cultural fields were equally vast. He highlighted (1970b) that Campantar never showed any kind of influence from being a Brahmin, escaping the logic of caste throughout his life. Two are the episodes that the author mentioned (1970b, 104-5): his meeting with the low-caste saint Tirunīlakaṇṭha Yālppāṇa, whom he addressed using the appellative *-aiyar* despite not being a Brahmin and for whose sake he asked

²¹⁵ One of them was Kurujñānacampantar (1550-1600), the eighth in the succession of the *ācāryas*, who established the Dharmapuram Adhinam. Arunachalam (1981a, iv) mentioned that he enriched the Tamil language through his poetry and, by the development of the Dharmapuram Adhinam order, he was further responsible for the development of Tamil Nadu’s art and culture.

for a dignified accommodation during their pilgrimages; the refusal of the marriage with Śivanēca, Pūmpāvai, not because she was a Chettiar but because, having brought her back to life, saw her as a daughter. Moreover, Arunachalam also pointed out (1970b, 106) his esteem towards the Velalar, of whom the saints had praised the industry and integrity.

Moreover, Arunachalam also praised (1970b, 106-8) his attitude towards women, whom he allowed to follow him, as in the case of Tirunīlakaṇṭha Yālppāṇa's wife; for whose sake he performed miracles, as in the case of the already mentioned Pūmpāvai; whom he glorified, as in the case of a Pandya queen who requested to see him.

Finally, another aspect to mention is the connection that Arunachalam (1969c, 1970b, 1981a, 1985) provided between Śaivism, Śaiva saints, and Gandhi. The author emphasized (1981a, 11; 1969c, 9) that Gandhi had spread the Śaiva concepts of God as Love and Truth through the two philosophies for the self-discipline of *ahimsā* or non-violence and *satyam* or truth, besides adhering to one of the most crucial aspects of Śaiva conduct for purifying one's body and soul, namely fasting (1969c, 72-3).

According to Arunachalam, Gandhi's merit was transforming these philosophical concepts, considered distinguishing marks of Śaivism, into a way of living, to the extent that he held many qualities that every Śaiva devotee should have (1969c, 87). This factor led Arunachalam to compare Gandhi to the Śaiva saints, especially Tirumūlar, who had insisted on the same message. See, for example, Arunachalam (1981a, 11):

His life is a luminous example to show that it is really possible to translate this highest philosophy into a way of living. Saivism indicates that way of living. Saint Tiru Mular in his Tirumantram has categorically declared that LOVE IS GOD.

(1970b, 72):

Tirumūlar here is not different from Gandhi who preached that Truth is God. Like the two sides of the coin, Love and Truth are the two aspects of the same being and Tirumūlar and Gandhi each emphasized one aspect thereof.

And (1969c, 9):

inta karuttu irupatām nūhrṛāṇṭilum perim tattuvamāka iruntamaiyai nām aṛivōm. makātmā kānti tam vāḷkkaiyil tammai neṛip paṭutta ahimcai, cattiyam enṛa iru perum tattuvaṅkaḷaik kṇṇṭiruntār. iraṇṭaiyum avar vevvērākak

karutavillai. oru kāciṅ iraṅṅu pakkāṅkaḷākavē avar karutiṅār. akimcayē anpākum. atikam varpurutti avar colliyatū, cattiyamē kaṭavuḷ eṅṅa karuttu pala nūru āṅṅukaḷukku muṅ anpē civam eṅṅu tirumūlar kūriya karuttum, inru cattiyamē kaṭavuḷ eṅṅu makātmā kūriya karuttum, ivvāru onraiyoṅṅu niraivu ceykiṅṅa eṅṅatai nāṅku kāṅalām.

We all know that this concept was the main philosophy of the twentieth century. Mahatma Gandhi had two main philosophies for self-discipline in his life, namely *ahimsā* and *satyam*. He did not consider the two as separate, but saw them as two sides of one coin. Ahimsā is Love. About the theory that Truth is God, which he said very persuasively, it can be well seen that the concept that Tirumūlar had said many centuries before that Love is Śiva and what Mahatma says now are complementary to each other.

Nevertheless, Arunachalam (1985, 41) also emphasized that, unlike “all of us” live on a worldly plane where thoughts about God, sacrifice, and devotion occur only occasionally, Gandhi lived on a different plane of existence, that of “Truth in thought, word, and deed”. The only difference that seems to emerge between Gandhi and the saints in Arunachalam’s thought is that there is a higher plan of existence characterized by absolute devotion and sacrifice to God, where the Śaiva saints lived and of which Gandhi only had some glimpses. In particular, the author described Gandhi as more devoted to the cause of basic education: it is for its sake that he was willing to make the most extraordinary sacrifices, even when it meant betraying his ethical codes.²¹⁶ Therefore, although there have been saints who equally transgressed the rules of conduct,²¹⁷ they had committed such infringements due to their love towards God and his devotees.

In a context where the Tamil cultural environment was animated by writers and scholars whose main concern was to underline, by any means and in any domain, the differences between the Hindu Brahmins and the Śaiva Tamils, Arunachalam emerged as a great advocate of Tamil culture, language and literature, who, at the same time, avoided such controversies, thus going beyond the political developments that could not be dissociated from the figure of Gandhi. The emphasis on the connection between Gandhi and Śaivism in his works seems to suggest his idea that there are values that carry a universal importance and which, therefore, should not be forced into rigid categories nor make them a prerogative of one or another tradition, ideology, or people. Moreover, it should also be

²¹⁶ Arunachalam (1985, 41) mentioned the episode of Gandhi telling Aryanayakam, one of his followers whom he asked to take up the cause of basic education, to divorce his wife in case she would have decided to not join him in this work.

²¹⁷ Note that in this regards Arunachalam (1985, 42) mentioned as an example the story of saint Iyarpakai (third century), who was willing to concede with no hesitation his wife to Śiva, who took the form of a Brahmin, as the love he nurtured for the Śaiva *bhaktas* prevented him from declining their requests.

noted that the mentions Arunachalam made about Gandhi did not reference politics, leaving the two spheres distinct. This choice might reflect one of the stands of Gandhi, as highlighted by Farooqui (2020, 25), about not mixing religion with politics.

2.5 Arunachalam's Śaivasiddhānta between Sanskrit and Tamil: sources and worship

As previously mentioned, during the twentieth century, the true origins of the Śaivasiddhānta became a burning issue in Tamil Nadu in the general context of cultural confrontation between Aryans and Dravida, filled with racial sentiments.

The notion that this religious tradition was a Tamil product was generally accepted. It led many reformers to define the Sanskrit Āgamas as translations or corruptions of the original Tamil textual tradition. In such context, the radicalists among the Śaiva reformers advocated the exclusive reliance on the Tamil canon, namely the *Tirumuṟai* and the *Meykaṇṭa Cāttiraṅkaḷ*, while disclaiming the value of the Sanskrit sources, including the Vedas and the Āgamas.

Arunachalam did not share such a stand (1969c, 1983, 1981b).

The analysis of his works shows that he believed in the intimate Tamil origin of Śaivism and, in particular, of Śaivasiddhānta, whose first mention was made by Tirumūlar in the fifth century: *Śaivasiddhānta* was, therefore, the name that the philosophy of Śaivism took in Tamil Nadu (1977c, 200; 1971b, 1).

Nevertheless, Arunachalam recognized the value of the Āgamas as the earliest Śaiva books in Sanskrit (1981b, 26) and never directly defined them as a replica of antecedent Tamil sources like some reformists had done before him. In fact, he believed that, despite their language, these texts carried specific Southern elements: the value of the Āgamas, thus, laid explicitly on their intrinsic Tamil characters (Arunachalam 1969c, 1977c, 1981b, 1983).

The most apparent evidence in these regards is the definition that he gave (1981b, 26) of the early *jñānins* responsible for the transmission of the Āgamic scriptures as spokesmen of a Tamil religious sensibility, as he wrote:

They were essentially representatives of All India and they reflected in their depth of thoughts, modes of meditation, and forms of worship, and in their writings, the inherent Theism of the South. The Theism of the South or rather, the Saivism of the Tamilians, was the growth of an unbroken tradition probably from the prehistoric past...

Such “theism of the South” was expressed through the descriptions of worships that Arunachalam (1981b, 30) considered to be not totally alien to the Northern culture but, furthermore, specifically Tamil:

The details of worship and temple consecration and the forms of the various manifestations of Siva are all only Tamilian in origin and character; they have nothing to do with the North; such rich and all-embracing spiritual and religious forms are totally lacking there.

The grantha script in which these texts were written represented another element that the author emphasized (1983, 1981b) to recall the connection of this tradition to the South. Besides the claims of the antiquity of this script, which was already in use when the Vedas were being transmitted in written form according to “a view” (Arunachalam 1983, v), the author further pointed out that it was “unknown in the north” (1981b, 30), a factor that would suggest their Tamil genesis. This would justify their greater circulation in the South, where they were preserved by the Śivācāryas,²¹⁸ while not being really available, nor popular, in the North.²¹⁹ Moreover, he also highlighted (1981b, 1983) that the script of these sources and their limited circulation in the North were the key reasons for the lack of critical studies, translations, or investigations by both Indian scholars and the “Orientalists of the West” (1983, v) on this textual production.²²⁰

As the author believed that the Āgamas highlighted the Tamil culture (1983, ix) despite being written in Sanskrit, he firmly criticized his contemporaries who were disclaiming all the Sanskrit texts, including these texts.

However, Arunachalam attributed (1983, ix) the general devaluation of this textual production to the Śivācāryas:

²¹⁸ See Arunachalam (1981b, 30): “The *Agamas* have the greatest currency in the Tamil country. The great Professor S. N. Das Gupta has stated that not a single manuscript of importance is available in Benares, considered the greatest seat of Sanskrit culture. It therefore goes without saying that the *Saivaagamas* have been a rare and special preserve of the *Sivaachaaryas* in Tamilnad” and Arunachalam (1983, v): “The agamas had existed mostly in South India, in the Tamil nad, in palm leaf manuscript book form in the homes of the Sivacharyas who had been entrusted with the duty of organizing and performing the consecration and the congregational worship (*parartha puja*) in the Siva temples for probably over two millennia and a half.”

²¹⁹ See Arunachalam (1983, v): “These agamas are not available in North India to the extent they are available in the South, although that had been responsible for the culture of the whole of India. Dr. Das Gupta has stated that ‘no agama manuscript of any importance is found even in Banaras, the greatest center of Hindu religion, Sanskrit studies and culture’.”

²²⁰ See also Arunachalam (1983, vi): “It is too much to expect Western Orientalists first of all to know of the existence of two scripts for Sanskrit and then to study two scripts for one language; their study was confined to the Devanagari script which was in use over a much larger area of India and in the north; hence no wonder the agamas were left out of their ambit of study”.

Thus by keeping the agamas as their own privileged preserve the Sivacharyas have snuffed out a wider study of the Saivagamas. The agamas in consequence came to perish.

Besides, he further accused (1983, ix) the Śivācāryas of having “aped” the *smārtha* Brahmins in an attempt to be recognized with greater authority and condemned them for this as the Āgamas advocated the superiority of the Śivācāryas as the ones who had received and could perform the initiation rites.²²¹ This led to the transgression of the prescription contained in the scriptures, which enhanced their perishment.

While Arunachalam recognized the authority of the Āgamas (1969c, 1977c, 1981b, 1983) with no limitation, the same cannot be said about the Vedas.

The author pointed out (1981b, 27) that the two indigenous cults of the Āgamas and the Vedas grew side by side, both relying on revealed and eternal texts unharmed by “extraneous” influences. The main difference that he highlighted (1983, ix) between the two – besides the traditional definition of the Vedas being common to all the Hindu traditions and the Āgamas being specifically Śaiva (1981a, 5; 1981b, 27) – was that while the Vedic scriptures dealt with the elite of the Aryan society, namely the Brahmins, the Āgamic ones concerned the whole society, including of common men and women.

Nevertheless, the reason for this did not lie in the nature of these scriptures, considered the emblem of the Brahmins’ culture, as was the case for many revivalists. As a matter of fact, Arunachalam never directly intervened in the racial debates of his times.²²²

It is somewhat justified by a prescription found in the Tamil canon, which Arunachalam reported (1969c, 19-20), according to which the sensual parts found in the *karma khaṇḍa*, the *mantras* other than the *pañcākṣara* found in the *upāsanā khaṇḍa*, and the parts about the union of *jīvātma* and *paramātma* the *jñāna khaṇḍa* of the Vedic scriptures had to be excluded.

²²¹ See Arunachalam (1969c, 47-48): *ivarkaḷ caivarkaḷukkup purōkitarāka irukkalām. enta vitattilum ācāriyarkaḷāka irukkum takuti uṭaiyavarkaḷ allar. itu pōlavē civālayattilum kūṭa, civamē paramporuḷ eṇru collum caivaraiviṭa atikamāṇa enta urimaiyaiyum, nāṇē paramporuḷ eṇru collupavarkaḷukku irukka muṭiyātu. cōḷa cāmrāṅyam (pēraracu) nilaviyanāḷil civācāriyarē cōḷarukkuk kuruvāyiruntārkaḷ. pirāmaṅar evvaḷavu ciṟappu uṭaiyavarāyiruntālum, caivarukku ṇāṇa kuru ākār //* “[Brahmins] can be *purohitas* for the Śaivas; but they don’t have any authority to be *ācāryas* at any rate. Similarly, even in the Śiva temples those who say ‘I am the Supreme Being’ have no more authority than the Śaiva who says that ‘Śiva is the Supreme Lord’. During the time of Chola Empire, the Śivācārya were the guru for the Chola kings. No matter how much great authority Brahmins may have, for the Śaivas the *jñānaguru* is more important”.

²²² His stand in this context is exemplified by the few words (1974, 4): “We do not wish to enter into any controversy here regarding the Dravidians and the Aryans. We would simply state here that even at the time of the earliest recorded history of the land and its literature, the two groups had intermingled to form the group which we now call the Tamilian”.

Arunachalam (1969c, 1983) advocated the use of Sanskrit as a religious language in all the works he wrote about Śaivism, hence supporting the notion that the Sanskrit and Tamil scriptures represent its two eyes. Besides, he firmly criticized (1969c, 28-9) those Śaivas who denied the authority of the Sanskrit literary tradition in the belief that their adoption would have meant spreading the Brahmins' culture, causing damages to Tamil culture as a whole and, in last analysis, Tamils' inferiority. In this regard, Arunachalam seemed to provide two objections for them to reconsider their stand.

The first was that Sanskrit sources were not written by Brahmins, who followed the Advaita Vedānta of Śaṅkara, but by *ācāryas* and Śaivas, who were proficient in both Sanskrit and Tamil.²²³

The second is that the reason for these texts to be written in Sanskrit was not a symbol of its greater authority but a consequence of the first religious debates between the Vedic religion and the later Buddhism and Jainism: as their founders were North Indians, they wrote in Sanskrit. Therefore, when the Śaiva had to write back about religion, they also made use of Sanskrit.²²⁴

However, the acceptance of Sanskrit texts' authority within the Śaiva religious context did not imply the approval of Sanskrit as the only language of worship. Although he recognized the sacredness of Sanskrit, Arunachalam also highlighted an equal status for his mother tongue, hence not remaining indifferent to the claims of the first as the language par excellence.

The author intervened in one of the thorniest issues of the time, traditionally glossed as *tamiḷ aruccaṇai*, "Tamil worship" (Ramaswamy 1997, 138), referred to the particular form of worship in which the priest recites the names of the deity in the presence of the devotee, traditionally in Sanskrit.

Ramaswamy (1997, 138) emphasized that starting from the very first decades of the twentieth century, the choice of the liturgical language in the temples became one of the contexts in which the

²²³ See Arunachalam (1969c, 28): *caiva cāttira vaṭa nūḷkaḷ pirāmaṇar ceytavai alla; ivarruḷ pala civācāriyar ceytavai, cila caivarē ceytavai. iraṇṭaiyum koḷvatāl tamiḷukku kuṛaiṅṅu, allatu pirāmaṇa ātikkaṃ ēṛpaṭum enru niṇaiṅṅatu aṛivutaṅṅaimaiyākātu. //* "The Sanskrit Śaiva Śāstras were not written by Brahmins; many of those were written by *ācāryas* and some by the Śaivas. It would be unintelligent to think that relying on both would imply the inferiority of the Tamils or the dominance of the Brahmins."

²²⁴ See Arunachalam (1969c, 28-9): *vaitika camayamoṅṅumē intiya maṅṅil nilaviya paḷaṅkālattil, iraṇṭāyirattu ainnūru āṅṅukaḷukkumuṅ, cīrtirutta camayaṅkaḷākiya peḷattamum caṅṅamum eḷuntaṅa. ivarrait tōṛruvittavarkaḷ vaṭa nāṅṅil piṛantavarkaḷ. ātalāl avarkaḷum avarkaḷ cīṭarkaḷum taṅkaḷ camaya nūḷkaḷai vaṭa moḷiyilēyē eḷutiṅṅārkaḷ. cīritu piṛpaṭtu iccamayaṅkaḷil poruntāta koḷkaikaḷaik kaṅṅikka muṛpaṭta vaiṭika camaya nūḷcīriyarkaḷ. atē vaṭamoḷiyil nūḷeḷuti kaṅṅuttārkaḷ. appōtum piṅṅarum, teṅṅāṅṅavar ac camayaṅkaḷaik kaṅṅikkavum taṅkaḷ koḷkaikaḷai viḷakkavum nūḷeḷutattoṅṅaiyapōtu, vaṭamoḷiyilēyē eḷitta toṅṅaiṅṅārkaḷ. camayanūlai vaṭamoḷiyil eḷututal enra marapy ivvāru toṅṅaiṅṅai nilai peṛruviṅṅatu. //* "In ancient times, when the Vedic religion was the only religion spread in Indian soil two thousand and five hundred years ago, Buddhism and Jainism developed as reform religions. Since those who started them were born in North India, they and their disciples wrote their religious books only in Sanskrit. A little later, the religious writers who started objecting the principles of these religions that were not suitable [for the Vedic religion], condemned them writing books in Sanskrit. Then afterwards, when the Southerners started writing books condemning those religions and explaining their own principles, they started to write in Sanskrit itself. This is how the tradition of writing religious books in Sanskrit started".

battle between Hindu Brahmins and Śaiva Tamils waged. While both Sanskrit and Tamil had been employed in temple worship with their respective importance varying on a given tradition, Sanskrit kept on being the prevailing language of the religious domain, a factor that even Arunachalam, despite his consideration of Sanskrit, could not accept. See, for example, (1983, x-xi):

We are prepared to employ Sanskrit and extoll it but this does not and can not of course be on the suppression of the mother tongue. We do grant that Saivism, along with Vaishnavism, had grown also through Sanskrit; we would further emphasize that Sanskrit is as much the learned and religious Tamilian's language as Tamil is, but that does not give Sanskrit the first position or the right to supplant Tamil.

A firm stand of Arunachalam on this matter is found in an article published in the magazine *Cittāntam* (1981c)²²⁵ entitled *Tamiḷil aruccaṇai* ("Worship in Tamil"). Some excerpts are proposed below.

[p.1]

kōyilkaḷil teyva caṇṇitīyil ceyyum arccaṇaikaḷai, inta nāṭṭut tāy molīyākiya tamiḷil ceyyavēṇṭumenra uṇarvu peritum vaḷarntu varukiratu. intiyā cutantiram aṭainta piṇṇar palvēru camaya, paṇpāṭṭu, molit tuṛaikaḷil makkaḷuṭaiya ṭṭupāṭu peruki irukkiratu. itu vaḷarcciyiṇ iyalpāṇa arikuṛi. itturaikaḷ puttuyir perru iyaṅki varukinraṇa eṇpatarku itu ciranta aṭaiyālam. aṇṇiyar ātikattil etuvum eppaṭiyō naṭantukoṇṭu pōkalām; āṭcikkuk kīlppaṭintu pōṇāl pōtum eṇra nilaitāṇ makkaḷiṭam mikutiyāka iruntatu. cutantiram perra piṇṇar nāmirukkum nāṭu namatu eṇpatu aṛintōm. itu namakkē urimaiyām eṇpatum aṛintōm. aṇṇi iṇṇu ellōrum innāṭṭu manṇar eṇra toṭarai ataṇuṭaiya uyarvāṇa poruḷilēyē eṭuttukkoḷvōm. aracu makkaḷuṭaiya aracu; makkaḷpāl poruppu uṭaiyatu. makkaḷai nanṇerip paṭuttuvatum avarkaḷpāl tōṇrukiṇra nōkkaṅkaḷil cirappāṇavarraic ceyal muraiykkuk koṇṭu varuvatum araciṇ mukkiya kaṭamaiyākum. Eṇavē mēṛkuṛippiṭṭa tuṛaikaḷil aracu kavaṇam celuttuvatu iyalpu, iṇṇiyamaiyātatumākum.

There is a growing feeling that the rituals performed in the sanctum inside the temples should be performed in Tamil, the mother tongue of this country.

²²⁵ A copy of this article was found in Arunachalam's office in Tiruchitrambalam on May 2022.

After India's independence, people's involvement in various religious, cultural, and linguistic fields has increased. This is a common indication of growth. This is a great sign that these sectors are reviving and functioning. During the foreigner's dominance everything has gone on somehow; the prevailing attitude among the people was to just obey the government. After gaining independence, we knew that the country we are in, is ours. We knew that it is our by right. And today we should all exercise [this right] in its highest meaning: that of rulers of this country.

Government is the government of the people; it is responsible for the people. The main duty of the government is to teach the people ethics and to make the best out of the aspirations they manifest. Therefore, it is natural and essential for the government to concern about the above-mentioned sectors.

[p.5]

piraruṭaiya tākkutal nēriṭṭapōtu atai etirttu vellum eṇṇam avarkaḷukku tōṇravillai. pira matattār katti muṇaiyilum, kavīrccikaramāṇa nilaikaḷaik kāṭṭiyum makkaḷai matam māṇriyapōtu ammakal eḷitilmāri viṭṭārkaḷ. itarkellām kōyil caṭaṅkukaḷ, valipāṭṭuc caṭaṅkukaḷ makkaḷuṭaiya tāy moḷiyil illai eṇpatum oru kāraṇamākum. ippaṭi illāmal ivai iṅku tamil moḷiyilēyē iruntirukkumāṇāl tamil nāṭṭiṅ carittiramē vēruvitamāy iruntirukkum. nikaḷntupōṇa carittirattai māṇri eḷuta muṭiyātu. āṇāl etirkālac carittirattai nirṇayippatu nam kaiyil irukkīratu. iṇru nammun uḷḷa piracciṇa ettaṇaiyō turaikaḷil tamilmoli āṭcikkū vantiruppatu pōla camayatturaiyilum tamilmoli āṭcikkū vara vēṇṭum eṇpatu. tamilnāṭṭil iṇru tamilar āṭci. kalvi muraiyil tamil, āṭcitturai ellām tamil. nītiṭ turaiyūm tamilāki varukīratu. camayatturaiyūm tamilāki varuvatu muraitāṇē?

itukārum aruccaṇai vaṭamoliyil naṭaiperru vantatu uṇmai. camīpa kālattiḷ cila kōyilkaḷil tamilum āṭci perukīratu. tamil kūṭātu eṇpavarkaḷ kaṅkūṭāṇa cila nilaimaikaḷai naṅku cintikka vēṇṭum. or utāraṇam kurippiṭalām. iṅkilāntil ceṇra nūṇṇāṅṭiṅ iṭaiypakuti varai nītimaṇra naṭavaṭikkaikaḷ lattīṅ moḷiyil naṭaiperru vantaṇa. lattīṅ tēva pāṣai eṇpatu avarkaḷ karuttu. camayat turaiyilum, nītiṭ turaiyilum aṅku lattīṅē ātikkam perṇiruntatu. orunāl makkaḷukku uṇarvu vantatu. uṭaṇēyē nītiṭ turaiyil lattīṅnai akarri viṭṭu āṅkila moḷiyilēyē aṇaittaiyūm ceyya āraṇpittārkaḷ. atupōla, intiyāvukku vanta kirittuvap pātirimār iṅkum taṅkaḷ mātā kōyilkaḷil lattīṅilēyē camayac caṭaṅkukaḷai naṭatti vantārkaḷ. toṭakka kālattiḷ kirittuva makkaḷ "lattīṅ moḷiyāltāṅ namakkuc corkka vācal tirakkīratu" eṇru uṇmaiylēyē eṇṇiṅārkaḷ. āṇāl kālam māṇriṭṭatu. pōp āṇṭavaruṭaiya aṅkikāṇṭiṅ mēl aṇaittaiyūm iṇru tamililēyē avarkaḷ naṭattukīrārkaḷ.

When [Śaivism] was attacked by other religions, [Śaivas] did not have the will to win. When other religious men showed them attractive conditions on

a knife-edge and converted the people, those people were easily converted. One reason for this is that all the temple rituals and worship rituals were not in the mother tongue of the people. Otherwise, if those would have been in Tamil language here, the history of Tamil Nadu would have been different. It is not possible to change and rewrite the past. But shaping the future is in our hands. The problem we face today is that just as Tamil language has come to power in so many fields it should also come to power in the religious domain. Today, Tamil Nadu is ruled by Tamils. Tamil [is used] in the educational system and in all the sectors of the government. Even the judicial system has become Tamilized. Shouldn't the religious sector also become Tamil?

Also, it is true that the worship is being conducted in Sanskrit. Recently in some temples Tamil also has gained power. Those who say that we cannot employ Tamil should think carefully about some obvious situations. We can give an example. Court proceedings in England were conducted in Latin until the middle of the last century. They believe that Latin was the *devabhāṣya*. Latin had become dominant in the field of religion and in the field of justice. One day, people came to their senses. Latin was suddenly removed from the judicial system and they started doing everything in English. Similarly, the Christian priests who came to India used to conduct the religious ceremonies in their churches in Latin. Initially, Christians really thought that Latin could open the gates of heaven for them. But time has changed. Today they conduct everything in Tamil with the approval of the Pope.

[p.6]

tamiḷnāṭṭil vaḷipāṭṭai naṭattukiṛa poruppuṭaiyavarkaḷ itai maṇattil eṇṇippārkkka vēṇṭum. maṇita kulam onrutāṇ. pēccum, eṇṇamum poruttavaraiyil pirittiṣārukkum namakkum vēṛrumaiyillai. avarkaḷ ōrē nāḷ illattīnai olittatu pōla nāmu ceytukoḷvatil kaṣṭamillai. tamiḷarccanai vēṇṭumenpōr colvatellām kōyilkaḷil pāmara makkalukkup purikiṛa moḷiyākiya tamiḷukkuc cama iṭam koṭuttal vēṇṭum eṇpatākum. kōyilil teyvam irukkumāṇāl antat teyvattukku tamiḷ puriyāmalā pōyviṭuma?

Those responsible for conducting worship in Tamil Nadu should keep this in mind. Mankind is one. There is no difference between the British and us in terms of speech and thought. Just like they abolished Latin one day, it won't be difficult for us to do same. All those who say that they want Tamil worship mean that they want to give equal space to Tamil in temples as a language understood by the lay people. If there is a deity in the temple, does that deity not understand Tamil?

Although Arunachalam has often expressed value judgments in his works, reading these few excerpts is sufficient to perceive the extent of his involvement in this particular issue.

Ramaswamy (1997, 139) highlighted that by the half of the twentieth century, political parties like the DMK and populists organizations got involved in the debate of liturgy language and supported the Śaivas' demand for making Tamil the normative language of worship.²²⁶ As Ramaswamy pointed out (1997, 141), the Congress-led state ignored their demands because it was more concerned with the matter of temples' administration and finances and feared that agreeing to it would have meant promoting regionalism and, thus, weakening Indian nationalism. Nevertheless, in 1970 and 1971, the DMK-led government in Tamil Nadu, under the lead of Karunanidhi, made attempts to officially authorize the primary use of Tamil as the language of religion in an effort to Tamilize the public sphere (Ramaswamy 1997, 143); as a result, the use of Tamil was improved,²²⁷ while Sanskrit was declared optional.

However, this did not mean that Tamil became the normative language of the Tamil worship; as a matter of fact, temple priests in many temples kept employing Sanskrit for the liturgy, hence, the intervention of Arunachalam on this matter.

In this context, the references that the author made to the government in the introductory lines of his article assume a deeper meaning: they are not just the complaint of a devotee expressed within a restricted community but the demand of a person, a Tamil, who knew that this issue was followed up by the government and wanted to be heard. Hence, his strong criticism: a proper government must not impose its acts on the country, as it happened during the colonial period, but should instead take care of its country by codifying the rational and irrational desires of the people into rightful guidelines and laws. When strengthening the idea that it should be the embodiment of its people and *concern about* their wishes and ambitions, Arunachalam was probably referring to the dominant indifference or tendency to minimize the cruciality of this matter of the central government, which for decades had been ignoring the request of the Tamils. As Ramaswamy mentioned (1991, 140-1), on several occasions the members of the Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Department (HRCE), despite accepting an increased use of Tamil hymns in temples during the 1950s and 1960, firmly refused to substitute Tamil for Sanskrit, defining this a “meaningful agitation”.

²²⁶ Ramaswamy (1997, 139) also pointed out that this line of action was taken as it represented a way to oppose, at same time, both the Congress government that was not willing to intervene in the status quo of liturgy and the Dravidian movements that were accused of being atheists.

²²⁷ Note that, as Ramaswamy (1997, 140) mentioned, even before the measure of the DMK many temples across Tamil Nadu already registered a major use of Tamil as primary language of worship.

At the same time, criticism towards the Tamil Nadu government, which was not making enough effort to Tamilize the religious practices in the same way it had done with other domains of public life, also emerged.

It is noteworthy that Arunachalam did not stress the importance of the primary use of Tamil in its quality of divine language, as was mostly the case of the Śaiva reformers, but in the quality of the mother tongue of Tamil Nadu. By doing this, he adopted the same reasons adduced by the political parties (Ramaswamy 1997, 140). This shows how much the feeling of need for the reappropriation of one's cultural identity was still crucial towards the end of the last century and how much the religious domain was a determinant for the assertion of such identity.

Ramaswamy (1997, 141) pointed out that one of the reasons that the HRCE members provided against the substitution of Sanskrit with Tamil was the impropriety of taking measures that went against the tradition. In this context, what Arunachalam conveyed is the concept that a *tradition* becomes such because its characteristics and features are shared and accepted by a community as the direct expression of their exigencies; when such exigencies change, not only there is no point in perpetuating it, but it is one's right to change it. It should not be an irreversible custom; in that case, it would be an imposition, and those are expected and, to some extent, justified in the political scenario of foreign colonial dominance. It rather is a choice that needs to be confirmed and perpetuated according to the people's needs, the same needs that an indigenous government should hear, consider, value, and second.

Although it is a process that might carry some criticalities, it is applicable: this is the other important message that Arunachalam expressed when mentioning the case of Latin being deprived of its role as the language of the liturgy. The reference to Latin as the classical language of the British is not surprising, considering that they still were a paradigm of comparison in the Indian cultural environment. The fact that Arunachalam emphasized how British and Indians – and specifically Tamils – are not different in the matter of thought complexity is a clear reference to the general and prevailing sentiment of cultural inferiority that the colonial period had impressed in the Indian soil. At the same time, the mention of the changes in the Christian liturgy in Tamil Nadu functions even as proof and an example of the applicability of changes in traditions in cases closer to the Tamil society. The point raised by Arunachalam is sharp: if Tamil had superseded Latin in the context of a religion that had foreign origins and whose profession was not intimately connected to the assertion of a Tamil identity, it was absurd that the same could not occur within the Śaiva context, considering that Śaivism was the essence of Tamil religiosity – and, for many, identity.

Moreover, in Arunachalam's case, Tamil was not to be used as the language of the liturgy only as a matter of principle, as the result of an abstract cultural and political claim without further implications or repercussions. The main reason for the author, as expressed in the article (1981c, 8), was securing the prosperity of the Śaiva faith through both the correct execution of the *aruccaṇai* by the priests, who often mispronounced the Sanskrit words nullifying their effect and preventing devotees from getting the blessings of God, and the real and deep understanding of the devotees themselves. One of the peculiarities of Śaivism in Tamil Nadu that Arunachalam always stressed was the high level of involvement that the chanting of the Tamil hymns had led to, which was the main reason behind its flourishing through the centuries. By contrast, the use of Sanskrit for worship caused a general detachment that increased the number of conversions to other religions. Thus, despite the author not requiring the total removal of Sanskrit from the religious practice, he was one of the voices advocating the improvement of Tamil use for cultural and religious reasons.

Although the issue of Tamil worship emerged a century ago, it is still a current theme in Tamil Nadu. It is noteworthy that the last development in its regards dates to 5 August 2022, when the Minister for Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments of Tamil Nadu's DMK-led government, PK Sekar Babu, announced the introduction of the *Annait Tamīlil Aruccaṇai* ("Worship in mother tongue Tamil"), a measure that for now concerns only forty-seven temples in the state, starting from the Kapaleeshwarar Temple in Chennai, where devotees will be allowed to ask the priest to chant the prayers in Tamil.

The analysis of Arunachalam's works and stands has shown that, when it comes to Śaivism, the aspects he focused on more were those pertaining to the ritual worship and practice, shaped by the scriptures and exemplified by the "godly" men he praised and commented.

The worship's features are, indeed, one of the main topics discussed in *Caiva Camayam* (1969c). Despite not being the most known among his religious works,²²⁸ it contains various personal opinions of the author. Since these features make a clear portrait of the author's insights about his religion, as long with criticism towards his contemporaries, and considering both the aim of this thesis work to shed light on Arunachalam's interpretation of Śaivism and that no work has been carried out on this book, the next chapter will provide its complete translation along with an introductory note with the comment of the contents.

²²⁸ This work does not seem to have had a broad circulation and there is a general shortage of soft copies of it. I was able to get one from Arunachalam's office in Tiruchitrambalam on May 2022.

CHAPTER III

ARUNACHALAM'S *CAIVA CAMAYAM*

Caiva Camayam (“Śaivism”) is a small book Arunachalam wrote in 1969. While the author had already published many articles on Śaivism, this is one of his first books on this topic. It did not result from a collection of earlier material²²⁹ but was conceived as a unique project whose aim is stated by the author in the introduction: give a clear account of the main aspects of Śaivism in terms of history, scriptures, people who have shaped it, worship, and philosophy.

Arunachalam also mentioned that the reason for such a task was the general ignorance about this religion. In particular, when writing this book, he had a specific audience in mind: he was not simply addressing the non-Śaivas but even and especially the members of the Śaiva community, who were following this tradition blindly without having a clear understanding and knowledge about its very fundamentals. As a matter of fact, they were not able to defend their religion when it was attacked and belittled by others. It is the case of idol worship, which had always been one of the most criticized aspects not only of Śaivism but even of other Indian religious traditions. Providing an explanation for such worship, specifying the ontology and epistemology of idols were perceived as one of the most crucial aspects by Arunachalam, who referred to this on several occasions throughout the book.

The author pointed out that the general ignorance about Śaivism was such that even the meaning of the term Śaiva was not acknowledged: among the common people, the first direct meaning associated with it is “vegetarian”; for many, this is the only one it holds. This certainly is an important detail, considering that vegetarianism was not prescribed in the canon, be it Sanskrit or Tamil, and the references to it started appearing more consistently from the sixteenth or seventeenth century.²³⁰ Arunachalam’s statements revealed that by the course of centuries, it became so much connected to Śaivism that it ended up identifying it completely, to the very extreme result of reducing the knowledge about this religion to it for a vast number of people.

The need to provide his audience with the correct information despite the topic's complexity determined the register's choice: a linear language, not overburdened with aulicism, that any educated

²²⁹ This was the case of Arunachalam (1977c, 1985).

²³⁰ Two of these texts are the *Civatarumōttaram*, the sixteenth-century translation of the *Śivadharmottara* by Maṛaiñāṇa Campantar, and the *Kolaimaruttal*, written by Pērūr Cāntaliṅka Cuvāmikaḷ in the seventeenth century. See Steinschneider: “Meat Matters: Kolaimaruttal and the Genealogy of Caiva Vegetarianism”, forthcoming.

person could understand. In fact, where he used technical terms that are derivations from Sanskrit, Arunachalam usually provided them with synonyms and explanations.²³¹

One of the first points that the author made clear was the authority he recognized to the Sanskrit sources, which made his stand clear within the debates of the reformists since the first lines of the book, leading him to define Śaivism as a *vaitika caivam*, a “Vedic” Śaivism, thus asserting the influences that the Vedic textual tradition had on the Āgamic corpus. He was pretty aware that this would have aroused the disagreement of many on this regards but the reply to them was straightforward: “It is not our intention to convey only notions that everyone agrees with. Our aim is to convey the truth. Notions about Sanskrit and Brahmin Śivācāryas are thus being told”.

Despite the acceptance of the Sanskrit scriptures, it is also true that the genealogy that Arunachalam provided for Śaivism – which he identified with Śaiva Siddhānta in its philosophical aspect following the interpretation that became dominant by the turn of the twentieth century – was of a tradition that existed among the Tamils since “time immemorial”, thus inserting himself on the same line of thought that prevailed in Tamil Nadu.

A peculiarity of Śaivism, as presented by Arunachalam, is that it is not just a set of beliefs and practices but a way of life characterized by the two main principles of love and truth. This is a topic that Arunachalam had highlighted in many of his works, where the concepts of “Love is God” and “Truth is God” are taken as a pretext to emphasize the thought and message of Gandhi. It is not surprising, then, that even this book contains such references: Gandhi is, thus, portrayed as someone who had, in fact, embodied the highest Śaiva values besides being a model of austerity.

The appreciation of Gandhi strongly contrasts with the consideration that Arunachalam had about the contemporary *ācāryas*: it is not by chance that when he wanted to provide a model to follow, Arunachalam mentioned the Mahatma, although he identified himself as a Hindu. When mentioning the worship of the teacher as one of the essential practices of Śaivism, Arunachalam expressed a strong criticism towards the *gurus* active in Tamil Nadu and their spiritual maturity: according to the author, none of them gained self-realization. In underlining the rarity and difficulty of this experience, which can be barely obtained “by one person every hundred years”, Arunachalam also highlighted that that one and only person lived in their century and was Ramakrishna Paramahansa, master of Swami Vivekananda. What is left for the disciples is thus deluding themselves that their *ācāryas* really have the needed qualities to teach them the way to the experience of Śiva.

²³¹ It is clearly seen, for example, when he talks about the concepts of God, individual soul, and attachments. In particular, Arunachalam defined *pati* as the *parama poruḷ* and commented it with the terms *kāppavaṇ*, *iraivaṇ*, *kaṭavuḷ*, *param poruḷ*, *paramātmā*, and *piramam*. For *paśu*, he gave the synonyms *uyir*, *āṇmā*, *āvi*, *cētaṇaṇ*, *jīvaṇ*, *jīvātmā*. For *pāśa*, he gave the synonyms *kaṭṭu*, *talai*, and *pantam*.

However, this is not the only “calamity” that Arunachalam described. A further issue, which the author defined a “pathetic situation”, was the presence of fake *yogins* in both Tamil Nadu and Andhra, whom he divided into two categories: those who had reduced *yoga* to a mere physical exercise, presenting themselves as great masters for their only ability to constrict the body into spectacular positions; those who had some rare skills, who presented themselves as mystics. Arunachalam highlighted how the less religious involvement of the people had brought them to fall for these “tricks” and believe in the greatness of these fake masters. Another problem that affected this situation was the illiteracy of most of them, which made them fascinated by their pompous show-offs. In these contexts, Arunachalam felt as necessary to provide correct information about Śaivism in the hope that getting a correct and true knowledge of it would have caused a major involvement of the people.

As already mentioned, *Caiva Camayam* was a book that Arunachalam conceived for the common people; this probably represents the most critical difference between this work and the contributions of other writers on Śaivasiddhānta and Śaivism in general, which were mostly thought for the circulation in intellectual and academic environments. The nature of “text for the people” is also reflected in its structure. The book is divided into eight chapters, as follows: “What is Śaivism?”, which functions as an introductory section on the antiquity of Śaivism, its general characteristics, meat abstention, and the principles of love and truth; “Śaiva Śāstras”, which deals with the Sanskrit and Tamil sources, thus containing even some reflections on the matter of Sanskrit as language of liturgy; “Śaiva Preceptors”, which gives details about the four *camaya ācāryas*’ lives, some accounts on the *cantāṇa ācāryas*, and mentions of Nāyaṇmārs and priests; “Śaiva Worship”, that focuses on the temple worship, the worship of Śiva’s *mūrttis* starting from Naṭarāja, the difference between the individual and congregational worship, and the philosophy on which the idol worship is based; “Śaiva Rituals”, which highlights the meaning and benefits of the rites and provides information about the most common rituals in a Śaiva’s life, the difference between *ātmārtha* and *parārtha* rituals, fasting as an important way to worship the deities, festivals occurring in each month of the year, processions as a fascinating and benefic form of congregational worship, and the experience of Śiva; “Śaiva Ethics”, on the meaning of *dharma* and its implications, the concept of attachment, and the stand of Śaivism about the *varṇāśrama* system; “Śaiva Practice”, which gives information about the four *pādas*, *mukti*, the Śaiva insignia, the worship of the *guru*, and the initiations he performs; and “The Philosophy of Śaivism (Śaivasiddhānta)”, which deals with the theological concepts of *pati*, *paśu*, and *pāśa*, the fetters, *karma*, *māyā*, the five functions of Śiva, *śakti*, the path to *mukti*, and God’s grace.

What can be noticed by looking at the structure of this book is that the order of the topics is reversed from what one would expect. Generally, theological concepts are the first to be explained when discussing a religion, as the ontology of God and the individual soul are the most crucial aspects in whose regards religious traditions differ. Arunachalam, instead, put it right at the end of the book, which is thus organized in an increasing degree of complexity.

This was not only done to facilitate the reader by getting him acquainted with these concepts in a more straightforward progression but also reflected an aspect of Arunachalam's thought that had emerged even in his other works on Śaivism, that is, the image of Śaivism as something more than a set of rules and abstract concepts, the idea of it as a way of life, a path made of concrete things and historical godly man that have exemplified the righteous paths to God, where actions, worship, and practice are essential in their being the key to understand and cherish the greatness of Śiva.

Next, my transliteration and translation of the full text of the *Caiva Camayam* are reported, following the original text of the author.

3.1 Caiva Camayam: transliteration and translation

#	Transliteration	Translation
	<i>caiva camayam</i>	Śaivism
I	<i>mu. aruṇācalam</i> 1969	M. Arunachalam 1969
	poruḷ aṭakkam	Index
	<i>attiyāyam</i>	Chapter
	<i>mukavurai</i>	Page
	<i>1. caiva camayam eṇpatu yātu?</i>	1
	<i>2. caiva cāttiraṅkaḷ</i>	7
	<i>3. caiva ācāriyar</i>	18
	<i>4. caiva vaḷipātu</i>	30
	<i>5. caivac caṭaṅkukaḷ</i>	49
	<i>6. caiva tarumam</i>	64
	<i>7. caiva cātaṅam</i>	78
	<i>8. caiva camaya tattuvam</i> (<i>caiva cittāntam</i>)	91
II		104
		104

caiva camayam intiyāvil aṅātikālamāka vaḷaṅkiya camayam. itu anru mukal inruvarai, valipātu maṭṭum ceykiṅra oru matam enrillāmal, makkaḷ vāḷkkai yiṅ ellāt turaikalāyūm cemmaiṭ paṭuttiya oru vāḷkkai neṟiyāka iruntu vantirukkīratu. pulāl uṅṅamaikkē caivam eṅpatu peyar; evvuyirukkum anpu ceypavaṅē caivaṅ. ivai caivam parriya iru kiṟanta karuttukkaḷ. inru caivamakkaḷil aṅēkar, vāḷkkaiyil illa niyamam koṅṅirukkīrarkaḷ. kālaiyil eḷuntu nīrāṭit tirunīru aṅintu taṅkaḷ illattil, pūcai araiyilō vēṟiṭattilō, tāṅkaḷ vaittirukkum teyvat tiru vuruvukku allatu paṭattukku malaritṭup pūcai ceytu cila pātal pāṭi valipattup piṅ uṅavu koṅṅu, tam vēlaikaḷaip pārkkac cellukīrarkaḷ. inrirukkum vāḷkkai nerukkaṭiyil-akavilai, nēra nerukkaṭi, paṅat taṭṭu, uṅavup poruḷ muttuppātu, pirayāna nerukkaṭi ittaṅaikkumiṭaiyil-palar inta niyamam koṅṅiruppatu mikavum pārāṭṭutarkuriyatu. mikap perumpālōrukku inta niyamam illai. eṅiṅum, niyamam uḷḷavarkaḷ illātavarkaḷ ākiya iru tirattāṟiṭaiyūm, taṅkaḷuṭaiya camaya tattuvam yātu, ācāriyar yār, camaya nūl yātu, taṅkaḷ valipāṭṭu muṟaikaḷ yāvai, intu camayam enru colkiṅra camayattiṅ pirivukaḷil taṅkaḷuṭaiya nilai yātu eṅpatu cīṟitaḷavum teriyavillai. ivarrai iyaṅra aḷavu eḷiya muṟaiyil uṅarttuvatē ipputtakattiṅ nōkkamākum. itu cāmāṅiyak kalvi arivūṭaiya caiva

makkaḷukkum, māṅākkarukkum, caivattaip parrip putitāy aṟiya virumpuvōrukku eṟra muṟaiyil eḷutap paṭṭuḷḷatu. itu caiva camayattiṅ ellāt turaikaḷaiyūm oṟaḷavu taḷuviya ārampa nūlāka irukkum. inta nūl eṭṭu aktiyāyaṅkaḷāka amaintuḷḷa tu. mutal attiyāyam pulāl uṅṅāmai, ellā uyirkaḷuk kum anpu celuttatal, caivattiṅ camaracam, caivattiṅ paḷamai, caivattāl viḷainta vaḷam ākiyavarraik kūrum. caiva cāttiraṅkaḷ enra pakuti, tamīlil tirumuṟaikaḷaiyūm meykaṅṭa cāttiraṅkaḷaiyūm vaṭamoḷiyil civākamaṅ kaḷaiyūm kurippiṭṭu, vētaṅkaḷum

Śaivism has been practiced in India since time immemorial. From that day till now, it has not been a religion that simply performs worship but a way of life that has refined all aspects of people's lives. "Śaiva" is the name given to meat abstention; a Śaiva is one who loves every living being. These are two crucial concepts concerning Śaivism. Many Śaivas nowadays follow good observances in life. They get up in the morning, take a bath, apply the sacred ashes, place the flowers on the divine statue or image that they have kept in their house, whether in the pūjā room or some other place, perform the pūjā, recite some hymns, and worship; only then they eat and take care of their business. In today's hardships of life – stress, limited time, financial straits, food shortage, busy travel time, and much more – many really appreciate following these precepts. Many [other] people don't follow them. However, both the two groups of people, those who follow them and those who don't, are not aware of what is their religious philosophy, who are the priests, which ones are the religious scriptures, what are their worship methods, and what is their position among the currents of the religion called Hinduism. This book aims to make these things as simple as possible. It is written in a manner that is suitable for the

generally educated Śaivas and students, as well as those who want to learn about Śaivism anew. It will be an introductory text covering almost all branches of Śaivism. This book is divided into eight chapters. The first chapter deals with meat abstention and love for all living beings, Śaiva lay life, the antiquity of Śaivism, and the prosperity produced by Śaivism. The section on the Śaiva Śāstras, referring to the Tirumurai and the Meykaṅṭa Cāttiraṅkaḷ in Tamil and the Śaivāgamas in Sanskrit, explains to what extent the Vedas, Upaniṣads and other Sanskrit Śāstras are

upaniṣataṅkaḷum pira vaṭamolic
cāttiraṅkaḷum enta aḷavu caivar koḷḷat
takkaṇa eṅpatai viḷakkum. caiva ācāriyar
eṅra pakuti, avarkaḷ yār eṅpatai naṅku kūri,
avarkaḷuṭaiya varalārraiyum curukkit tantu,
avar allātavar ācāriyar ākār eṅra uṅarvai
ūṭṭum; cila arputaṅkaḷai nikaḷt tik kāṭṭuvōr
nilai caiva ṅāṇa mārkattil iṅṅatu
eṅpataiyum tiṭṭamāyk kāṭṭum.

caiva valipāṭu eṅra pakuti, potuvāka ālaya
vali pāṭṭai viḷakkum; oruteyva valipāṭṭai
varpuruttum, ciṟu teyva valipāṭṭaik
kaṅṭikkum. uruva valipāṭṭiṅ avaciyattai ip
pakutiyl teḷivupaṭuttic colli yirukkak
kāṅalām.

caivac caṭaṅkukaḷ eṅra attiyāyattil, caivar
taṅippaṭṭa muraiyilum, camūkamākavum,
vīṭṭilum civālayat tilum, ceyyattakka
kiriyaikaḷukku oru viḷakkam collap
paṭṭuḷḷatu. caiva tarumam eṅpatu, aṭutta
pakuti; “mēṅmai koḷ caivanīti viḷaṅkuka
ulakamellām” eṅpatu āṅrōr vākkū. intac
caiva nītiyaiyē tarumam

eṅru kurippiṭṭirukkīrōm. varuṅam,
āciramam ākiya tarumaṅkaḷ, caivak
kaṅkoṅṭu collappaṭṭuḷḷana.

aṭutta iru attiyāyaṅkaḷum camaya
nuṭpaṅkaḷukkuḷ celvaṇa. caiva cāṭaṅam
eṅpatu, nālvakai mārkkaṅkaḷai yum civa
ciṅṅaṅkaḷaiyum viḷakki uraiṅpatu. caiva
camayat tattuvam eṅpatē caiva cittāntam. ip
pakutiyl caiva cittāntak kōṭpāṭṭukaḷil
aṭippaṭṭaiyāṅavai oṟaḷavu teḷivākkap
paṭṭuḷḷana. itu curuṅkiya nūlātalāl, atika
viḷakkam cāttiyamillai. ārampa nilaiyil uḷḷa
varkaḷ itaṅ mukkiya pakutikaḷai maṭṭum
aṅintāl pōtum.

curuṅkak kūrum avaciyam paṅṅi, iṅku
mērkōṭ pāṭaḷaḷaiyum ātāraṅkaḷaiyum
kurippiṭṭavillai. atu pōla, camaya viḷakkamē
ematu nōkkamātalāl, oṟiṭat tilum kāla
ārāycciyilō vivātattilō pukavillai. caivattil
ellāp purak kiriyaikaḷukkuḷ amaippukkaḷuk
kum tattuvārttam kūramuṭiyum. āyīṅum
iṭamiṅmai karuti avai mumumaiyum iṅkuc
collap peravillai. uruva valipāṭṭu viḷakkam
muṅṅamē kurippiṭṭōm. pira varrai aṅiya
virumpuvōr, vēru virinta nūlkaḷaiyum
cāttiraṅkaḷaiyum payila vēṅṅum.

accepted as Śaiva scriptures. The section on
the Śaiva ācāryas clearly states who they
are, summarizes their biographies, and gives
a brief account of other ācāryas besides
them; it also clearly shows the status of
those who perform some miracles in [the
context of the] Śaiva jñānamārga.

The section on Śaiva worship explains
temple worship in general; it encourages
monotheism and condemns the worship of
minor deities. In this section, the necessity
of idol worship is clarified.

In the section on Śaiva rituals, an
explanation is given of the actions to be
performed by the Śaivas individually and in
a group, both at home and in the temple. The
following section is the Śaiva dharma; “Let
the whole world understand the excellence
of Śaiva moral”, a wise one said. The
dharma

is what we call this Śaiva moral. The varṇas
and āśramas are dharma; they are explained
from a Śaiva perspective.

The following two chapters analyze
sophisticated tenets of the religion. The one
called Śaiva sādhana explains the fourfold
mārgas and the insignia of Śiva. The one on
the philosophy of Śaivism [talks about] the
Śaivasiddhānta. In this section, the basic
theories of Śaivasiddhānta are somewhat
clarified. As this is a condensed book,
further explanations are not possible.
Knowing only its main parts is enough.

For the sake of brevity, the hymns and
sources’ quotations are not mentioned here.
Similarly, since our aim is [providing] an
explanation of the religion, we did not enter
research or discussion into any time period.
The meaning of the philosophical theories
for all the outer rites and observances could
be explained. However, they couldn’t be
mentioned in full here due to lack of space.
We have already mentioned the explanation
of idol worship. Those who want to know
about other things should study other
elaborate scriptures and Śāstras.

mantiraṅkaḷ mutaliyavarraik kuṛippiṭa nērnta iṭattu, “kurumukamāy arika” eṇru kuṛippiṭtiruk kirōm. itu pōṇra ārampanūlilavarrai viḷakki uraikkavum muṭiyātu; eḷuttāl virittu eḷutuvatu camaya marapukku muraṇum ākum. ivai ācāriyaṅ upatēcat tāl ariya vēṅṭiyavai. ivai pōlavē yōkaktaik kuṛittuc collāl viḷakkap pukutal ciṛitum porun tātu. yōkamum atan mūlam varum aṇupavamum, ap piyācattiṅālum, tiruvaruḷiṅālum kaivara vēṅṭiyavai. eḷuttāl ivarrai viḷakkap pukutal eṭṭuc curaik

kāyāy irukkumēyaṅri, uṅmaiyaik kūriyatāka ākātu.

caiva camayam aṅātiyāka iruntu pala pirivukaḷaic koṅṭu viḷaṅkiyatu. caivap peruṅcamayattiṅ akac camayaṅkaḷāka pātāṅavātam, pētavātam, civa cama vātam civa caṅkirānta vātam, icuvara avikāra vātam, civāttu vitam eṇra ārum, akappurac camayaṅkaḷāna pācupatam māviraṭam kāpālam vāmam vairavam aikkiyavāta caivam eṇra ārum, paṅṭaic camaya nūlkaḷil collap paṭṭuḷḷana. ivai āryecciyl maṭṭilum uḷḷaṅavē yaṅri, ivarruḷ oṅrēnum aṅuṭṭānattil illai. aṅuṭṭānattil iruppatu caiva cittāntam oṅrē; itai oṭṭiyē tamilnāṭṭil uḷḷa pallāyiram civālayaṅ kaḷumavarriṅ valipāṭṭu muraikaḷum viḷākkalūm iṅru varai amaintuḷḷana. caiva camayam eṇra ip puttakam caivacittānta marapai oṭṭiyē eḷutap paṭṭuḷḷatu.

iṅkuk kūrapaṭṭuḷḷa caivam pūraṅamāṅa vaiṭika caivamē. vaiṭikattirku mārupaṭṭu etuvum colla villai. eṅiṅum, virinta maṅappāṅmaiyōṭu ellāp pēruṅmaikaḷaiyum taluviya caivamē collappaṭukiṅratu. iccaivam eṅraikkum uḷḷa caivamākum. ellārukkum uṅaṅpātāṅa karuttukkaḷai maṭṭum colvatu ematu nōkkamaṅru. uṅmaiyaḷi uṅarttatalē ematu nōkkam. vaṭamoḷi paṅriyum civācāriyar pirāmaṅar paṅriyum kuṛippiṭṭuḷḷa karuttukkaḷ ivvāru collap perravai.

iṛutiyl oru karuttaic collāmal irukka muṭiya villai. “ney pāl tēṅ kaṭṭi karuppenrāl tittiyā kāṅ nī” eṇru oru ṅāṅi pāṭiṅār. atu pōla, caiva

Where we happen to mention *mantras* etc., we meant to say “those one should learn from a *guru*”. They cannot be explained in a textbook like this; it is against the religious tradition to spread out the [sacred] words. These are to be learned from the teachings of an *ācārya*. Similarly, when we talk about *yoga*, there is little point in explaining it. *Yoga* and the experience that comes through it are to be attained by meditation and divine

grace. Since there is no chance these things can be explained by words, there’s anything correct that can be said [about them].

Śaivism has existed since time immemorial and has evolved into many currents. The six subgroups of “innermost” schools within Śaivism, which are the Pāṣāṅavāda, Bhēdavāda, Śivasamavāda, Śivasāṅkrāntavāda, Īśvarāvikaṅravāda, and Śivādvaita, and the six subgroups of inner schools, which are the Pāsupata, Vīraśaiva, Kāpālika, Vāma, Vairava, and Aikyavāda, are mentioned in the ancient scriptures. Not only are these not researched, but none of them is still in practice. The Śaivasiddhānta tradition is the only one still practiced; many thousands of Śaiva temples are based on it, and its rituals and ceremonies are still practiced in Tamil Nadu up to our days. This book *Śaivism* is based on the Śaivasiddhānta tradition.

The Śaivism described here is a pure Vedic Śaivism. It does not say anything contrary to Vedic religion. Nevertheless, Śaivism is said to embrace the essence of all religions with broad-mindedness. This Śaivism is eternal. It is not our intention to convey only notions that everyone agrees with. Our aim is to convey the truth. Notions about Sanskrit and Brahmin *śivācāryas* are thus being provided.

Finally, I couldn’t help making a comment. A *jñānin* sang, “ghee, milk, and honey. If you put them with jaggery, you’ll perceive them as sweet”. Similarly,

camaya nūlaip paṭittāl aṇupavam vantatāka ākātu. uṇmaiyaṇupavam, uṇmaiycāṇ aruḷāl tōṇrum pōtu tāṇ viḷaiyum; eṇiṇum, atarkāṇa takutiyaḷi uṇtu paṇṇik koḷḷum vaḷikaḷ cila. civa ciṇṇaṇ kaḷum tiruvainteluttum vaḷikaḷ. ivarrōṭu marṇoru ciṇṇappu vaḷi, eḷitāṇa vaḷi, tirumuṇrai ṍtutal. tirumuṇrai kaḷai muṇaiyāka ṍtutal uṇmaiyaḷi kālakkiramattil oru paravaca nilaiyaḷi tōṇruvipattu aṇupavapūrvamāṇa uṇmai. itaṇāl vēru palaṇkaḷum viḷaikiṇṇaṇa. aruṭpācuraṇkaḷāṇa tiruppukaḷ pōṇravaiyum uṇṇa kūrattakavai. ivarrōṭu inku nām kuṇṇipṇa virumpuvatu, civa ṇāṇa cittiyaṇ eṇṇa cittaṇta cāttiram. inta nūlil eṭṭām cūttiram toṭaṇkip pāṭam kēṭṭatu oru marapu. ip pakuti, tūksaikaḷ toṭaṇkip kuru liṇka caṇkama vaḷipāṭṭil muṭikiṇṇatu. pāṭalkaḷ yāvum eṇcīr āciriya viruttaṇkaḷ. pāṭalkaḷ paṭikkavum icaiyōṭu pāṭavum, maṇattirṇē mikka āṇṇal taruvaṇavākum. ip pakutiyaḷi, caiva cittaṇtattil ilakkaṇam kūṇum pakutikaḷ nīṇka lāka, eṇaiya pakutikaḷ aṭaṇkiyaḷḷaṇa; poruḷ uṇarvatu eḷitu. icaiyōṭu collip poruḷ vaḷi maṇattaic celuttiṇṇāl, caivacittaṇtak karut tukkaḷai naṇku terintukoḷḷamuṭiyum. ivvāru icaiyum poruḷ uṇarvum kūṭit tarum cukattil, ṍraḷavu poruḷ kāṭṭukiṇṇa vāḷkkai aṇupavaṇ kaḷum eḷitākaḷ cittaṇkum. itu palar aṇupavat til kaṇṇa uṇmai. āṭalāl caiva aṇparkaḷ inta nūlaip payilum paḷakkam mēṇkoḷvārkaḷāka; payilumpōtu inta vaḷiyē nūlkaḷaip payilvārkaḷāka. ceṇṇa talaimuṇrai varaiyaḷi, nūl karṇār eṇṇāl maṇappāṭam ceṇṇār eṇṇē poruḷ. maṇappāṭam

ceṇṇa piṇ, ṍyṇtirukkum pōtellaṇ, pāṭalkaḷai mīṇṇum mīṇṇum maṇattil collip pāṇṇtu, ataṇāl varum iṇpattaiyaḷum aṇupavattaiyaḷum perukkikoḷḷa muṭiyum. āṭalāl, nūlkaḷai uṇara vēṇṇum eṇṇu niṇaikkiravarkaḷ, tavarāṇtu maṇappāṭam ceṇṇu, icaiyōṭu collip paḷakuvārkaḷāka. “kōḷai miṭararāka kavi kōḷum ilavāka icai kūṭum vakaiyaḷ-ēḷai aṭiyaḷ

reading Śaiva scriptures does not lead to [Śiva] experience. True experience results only when it appears by the grace of the real teacher; however, there are some ways to qualify for it. [Using] Śiva insignia and the five syllables *mantra* are ways. Besides these, another special way, an easy one, is reciting the *Tirumuṇrai*. It is an empirical fact that the regular recitation of *Tirumuṇrai*'s hymns actually induces an ecstatic state over time. Thus, it also results in other benefits. Compassionate songs like those of the *Tiruppukaḷ* are also worth mentioning. Along with these, we would like to mention here the Siddhānta Śāstra of Civaṇṇa Cittiyaṇ. The tradition of listening to its hymns starts from the eight sūtra in this text. This section begins with the initiations and ends with the *guru*, *liṇga*, and congregational worship. All the hymns are in *cīr* metre. Reading the hymns and singing them along with the music is very soothing to the mind. In this section, besides the parts that deal with the definitions [of the theories found] in the Śaivasiddhānta, other [parts] are also included, whose meaning is easy to grasp. It is possible to better understand the theories of Śaivasiddhānta by focusing the mind and reciting them with music. Thus, in the happy state that the music and the awareness of the meaning together give, one will easily visualize even meaningful life experiences to some extent. This is a fact that many people have experienced. Therefore, Śaiva devotees should practice the customs studied through this book; if they study in this way, they will learn the scriptures.

Until the last generation, those who learned the scriptures had to memorize their meaning. After memorizing them, they

could repeat the hymns in their mind again and again whenever they were taking rest and, thus, increase the pleasure and the experience coming from it. Therefore, those who want to understand the scriptures should memorize them without fail and practice reciting them with music. “Even a shy devotee will say it freely if there is

ravarkaḷ yāvai conṇa col makilum īcaṅ”
allavā?

innūḷirutiyaḷ tirumuṛaikaḷiliruntum cittānta
cāttirankaḷiliruntum tokutta cila pāṭalkaḷ
cērkkap paṭṭuḷḷaṇa. ivai nūlakattuvarum
camayak karuttukkaḷai uraikkuṁ
pāṭalkaḷākum; ciṛanta pāṭalkaḷait toku
kum nōkkattuṭaṅ ivai tiraṭṭap peṛavillai.

intu camaya viḷakkamākap pala nūlkaḷ
āṅkilattil veḷi vantirukkiṇṇaṇa; camayak
kōṭpāṭukaḷukkuṭ pukuntu paripāṣaiyaip
perukkāmal pēruṇmaikaḷaic colliya nūlkaḷ
pala. caivam paṛṛi avvāru veḷi vanta nūlkaḷ
mikavum kuṛaivu. yāḷppāṇattup periyār
eḷutiya caivacamayam eṇṛa āṅkila nūl
iṅkilāntil veḷiyiṭappaṭṭatu. katirēcu eṇṇār
eḷutiya āṅkila nūl ceṇṇaiyil veḷiyāyirru.
tamiḷil vanta nūlkaḷ iṇṇum kuṛaivu.
mēlaiyūr cuvāmikaḷ eḷutiya caiva camaya
arimukam camīpa kālattil veḷiyāyirru. ivai
camaya tattuvattaiyē pēcupavai.

ippōtu veḷivarum inta nūl ivvāru tattuvak
karuttiṇuḷ atikam pukātu eḷutap peṛratu.
tiruvaruḷ tuṅaiceyṭāl, ituvē āṅkilattil veḷiyiṭa
eṇṇa muṇṭu.

music – God will enjoy the words uttered by
the poor devotees”, isn’t it?

At the end of this book, some hymns from
those compiled in the *Tirumuṛai* and
Siddhānta Sātras have been added. These
are hymns that comment on the religious
notions that come in the book; these were
not collected with the aim of compiling the
best hymns.

Many books have appeared in English
explaining Hinduism; there are many books
that speak about the core facts without
exceeding examining the religious
doctrines. There are very few of such
published books on Śaivism. An English
book entitled *Śaivism* written by Arumuga
Navalar was published in Srilanka. An
English book written by Katiresu was
published in Chennai. Books in Tamil are
still fewer. The book *Caiva Camaya
Arimukam* by Melayur Swamikal has
recently been published. These talk about
religious philosophy.

This book, which is coming out now, was
written without entering much into the
philosophical concepts. With the support of
divine grace, we intend to publish this in
English.

1

caiva camayam eṇṇatu yātu?

ulakattilē vaḷāṅkum camayaṅkaḷ pala. avai
yāvum kālattuḷ kaṭṭuppaṭṭu uḷḷaṇa. caiva
camayam oṇṇru tāṅ, carittira kālattaik
kaṭantu ninṇru iṇṇruvarai nilavuvatu. itu oru
kālattil oruvarāl uṇṭākkap paṭṭataṇṇu. itaṅ
varalāṇṇaip piṇṇē kūruvōm.

pulāl unnāmai

caivam eṇṇa col mikac ciṛanta karuttaik
taṇṇuḷ aṭakkuyūḷlatu; tamiḷnāṭṭil uḷḷa ellā
makkaḷukkum-nakaram nāṭṭuppuram,
paṭṭittavar paṭikkātavar, mēl vakuppu kīḷ
vakuppu, ēlai paṇakkāraṅ, āṭavar peṇṭir
eṇṇa vēṇṇumai etuvumiṇṇi-nāṅku terinta
virinta karuttuṭaiya oru col. caivam eṇṇatu
pulāl nīkkiya vāḷkkai; acaivam eṇṇatu pulāl
uṇṇum vāḷkkai. ituvē pāmara makkaḷ nāvil

1

What is Śaivism?

There are many religions in the world. All
of them are bounded in time. Śaivism is the
only one which has survived through history
and still exists. It was not created by a man
in a given time. We will tell its history
afterward.

Meat abstention

The word “Śaiva” contains a lot of
meanings; for all the people living in Tamil
Nadu – be it in a town or a village, and with
no distinction if one is literate or illiterate,
of an upper class or lower class, rich or poor,
male or female – the term “Śaiva” is
commonly known with a broader sense.
“Śaiva” means a life in which meat has been
eschewed; “aśaiva” is a non-vegetarian life.

valānkum collum poru ḷum. camayattiṇuḷ
pukāmalē ippaṭippaṭṭa karuttai nām
kāṅkirōm. caivaṇ eṇṇāl paramparaiyāka
māmicam unṇātavaṇ, ākavē avan
uyarntavaṇ eṇṇa orē karuttu āḷntu
nilaiperrirukkīratu. “kollāṇ pulānai
maruttānaik kai kūppi-ellā ulakum toḷum”:
talai murai talaimurāiyākap pulāl ariyāta
caivaṇ toḷat takkavaṇ, caivam toḷat takkatu.
caivam eṇṇa col lukku ēṇṇam taruvatu
itaṇiṇum vēronṇillai.
aṇṇiyum, ellōrum valipaṭum iraivaṇ aruḷ
vaṭivāṇavaṇ; avānai aṭaiya eṇṇum
maṇitarum aṇṇu nirampi aruḷ vaṭivāka
vēṇṇum. anta nilaiyil “taṇ

ūṇ perukkattirkut tāṇ pīritu ūṇ unṇāṇ-
eṇṇaṇam āḷum aruḷ?” eṇṇpatu cintikka
vēṇṇum. ivaṇ pulālai viṭāta varaiyil oru
kāḷattilum irai nilai aṭaiyum takuki pera
māṭṭāṇ.

pulāl unṇāmaiyaṇ intiya maṇṇil tōṇṇiya
ellāc camayaṇkaḷum aṇṇāti kālamāka
vaṇpurutti vantiruk kiṇṇaṇa. oḷi
irukkumiṭattil iruḷ iruppatu pōla vum,
meyyaic cūḷntu poy perukuvatu pōlavum,
caiva unavaic cūḷntu pulāl unavum
valāṅkiyē vantiruk kiṇṇatu. caiva camayattil
pulāl oḷittalukkuṇ perum ciṇṇappu. pulāl
oḷippatē caivam eṇṇu makkaḷ karutu
vārkaḷēyāṇāl ac “caivam evvaḷavu
eḷimaiyāṇatu, āṇāl evvaḷavu uyarnta
kuṇṇikōḷaik koṇṇiruntatu eṇṇu naram
naṅkuṇartal vēṇṇum. caiva camayattil tāṇ,
pulāl oḷittal eṇṇpatu, camayattilum
moḷiyilum vāḷkkaiyilum iraṇṇarak
kalantuvittatu. inta oru kāraṇam paṇṇi,
pulāl unṇavarkaḷ caivarkaḷai mika mika
uyarvāka niṇaikkiṇṇaṇar.

anpē civam

pulāl maruttal eṇṇu etir maraiyāka
colvatai uṭaṇpāṭṭu muraiyil colvatāṇāl,
uyirkaḷittatu aṇṇu ceṇṇal eṇṇu collak kūṭum.
caiva marapiṇṇaṭi “ilaṅkum uyir aṇṇaittum
īcaṇ kōyil.” īcaṇ vaḷi pāṭu iraṇṇu vakai. oṇṇu
ālaya valipāṭu, marṇṇu ellā

This is what laymen would say. We would find this notion, leaving religion aside. That a Śaiva is someone who does not eat meat as his heritage and, thus, has a higher social status is an idea that has taken deep roots. “The whole world will adore with joint hands the one who never kills, who refuses meat”: a Śaiva who has never had meat from generation to generation is a pious man, is a Śaiva who deserves to be worshipped. There is nothing else that gives uplift to the word “Śaiva”.

Besides, the God that everyone worships is an embodiment of grace; even the person who aims at reaching him should be an embodiment of compassion, full of love. [That person] should meditate on this situation:

“If a man, who was born for growing his flesh, eats meat, then how can grace dominate over him?”. He will not obtain the qualification to reach God as long as he does not eschew meat.

All religions originating in India have always insisted on meat abstention from time immemorial. Just like where there is light there is darkness, which increases as it surrounds the light, even the non-vegetarian food surrounds the vegetarian food and advances [in the body]. In Śaivism, great importance is given to meat abolition. If people think that Śaiva just means the abolition of meat, then Śaivism would be very simple, but we need a better understanding of how much high its aim is. It is in Śaivism alone that meat abstention has become one with religion, language, and life. For this one unique reason, people think that Śaivas have a higher status than those who eat meat.

Love is Śiva

Saying it the other way round, eschewing meat means being kind and lovable to all living beings. According to the Śaiva tradition, “All living beings in the world are temples of God”. The worship of God is of two kinds. One is temple worship and the other is soul worship, which is loving all

uyirkaḷiṭattum aṅpu celuttuvatākiya uyir
vaḷipāṭu. ālayamum uyirum, muṛaiyē
paṭamāṭum kōyil naṭamāṭum kōyil eṅru
tirumūlar kūrivār. ivvirāṅṅi nuḷ naṭamāṭum
kōyil vaḷipāṭē ciṛappuṭaiyatu. “ev

vuyirum nīnkātu uṛaiyum irai civāṅ eṅru-ev
vuyirkkum aṅpāy iru” eṅpātu oru cāttiram.
uyirkaḷukkuḷ uyarvu tāḷvu, cāti pētam illai.
itaip periya purāṇa nāyaṅmār varalārūkaḷ
naṅku viḷakkum. entac camayattukkum
itarku oppāṇa ciṛanta ilakkaṅam collutal
aritu.

aṅpē civam eṅru tirumūlar itaik kuṛip piṭṭār.
iraivaṅuṭaiya aruṅkuṅaṅkaḷil karuṅai oṅru.
iraivaṅuṭaiya peruṅ karuṅaiyē tiruvaruḷ
eṅru collukirōm. iraivaṅuṭaiya karuṅai ellā
uyirkaḷaiyum taḷuviyatu. atu pōla, aṅpē
civam eṅru collumpōtu, maṅitaṅ
uyirkaḷiṭattup pūṅ ṭomuka vēṅṅiya aṅpaic
civat taṅmai eṅru collukirōm. maṅitaṅ
kaṭavuḷiṭattup paktiyōtu oḷukuvatu mātṭiram
alla; ellā uyirkaḷiṭattum payaṅ karutāta
aṅpu pūṅ vēṅṅiyavaṅ. maṅitaṅ kāṭṭuvatu
aṅpākavum, kaṭavuḷ kāṭṭuvatu aruḷākavum
ākiratu; ituvē civam.

intak karuttu irupatām nūrrāṅṅilum perum
tattuvamāka iruntamaiyai nām aṅrivōm.
makātmā kāṅti tam vāḷkkaiyil tammai nerip
paṭutta ahimcai, cattiyam eṅra iru perum
tattuvaṅkaḷaik koṅ ṭiruntār. iraṅṅaiyum avar
vevvēruākak karuta villai. oru kāciṅ iraṅṅu
pakkaṅkaḷākavē avar karutiṅār. akimcaiye
aṅpākum. atikam varpurutti avar colliyatu,
cattiyamē kaṭavuḷ eṅra karuttu pala nūru
āṅṅukaḷukku muṅ aṅpē civam eṅru tiru
mūlar kūriya karuttum, iṅru cattiyamē
kaṭavuḷ eṅru makātmā kūriya karuttum,
ivvāru oṅraiyonru niraivu ceykiṅrana
eṅpatai naṅku kāṅalām.

cemmai taruvatu

civam eṅra col, iṅru civaperumāṅ, caiva
camayattirku mūlamāṅa civa paramporuḷ
eṅra karuttal ciṛappāka vaḷaṅkukiratu. āṅāl
itaṅ potuvāṅa karuttu, cemmai aḷippatu,
maṅkaḷattait taruvatu eṅpa tākum. ipporuḷil
iccol vētattil kāṅap paṭukiratu eṅpar.
ikkaruttu oru vakaiyil camayaṅ kaṅanta oṅ

living beings. Tirumūlar said that the temple
and the soul are, respectively, a temple
where the image of God is set and a moving
temple. Among these two, the worship of
the moving temple is more important. One
of the Śāstras says:

“God lives forever in all the living beings,
so be nice to all of them”.

Among living beings, there is no superior
and inferior nor caste distinction. The
biographies of the Nāyaṅmārs in the
Periyapurāṇa well explain this concept. It is
rare for any other religion to have an equally
outstanding feature.

Tirumūlar has said that Love is Śiva.
Compassion is one of the qualities of God,
which we call grace. It extends to all the
living beings. Similarly, when we say that
Love is Śiva, we are saying that a person
should cultivate the quality of love of Lord
Śiva towards all the living beings. A person
should not just worship God with devotion
but also needs to feel selfless love towards
the living beings. What people show is love,
but what God shows is grace; this itself is
Śiva.

We all know that this concept was the main
philosophy of the twentieth century.
Mahatma Gandhi had two main
philosophies for self-discipline in his life,
namely *ahimsā* [or non-violence] and
satyam [or truth]. He did not consider these
two as separate but saw them as the two
sides of one coin. *Ahimsā* is love.

About the theory that Truth is God, which
he said very persuasively, it can be noted
that the concept that Tirumūlar had said
many centuries before that Love is Śiva and
what Mahatma says now are
complementary to each other.

Giving goodness

The word “Śiva” – here Lord Śiva – better
represents the concept of Supreme Śiva, the
chief God of Śaivism. However, its general
meaning is “giving goodness”, and “giving
auspiciousness”. We find this word with the
same meaning in the Vedas. This concept
somehow goes beyond religion and refers to

9

10

ānanta nilaiyaic cuṭṭiyatu pōlum mēlānātu etaiyum civam enrē colli vantārkaḷ. 15ām nūrṛāntu varaiyil kūṭa, vīṭṭulaku enru kurippitum pōtu caina nūlkaḷ civakati enrē collivarak kānalām. tītaru civakati cērka yām, aruḷuḷam purikuvarāyiṅ iruḷaru civakati eytalō eḷitē, civakatikku vēntu enpaṇa pōṇra toṭarkaḷ mikappala. ātalāl, civam enra karuttu, mēlāṇa oru cemmaiyai, pēriṅpa nilaiyaic cuṭṭiyatu enru karutu vatu pīlaiyākātu. ituvē caiva camayam kurikkōḷā kak koṅṭa civat taṅmaiyum civa param poruḷumākum.

ulaka camayam

iṅi caiva camayattirku ānrōrkaḷ campiratāya mākac colli vanta ilakkaṇamum mikavum ciṛappāyk karutat takkatākum. caivam pīraraip paḷikkātatu, pariṛaraik kūrai kūṛātatu. ūr onru tāṅ; atarku vaḷikaḷ āru ula; aruvakaic camayaṅkaḷum iṛaivaṅai aṭaivatarḷku vevvēru vaḷikalāvaṇa. pacukkaḷ pala vaṅṅamāyiruppinum, avarriṅpāl orē vaṅṅamāy iruppatu pōla, camayaṅkaḷ palavāyiṅum avai kūṛum muṭivāṇa poruḷ onrē-enpaṇa caiva cāttiram kūṛum karuttukkaḷir cila. virivilā aṛivutaiyavarkaḷ putitāka oru camayattaip pakaiyuṅarcciyāl tōrruvit

11 *tālum kūṭa, atuvum empirāṅukku ēṛratākum enpar appar cuvāmikaḷ. aruvakaic camayattōrkkum avvavar poruḷāyiruppatōṭu, iṛaivaṅ avarraik kaṭantu ap pālāṇa taṅmaiyaṭaiyavaṅāyimirukkiṛāṅ. “ulakilulla camayaṅkaḷum avarril kūṛappaṭum tattuvaṅkaḷum avar riṅ ātāra nūlkaḷum tammil peritum muraṅpaṭ ṭuḷḷaṇa. iruppinum enta oru camayamānātu, itu tāṅ camayam, itu tāṅ poruḷ, itu tāṅ nāl, vēroṅ rum alla enru uraittup pīravarraik tiṭṭavaṭṭa māy maṛukkiṛatō atu camayamumalla, poruḷumall, nūlumalla; etu ivvērupāṭukaḷai yellām taṅakkuḷ ḷaṭakki orrumai kāṇa muyalkiṛatō atuvē camayam, poruḷ, nūl; caivam ivvēru kāṇa muyalkiṛatu” enru caiva cāttiram kūṛukiratu. caivattiṅ marroṛu taṅicciṛappu, caivam peṅ kulat tukkut taruma perumai. kaṭavul*

a blissful condition that is called nothing but “Śiva”.

We can notice that up to the fifteenth century, all the Jain books that talked about heaven called it “Śivagati”. There are many phrases like “Let me reach Śivagati”, “It is very easy to reach Śivagati for the one who has a merciful soul”, and “He is the king of Śivagati”. Therefore, it would not be wrong to assume that the concept of Śiva refers to a superior refinement, a state of bliss. This itself is the nature of Śiva and the meaning of Śiva’s heaven, which Śaivism aims at.

World religions

It is worth considering how other religions define Śaivism. Śaivism does not defame other religions nor criticize them. There is only one destination, [but] the ways to reach it are six; all six religions are different ways of reaching God. Even though cows come in different colors, their milk is of the same color. Similarly, some of the notions conveyed by the Śaiva Śāstras state that although there are many religions, their ultimate purpose is the same. Appar said that even if ignorants create a new religion out of

hostility, that religion also would be suitable for our Lord. Besides being the object of all six religious traditions, God transcends them and remains their essence. The Śaiva Śāstras say: “The religions of the world, their philosophies, and their scriptures are highly contradictory. Nevertheless, Śaivism seeks to contain all the differences among those religions that categorically deny the others by stating, “this is the religion, this is the meaning, these are the scriptures, and there is nothing else”, and those that state, “this is not the religion, this is not the meaning, there are not the scriptures”, and unite them within itself stating that “this itself is the religion, the meaning, the scriptures”.

Another special feature of Śaivism is that it values women. Since there is the concept

paṭaippil ellām camam eṇra
karuttuṭaimaiyāl, peṇṇukkup peṇpāl eṇra
kāraṇattiṇāl evvitak kuṟaipāṭum illai.
nāyaṇmār varalārukaḷ itai naṅku viḷakkum.
caṇa camayattil peṇṇukku muttinilai
eytuvataṟkāṇa urimai illai. marṟu, aṭutta
piṟaviyilēnum āṇāyp piṟantu tāṇ aval
muttinilai peṟuvataṟkāṇa yōkkiyatai aṭai
kiṟāl eṇpatu caṇar kūṟru. āṇāl intu matattiṇ
marrellāp piṟivukaḷum, ciṟappākac caiva
camayamum, peṇ ṇukkuc camayat tuṟaiyil
ellā urimaikaḷum aḷit tuḷḷaṇa.

caivattin tonmai

iṇi, caiva camayattiṇ tōṟruvāyai aniya nām
mūyalvōmāyiṇ, nam muyarci, intiyā intu
matam eṇra peyarkaḷukkum murpaṭṭa
kālattukkuc cella vēṇṭum.

nām vacikkum nāṭu intiya nāṭu. itaṟku intiyā
eṇra peyar vanta kataiyē viṇōtamāṇatu.
vaṭamēr kiliruntu vantavarkaḷ, cintu
natikkuk kiḷakkē vāḷnta makkaḷ ellām
cintukkaḷ eṇru peyariṭṭārkaḷ. nāḷaṭaivil itu
hintu eṇṟāyirru; ivarkaḷ matam hintu matam
āyirru; ivarkaḷ vāḷnta nāṭu intiya nāṭu.
ippaṭiyāka ip peyarkaḷ ellām aṇṇiyar vaitta
peyarkaḷē. ivarkaḷ putitāy hintu matam eṇru
peyariṭṭatu, ivarkaḷ varumuṇṇamē ikkāṭṭil
nilaviya teyvakkolkaikkē.

vaṭamoḷi intiyāvukku varumuṇṇamē tamil
makkaḷ intiyāviṇ pala pākaṇḷilum vāḷntu
vantārkaḷ. iyaṟ kaiyil nilam amaintirunta
muraiyai oṭṭi āṅkāṅku vāḷnta makkaḷaiyum
avarkaḷuṭaiya oḷukkattaiyum avvap
pakutikaḷukkuriya teyvattaiyum
oḷuṅkupattittik koṇ ṭiruntārkaḷ. nilamum
oḷukkamum malai-kuṟiṅci eṇavum, kāṭu-
mullai eṇavum, vayal-marutam eṇavum,
kaṭaṟkarai-neytal eṇavum, varaṇṭa curam-
pālai eṇavum, ivarṟir kut teyvaṅkaḷ muraiyē
murukaṇ, tirumāl, intiraṇ, varuṇaṇ,
koṟravai eṇavum, amaittuk koṇṭirun tāṟkaḷ.
ivvamaippu, pallāyiram āṇṭukaḷāka, kar
rōṟitaiyilāvatu vaḷaṅki vantatu eṇpatu
marukka muṭiyāta uṇmai.

intat teyvaṅkaḷukku mēlāka oru paramporuḷ
iruntatu eṇra uṇmaiya ellōrum arintiruntār
kaḷ. apparam poruḷukku avarkaḷ
kurippiṭṭirunta peyar innatenru

that all are equal in God’s creation, women do not have any kind of deficiency for their being females. The Nāyaṇmār’s biographies will elucidate this well. In Jainism, women are not entitled to obtain *mukti*. Moreover, Jains state that they can attain salvation only in a next life, where they are reborn as males. But all the other traditions of Hinduism, and especially Śaivism, have given full rights to women in the religious sphere.

Antiquity of Śaivism

Henceforth, if we seek to trace the origin of Śaivism, our efforts must go back to a time before the names “India” and “Hinduism” [were introduced].

The country we live in is called India. The story of how it got the name “India” is strange. Those who came from the North-west named all the people who lived east of the Indus River “Sindhu”. As time passed by, it became “Hindu”, their religion was called “Hinduism”, and the country they lived in was called “India”. Foreigners gave all these names. They chose the name “Hinduism” because of the religious doctrines that prevailed in this country before they came.

Tamilians lived in many parts of India before Sanskrit-[speaking people] came to India. They have set regulations about the people who lived here and there according to the land’s lay, their morals, and the deities suitable for those areas. The mountain was called “kuṟiṅci”, the forest “mullai”, the field “marutam”, the seashore “neytal”, and the desert “pālai”, and Murukaṇ, Viṣṇu, Indra, Varuṇa, and Kotravai were their deities, respectively. At least learned people cannot deny that this system has existed for thousands of years.

That among the deities there was a superior one is a truth everyone knows. Although we do not know the name by which they called that absolute God, we know that in very ancient times, the Absolute Śiva was

teriyāvittālum, ālamar celvaṅ, nīlamanī
miṭarru oruvaṅ eṅpaṅa pōṅra toṭarkaḷāl
mikka paḷaṅkālattilēyē civaparamporuḷ
kurippitap paṭtiruntatu eṅru arikiṛōm.

ivvāru cutṭappaṭṭa poruḷē civam, ivvāru
potuppaṭa nilaviya kaṭavuḷ koḷkaiyē caivam
eṅpatu telivu. ituvē peyar ariyāta aṅṅiyarāl
hintu matam eṅru putiya peyaritap perratu.
mēlē kurip piṭappaṭṭa murukaṅ tirumāl
mutaliya teyva vaḷipāṭukaḷ kālakkiramattil
pala pirivukaḷākat taṅit taṅiyē pirintu
pōyiṅa. ivai yāvum cērntatē hintu matam
eṅra karuttup piṅṅar nilavalāyirru.
uṅmaiyl, ivai yāvum, varaiyaṛai ceyyap
perāta caiva camayam eṅra aṅṅiyāka uḷḷa
oru camayattil piṛkālatteḷunta pirivukaḷ
eṅru koḷvatē poruttamākum.

13

cintu veliyil akaḷntu putai poruḷai ārāyntu
kaṅta ārāycciyāḷar, aiyāyiram āṅṅukaḷukku
muṅṅē innāṅṅil paraviyirunta purātaṅa
nākarikattil iliṅka vaḷipāṭum,
civaperumāṅṅutaiya vākaṅamākiya
iṭapamum iruntamai teriya varukiṛatu eṅru
collukiṛārkaḷ. ic ceytikaḷ, intiya nāṅṅiṅ
purātaṅa camayam caiva camayamē, peyar
teriyāmaiyl itarkup piṛkālaktil intu
camayam eṅru aṅṅiyar peyar vaittārkaḷ
eṅra koḷkaikku ātaravu tarukiṅṅraṅa.

tamiḷ nāṅṅil aṅṅati kālam toṭaṅki nilaviya
camayam caiva camayamē, ēṅaiyavai
yāvum piṅṅāl iṅaintavai eṅṅrak karuttaik
telivāka uṅarvataṅku iraṅṅtu karuttukkaḷ
iṅkuk kurippitā mutiyum.

oṅru, tamiḷnāṅṅil aṅṅrum iṅṅrum uḷḷa
pallāyirakkanaṅkkaṅa kōyilkaḷ civaṅ
kōyilkaḷē. piṛa camayak kōyilkaḷ mikac
cilavē. eṅavē, nāṅṅil paḷaiya potuc camayam
caivam eṅpatu tēṅṅram. maṅṅrak kurippu, inta
nāṅṅil caivam oru camayamē piṛa camayat
tiṅṅarait taṅ kūṅṅattuḷ cērṅka muyalātatu.
kāraṅam

14

velippaṭai. āki kālattil nāṅṅilirunta camayam
caivam oṅṅrutāṅ. ākavē, piṛar eṅṅra collukku
aṅku iṭa millai. cumār iraṅṅāyirattu ainnūru
āṅṅukaḷukku muṅ cainamum, peḷattamum
tōṅṅriṅa. iccamayaṅkaḷ putitāka uṅṅāki
vaḷarntapōtu, ivarruḷ ceṅṅru cērntavarkaḷē.
yāvarum caivattiliruntu cērntavarkaḷē.
camaṅattin koṅṅumai atikamāṅa kālattil

referred to with phrases like “the Lord of the South” and “the one with blue throat”.

Therefore, it is clear that the God these referred to is Śiva and, thus, Śaivism is the doctrine of God that commonly prevailed. Foreigners who did not know its name called it “Hinduism”. Over time, the worship of the deities mentioned above – Murukaṅ, Viṣṇu, etc. – split into many separate traditions. Later, the idea that Hinduism is a combination of all these prevailed. In fact, all these are apt to be considered later streams which arose from the once indeterminate Śaivism.

Archaeologists who made excavations outside the Sindhu area and examined the objects buried there say that those reveal the existence of a *liṅga* worship and of the bull as the vehicle of Śiva 5000 years ago. This information supports the theory that Śaivism is the most ancient religion of India, but in later times foreigners called it Hinduism since they did not know this name.

Two points may be mentioned here to clarify the idea that Śaivism was the religion that existed in Tamil Nadu since time immemorial and that all the others developed later.

One is that the many thousands of temples spread in Tamil Nadu are Śiva temples only, while the temples of other religions are very few. Therefore, it is a certain fact that Śaivism was the old common religion. The other remark is that Śaivism is the only religion in this country that does not seek to gather the devotees of other religions within its community. The reason is obvious: in

ancient times, Śaivism was the only existing religion in the country. Therefore, there was no chance to talk about other ones. Jainism and Buddhism made their appearance approximately 2500 years ago. When they were founded and developed, whoever converted to them was formerly a Śaiva. When the cruelty of Jainism increased,

*tiruñāna campantar tōṅric camañak
kurumpai atakkiṅār; mata mārram eṅrumē
caivattiṅ nōkkamāka iruntatillai.
irāmānucar tirumaṅṅalittu vaiṅavarākkiya
makkaḷ yāvarum, avarkaḷ
ekkulaktavarāyinuṅ, caivarāy irun
tavarkaḷē. piṅkālaktiḷ kattiyaik kattiṅiyum
paṅattaik kattiṅiyum pataviyaiṅ tantum, vēru
vakaiyilum ceyta mārraṅkaḷ yāvum
caivattiliruntu ceypapperravaiyē. ivarrāl
caivam onrē innāṅṅiḷ nilaviya tāyccamayam
eṅpatai naṅkuṅaralām.*

*caivattiṅ paḷamaiyaiṅ kurippita marrumoru
kurip pum taramuṅiyum. caṅka nūḷkaḷiḷ
kāṅum maturai veḷḷi yampalattaip parriya
kurippu ataṅ paḷamaiyai uṅart tum. atarku
munṅṅatākat tillaiṅ ponṅṅampalam irun
tataṅāl tāṅ veḷḷiyampalam putiyatāka
ēṅpaṅṅatu. aṅṅiyum, kōccēṅkaṅ cōḷar
eḷupatteṅṅtu māṅṅak kōyilkaḷ kaṅṅiṅār eṅpatu
appar cuvāṅmikaḷuṅṅaiya tēvāraṅ kurippu.
tirumaṅkaiyāḷvār iccōḷar kaṅṅiya
tirunaṅraiṅyūr maṅimāṅtam eṅra tirumāl
ālayattaik kurippituṅ pōtu, avar civa
perumāṅukku eḷupatu māṅṅak kōyilkaḷ
kaṅṅiṅār eṅpataik kurippituṅkiṅār. “irukku
ilaṅku tirumolivāy eṅ tōḷ iṅcarṅku, eḷilmāṅtam
eḷupatu ceytu ulakam āṅṅa-tirukkulattu
vaḷac cōḷaṅ ceyta kōyil, tirunaṅraiṅyūr
maṅimāṅtam cēr miṅkaḷē” eṅpatu avar
pācuram. ikkōyilkaḷ yāṅnai*

15

*pukamuṅiyāta amaipputaiyaṅa. eṅiṅum,
yāvum peruṅ kōyilkaḷ. iccōḷa maṅṅaruṅṅaiya
varalāru caṅka nūḷ kaḷiḷ payilkiṅratu. ivar ki.
pi. iraṅṅām nūṅṅāṅṅuṅṅu muṅ vāḷntavar;
arupattu mūṅṅru nāyaṅmārkaḷiḷ oruva rāyum
ivar pōṅṅrap perrullār. ivar kaṅṅiyavai
kaṅṅkōyilkaḷ; avarrukku muṅ iruntavai
ceṅkar kōyilkaḷ. avarrukku muṅ maṅṅāl
kaṅṅiya kōyil kaḷum marattāl kaṅṅiya
kōyilkaḷum iruntaṅa eṅrāl caivak kōyilkaḷ
evvaḷavu paḷamaiyāṅṅavai eṅpatai nām*

Tiruñānacampantar made his appearance and suppressed its power; religious conversion had never been the aim of Śaivism. All the people whom Rāmānuja converted to Vaiṣṇavism were Śaiva only, no matter what the community they belonged to. Later on, all the changes that occurred in other traditions – like offering protection, giving financial support, and providing a good position – were all provided by Śaivism. From this, we can well understand that Śaivism only was the mother religion that existed in this country.

We can give another example of the antiquity of Śaivism. A reference to the Silver Hall of Madurai in the Caṅkam literature indicates its antiquity. Since the Golden Hall of Chidambaram was pre-existing this, the Silver Hall was newly formed. Moreover, in the *Tēvāram* Appar mentioned that Kochengat Chola built 78 temples. When Tirumaṅkai Āḷvār mentioned that this Chola built a Viṣṇu temple, namely the Tirunaṅraiṅyūr shrine, he [also] said that he built 70 temples to Śiva. His hymn mentioned: “[Oh devotees], go to the precious shrine of Tirunaṅraiṅyūr, the temple that the great Chola [king] – belonging to the eminent lineage that ruled over the world – built, having constructed 70 imposing temples to the eight-armed Lord Śiva, whose mouth sparkles with Rig[veda verses]”.²³² These

temples had such a structure that elephants could not enter them. Nevertheless, they all were prominent temples. The biography of this Chola king is found in the Caṅkam literature, so he lived before the second century A.D.; he is furthermore considered one of the sixty-three Nāyaṅmārs. The temples he built were made of stone, while the earlier ones were brick temples. We can only guess how old Śaiva temples were if we consider that, even before that, they were

²³² I thank Professor K. Nachimuthu from the EFEO, Pondicherry, for his help on this quotation.

oruvāru yūkikka muṭiyum. tamīlnāṭṭin
(intiya kāṭṭin) ātic camayam caivamē enru
itiliruntu naṅ kuṅaralām.

caiva tattuvam

mēlai nāṭṭu muraippaṭi, tattuva cāstiram
vēru, camayam vēru. camayam enpatu
iraivan uḷninru uṅarttuvatu; tattuva
cāstiram enpatu pakuttariviṅāl tarkka
rītiyāka āraṅntu kāṅpatu. ulakaktil kāṅum
tuṅpaṅkaḷiliruntu tappa ellōrum
ennukirārkaḷ. ippaṭit tappuvatarkāṅa
muyarci tarkka rītiyāka naṭai perumpōtu,
tattuva āraṅycciyāka atu vaḷarntu,
camayattil pōy muṭikiratu.

intiya maṅṅiṅ ciṅappu, ivviraṅṅum oṅrāka
iṅaintiruppatu. inta iṅaippināḷtāṅ, tattuva
āraṅycci varāṭṭu vētāntam ākāmalum,
camaya uṅarcci mūṭanampikkaiyākap
pōkāmalum, uḷḷaṅa. piṅa mataṅkaḷ vāḷkkai
muḷuvatum pāvamē niṅaintatu enru colla,
intiya camayaṅkaḷ maṭṭumē pāvam allatu
tīmaiyaip poruḷākac collavillai. vāḷkkai
nilaiyarṅratu, atu tarum iṅpam nilaiyarṅratu,
ākavē, aḷikira vāḷkkaiyai viṭṭu, nilaitta
iṅpattai, arivu perra maṅiṅ tēṭa

vēṅṅum enru ivai upatēcikkirāṅa. itaṅāl
nilai yarṅa vāḷvil oru tarumattaiyum
niyāyattaiyum kaṭaip piṭikka vēṅṅum enra
koḷkai nilavukiratu. itaṅ payaṅāka, intu
camayamum caiva camayamum vērum
camayaṅkaḷ māttiramalla, vāḷkkai
vāḷvatarkāṅa oru vāḷkkai
muraiyumākiṅrāṅa. upaniṭataṅkaḷum
camayācāriyarkaḷum orē karuttaic
colkiṅrārkaḷ. atāvatu, cattiyam enpatu oṅru;
itaip palar pala kōṅaṅkaḷiliruntu
kāṅpārkaḷ; pārvaikku vevvērāka iruppiṅum,
ivai yāvum orē porulil pōy muṭikiṅrāṅa
enpatē avarriṅ cāram.

pulāl oḷittavar caivar enra oru karuttaic
kurip piṭṭōm. itu ulaka vaḷakkil irunta
pōkatilunḷkūṭa, civaṅaiyē paramporuḷākak
koṅṅavar caivar enra karuttai iṅku
valiyuṅuttic colla vēṅṅum. caivar enra col
oru cātiyāraik kurippataṅru. viṅṅuvai
valipaṭupavar vainavar enpatupōla.

made of mud or of wood. From this, it is
clear that Śaivism is the oldest religion of
Tamil Nadu (and India).

Śaiva philosophy

According to Western thought, philosophy
and religion are two different things:
religion is the inner perception of God,
while philosophy is an objective
investigation using reason. Everybody
wants to escape from the miseries of the
world. When such an attempt to escape is
made rationally, it develops into
philosophical research and culminates into
religion.

A unique feature of India is that these two
are combined together. Since they are
united, the philosophical research does not
become the barren Vedānta and the religious
sentiment does not lead to superstition.
While the other religions say that life is
totally filled with sins, Indian religions do
not talk about sin and evil only. They teach
that since life and the happiness it gives are
temporary, men must let go of the perishable

life and try to obtain the eternal bliss and
wisdom. Therefore, there is the principle
that one must adhere to *dharma* and moral
precepts during the perishable life. As a
result, not only Hinduism and Śaivism are
not two different religions, but they have
become a way of living life. Both the
Upaniṅsads and the *camaya ācāryas* have
preached the same thing, that is: there is
only one truth, but many see it from several
different perspectives; although the point of
view is different, they all end in the same
entity.

We mentioned the notion that a Śaiva is
someone who eschews meat. Although this
concept exists among lay people, it is
necessary to emphasize the concept that
Śaivas are the ones who consider Śiva as the
Supreme Being. The word “Śaiva” does not
indicate a [specific] caste. Just like the word
“Vaiṅṅava” means “a person who worships

civaperumāṇai vaḷi paṭupavar caivar. vētiyac ciṟuvarāṇa campantarum avar kirukkūṭṭattil yāl vācitta pānarāṇa nīlakaṇṭarum caivarē. nantaṇārūm tillaiṅvāl antaṇarūm caivarē. iṅṟaiya ulaka vaḷakkil caivar eṅṟa col oru cāti yāraik kuṟikka vaḷaṅkukiratu; avarāvār vēḷālar eṅṟa pirivil paramparaiyākap pulāl uṅavu uṅṅātavarkaḷ. tamīṅnāṭu muḷumaiyūm ivvaḷakku uṅṭu. itu caivam eṅṟa camayattiṅ virinta poruḷaiyūm, accamaya oḷukkat til aṅṇu neriyiṅ vēḷippāṭākiya pulāl nīttalukku uḷḷa ciṟappaiyūm pulappaṭuttuva tākum. caiva camayattiṅ aṭippaṭait tattuvaṅkaḷaic curuk kic colli ip pakutiyai muṭippōm. iṟaiṅṅaṅ oru vaṅḷē. avaṅ civaṅ eṅṅum peyaruṭaiyavaṅ. paṭaittal,

kāttal, aḷittal, maraittal, aruḷal ākiya aintoḷil kaḷaiyūm, uyirkaḷiṭattup piṟanta karuṅaiyāl taṅṅilum vēṟallāta cakti mūlamāka avviraivaṅ naṭattukirāṅ. uyirkaḷ pala. pul pūṅṭu mutal maṅṭa varkkam varaiyil ellām uyirkaḷē. uyirkaḷ taṅkaḷ taṅkaḷ viṅṅaiṅku iṭāka ulakil piṟantu iṟantu uḷalkiṅṟaṅa. viṅṅai ceyyumpōtu puṅṅiya pāvam viḷaikiratu; mīṅṭum mīṅṭum piṟappum iṟappum ēṟpaṭukiṅṟaṅa. taṅ ciṟṟarivu kuṟaintu iṟaiyarivu ciṟitē viḷakkam perra āṅmā, tiruvaruḷaip peṟa vēṅṭum eṅṟa uṅarvōṭu, ceyyūm karumattaic civaṅ paṅi eṅṟē ceytu, viḷaiyūm payaṅil parrinṟi vāḷṅṭu, civaṅṅaiyārōṭu uravu pūṅṭu, civā layattil iṟaiṅṅaṅ tiruvaṭivai vaḷipattū vantāl, uriya kālattil iruṅṅai kaḷum aṅṇupavittuk kaḷiyūm. aṭiyār cēvaiyūm civaliṅka vaḷipāṭum, viṅṅaivantu parrāṭapaṭi kākkum. māyai nīṅkavē, yāṅ eṅṅatu eṅṅum āṅava muṅaiyūm paripākamaṭaiyūm. appōtu avvāṅmāvi nīṭattut tiruvaruḷ patitalākiya catti nipātam ēṟpaṭum. itaṅṅiṅ karaṅṅaṅkaḷellām civakaraṅṅaṅkaḷākavum, āṅma pōtam nīṅkic civapōtamākavum māra, ceyal kaḷellām civaṅceyalkaḷākac ceytu, uriya kālattil uḷalai viṭṭu uyir nīṅkavē, uyirāṅṅatu mīṅṭu vārāta muttip pēru aṭaiyūm.

17

Viṣṇu”, the term “Śaiva” refers to one who worships Lord Śiva. Both Campantar, a Brahmin boy, and Nīlakaṇṭa, a musician who played the *yāl* in the religious community, were Śaivas. Both [the Harijan] Nantaṅār and the saints who lived in Chidambaram were Śaivas. [Nevertheless], nowadays among laymen, the word “Śaiva” denotes a [specific] caste; they all belong to the community of Velalar, who are traditionally vegetarians. This is a common understanding in the whole of Tamil Nadu. This shows the broader meaning of Śaivism and the importance of meat abstention as a manifestation of the doctrine of love in the religious discipline.

We will finish this section by summarizing the basic principles of Śaivism. There is only one God, whose name is Śiva. This God,

feeling compassion for the living beings he has created, performs the five functions of creation, protection, destruction, concealment, and grace through the *śakti* that is not separate from him. As a consequence of all their actions, the living beings suffer from the cycle of rebirths in this world. When they do an action, a virtuous or sinful deed occurs; [therefore] they undergo birth and death again and again. A soul that has decreased the self-knowledge and obtained a little knowledge of God will fulfill experiencing the two *karmas* at the proper time if it acts with the wish of attaining the divine grace – thinking that what it does is a service to Śiva –, lives regardless of the results of the actions, has a good relationship with Śiva’s devotees, and worships God’s feet in a Śiva temple. The servants’ worship and the *śivaliṅga* worship do not create attachment to the deeds. When *māyā* is removed, then even the ego will disintegrate. At that moment, *śaktinipāta* [or the descending *śakti*] will set in that soul as a sign of divine grace. After this, when all its actions will become Śiva’s actions and the [worldly] enjoyments will cease and be converted into Śiva’s bliss, every action will be done as God’s actions; when, at the

proper time, it will leave the body and its life will end, it won't get another birth as it will obtain *mukti*.

2
caiva cāttiraṅkaḷ

potuvāka intiya nāṭṭil, ilakkiyamellām teyva campantam uṭaiyatu. nūliṅ payaṅ aram, poruḷ, inṅpam, vīṭu eṅṅum uṟuṭip poruḷkaḷ nāṅkaiyum uṅarttavēṅṅum eṅṅpatu āṅrōr karuttu. in nāṅkil muṭivākiya vīṭu ciraṅpāṅnatu. muttippēru eṅṅra nilaikkuc celuttuvatākiya irai vaḷipāṭu ellā nūl kaḷilum collappaṭṭuḷlatu. inta nūrrāṅṅiṅ toṭakkam varaiyil ellā nūlkaḷukkum vāḷkkaik kumē, ituvē mukaṅmaiyāṅa kuṟikkōḷ. ātalāl ellā nūlkaḷilum, camayamum camaya tattuvamum piṅṅi yiruttal viyappaṅru,

vētam

18 *intiya maṅṅil tōṅriya intu camayap pirivukaḷ aṅaittukum mūlanūl vētam. vētam neṭuṅkālamākak “kēṭṭal” vaḷi vantatu. ātalāl curuti eṅṅpatu peyar. (curuti-kēṭṭappaṭuvatu.) vētaṅkaḷ oruvarāl ceyyap paṭṭavai alla; iraivaṅāl nāṅikaḷukku uṅarttap peṅṅravai. vētaṅkaḷ nittiyamāṅavai. irai uṅ maiyaik kaṅṅavar riṣi eṅappaṭṭār. vētam eṅṅra collukku nāṅam eṅṅpatē poruḷ. vētaṅkaḷ nāṅku-irukku, yajus, cāmam, atarvaṅam eṅṅpaṅa. nāṅ kiṅṅuḷ mikavum paḷamaiyāṅnatu irukku; atu mantira rūpa māṅnatu. kālattāl mikavum piṅṅpaṭṭatu, atarvaṅam. itil palatiṅrappaṭṭa kōṭṭipāṭukaḷum upācaṅaikaḷum kalantūḷḷaṅa; potuvāka vētakaṅkaḷ kuṟippiṅumpōtu, mutal mūṅṅumē poruḷākum.*

19

ovvoru vētattilum nāṅku pākaṅkaḷ uḷḷaṅa-mantiram, piṅṅmaṅam, āraṅyakam, upaṅṅat eṅṅa mantiram eṅṅra pakuti, vēta teyvaṅkaḷait tutippatu. itu vāḷkkaiyil cukamum celvamum peṅṅvatai nōkkamāyṅ koṅṅatu. piṅṅmaṅam eṅṅra pakuti

2
Śaiva Śāstras

Generally, in India, all the literary production is connected with God. It is an opinion of the scholars that a benefit of scriptures is to make one realize all the four aims of humankind, which are *aram*, *poruḷ*, *inṅpam*, *vīṭu* (Sans. *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma*, and *mokṣa*). The ultimate one among these four, *mokṣa*, is the most important. The worship of God for the attainment of *mukti* is discussed in every book. This itself was the primary purpose for the production of all the books until the beginning of this century. Therefore, it is unsurprising that all the books deal with religion and philosophy.

The Vedas

The Vedas are the source scriptures for all the traditions of Hinduism that arose in India. Since it was transmitted orally for a long time, it was defined as *śruti*, which means “that which is heard”. The Vedas were not written by a person; God revealed them to the sages. The Vedas are eternal. Those who understood the truth of God were called “ṛṣis”. The word “Veda” means “knowledge”. They are four: Yajurveda, Sāmaveda, Rigveda, and Atharvaveda. All four scriptures contain an ancient layer which is in the form of *mantras*. The Atharvaveda came much later. It contains doctrines and worships of all sorts; generally, when mentioning the Vedas, the reference goes to the first three.

There are four parts in each Veda: Mantra (Saṅhitā), Brāhmaṅam, Āraṅyaka, and Upaṅṅad. The part called Mantra praises the Vedic deities; it aims to gain happiness and wealth in life. The section called Brāhmaṅam refers to the rituals that arose to

akkālattuk koṅṭa teyvaṅkaḷaip pirīti
ceyvataṅkāka elunta yākak kiriyaiḷaḷaic
colvatākum. āraṇyakam eṅra pakuti,
akkiriyaiḷaḷukkut tattuvārttaṅkaḷai
viḷakkuva tākum. muṭivāṇa pakutiyaḷaiya
upaniṣatam eṅpatu, irai uṅmaiyaḷi uṅarttum
pakuti. upaniṣatam eṅra col arukil iruttal
eṅru poruḷpaṭum; ākavē, aruki liruntu
perum uṅmai upatēcam eṅpatu karuttu. intu
camayat tattuvaṅkaḷ aṅaittirukum
upaniṣatamē pūraṇa aṭippaṭai. upaniṣatam
vētattiṅ antamāṅapaṭi yāl, vētāntam
eṅappaṭum.

upaniṣataṅkaḷ eṅnarrana, nūrreṭtu eṅra
marapum uṅṭu. avarruḷ ciṅrappāṅavai
āticaṅkarar viḷakkavurai ceyta
paṅṅirāṅtum ākum. avai īca, kēṇa, kaṭa,
piraciṇa, muṅṭaka, māṅṭūkkiya, aitarēya,
tāittirīya, cāntōkkiya, pirukatāraṇyaka,
keḷacītaki, cuvētācuvatarām eṅpaṇa.
ivarruḷ irutiyaṅa cuvētācuvatarām oṅrē
caiva cittāntikaḷukku uṅaṅ pāṭu. eṅaiyavai
ēṅra perri koḷḷappaṭumēyaṅ ri, poruḷ
vakaiyil muḷumaiyūm koḷḷappaṭā.

vētāntam caivattukku uṅaṅpāṭu; caiva cit
tāntam vētāntattiṅ telivu eṅru taṅṅaiḷ kūrīk
koḷḷum.

vētaṅkaḷaic caiva camayam koḷḷumpōtu, oru
varaiyaṅraikku utpaṭṭē koḷḷukiratu. vētattil
mūṅru kāṅṭaṅkaḷ collappaṭum-avai karma
kāṅṭam,

upācaṅā kāṅṭam, ṅāṅakāṅṭam eṅpaṇa.
“caivaṅ vētattaik koḷḷumpōtu, karma
kāṅṭattil kāṅ yārttamāṅa karumaṅkaḷaik
koṅṭa pakutiyaḷiyūm, upācaṅā kāṅṭattil
paṅcākkarattukku māṅāṅa vēru vittaiḷaḷaik
kūrūm pakutiyaḷiyūm, ṅāṅakāṅṭattil
cīvātmāvukkum paramātmāvukkum
aikkiyam kūrūm pakuti yaḷiyūm vilakka
vēṅṅiyavaṅ” eṅpatu caivacāttiram.

caiva makkaḷukku smirutikaḷ ātāra
cāttiraṅkaḷ alla. ivai āriya-tamiḷk kalappu
ēṅpaṭāta kālattil vāḷṅta makkaḷukku
poruntuvaṅa ākalām. caivarākiya tamiḷ
makkaḷuṭaiya kalappu ēṅpaṭṭa piraku,
smiruti kūrūm caṭṭatiṅṅaḷ ciṅritum
poruntuvaṅa alla; caivaṅ ivarriṅ āṅciyaḷ
oppukkoṅṭavaṅ allāṅ.

please the deities of that time. The Āraṇyaka
section explains the theories for those
rituals. The Upaniṣad, the final part, is the
one that makes one realize the divine truth.
The word “Upaniṣad” means “to be near”;
therefore, there is the concept that the true
teaching is the one attained by being close
[to the guru]. The Upaniṣads are the
absolute basis for all the philosophies of
Hinduism. Since the Upaniṣad are the
conclusion of the Vedas, they are called
“Vedānta”.

The Upaniṣads as innumerable, but
according to tradition, they are hundred and
eight. Among them, the most important ones
are the twelve that Ādi Śaṅkara commented
on, which are: Īṣa, Kena, Kaṭha, Praśna,
Muṅḍaka, Māṅḍūkyā, Aitareya, Taittirīya,
Chāndogya, Bṛhadāraṇyaka, Kauṣītaki, and
Śvetāśvatara. The last one among these, the
Śvetāśvatara, is the only one that agrees
with the Śaivasiddhānta. Although the
others are adopted, their meaning is not
entirely accepted.

Vedānta agrees with Śaivism; the
Śaivasiddhānta defines itself as the
explanation of Vedānta.

Although Śaivism accepts the Vedas, it does
it to a certain extent. In the Vedas, three
sections are mentioned, that are: *karma*
khaṇḍa [or ritualistic section],

upāsanā khaṇḍa [or worship section], and
jñāna khaṇḍa [or knowledge section]. The
Śaiva Śāstras said: “When a Śaiva considers
the Vedas, he should exclude the sensual
parts found in the *karma khaṇḍa*, the parts
in the *upāsanā khaṇḍa* that mention sacred
mantras other than the *paṅcākṣara*, and the
parts in the *jñāna khaṇḍa* that talk about the
union of the *jīvātma* and the *paramātma*”.

The *smṛti* texts are not source scriptures for
the Śaivas. These were suitable for people
who lived in a time when Aryas and Tamils
had not mixed yet. After the mixture with
the Tamils, who were Śaivas, occurred, the
regulations conveyed by the *smṛti* texts were
not applicable at all; Śaivas did not accept
their rules.

ākamam

vētaṅkaḷaip pōlavum, iṅṅum cīrappākavum, caiva camayam koḷḷukiṅra mūla nūlkaḷ caivākamaṅkaḷ eṅappaṭum. caiva mūlākamaṅkaḷ 28. ivaikaḷē cīrappup piramāṅa caiva cāttiraṅkaḷ. ivarriṅ upākamaṅkaḷ 207. avaiyum koḷḷappaṭum. ākamaṅkaḷukkuc civā cāriyar palar virivurai elutiyuḷḷaṅar. caivarkaḷukku, vētam potu, ākamam cīrappu nūlākum.

caivākamaṅkaḷ nāṅku pirivukaḷaik koṅṅirukkum. ivai vittiyā pātam(ñāṅapātam), kiriyā pātam, yōka pātam, cariyāpātam eṅpaṅa. vittiyā pātamāṅatu, kaṭavuḷ uyir ulaku eṅpaṅavaṅraiyum, pāca ilakkaṅattaiyum viḷaṅkakkūri, āṅmā pācaṅkaḷiṅṅinrum viṭupaṭac ceyvataṅkāṅa cātaṅai muraikaḷaiyum uṅarttum. kiriyā pātam, āṅmārttam, parārttam, nittiyam, naimittikam ākiya pūcaikaḷaiyum, ālayap piratiṭṭai, viḷā mutaliya

muraikaḷaiyum viḷakkamāyk kūrūm; uruvac cīrpam, kaṭ ṭiṭaccīrpam, naṭaṅam mutaliya kalaikaḷukku mūlam ākamamē. yōka pātam aṭṭāṅka yōkattaiyum pirācāta yōkattaiyum viḷakkikkūrūm. aṭṭāṅka yōkam ellā intuc camayaṅkaḷukkum potu. ip pirācāta yōkam caiva camayattukkē uriyṭu; ituparri vaṭamoḷiyilum, tumiḷilum aṅṅeka cāttira nūlkaḷ uḷḷaṅa. cariyā pātam, caivaruṭaiya nittiyakaruma vitikaḷaik kūrūm.

pirkālattil civācāriyar palar caiva camayak karuttukkaḷil cila taṅiṅ pakutikaḷai viḷakki vaṭamoḷiyil aṣṭap pirakaraṅam mutalāṅa cila taṅi nūlkaḷ ceytārkaḷ. ivaikaḷum caivattukku ātāra nūlkaḷ eṅru karutappaṭum. appaṭiyē, civācāriyar palar ceyta pattatikaḷ (vaṭamoḷi) caivaccaṭaṅkaḷukku ātāra nūlkaḷ.

piramma cūttiram

viyācar tokutta piramma cūttiraṅkaḷ ellā intu camayaṅkaḷukkum mūlātāram. ivarrukku ācāriyar ceyta pāsyāṅkaḷai oṭṭic camayakkaruttukaḷ vērupaṭṭum mārupaṭaṭṭum vantuḷḷaṅa. caṅkarar, irāmānucar, mattuvar ākiyōr ceyta pāsyāṅkaḷai oṭṭi, ivarkaḷ peyarāl vevvēru

The Āgamas

Like the Vedas and even more than them, the source scriptures of Śaivism are the Śaivāgamas. The Śaiva Mūlāgamas are 28. These are very important Śaiva Śāstras. Their Upāgamas are 207, and even those are accepted. The śivācāryas have written many commentaries to the Āgamas. The Āgamas are more important than the Vedas for the Śaivas.

The Śaivāgamas have four sections; they are: vidyāpāda (jñānapāda, “section of knowledge”), kriyāpāda (“section of ritual action”), yogapāda (“section of meditation”), caryāpāda (“section of the good conduct”). The vidyāpāda speaks about God, the soul, and the world, explains the characteristic of the fetters, and points out the methods of achievement to get rid of all of the souls’ fetters. The kriyāpāda explains practices like ātmārtha, parārtha, daily, and special pūjās, the consecration of

temples, festivals, etc.; in fact, the Āgamas are the source for arts like sculpture, architecture, dance, etc. The yogapāda talks about the aṣṭāṅkayoga and prāsādayoga. The aṣṭāṅkayoga is common to all Hindu religions, while the prāsādayoga is peculiar of Śaivism; there are many Śāstric texts about it both in Sanskrit and Tamil. The caryā section talks about the daily regulations for Śaivas.

In later times, the śivācāryas have written a few independent texts in Sanskrit explaining some aspects of the theories of Śaivism, like the Aṣṭaprakarana. Śaivism accepts even those. Similarly, the many paddhatis written by śivācāryas (in Sanskrit) are considered reference sources for the Śaiva rituals.

The Brahmasūtra

The Brahmasūtras compiled by Vyāsa are the source reference for all the Hindu religions. The religious interpretations contained in the commentaries that the ācāryas wrote to the Brahmasūtras are different and varied. Following the Bhāṣyas written by Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja, and Madhva, different religious traditions arose in their

camayap pirivukaḷ ērpaṭṭaṇa. nīlakaṇṭa civā cāriyar tam peyarāl oru pāṣyam ceytār. atil perum pakuti caivamakkaḷ koḷvārkaḷ; civa camamākac collukinra pakutiyaik koḷlamāṭṭārkaḷ. pira camayaṅkaḷ-caṅkararuṭaiya attuvaitam, irāmāṅucarūṭaiya viciṣṭāttuvaitam, mattuvaruṭaiya tuvaitam eṅpaṇa-mēṅkuṛitta āciryarkaḷāl vakukkap perravai. caiva camayam avvāru vakukkapperavillai; itu aṅāṭiyāṅatu; maṅṅitarāl uṅṅākkap perratanru.

upaniṭatak koḷkaikkum piramma cūttirak koḷkaikkum vērupāṭu uṅṅu eṅru āṅāycciyāḷar kūruvar. piramma cūttiram ceytavar vātarāyaṅar eṅpar. attuvaita marapil, upaniṭatam, pirammacūttiram, pakavatkūtai ākiya mūnrum pirastāṅattirayam eṅappaṭum; ivai camayak koḷkaikaḷ aṅāittukkum aṭip paṭai eṅru karutappaṭum. caṅkarar, irāmāṅucar, mattuvar ākiya mūvarumē ivvāru koṅṅaṅar. caiva camayamāṅatu, muṅkūriya varaiyaṅaikaḷukkuṭpaṭṭu, upaniṭatam, piramma cūttiram iraṅṅaiyum koḷlum; pakavatkūtaiyaik koḷḷātu.

purāṇa itikācam

22

īṅi, intu camayattil campiratāyamākac collukinra purāṇa itikācaṅkaḷ, caivattilum ēṅruk koḷḷap paṭuvāṇa. paṭiṅeṅ purāṅaṅkaḷil caiva purāṅaṅkaḷ pattu. avai caivam, skāntam, liṅkam, kūrmmam, vāmaṅam, varākam, paṅviṣyam, maccam, māṅkkaṅṅēyam, piramāṅṅam eṅpaṇa. cilavē muḷumaiyum tamīlil uḷḷaṅa. atikamāka āṅciyil uḷḷatu skānta makā purāṅam. skāntattiṅ pakutiyaṅa cūta caṅkitai caivarkaḷukku mikavum ciṅrappāṅatu. itu vaṭa moḷiyil 5000 culōkaṅkaḷuṭaiyatu. itai āti caṅkarar paṭiṅeṅṅu murai ṅtiya piṅakē piramma cūttira pāṣyam ceyyat toṅaṅkiṅar eṅru āṅṅōr kūruvar. ikkūru innūliṅ ciṅrappai naṅkuṅarttum. piṅkālattil mikap palavāṅa purāṅaṅkaḷ tamīlil ceyyappaṭṭaṅa. ivarruḷ ellāc ciṅrappum vāyntavai kacciyappa civācāriyar ceyta kantapurāṅamum paraṅcōti muṅivar ceyta tiruṅṅaiyāṅar purāṅamum ākum. periya

name. Nīlakaṇṭa Śivācārya wrote a commentary that carried his name. Śaivas accept many parts contained in it, but they won't accept the parts where it is said that we are equal to Śiva. Other religions – the Advaita of Śaṅkara, the Viśiṣṭādvaita of Rāmānuja, and the Dvaita of Madhva – were founded by the aforementioned ācāryas; Śaivism is not classified like that; it is without beginning; it was not created by men.

Scholars say that the principles of the Upaniṣads and those of Brahmasūtras are discordant. [Some claim that] the Brahmasūtras were written by Bādarāyaṅa. The Upaniṣads, the Brahmasūtra, and the Bhagavadgītā are the scriptures for the Advaita tradition; they are considered the basis for all the religious theories. Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja, and Madhva accepted them. Śaivism accepts Upaniṣads and Brahmasūtras, with the limitations that have been mentioned earlier; it does not accept the Bhagavadgītā.

The Itihāsa-Purāna literature

Now, what are traditionally called Itihāsa-Purāṅas in Hinduism are also accepted in Śaivism. Among the 11 Purāṅas, 10 are Śaiva Purāṅas. They are: Śiva, Skānda, Liṅga, Kūrma, Vāmana, Varāha, Bhaviṣya, Matsya, Mārkaṅṅeya, and Brahmāṅṅa. Some of these are totally in Tamil. The Skānda Mahā Purāṅa is the most used. The Sūta Saṅhitā part of Skānda is crucial for Śaivas. It contains five thousand ślokaḷ in Sanskrit. Learned people say that Ādi Śaṅkara started writing the comment to the Brahmasūtras only after having read them more than eighty times. This statement sums up the value of these texts. Later, many Purāṅas were written in Tamil. Among them, the most significant ones are the Kantapurāṅam by Kacciyappa Śivācāryar and the Tiruṅṅaiyāṅar purāṅa by the sage Paraṅcōti. Although the Periya Purāṅam is nominally a Purāṅa, it tells the lives of the

purāṇam peyaraḷavil purāṇam enru
amaintu iruppīnum, civaṇaṭiyār

varalāru kūruvatu; oru tirumuraiyākak
koḷḷappaṭṭatu. itu parrīp piṇṇē kūruvōm.
[maccapurāṇam, kūrmapurāṇam,
iliṅkapurāṇam, vāyucanṅkitai, kācikaṅṭam,
piramōttara kāṅṭam, upatēca kāṅṭam
pōṇraṇa civacarittiram kūrum
itikācaṅkaḷākavum civa puṇṇiyam kāṅṭam
mutalāṇa purāṇaṅkaḷ kūrum
cāttiraṅkaḷākavum ceyyuḷ vaṭivil
eḷutappaṭṭa perunūlkaḷ. virivaṅci ittakaiya
tamiḷ nūlkaḷai mēr kuṟippīṭṭa varicaiyil
cērkkavillai.]
irāmāyaṇa makāpārata pākavataṅkaḷ,
itikācaṅkaḷ enra aḷavil intiya makkaḷ
aṇaivarukkum potu enpatu uṇmai. ivai,
camaya itikācam enru pēcum pōtu,
caivarkaḷukku nūlkaḷākā; civa
makāpurāṇam, skāntam, civa rakaciyam
ākiyaṇavē caiva itikācaṅkaḷākum.

23

tirumurai-tamiḷ vētam

mēr kūriyavarruḷ kaṅṭa tamiḷp purāṇaṅkaḷ
tavira eṅaiyavai yāvum vaṭamoḷi ātāra
nūlkaḷ. tamiḷil tōṅriya tēvāram mutaliya
nūlkaḷ tamiḷ vēkam enappaṭum. mūla
vētaṅkaḷai aṟintavar ariyar. āṅāḷ ittamiḷ
vētaṅkaḷē, tōṅriya nāḷ mutal caiva makkaḷai
nanṇerip paṭṭutta uṟuṇaiyāy iruntu
vantiruk kiṅraṇa. inrum iruntu varukiṅraṇa.
tēvāram pōṅra aruṭ pācuraṅkaḷukkuc caivat
tirumuraikaḷ enra peyar ērpaṭṭatu. caivap
periyār ceyta aruṭ pācuraṅkaḷaip
panṇiraṅtu puttakaṅkaḷākat tokuttārkaḷ.
ovvoru puttakamum tirumurai enappaṭum.
tēvāram enpatu campantar, appar, cuntarar
ākiya mūnru nāyaṅmārum talaṅkaḷ tōrum
cenru pāṭina

24

pāṭalkaḷiṅ tokuppu. pattup pāṭalkaḷ koṅṭatu
patikam enappaṭum inru kiṭaiṭṭaṇa,
campantar pāṭiya patikaṅkaḷ 384; pāṭalkaḷ
4147; ivai tirumurai 1, 2, 3. appar pāṭiya
patikaṅkaḷ 312; pāṭalkaḷ 3066; ivai
tirumurai 4, 5, 6. cuntarar pāṭiya patikaṅkaḷ
100; pāṭalkaḷ 1026. ivai eḷām tirumurai.
māṅikka vācakar pāṭiya tiruvācakamum,
avar pāṭiyatāka vaḷaṅkum tirukkōvai yārum
eṭṭān tirumurai; pāṭalkaḷ 1056. tirumāḷikait

Śaiva saints. It is accepted as one of the
Tirumurai texts; we will discuss this later.

[The Itihāsa called Śivaśāstras like the
Matsyapurāṇa, Kūrmapurāṇa,
Liṅkapurāṇa, Vāyu Saṃhitā, Kāśikaṅṭam,
Bramōttara Kāṅṭam, Upadēśa Kāṅṭam, and
the Śāstras called as Purāṇa like the Śiva
Puṇya Kāṅṭam, etc., are great books that
were written in poetic form. Such Tamil
texts are not included in the above order].

The Rāmāyaṇa and Mahābhārata are indeed
common to all Indians as they are epics. For
Śaivas, these are not religious epics; the
Civa Makāpurāṇam, the Skāntam, and the
Civa Rakasiyam are Śaiva Itihāsas.

The Tirumurai – The Tamil Veda

Apart from the Tamil Purāṇas mentioned
above, all the others are Sanskrit sources.
Books written in Tamil, like the Tēvāram,
etc., are defined as the Tamil Veda. The
Aryans knew the original Vedas, but these
Tamil Vedas have supported the
righteousness of Śaivas from the day they
appeared. They still do even today.

The hymns to divine grace, like the
Tēvāram, were called Tirumurai. The
hymns written by great Śaivas were
collected into twelve books. Taken together,
these books are called Tirumurai. The
Tēvāram is a collection of hymns that were
sung in the places that the three Nāyaṅmār
Campantar,

Appar, and Cuntara visited. Of the patikam
that are nowadays available, each of which
contains ten hymns, we have: 384 patikam
and a total of 4147 hymns sung by
Cuntaram, which correspond to volumes
1,2,3 of the Tirumurai; 312 patikam and a
total of 3006 hymns sung by Appar, which
cover volumes 4, 5, 6 of the Tirumurai; 100
patikam and a total of 1026 hymns sung by
Cuntaram, which are the seventh volume of

tēvar mutalāna aṭiyavar onpatu pēr pāṭiya tiruvicaip pāvum tiruppallāṇṭum onpatām tirumurai; patikaṅkaḷ 29, pāṭalkaḷ 301. tirumūlar pāṭiya tirumantiram pattām tirumurai; itaṇuḷ 3047 pāṭalkaḷ uḷḷaṇa. iraiyaṇār aruḷiya tirumukap pācuram toṭaṅki nampiyāṇṭār nampi eḷutiya patikaṅkaḷ irutiyāka, paṇṇiru āciriyar ceyta 1400 pāṭalkaḷ koṇṭa 40 nūlkaḷ paṇṇorān tirumurai eṇappaṭum. civaṇaṭiyārkaḷiṇ carittiraṅkaḷ virittuc cēkkilār pāṭiya tiru toṇṭar purāṇam eṇpatu, taṇ perumaiyāl periya purāṇam eṇap peyar perṛup paṇṇiraṇṭām tirumuraiyākat tokukkap peraratu; itaṇ pāṭalkaḷ 4286.

meykanta cāttiram

ituvaraiyil collappaṭṭa tirumuraikaḷ periya purāṇam nīṅkalāka, tōttira nūlkaḷākum. ivai caiva camayak karuttukkaḷai āṅkāṅkē uḷḷaṭakkik kūrukiṇraṇa. tēvāra tiruvācakaṅkalil kaṭavuḷ, uyir, ulaku paṛric collappaṭṭuḷḷa aṭippaṭaik karuttukkaḷ caiva cittāntak karuttukkaḷ eṇappaṭum. ivai cila nūrrāṇṭukaḷiṇ piṇ taṇiyē eṭuttuc cāramāka meykaṇṭārāl uraikkappaṭṭaṇa. ivar ceyta ciṛu nūl nārpatu varikaḷ koṇṭa paṇṇiraṇṭu nūrpākkaḷāl āṇatu. ituvē

25

civaṇāṇa pōtam eṇru peyar perum. ip paṇṇiraṇṭu cūttiraṅkaḷum, potu uṇmai eṇra pīrivukaḷāy, pīramāṇa iyal, ilakkaṇaviyal, cātaṇa iyal, payaṇiyal eṇra nāṅku pakutiḷāka amaintuḷḷaṇa. ivai muṛaiyē irai nilaiyaiyum ulakiṇ nilaiyaiyum uyiriṇ nilaiyaiyum kūri, uyir, ulakākiya pācattiṇ nīṅki, uṭaiyavaṇākiya iraiyaṇiṇ nilaiyai aṭaivataṛkāṇa cātaṇaiyai viḷakkukiṇraṇa. cūttiraṅkaḷiṇ karuttai 81 utāraṇa veṇpākkaḷ viḷakkik kāṭṭukiṇraṇa. iṇruḷḷa caiva camaya tattuvaṇāṇattukku ittamiḷc civaṇāṇa pōtamē mūla nūl.

Tirumurai. The *Tiruvācakam* sung by Māṇikkavācakar and the *Tirukkōvaiyār*, which is attributed to him, constitute the eighth volume of *Tirumurai*, with a total of 1056 hymns. The *Tiruvicaippā* and the *Tiruppallāṇṭu*, sung by nine saints including Tirumālikaittēvar, form the ninth volume, which contains a total of 29 *patikam* and 301 hymns. The *Tirumantiram* sung by Tirumūlar is the tenth volume, containing 3047 hymns. The 40 books containing 1400 hymns by 12 *ācāryas*, from the *Tirumuka Pācuram* finishing to the *patikam* written by Nampiyāṇṭār Nampi, are considered the eleventh volume of the *Tirumurai*. The *Tiruttoṇṭar Purāṇam* by Cēkkilār that spread the biographies of the Śaiva saints and that gained the name of *Periya Purāṇam* due to its greatness was classified as the twelfth volume of the *Tirumurai*; its hymns are 4286 in total.

The Meykanta Śāstras

Apart from the *Periya Purāṇa*, the *Tirumurais* that have been mentioned earlier are devotional books. They contain notions of Śaivism here and there. The basic concepts about God, the soul, and the world that are pointed out in the *Tēvāram* and in the *Tiruvācakam* are concepts of the Śaivasiddhānta. After a few centuries, they were taken separately and their essential parts were commented on by Meykaṇṭār. The small book he wrote is made of twelve *sūtras* consisting of forty lines. It

has the title *Civaṇāṇapōtam*. These twelve *sūtras* are structured in four sections: *pīramāṇa iyal* [or section on the *pramāṇas*], *ilakkaṇaviyal* [or section on attributes], *cātaṇa iyal* [or section on the practice], and *payaṇiyal* [or section on the benefits]. They speak about the ontology of God, the world, and souls and about the means to get the status of God as the soul departs from the fetters of the world. 81 exemplary [stanzas in] *veṇpā* meter explain these concepts. This Tamil *Civaṇāṇapōtam* is the source scripture for the Śaivasiddhānta philosophy, which still exists today.

meykaṅṭāruṭaiya mutal māṅṅkarākiya aruḷ nanti civācāriyar ceyta civaṅṅa cittiyār eṅpatu mika virinta nūl. caiva cittānta camayakkaruttukkaḷ aṅai ttukkum araṅṅakavum viḷakkamāṅa ātāramākavum uḷḷa mūlanūl ituvē. piṛar matattaik kūri maruppatu itaṅ mutal pakutiyaḷkiya parapakkam eṅpatu; 301 pāṭal uṭaiyatu. iṅku ulakāyataṅ mutal pāṅcarāttiri varaiyiluḷḷa pakiṅṅaṅku camayavātikaḷuṭaiya karuttukkaḷ colli nirākaraṅam ceyayappaṭḷuḷḷaṅa. aṭuttu, tamatu caiva cittānta camaya uṅmaikaḷaic colluḷiṅra pakuti cittiyār cupakkam eṅpatu; 328 pāṭalkaḷ uṭaiyatu. innūl taṅ perumai kāraṅamāka, “pār viritta nūlellām pārṭṭariyac cittiyilē, ōr viruttap pāti pōtum,” “civaṅṅukku mēl teyvamillai; cittikku mēl cāttiramillai”-eṅru paḷamoliyāka vaḷaṅkuvatu. ivarē ceyta marṛoru nūl, irupā irupatu eṅpatu; 20 pāṭal uṭaiyatu; tammuṭaiya kuruvaic cila viṅṅkaḷ viṅṅavi, avar kūrum viṭaikaḷai uraippatāka amaintuḷḷatu. meykaṅṭāriṅ marṛoru māṅṅkarākiya maṅṅavācakaṅ kaṭantār eṅpavar 54 veṅpākkaḷ koṅṭa

The *Civaṅṅacittiyār* written by Aruḷnanti Śivācārya, who was the first student of Meykaṅṭār, is a very extensive book. This is the sourcebook that became the bastion and exposition of all the principles of Śaivasiddhānta. Its first section, called “*parapakkam*”, refuses the other religions; it has 301 songs. The concepts of fourteen religious exponents, starting from the Lokāyatas till the [Vaiṣṇava who] follow the *Pāṅcarāttiram*, are being rejected. Next followed the comment called *Cittiyār Cupakkam* that talks about the truths of the Śaivasiddhānta religion and contains 328 songs. Due to its greatness, proverbs like “What is contained in all the books spread in the world is all explained in half *viruttam* meter poem in the *Cittiyār*”, [and] “There is no God above Śiva; there is no Śāstra other than the *Cittiyār*” are provided for this text. Another text written by this poet is the *Irupā Irupatu*, which contains 20 songs; having asked some questions to his *guru*, it is set as a comment to the replies he gives. Maṅṅavācakaṅ Kaṭantār, who is another student of Meykaṅṭār, has written a small book entitled *Unmai Viḷakkam* that contains 54 poems

26 *uṅmai viḷakkam eṅṛoru ciṛunūl ceytār. itu caiva citkānta camayattil koḷḷappaṭuḷiṅra 36 tattuvaṅkaḷiṅ ilakkaṅaktaiyum tōṛram oṭukkaṅkaḷaiyum curukkamāka naṅku uraippatu, caiva cittānta camayat tukku mikavum piṛatāṅamāṅa oru karuvi nūl. aruḷ nantiyiṅ māṅṅkar kaṭantai maṛai ṅṅa campantar. ivaruṭaiya māṅṅkar umāpati civācāriyar. ivar ceyta nūlkaḷ eṭṭu. avarṛuḷ civappirakācam, tiruvaruṭ payaṅ eṅra irāṅṅum mikka ciṛappuṭaiyavai; muraiyē 100 viruttāṅkaḷum, 100 kuṛaṭ pākkaḷum koṅṭavai. tiruvaruṭ payaṅ ārampanūl; civappirakācam mutirnta nilaiḷku uriyatu. ivar ceyta piṛa nūlkaḷ viṅṅa veṅpā, pōṛrip paḷroṭai, neṅcuviṭu tūtu, koṭikkavi, uṅmaineriṅviḷakkam (ceytār cikāḷi tat tuvanātar eṅpar) caṅkarpa nirākaraṅam eṅpaṅa. iṛuti yācac coṅṅa caṅkarpa nirākaraṅam, māyāvātiyaiyum caivattiṅ*

in *veṅpā* meter. It briefly explains the characteristics of the 36 *tattvas* that are accepted by Śaivism, their manifestation, and reabsorption, and it is the primary reference material for Śaivism.

Maṛaiṅṅacampantar was a student of Aruḷ Nanti; Umāpati Śivācāryar was his student. Eight are the books that he wrote. Among them, two significant ones are the *Civapirakācam* and the *Tiruvaruṭpayaṅ*; the first one contains 100 poems in *viruttam* meter, and the second one has 100 poems in couplets in *veṅpā* meter. The *Tiruvaruṭpayaṅ* is a book for beginners; the *Civapirakācam* is appropriate for [those who have] a higher level. Other books he wrote are the *Viṅṅa Veṅpā*, the *Pōṛrip Paḷroṭai*, the *Neṅcuviṭu Tātu*, the *Koṭikkavi*, the *Uṅmaineriṅviḷakkam* (with the comment of *Cikāḷi Tattuva Nātar*), and the *Caṅkarpa Nirākaraṅam*. The latter mentioned, the

*uṭpirivāka uḷḷa oṇpatu camaya vātikaḷiṇ
koḷkaiyaiyum, maṛutturaippatu.
meykaṇṭārukku muṇ ṭōṇriyirunta tiruviyalūr
uyya vanta tēvar ceyta tiruvuntiyārum,
tirukkaṭavūr uyya vanta tēvar ceyta
tirukkaḷiṇruppaṭiyārum mutirnta
civāṇupavac cāttira nūlkaḷ.
inḱē kūriya patināṅku nūlkaḷum iṇru tamil
nāṭṭuc caiva cittāntattirḱuriya ciṛappāṇa
mūla ātāra nūlkaḷ. ivai caiva cittānta
cāttiram eṇrum, meykaṇṭa cāttiram eṇrum
vaḷaṅkum. mēlē kūriya vētam mutalāṇavai
potu eṇrum, ivai kiṛappu eṇrum karuta
vēṇṭum. avai vaṭamoḷi, ivai tamil.*

marrai

*inta nūlkaḷōṭu maṛaiṇāna campantar
ceytatākak karutappaṭum catamaṇik
kōvaiyum, ciṛrampala nāṭi ceyta tukaḷarupō
tamum, cittānta cāttiraṅkaḷākavē koḷḷa
vēṇṭum. ivaikaḷōṭu cāttiraṅkaḷ
patināṅkiṛkum pala vēru uraiyācīriyarkaḷ
ceyta virivuraikaḷum mutanmai
uṭaiyaṇavākak karutappaṭu varuḱiṇraṇa.
ciṛappāṇa uraikaḷ iraṇṭu. oṇru, civaṇāṇa
pōtaktirḱu civāḱkirayōki vaṭamoḷiyil ceyta
12000 kirantam koṇṭa civāḱkira pāṣyam.
marṛatu, civaṇāṇa muṇivar tamilil ceyta
civaṇāṇa pōtamā pāṭiyam.
nūlācīriyariṇ karuttukku urai kāṇa
murpaṭum poḷutu oṛ eccarikkai niṇaivil
irukkavēṇṭum. ācīriyar entak karuttōṭu
conṇār eṇru pārkka vēṇṭumēyaṇri,
mārupaṭṭa karuttukkaḷai anta nūlil pukuttak
kūṭātu. cittānta nūlukkuc cilar vētānta
uraiyum kūrukīrārkaḷ. itu poruntātu.
marapu kōlittanta varampukaḷukkiṭaiyē tāṇ
urai cella vēṇṭum.
iṇi, mēlē kuṛittavai yāvum caiva
makkaḷukku vētam pōṇra ciṛappaṭaiyaṇa.
cila nūlkaḷ piṇ vantavai āyiṇum, avai pōlavē
koḷḷattakkaṇa. ivarṛuḷ mutanmaiyaṇavai
ṇāṇamārkkattil ṇāṇāmirtamum civanerip
pirakācamum; yōka, kiriyā mārkkattil
tattuvap pirakācam; cariyā mārkkattil
civatarumōttaramum caiva camaya*

27

Caṅkarpa Nirākaṇam, refutes the *māyāvāda* and the tenets of the nine schools that are subgroups of Śaivism.

The *Tiruvuntiyār* written by Tiruviyalūr Uyya Vanta Tēvar and the *Tirukkaḷiṇruppaṭiyār* written by Tirukkaṭavūr Uyya Vanta Tēvar, who lived before Meykaṇṭār, are Śāstras for a more mature *śivānubhava*.

The fourteen books mentioned so far are essential source scriptures for knowing the Śaivasiddhānta of Tamil Nadu. These are called both Śaivasiddhānta Śāstras and Meykaṇṭa Śāstras. One must understand the aforementioned Vedas as general books and these [Śāstras] as specific ones. Those are in Sanskrit; the latter in Tamil.

Other sources

The *Catamaṇi Kōvai*, which is believed to have been written by Maṛaiṇānacampantar, and the *Tukaḷarupōtam* written by Ciṛrampala Nāṭi should be considered as Śaivasiddhānta texts along with these books. Many other commentaries on these fourteen books are considered of primary importance. Among them, two are very important. One is the *Civāḱkira Pāṣyam*, which contains 12000 verses in Sanskrit written by Civāḱkirayōki as a commentary to the *Civaṇānapōtam*; the other one is the *Civaṇānapōtamāṭiyam*, written in Tamil by Civaṇāna Munivar.

When looking at the commentary to the thought of a writer, one should be cautious. One must not introduce different ideas in that book without investigating the writer's thoughts. Some [scholars] have written Vedāntic commentaries to Siddhāntic books. Those are not suitable. One must commentate within the limits of a tradition. All the abovementioned texts are considered important like the Vedas for Śaivas. Although some books were written later, they are accepted just like the others. Among these, the *ṇāṇāmirtam* and the *Civanerip Pirakācam* are of primary importance in the *jñānamārga*; the *Tattuvap Pirakācam* is primary in the *yogamārga* and the *kriyāmārga*; the *Civatarumōttam* and the

neriyum; pakti mārkkattil aruṇakiri nātar
nūlkaḷum, tāyumaṇavar pāṭalkaḷum.
mūla cāttiraṅkaḷiṅ varaiyaṛai paḷamaiyāṇa
ōr aḷavōṭu nirkavēṅṅiyatu. mēlum perukik
koṅṭē pōka muṭiyātu. itu eṅkum mūlattukku
amaiyattakka

ōr iyalpu. immuraiyil, tirumuraikaḷ 12
cittānta cāttiraṅkaḷ 14 eṅra varaiyaṛai
ēṛpaṭṭu nilaipernirukkīratu.

vata moliyin nilai

vaṭa molīyaik kurittu oru vārttai kūri
ippakutiyai muṭippōm. caivattukku vaṭamoli
nūlkaḷum taṃiḷ nūlkaḷum iraṅṭu kaṅkaḷ
pōṅṛavai. iraṅṭumē cāttiraṅkaḷ. caiva
cāttira vaṭa nūlkaḷ pirāmaṇar ceytavai alla;
ivarṛuḷ pala civācāriyar ceytavai, cila
caivarē ceytavai. iraṅṭaiyum koḷvatāl
taṃiḷukkuk kuṛaivu, allatu pirāmaṇa
ātikkam ēṛpaṭṭum eṅru niṅaiyatu
arivutaṃimaiyākātu. cila nūṛṛāṅṭukaḷukku
muṅ varai camaya nūl kaṛra caivar iru moḷi
vallavarākavē iruntārkaḷ. ākavē, avarkaḷ
tāṅkaḷē vaṭamoliyil nūl ceytatil viyappillai.
aṅṛiyum, muṛkāḷattil camaya nūlkaḷai
vaṭamoliyil tāṅ eḷuta vēṅṭum, taṃiḷil eḷutak
kūṭātu eṅra uṅarvu iruntatu. atu
kāraṇamākavē taṃiḷ nāṭṭil maṭṭumiṅṛi intiya
nāṭeṅkum camaya nūlkaḷum
viyākkīyāṅaṅkaḷum vaṭa molīyil
eḷutappaṭṭana.

vaitika camayamoṅṛumē intiya maṅṅil
nilaviya paḷaṅkāḷattil, iraṅṭāyirattu ainnūru
āṅṭukaḷukku muṅ, cīrtirutta
camayaṅkaḷākiya peḷattamum caiṅamum
eḷuntana. ivarrait tōṛruvittavarkaḷ vaṭa
nāṭṭil piṛantavarkaḷ. ātalāl avarkaḷum
avarkaḷ cīṭarkaḷum taṅkaḷ camaya nūlkaḷai
vaṭa molīyilēyē eḷutiṅārkaḷ. cīritu piṛpaṭṭu
iccamayaṅkaḷil poruntāta kolkaikaḷaik
kaṅṭikka muṛpaṭṭa vaiṭika camaya
nūlācīriyarkaḷ, atē vaṭamoliyil nūleḷutik
kaṅṭittārkaḷ. appōtum piṅṅarum,
teṅṅāṭṭavar ac camayaṅkaḷaik

Caiva Camaya Neri are primary texts in the
caryāmārga; the books of Aruṇakiri Nātar
and the hymns of Tāyymāṇavar are
important materials in the bhaktimārga.

The definition of the Mūla Śāstras is limited
to these old scriptures and cannot add
further [texts]. This is the character that is set

everywhere for the source scriptures. In this
way, [the Śaiva scriptures] are restricted to
the 12 books of the Tirumurai and the 14
Siddhānta Śāstras.

The status of Sanskrit

Let us conclude this section with a note
about Sanskrit. The Sanskrit scriptures and
the Tamil scriptures are like two eyes for
Śaivism: they both are [its] Śāstras. The
Sanskrit Śaiva Śāstras were not written by
Brahmins; many of those were written by
ācāryas, and some by the Śaivas. It would be
unintelligent to think that relying on both
would imply the Tamils' inferiority or the
Brahmins' dominance. Till a few centuries
ago, the Śaivas who studied the Śaiva
scriptures were proficient in these two
languages. Therefore, it is not surprising
that they wrote books in Sanskrit. Moreover,
in earlier times there was the belief that
religious texts were to be written only in
Sanskrit and not in Tamil. For this reason,
religious books and commentaries were
written in Sanskrit in Tamil Nadu and
everywhere in India.

In ancient times, when the Vedic religion
was the only religion spread in India two
thousand and five hundred years ago,
Buddhism and Jainism developed as reform
religions. Since those who founded them
were born in North India, they and their
disciples wrote their religious scriptures
only in Sanskrit. A little later, the religious
writers who started objecting to the
principles of these religions that were not
suitable [for the Vedic religion], condemned
them for writing books in Sanskrit. Then
afterward, when the Southerners started
writing

kaṅṅikkavum taṅkaḷ koḷkaikaḷai viḷakkavum
nūleḷutat toṅaṅkiyaḷōtu, vaṭamoḷiyilēyē
eḷutat toṅaṅkiṅārkaḷ. camayanūlai
vaṭamoḷiyil eḷututal eṅra marapu ivvāru
toṅaṅki nilai perruviṭṭatu.

29 \caiva camayattil vaṭamoḷiyil nūl eḷutiṅōr
tamiḷ nāṭṭavarē. itil pirāmaṅa ātikkam illai.
ēṅenil pirāmaṅarukku uriyatu
caṅkararuṭaiya attuvaita vēṭāntamēyaṅri,
caiva cittāntamaṅru. tāṅkaḷākac cila
pirāmaṅar virumpic civa valipāṭṭaiyum
ālaya valipāṭṭaiyum caiva nūlkaḷaiyum
kaṅraṅar. ivarkaḷ civavēṭiyar eṅappaṭṭaṅar.
caivarukkuc colliyatellām ivarkaḷukkum
poruntum. civavēṭiyar caiva reṅak koḷḷa t
taṭaiyillai.

books criticizing those religions and
explaining their own principles, they began
writing in Sanskrit. This is how the tradition
of writing religious books in Sanskrit
started.

Within Śaivism, Tamil writers wrote books
in Sanskrit. This did not imply a Brahmin
dominance because the Brahmins followed
the Advaita Vedānta of Śaṅkara, not the
Śaivasiddhānta. Few Brahmins interested
[in Śaivasiddhānta] have studied the Śaiva
scriptures and performed the Śiva worship
and the temple worship by themselves. They
are called *civavēṭiyar*. Everything that has
been said for Śaivas applies to them also.
There is no prohibition in calling the
civavēṭiyar Śaivas.

3 caiva ācāriyar

civaperumān

30 caiva marapil, civaperumāṅē ācāriyaṅāka
vantu āṭkoḷḷukiṅrāṅ eṅpatu aṭippaṭaik
karuttu. civālayattil parama kuruvāyullavar
takṣiṅāmūrṭti. ipperumāṅ, kailaiyil kallāla
niḷalil, vākkirānta pūraṅamāy, maṅraikku
appālāy iruntu, cakala kalvi kēḷvikaḷilum
valla muṅivarkaḷāṅa caṅakar caṅantaṅar
caṅāṭaṅar caṅaṅkumārar eṅra
nālvarukkum, paraṅāṅattai vākkiṅār
collāmal tām irunta nilaiyilēyē uṅartti, vīṭu
pēraḷittaṅar. ipperumāṅ valakkaiyil piṭṭita
ciṅ muttirai ik karuttaip pulappaṭuttum.
peruviral iṅraivaṅaiyum mukal viral
āṅmāvaiyum kurippiṭum. naṭuviral,
mōtiraviral ciṅuviral mūṅrum āṅmāvaip
pantitta pācaṅkaḷākiya āṅavam, kaṅmam,
māyai eṅra mūṅraiye muraiyē kurikkum.
āṅmā intap pācaṅkaḷiliruntu viṭupaṭṭu
iṅraivaṅatu tāḷil vantu aṅaṅka vēṅṭum
eṅpatai inta muttirai uṅarttukiratu.
muttiraiyil pārttāl mūṅru viralkaḷ taṅiyē
pirintu nirka, mutal viral maṭṭum peruviral
aṅiyil vantu aṅaṅkuvatu teriyum.
takṣiṅāmūrṭtiyākiya paramācāriyar
kailāyattil uḷḷavar. pūlōkattil caiva
camayattil camayācāriyar nālvar, cantāṅa
ācāriyar nālvar eṅru colluvatu marapu.

3 Śaiva Preceptors

Lord Śiva

In the Śaiva tradition, there is the
fundamental tenet that Lord Śiva himself is
embodied as an *ācārya*. Dakṣiṅāmūrṭi is
the primary *guru* in the Śaiva temples. This
Lord, [sitting] under the shade of a banyan
tree in Kailāsa, having completely gone
beyond the concealment, imparted supreme
knowledge to the four sages Caṅakar,
Caṅantaṅar, Caṅāṅar, and Caṅaṅkumārar,
who were experts in all educational matters,
not by uttering it but by making them realize
it within themselves, and made them obtain
mukti. The *cin-mudrā* of the right hand of
this Lord illustrates this point. The thumb is
said to refer to God and the first finger to the
soul. The middle finger, the ring finger, and
the little finger, respectively, represent the
three attachments of the soul: *āṅava*, *karma*,
and *māyā*. This *mudrā* implies that the soul
has to get rid of these bondages, reach God's
abode, and merge with him. If you look at
the *mudrā*, you can see that the three fingers
stand separately, and only the first finger
goes under the thumb and touches it.
The supreme *ācārya* dwells in mount
Kailāsa in form of Dakṣiṅāmūrṭi. On the
earth, the tradition talks about four *camaya*

camayācāriyar āvār tiruñāṇa campantar, appar, cuntarar, māṇikkavācakar eṇṇpōr. cantāṇa ācāriyar

ācāryas and four cantāṇa ācāryas. The camaya ācāryas are Tiruñāṇacampantar, Appar, Cuntarar, and Māṇikkavācakar. The cantāṇa ācāryas

āvār meykaṇṭār, aruḷ nanti, maraiñāṇa campantar, umāpati eṇṇpōr.

are Meykaṇṭār, Aruḷ Nanti, Maraiñāṇa Campantar, and Umāpati.

camayācāriyar

camayācāriyar nālvarum tamilnāṭṭil ēḷu, eṭtu oṇṇpatu ākiya nūrrāṇṭukaḷil tōṇric cīvapakṭip payir vaḷarttārkaḷ. paracamayak kurumpai aṭakkiṇārkaḷ. ivarkaḷuṭaiya vāḷkkaiyiṇ tattuvattaic caivap paṇṭitarkaḷ palavārāka virittuk kūriya pōtilum kūṭa, ivarkaḷ mikavum cīrappākap pakti mārkkattai vaḷart tārkaḷ eṇṇpatu inku uṇarattakkatu. “cāttirappaṭippu, kulattiṇ mēṇmai ākiya aṇaittaiyum viṭa, mey yanpē aruḷ peruvatarṅku vaḷi; ulakukku orē teyvam, atteyvamē cīvaparam poruḷ, uyir varckaṅkaḷ yāvum at teyvaktai vaḷipaṭṭut taṅkaḷ viṇaikaḷiliruntu nāṅki uriya kālattiḷ tiruvaruḷilē tōyntu apparam poruḷilē irāṇṭarak kalattal ākiya muttip pēru aṭaivārkaḷ” eṇṇpatē ivarkaḷatu potuvāṇa upatēcam. aṇru mutal iṇru varai ivarkaḷ ārrup paṭuttiya neriyilēyē ciritum piraḷāmal caiva makkaḷ oḷuki varukiṇārkaḷ eṇṇpatum kurippitattakkatu. ivarkaḷuṭaiya vāḷkkai varalārraic cila corṅkaḷāl inṅuk kūralām.

campantar

tiruñāṇa campantar cōlanāṭṭuc cīrkāḷiyil tōṇri mūnru vayatil umātēviyārāl ṇāṇappāl ūṭṭap perṅu, tamil nāṭeṅkum curri, talaṅkaḷ tōrum icaip patikaṅkaḷ pāṭi makkaḷaic civaneriyilē ārruppaṭuttiṇār. tirukkōlakkāvil civaperumāṇ ivarukkup

The camaya ācāryas – the religious preceptors

The four *camaya ācāryas* were born in the seventh, eighth, and ninth centuries and spread the Śiva *bhakti*. They subsided the atrocities of the other religions. Although the philosophical [meaning] of these people’s life has been explained in different ways by the Śaiva pandits, here it is emphasized that they developed the *bhaktimārga* as the primary thing. Their general preaching was: “True love is the only way to get [Lord’s] grace, more important than any other thing, including the study of the Śāstras and caste superiority; there is only one God in the world and that God is the Supreme Śiva; all the living beings that have worshipped that God, having departed from their deeds, having got involved into the holy grace of God, and having become one with him, will obtain *mukti*”. It is also noteworthy that from that time till today, the Śaivas have followed the principles laid down by them without any deviation. Their lives can be told here in a few words.

Campantar

Tiruñāṇacampantar was born in Sirkali, in the Chola country; fed with the knowledge milk by the goddess Umā at the age of three, he went all around Tamil Nadu, sang the musical hymns in the places he visited, and guided the people on the path of Śiva. Lord Śiva blessed him with golden cymbals at

poṇṭālam aruḷiṇār. yāl vācittalil vallavarākiya tiruñilakaṇṭa yāḷppāṇarum avar maṇaiviyārum varak kaṇṭu, avarkaḷaip pōrrit tamatu tirukkūṭṭattiḷ cērttuk koṇṭu tam patikaṅkaḷai yāḷil icaikkum urimai

Tirukkōlakkā. Having met Tiruñilakaṇṭa Yāḷppāṇar, who was an expert in playing the *yāl*, and his wife, he praised them, joined their followers, and learned to play his hymns with the *yāl*. In Chidambaram, he

31

32

*aḷittār. tillaiyil tillavāḷantaṅkaḷaia
 civakaṅkaḷākak kaṅṅār. kuḷantaip
 pirāyattōṭu ivar tantai tōḷmīṭum, cila
 camayam naṅantum varuva tuṅṅu. naṅantu
 vanta varuttattaik kaṅṅa civaperumāṅ,
 tirunelvāyil aratturaiyil ivarukku oru
 muttuc civikai aḷittu atil ivarntu varumāru
 paṅittār. muttuc ciṅṅamum muttuk kuṅaiyū
 aḷittār. cila nāḷ kaḷittu ivar appar
 cuvāmikaḷuṅaiya toṅarpum perrār. piṅṅar
 tiruppāccilāccirāmam aṅaintapōtu,
 aṅkirunta aracaṅṅaṅa kolli maḷavaṅ
 eṅpavaṅuṅaiya peṅṅaip pīṅṅirunta
 muyalakaṅ eṅra koṭu nōyaip perumāṅ mītu
 pāṅṅal pāṅṅip pōkkinār. koṅkunāṅu ceṅṅrapōtu
 annāṅṅuk kuḷir curam tam aṅiyavaraikac
 tākkāṅapaṅi perumāṅ mītu patikam pāṅṅi
 vilakkinār. tiruppaṅṅiccuram aṅaintu,
 veppattaik taṅṅikkap perumāṅṅal aruḷap
 perra muttup pantar perrār. tiruvāvaṅṅurai
 aṅaintu tantaiyār vēṅ ṅiyapaṅi perumāṅṅaik
 kuṅaiyirantu porṅkiḷi perru, “nalvēḷvi tītu
 nīṅka nīr ceyyum” eṅru tantaiyīṅam aḷittār.
 tiruttarumapuram eṅra ūril yāḷmūrip
 patikam pāṅṅi, iṅraivaṅ aruḷ perra icai,
 karuviyil aṅaṅkāṅu eṅru tirunīlakaṅṅa
 yāḷppāṅar mutaliyōrukku meypittār.
 tiruccāttamaṅkai vaṅaṅkit tirunīla nakkar
 upacārattaip perru, tirumarukal aṅaintu,
 oru vaṅṅikap peṅṅiṅṅ tuyar tavirkka vēṅṅip
 perumāṅṅaik kuṅaiyirantu, viṅaṅṅiṅṅi uyir
 tuṅanta vaṅṅikaṅ uyir perrēḷac ceytār.
 mīṅṅum apparaic cantittut*

saw the inhabitants of the city as Śivagangas. During his childhood, he used to walk on his father’s shoulder and some other times he used to walk. Lord Śiva, having seen the sufferings that came from walking, gifted him a palanquin made of pearl in Tirunelveli and asked him to travel sitting on that. [God] gifted him a pearl palanquin and a pearl umbrella. After some time, he got in contact with Appar. Later, when he reached Tiruppāccilāccirāmam), he sang a hymn in praise of Śiva to cure the disease of the Malava king’s daughter who was there. When he went to Koṅkunāṅu, he sang hymns to God, requesting that the coldness should not harm his devotees in that country. Having traveled to Tiruppaṅṅiccuram, he received a pearl umbrella blessed by the Lord to cool down the heat. After he reached Thiruvavaduthurai, he requested God and obtained a bundle of golden coins as his father demanded; he gave those to his father, saying, “The good sacrifices will make you depart from the sinful deeds”. In the city called Dharmapuram, Tirunīlakaṅṅa Yāḷppāṅar sang the *patikam* with the *yāḷ* and demonstrated the Mudaliyar that he could not play the instrument [as Cambandar], since his music had obtained the divine grace. After worshipping at Tiruccāttamaṅkai and receiving the blessing from Tirunīla Nakkar, he reached Tirumarukal and brought back to life a merchant who had sacrificed his life to save a businesswoman from suffering. He met Appar again;

33

*tiruvārūrṅ perumai aṅrintu aṅkucceṅru
 vaḷipaṅṅu, tiruppukalūr aṅaintu murukar,
 tirunīlakantar, ciṅrut toṅṅar ākiyavarōṅu
 aḷavalāvip piṅṅar apparuṅṅaṅ tiruvīḷimīḷalai
 aṅaintār; aṅkup perumāṅ ivarukkut
 tōṅiyappar kōlam kāṅṅiṅṅar. aṅkirunta
 paṅcam tīruvatarṅkākap perumāṅṅiṅattil kācu
 perru aṅiyavar viruppappaṅi perumāṅṅaip
 paṅṅintu mīṅṅum vāci tīrnta kācu perrār.
 aṅkup paṅcam nīṅkavē, apparōṅu
 tirumaraikkāṅu aṅaintār. aṅaṅṅirunta katavai
 apparāl tirappittu vaḷipaṅṅu mīṅṅum pāṅṅal*

knowing the glory of Tiruvarur, he went there and worshipped [God]; [then,] after he reached Tiruppukalūr and talked in a friendly way to Murukar, Tirunīlakaṅṅa, and Ciṅruttoṅṅar, he reached [the city] of Appar, Tiruvīḷimīḷalai; there, God gave him a vision of Sirkali. He obtained money from God to eradicate the famine there, bowed down to God as a servant, and again received money, which he spent. [Afterwards,] he reached Tirumaraikkāṅu with Appar to eliminate the famine there. Appar opened the locked door,

pāṭi aṭaippittār. vāymūr vaḷipaṭṭu mīṇṭapōtu, pāṇṭi nāṭṭu orṟar vantu aḷaikkavē, camaṇar tīmaiyaī eṭuttuk kūṟi appar taṭuttataik kōḷaru patikam pāṭi vilakki, araci maṅkaiyarkkaraciyaṟ mantiri kulacciraīyaṟ viruppap paṭip pāṇṭināṭṭil camaṇ pōkkic caivam perukkam purappaṭṭār. campantar maturai ceṇru taṅkiya maṭattil camaṇar tīyitavum, ivar “paiyavē ceṇru pāṇṭiyarkāka” eṇru pāṭiya māttirattil, tī pāṇṭiyaṇai veppuc curamākat tākkiyatu. camaṇarāl curam tīrkka muṭiyātu pōkavē, campantar curattait tiruṇṟṟāl pōkkiṇār. camaṇar nōy tīrkka muṭiyāmar pōṇatu kaṇṭu pāṇṭiyaṇ maṇam māravē, camaṇar campantarai aṇal vātam, puṇal vātam ceyyumāru aḷaittaṇar. camaṇar aṇalil iṭṭa ēṭu erintu pōka, campankar iṭṭa ēṭu paccenru iruntatu. appaṭiyē vaikai yārril ēṭukaḷai iṭṭapōtu camaṇar iṭṭa ēṭukaḷ ārru vellattāl aṭittuc cellappaṭṭuk kaṭalai aṭaintaṇa; campantar iṭṭa ēṭu etirēric ceṇratu. campantar perumaiyuṇarnta aracaṇum camaṇarum caivarāyiṇar. piṇ campantar maturai nīṅkik koḷlam pūtūr aṭaintu ārruvellaṭ perukkil oṭam celuttuvōriṇrip pāṭalālēyē oṭattaic

worshipped [God], and again closed the door singing hymns. When he resumed worshipping in Vāymūr, a spy from the Pandya country came to call him, he sang the kōḷaru hymns preventing Appar from stopping the Jain evil, dispelled the Jainism in the Pandya country according to the wish of the chief minister Kulacciraīyaṟ and the queen Maṅkaiyar and spread Śaivism. When Campantar went to Madurai and the Jains set fire to the monastery where he was staying, he only sang, “Slowly it came for the Pandya” and a fierce fever hit the Pandya king. As the Jains could not stop the fever, Campantar dispelled it with the sacred ashes. The king, having seen that the Jains could not remove the fever, changed his mind and asked Campantar and the Jains to have a debate with fire on the river’s water [called aṇalvātam puṇalvātam]. While the palm-leaf manuscript that the Jain put on the fire got burned, those that Campantar put remained fresh. Like that, the palm leaves that the Jains had put [on the fire] fell in the river Vaikai and, carried by the rivers’ flood, reached the sea; the manuscript that Campantar had put [on the fire] returned back. Both the king and the Jains, having understood the greatness of Campantar, became Śaivas. After that, Campantar left Madurai and reached a new village guiding a boat that was not floating on the river but

34

celuttiṇār. pōti maṅkai eṇra ūr aṭaintapōtu, aṅku putta nanti eṇra peḷatta camayak talaivaṇuṭaiya tontaravu porukkamāṭṭāta aṭiyavar oruvar campantarūṭaiya pāṭaliliruntu tiruvainteluttiṇ perumai kūṟum oru pāṭalaip pāṭiya māttirattil, talaiyil iṭi vīḷntu avaṇ māyṇtāṇ. piṇ tiruppūnturutti aṭaintu tam civikaiyaī appa mūrttikaḷē tāṅki vantamai kaṇṭu avaraip pōṟri, kāḷiyaṭaintu piṇṇar toṇṭai nāṭu nōkkiṇār. tiruvōttūril oru civaṇaṭiyāṟ payiriṭṭa paṇaikaḷ yāvum camaṇar paḷikkumāru āṇ paṇaikaḷāy iruntamai kaṇṭu, patikam pāṭi avarraip peṇpaṇaiyākki, kāraikkālammaiyaṟ kaṇṇappar talaṅkaḷāṇa ālaṅkāṭu kāḷatti vaṇaṅki, mayilāppūr aṭaintār. aṅku tamakkenru civarēcar eṇpār vaḷartta

thanks to his hymns. [Then,] he reached the city called Pōtimaṅkai; [there,] when a Śaiva devotee – who was not able to oppose the religious chief of Buddhists of that place – sang one of the hymns of Campantar which conveyed the greatness of the five syllables *mantra*, a thunder fell on his head and he died. Afterward, when [Campantar] reached Tiruppūnturutti, he saw that Appar had carried his palanquin; [thus,] he praised him and, after being satisfied, went to the Toṇṭai country. In Tiruvōttūr, having seen that Jains had replaced with male palms all the [female] palm trees that a Śaiva devotee had planted, he sang a hymns, transformed them into female trees, worshipped at the shrine of Ālaṅkāṭu that was famous for

pūmpāvai viṭantīṇṭi irantapiṇ avar eṭuttu
vairuntā aval elumpaip penṇākki,
avalukkuṭ tām tantai murai enṇpatai yunartti,
mīṇṭum cikāli vantār. tirukallūr
perumaṇattil tam perṇōr tamakkup peṇ
pārttut tirumaṇa ērpātukaḷ niṇraivēṇṇi
vaikkavē, penṇaik kaippiṭittu, iraivaṇaṭi
cēravēṇṭum eṇṇa eṇṇattōṭu oru patikam
pāṭiṇār. oru cōti tōṇṇirru. pañcākkarac
tiruppatikam pāṭi aṇaivaraiyum tīkṣaiyāl
pūṇitarākkic cōtiyul pukac ceytu, tāmum
maṇaiviyaiḷ kaippiṭittavārē cōtiyul pukuntu,
vaikāci mūlattanru civattil iraṇṭarak
kalantār.

tiruñāṇa campantar vāḷkkai iruperum
tattuvaṇ Iḷai uṇarttukiratu. oṇṇu avaruṭaiya
vāḷkkai karput tira māṇkkam eṇṇu
collukiṇṇa kiriyā māṇkkattai uṇarttukiratu.
iraivaṇuṭaiya putalvar eṇṇa perum takutiya
ivar perṇavar. marṇatu, ivar tamakkenru
vāḷavillai; uyirkaḷukku upakāram
ceyyavēṇṭu

meṇṇē vāḷntār. iraivaṇ ivarukku ṇāṇappāl
aruḷiyatu mukal cōtiyaṭ tōṇṇuvittatu
varaiyil tāmā kavē aruḷ ceytār. oṇṇēṇum ivar
kēṭṭatillai; āṇāl ivar perumāṇak
kuṇaiyirantatellām piṇaruṭaiya tuṇpattai
pōkka vēṇṇiyē. muyalakaṇ nōy tīrttatu,
curam pōkkiyatu, tantaikkup poṇ alittatu,
viṭam tīrttatu, paṭikkācu perṇatu, camaṇarai
veṇṇratu, oṭam viṭṭatu, penṇaṇaiyākkiyatu,
aṇkam pūmpāvaiyākkiyatu ākiya
arputaṇkaḷ yāvum ulakiṇarukku ivar ceyta
upakāraṇkaḷē yācum.

35

appar

appar cuvāmikaḷ eṇṇu vaḷaṇkupavar
tirukāvukkaracu cuvāmikaḷ; apparē eṇṇu
campantarāl alaikkap perṇār. ivar
naṭunāṭṭil tiruvāmūril vēḷāḷa maraṇil
piṇantār. ilamaiyil pala camaya āṇaycci
ceytu caiva camayattiliruntu vaḷuvic caṇa
camayam pukuntu irunta nāḷil, ivar
tamakkai tilakavatiyār tam tampiyai
āṭṭkoḷḷumāru iraivaṇai vēṇṇa, iraiyaruḷāl
ivar vayirril cūlaikōy tōṇṇi ataiṇ pōkka
vaḷiyariyātu, ivar tam tamakkaiyai nāṭi
vantapōtu tilakavatiyār tiru nīru alittut tiru
vatikai vīraṭṭāṇēcuvararai vaḷipaṭac ceyya,

Kāraikkālammaiṇyār and Kaṇṇappar, and
reached Mylapore. There, after the death of
Pūmpāvai, who was raised by Civarēcar, he
turned her bones into a woman, made her
realize that [Civarēcar] was her father, and
returned to Sirkali. At Tirukallūr, he sang a
hymn with the thought that his parents
would have looked for a woman whom he
could marry, finalize the marriage
arrangements, get married, and join God's
abode. A light appeared. Then he sang the
five syllables *mantra* and made everybody
enter the glowing light by blessing them
with the initiation; he entered the light
holding his wife's hand, crossed it, and
merged with Śiva in Vaikāci (May-June).

The life of Tiruñāṇacampantar conveys two
messages. One is that his life reflects the
kriyāmārga, which is said to be a path of
purity. He has the great status of son of God.
The other is that he did not live selfishly but
lived teaching that one must help the [other]

living beings. God spontaneously blessed
him starting with giving him the milk of
knowledge and till making the light. He did
not ask for anything [for himself]; all he
asked God was to alleviate the sufferings of
others. Curing diseases, dispelling the
poison, obtaining the gold, winning over the
Jains, conducting the boat, converting the
palmyra trees into females, and
transforming the bones into Pūmpāvai, are
all miracles he did only to help others.

Appar

Tirukāvukkaracu Cuvāmikaḷ is called Appar
Cuvāmikaḷ; he was called Appar only by
Campantar. He came from a Velalar family
in Tiruvāmūr, in the Naṭu country. During
his youth, he investigated different religions
and converted from Śaivism to Jainism.
When his sister Tilakavati prayed to God to
embrace his brother, God gave him a terrible
stomach disease; when Appar came to his
sister, Tilakavati applied the sacred ashes
[on him], worship [God] at the
Vīraṭṭāṇēcuvararai temple, and the disease
disappeared. So, he also started to sing in
praise of Śiva and gained eloquence.

cūlai maṛaintatu. ivarum perumāṅ pukaḷaip
pāṭum nāvaṅmaiyum perrār. pāṭalkaḷi
poruṭ polivu kāraṅamāka iraivaṅāl
“nāvukkaracu” enru peyar cūṭṭavum
perrār. ivar kōyilkaḷ tōrum ceṅru
maṅattiṅāl tiyāṅittu, vāyiṅāl pukaḷ pāṭi,
kaiyiṅāl ulavārap paṅi ceytu vantār. ivar
caivarāṅamai aṛinta caiṅac talaivar,
tamatu aracaṅākiya makēntiravarma
pallavaḷiṭam ceṅru caiṅa camayattukku
imukkuṭ tēṭiya ivarait tunpuruttac
connapōtu,

36

avaṅum ataiyēṛru ivarai alaittuc cunnāmpu
nīrṛaraiyil iṭṭāṅ. iraivaṅ tiruvaṭi niḷalai ivar
niṅaittirukkavē, aṛai ivarukku anniḷalpōlak
kuḷirntiruntatu. pīraku ivarukku naṅcamutu
koṭuttanar. atai uṅṭu ivar tīṅkiṅri iruntār.
mataṅkoṅṭayāṅaiyai ivar mītu ēviṅar. yāṅai
ivarai vaṅāṅkic ceṅratu. kallil piṅittuk
kaṭalil iṭṭanar. ivar iraivaṅ tirunāmattai oṭi
mitantu tiruppātirippuliyūril karaiyēṛit
tiruvatikai vantu toḷutu koṅṭiruntār. pallava
maṅṅaṅ ivar perumaiyai yuṅarntu ivarai
vaṅāṅki nallarivu perruc caivaṅāṅkic
civālayam kaṭṭiṅāṅ. nāvukkaracar piṅ
tiruppenṅākaṭam aṭaintu perumāṅaip pāṭi
vēṅṭit tōḷil cūlamum iṭapamum porikkap
perrār. cīkāḷi aṭaintu campanta ruṭaiya
naṭpaipperrār. tirunallūril iraivaṅuṭaiya
tiruvaṭikaḷait tam muṭi mītu cūṭṭap perrār.
tiṅkaḷūr aṭaintu, aṅku appūti enṛa antaṅa
aṭiyavar nāvuk karacarākiya tam
peyarālēyē pala civa tarumaṅkaḷ
ceytiruppatu kaṅṭu aticayittu avaruṭaṅ
aḷavaḷāvi makilntu, viṭam tīṅṭiya avaruṭaiya
putalvaṅai uyirppittār. mīṅṭum tiruppukalūr
aṭaintu campantar ciṛut toṅṭar
mutaliyavarkaḷōṭu paḷakip piṅ tirukkaṭavūr
kuṅkiliyakkalayarūṭaiya naṭpaip perru,
tiruvīḷimiḷalai aṭaintu, aṅkirunta paṅcattil
tam kait toṅṭiṅ ciṛappukkāraṅamāka
vāciyillākkācu perrār. tirumaṅaik kāṭu
aṭaintu maṅaik katavu tirappittu, vāymūr
vaḷi paṭṭu, ṅāṅa campantarukkuc
camaṅariṅ koṭumaiyaikkū ri, avaraip
pāṅṭināṭu pōkaviṭṭup paḷaiyārai aṭaintār.
aṅku irunta civālayam camaṅarāl
mūṭappaṭṭiruntamai aṛintu varunti uṅaviṅri

Because of the greatness of his hymns, God also gave him the name Nāvukkaracu (“the king of the tongue”). He meditated in all the temples where he went, sang the hymns in praise of God, and did manual services. When the Jains’ chief came to know that he got converted to Śaivism and went to the Pallava king Mahendravarman asking him to punish Appar for having defamed Jainism,

the king accepted this, brought Appar there, and put him in a limestone aquifer. Since [Appar] thought about the shadow of the abode of God, that place became as cool as that shadow for him. Afterward, they poisoned him, but he remained unharmed. They released a rutting elephant against him, but the elephant worshipped him. They tied him to a stone and threw it into the sea. He recited the holy name of God while floating, reached the shore in Tiruppātirippuliyūr, went to the temple, and prayed. The Pallava king, having understood his greatness, worshipped him, gained proper sense, became a Śaiva, and built a Śiva temple. After that, Nāvukkaracar reached Tiruppenṅākaṭam, sang hymns in praise of God, and was marked with the trident and the bull on his shoulder. Then he went to Sirkali and became a friend of Campantar. In Tirunallūr, he placed God’s feet on his hair. Then he reached Tiṅkaḷūr, and there, being amazed and happy after seeing that the Brahmin devotee named Appūti had performed many Śiva dharmas in the name of Nāvukkaracar, he resurrected his son who had drunk poison. Then he went again to Tiruppukalūr, and after getting acquainted with some devotees of Campantar, he became friend with Kuṅkilorakkalayar of Tirukkaṭavū, and then went to Tiruvīḷimiḷalai, where he obtained money donations because of the important charity services he did during the famine there. When he reached Tirumaṅaikkāṭu, he made its door open, worshipped God, and having

*iruntapōtu, iraiyarulāl aracan
camaṇaraicak tolaittuc civāla*

37 *yattai veḷippaṭuttinaṇ. tiruppaiṇṇīli pōkum
vaḷiyil iraiyaṇ ivaruṭaiya paciyaikum nīr
vēṭkaiyaikum arintu poti cōru alittān.
piṇṇar kayilai naṇṇa eṇṇik kāci varai
naṭantu ceṇrapōtu, kālkaḷ tēyntaṇa, kaikaḷ
tēyntaṇa, mārpum tēyntatu; puraṇṭu cellavē
uṭampum tēyntatu; appāl cellum
ceyalaravar ākiya pōtu, iraiyaṇ oru
poykaiyaik kāṭṭi ivarai mūlkac ceytān. ivar
aṇceluttai oṭip poykaiyil mūlkit
tiruvaiyārriḷē eḷuntār. appōtu tam kaṇṇil
paṭṭa carācaraṅkaḷ ellām caktiyum
civaḷumākat tōṇrak kaṇṭār. aiyārappār
ālayam kailāyamākak kāṭci yaḷittatu. ak
kāṭciyil maṇattaip pariḷoṭuttup pāṭip piṇṇar
tiruppūnturutti vantu, aṅku campantar
civikaiyaṭ tāṅkiṇār. maturai ceṇru
vaḷipaṭṭu, maṅkaiyarkkaraci yāraiyum,
pāṇṭiyanaiyum, kulacciraiyāraiyum kaṇṭu
makilntu, mīṇṭum pukalūr aṭaintār. iraiyaṇ
tiruvarulāl ivar ulavārap paṇi ceyta
iṭamellām poṇṇum maṇiyum tōṇriṇa.
avaṇrai oṭākavē matittup peyartterintār.
tēva maṅkaiyar tōṇri ivar muṇ pāṭṭum
āṭṭamum āṭiṇar. avarkaḷai ivar civamā kavē
kaṇṭār. muṭivil oru ciktiraiccatayattil
“puṇṇiyā unṇaṭikkē pōtukinrēn” eṇru oṭik
koṇṭē civaperumāṇuṭaiya tiruvaṭikkil
civāṇanta ṇṇaṇaṭivāy amarntār.
caiva marapil appar vāḷkkai tācamārkkam
eṇru collukinra cariyaip pakutiyaip
pulappaṭuttuvatu. uṭal ulaippiṇ perumaiyai
eṇrum uṇarttiyiruppatu. nāviṇāl pāṭiṇālum
neṅciṇāl niṇaittālum pōtātu, meyyiṇāl paṇi
ceyya vēṇṭum eṇra aṭimait tirattai-
pēruṇmaiyaip pulappaṭuttuvatu.*

told Nānacampatar about the cruelty of
Jains, he left the Pandya country and
reached Paḷaiyārai. When he got sad and
refused food, knowing that the Jains had
closed a Śaiva temple there, the king

eradicated the Jains and constructed a Śiva
temple by God’s grace. On the way to
Tiruppaiṇṇīli, knowing his hunger and
thirst, God fed him with the food of wisdom.
Afterward, when he started walking from
Kashi, wishing to reach mount Kailāsa, his
feet were torn, his hands were ripped, and
his chest was worn; his body was too tired
to walk further. When he could no longer
walk, God made a pond appear and drowned
him. He immersed himself in the pond while
reciting the five syllables *mantra* and
resurfaced in Tiruvaiyāru. In that moment,
the whole world appeared to his eyes as
Śiva-śakti, while the Aiyārappār temple
appeared as mount Kailāsa. After having
sung [a hymn], astonished by this vision, he
went to Tiruppūnturutti, and there he carried
Campantar’s palanquin. Having reached
and prayed in Madurai, he was delighted to
see the Pandya queen Maṅkaiyar and
Kulacciraiyār and then went again to
Pukalūr. By God’s grace, gold and precious
stones had appeared in all the places where
he had done plowing works. He paid
homage and moved them. Divine ladies
appeared and sang and danced in front of
him; they saw him as Śiva. Finally, during
the month of Cittirai, he sat down at the
Lord’s feet, having obtained the blissful
knowledge of Śiva, while reciting, “I reach
your feet as a pure person”.

In the Śaiva tradition, the life of Appar
exemplifies the *caryāmārga*, which is [also
called *tācamārkkam*. It indicates the
greatness of [his] physical service. It has
demonstrated that reciting hymns with the
tongue and carrying good thoughts in the
heart is not enough: it is necessary to serve
through the body, namely slavery.

38

*cuntarar
mūnrāvatu ācāriyar cuntaramūrṭti
cuvāmikaḷ. ivar kailaiyil āṭi niḷalil tōṇriya*

Cuntarar
The third *ācārya* is Cuntaramūrṭti
Cuvāmikaḷ. He diverted his mind from the

civaperumāṇuṭaiya pīmpamāyiruntu, malar
 koyta umātēviyāriṇ cēṭiyar iruvar mītu
 maṇam ceṇra kāraṇattiṇāl, maṇṇulakil
 pīraṇtār. naṭu nāṭṭil āti caiva marapil
 nampiyārūr ar eṇra peyarōṭu pīraṇtu,
 naraciṅka muṇaiyaraiyar araṇ maṇaiyil
 vaḷarntār. puttūril tamakku maṇam
 ērpātākiyiruntapōtu, civaperumāṇ oru
 mutiya vēṭiyārakat tōṇri, ivar tamakku
 aṭimai eṇru ōlai kāṭṭi maṇat taik taṭuttut
 tiruveṇṇey nallūr ālayattuṭ ceṇru
 maraintār. paḷaiya varalāru uṇarnta nampi
 yārūr ar, “pittā” eṇru perumāṇaip pāṭi,
 talayāttirai toṭaṅkip patikam pāṭikkōṇṭu
 vantār. kāḷi vaṇaṅki ārūr aṭaintu
 perumāṇayē tōḷarākap perrār. aṅku
 umātēviyāriṇ tōḷi paravai eṇra peyarōṭu
 pīraṇtirukkak kaṇṭu kātālittup perumāṇ
 aruḷāl maṇantār. ārūr maṇṭapattil
 toṇṭarkaḷaik kaṇṭu vaṇaṅkit tiruttoṇṭat tokai
 pāṭiṇār. paravai maṇaiyil oru camayam
 aṭiyavar uṇavukku nel illātu pōka arukil uḷḷa
 kuṇṭaiyūrkkilār nelmalai aḷikka, ataik
 kōḷilip perumāṇ aruḷāl pūtakaṇaṅkaḷaik
 koṇṭu paravai maṇaikku eṭuppittār. tiru
 nāṭṭiyattāṅkuṭi aṭaintu aṅkuk
 kōṭpuliyaṇruṭaiya peṅkaḷāṇa ciṅkaṭi
 vaṇppakai eṇra iruvaraiyum tam
 putalviyarāka ērrār. tiruppukalūr ceṇru
 paṅkuṇi uttirattil paravaiyārukkākap poṇ
 vēṇṭip paṭuttirukka, ivar talaikku vaittup
 paṭuttirunta ceṇ kaṅkaḷ poṇṇāka āyiṇa. pala
 iṭaṅkaḷ vaḷipaṭṭut tirumutukunṇrattil kiṭaitta
 paṇṇīrāyiram poṇṇai maṇi muttārriḷ iṭṭup
 piṇṇar ārūrku kuḷattil atē

reflection of Lord Śiva that appeared in a
 mirroring shadow on mount Kailāsa
 towards two maids of goddess Umā who
 were ploughing flowers; because of this, he
 was [re]born on the earth. Born with the
 name of Nampi Arūr ar in an Ādiśaiva
 family in the Naṭu country, he grew up in the
 palace of king Narasimha Muniyaraiyar.
 When he was about to get married in Puttūr,
 Lord Śiva appeared in the form of an old
 man Brahmin, showed a palm-leaf
 document stating that Cuntarar was his
 slave, prevented the marriage, went to [his
 palace in] Tiruveṇṇey Nallūr, and
 disappeared. Nampiyārūr ar, who
 understood what happened, praised God
 addressing him as “Pittā (Oh madness)”,
 began a pilgrimage to that place, and walked
 chanting the verses. Having worshipped
 God and reached Arur, he took Lord Śiva
 himself as his companion. There he saw [the
 reincarnation of] Umā’s maid, who was
 born with the name of Paravai, fell in love
 with her, and got married by Lord’s grace.
 Having met and worshipped the devotees in
 Arur’s royal court, he sang the
Tiruttoṇṭattokai. Once, when
 Kuṇṭaiyūrkkilār, a devotee living nearby
 who was providing them rice, didn’t have
 any to give to his wife Paravai, God
 provided him with a mountain of rice and
 his attendants took it to his wife Paravai by
 his grace. When he reached
 Tirunāṭṭiyattāṅkuṭi, there he accepted as his
 daughters the two girls named Ciṅkaṭi and
 Vaṇppakai, daughters of Kōṭpuliyaṇ.
 Then, having gone to Tiruppukalūr, when he
 praised [the Lord] asking for gold for his
 wife in the month of Paṅkuṇi, the bricks that
 were lying on his head became gold. Having
 worshipped [God] in many places, after
 having thrown in the river twelve thousand
 golden coins that he got in Tirumutukunṇam,
 he found

39

poṇ aruḷap perrār. tirukkurukāvūr cellum
 vaḷiyil iraivaṇ poti cōru alittu ivar paciyaip
 pōkkiṇār. mīṇṭum tirukkaccūril perumāṇ
 ivarukkākak kaṇi cōru irantu vantu aḷittār.
 pīraku tiruvorriyūr aṭaintu aṅkuk kaṇṭu

that same gold in Arur’s tank. On the way to
 Tirukkurukāvūr, he got rid of the hunger
 thanks to the rice God gave him. When he
 was again in Tirukkaccūr, God gave him
 meat and rice. Afterward, he reached

caṅkili eṅra ammaiṅrai maṅakka eṅṅiṅār.
 avar umāṅēviyāruṅaiya iraṅṅāvatu cēṅṅiyiṅ
 piṅappu. iraivaṅ eḷuntaruḷiyirunta maḷiḷa
 marattiṅ kīḷ, “uṅṅai nāṅ piriṅvatillai” eṅru
 cūḷuraittu maṅam ceyṅār. āṅṅāḷ ciṅritu nāḷiḷ
 tiruvārūr vacanta viḷā niṅaiṅ varavum
 aṅkē cella eṅṅit tiruvorriyūrāi nīṅkiṅār.
 iraṅṅu kaṅṅum maṅaintatu. tāṅ cūḷurai
 poytta maiyē kāraṅam eṅruṅarntu,
 iraivaṅai vēṅṅik kaṅ aruḷumāru urukkamaṅṅa
 pala pāṅtakaḷ pāṅṅiṅār. taruma tēvataiyāṅṅa
 iraivaṅ uṅṅē kaṅ aruḷavillai.
 tiruveṅpākkattil iraivaṅ oṅ uṅruḷaḷ aḷittār.
 iṅṅum kaṅṅillai. kāṅci aṅaintu pōrriyapōtu
 iṅṅakkaṅ kiṅaittatu. itaṅku maḷiṅṅtapōtilum,
 maṅṅoru kaṅṅillāmai nōḷḷik karuttalintu
 varum vaḷiyiḷ tirutturuttiyil perumāṅ
 ivaruṅaiya uṅṅar piṅi oṅraip pōḷḷiṅār. piṅṅar
 āṅrūr ceṅru vaḷipaṅṅapōtu aṅku valakkaṅṅum
 aruḷap perrār. paravai viṅṅṅukku ivar
 ceṅrapōtu, caṅkiliyār tirumaṅam aṅintu,
 avar ivarāi viṅṅiṅuḷ aṅumatikka villai.
 appōtu ivar civaperumāṅṅai vēṅṅa avar
 paravaipāl tūtu ceṅru avar kōpattaik
 taṅṅittuc cuntararāi ēṅkumāru ceyṅār.
 icceyṅiyai aṅrinta perumaṅkalam kalikkāmar
 eṅra toṅṅar cuntararmītu veṅruppuk koḷḷa,
 civaperumāṅ avarukkuc cūlai nōy varac
 ceytu ataik tīṅkumukamāka iruvaraiyum
 naṅparāḷḷiṅār. cuntarariṅ perumaiyāi
 aṅrinta cēramāṅ

Tiruvorriyūr and thought to marry a woman called Caṅkili whom he saw there. She was the reincarnation of the second maid of goddess Umā. He got married reciting “I won’t separate from you/” under the temple’s tree that God had erected. But after a few days, as he remembered the spring festival of Tiruvarur, he left Tiruvorriyūr thinking of going there. He lost sight of both eyes. Having understood that it was for breaking his promise, he prayed to God and sang many moving hymns for his blessing. The righteous God did not bestow his grace immediately. In Tiruveṅpākkam, God provided him with a blind man’s staff. He still couldn’t see. When he reached Kanchi and prayed, he had his left eye’s sight back. Although he was happy, he cried thinking about the blindness of the other eye; God freed him from his body’s ailment when walking in Tirutturutti. Afterward, when he reached Arur and worshipped God, there he got even the sight of the right eye back. When he reached the house of Paravai and she found out about the marriage with Caṅkili, she didn’t allow him [to enter] inside the house. At that moment, Lord Śiva went to her as Cuntarar’s messenger, mitigated her anger, and made her accept Cuntarar. When the devotee Kalikkāmar of Perumaṅkala came to know about this news and felt an aversion towards Cuntarar, Lord Śiva caused him a stomach disease, and as a result, the two became friends. Cheraman Perumal, who came to know about Cuntarar’s greatness,

40

perumāḷ āṅrūr vantu ivarōṅṅu naṅpuk koṅṅār.
 iruvarum pala talaṅkaḷ vaḷipaṅṅaṅar.
 tiruvaiyāṅṅril pāṅṅal pāṅṅik kāviri vellam
 vaḷiviṅṅaḷ ceytu vaḷipaṅṅuc cēra māṅṅuṅṅaṅ
 avar talainakar ceṅrār. piṅṅar avar tanta
 perum poruḷkaḷōṅṅu tirumurukaṅ pūṅṅi vaḷiyē
 tam mūrukkut tirumpukaiyil, pūṅṅakanaṅkaḷ
 poruḷaik kavara, iraivaṅaiṅ pāṅṅiṅ poruḷai
 mīṅṅum perrār. tiruppukkoḷiyūr avināci
 aṅaintu, perumāṅaiṅ pāṅṅiṅ mutalaiyūṅṅa
 pāḷaṅai uyirtteluṅṅu varac ceyṅār.
 maṅrupaṅiyum cēraṅāṅṅu aṅaintu, cēramāṅṅal
 ciṅrappikkap perru vāḷṅṅtapōtu,

went to Arur and got his friendship. They went to worship in a lot of places together. Having recited a hymn on the Tiruvai river, it made way through the Kaveri flood, and they reached the capital city of the Chera king. Then, on the way back to his town through Tirumurukaṅ Pūṅṅi with all the precious things that the king gave him, when robbers stole his presents, [Cuntarar] prayed to God and got them back again. Having reached Avināci [temple] in Tiruppukkoḷiyūr, he resurrected a boy [eaten by] a crocodile praying to the Lord.

kailāyattiliruntu vellai yānai vara, āṭi
cuvāṭiyil cuntarar ataṇmītu ērik kailāyam
ceṇṇār. aṇṇparāṇa cēramāṇ itaiyaṇintatum,
kutiraimītu ēri ataṇ kātil civa mantiram ōta,
atuvum vāṇavīti valiyākak kailāyam
ceṇṇratu. kailāyam ceṇṇra valiyil tām ceyta
patikaṅkaḷaic cuntarar varuṇaṇiṭam
koṭukka, avaṇ avarrait tiruvaṅcaik kaḷattil
veliyiṭṭāṇ.

cuntarar vāḷkkai cakamārkkam eṇṇum yōka
mārkkattaip pulappaṭuttuvatu. itu tōḷamai
eṇṇu collappaṭuvatu, aṇṇiyum, iṇṇaiṇṇ nīti
vaṭivāṇavaṇ, nītiyiniṇṇum piraḷpavar
taṇṭikkappaṭuvar eṇṇpatai ivar vāḷkkai naṅku
uṇarttukiratu.

māṇikkavācakar

nāṅkām ācāriyar māṇikkavācakar.
pāṇṇināṭṭut tiruvātavūril civa vēṭiyar kulattil
vātavūrar eṇṇa peyarōṭu piraṇta ivar,
pāṇṇiyaṇiṭam mutal mantiriyāki, avaṇiṭam
peruṇ celvam perruk kutirai
vāṅkuvataṅkākak kīḷ kaṭaṅkaraiyai nōkkic
ceṇṇrapōṭu, tirupperunturai eṇṇa iṭattil,
kurunta marat

When he reached the Chera country again
and was celebrated by the Chera king, a
white elephant arrived from mount Kailāsa;
Cuntarar climbed on it in the Cuvāṭi month
and went to Kailāsa. As soon as the beloved
Chera king came to know [about this], he
mounted on a horse, and when he chanted
the Śiva mantras at [the horse's] ear, it also
went to Kailāsa through the sky. On the way
to reach mount Kailāsa, when Cuntarar gave
to Varuṇa the verses he had written, he
inscribed them in the Tiruvaṅcaikaḷam
temple.

The life of Cuntarar exemplifies the
yogamārga, which is also called
cakamārkkam. Besides being referred to as
“companionship”, his life clearly indicates
that God is righteous and those who deviate
from justice will be punished.

Māṇikkavācakar

The fourth ācārya is Māṇikkavācakar. He
was born in a Śaiva Brahmin family in
Tiruvātavūr, in the Pandya country, with the
name of Vātavūrar. Having become chief
minister of the Pandya king, he got a lot of
wealth from him and went to the East coast
to buy horses. When he saw and worshiped
the Supreme guru that is Lord Śiva, who had
come to admit him as a servant [seated] at
the foot of a Kurunda tree,

taṭiyil ivarai āṭkoḷvataṅkākaṅkavē vantirunta
civa perumāṅkākiya parama kuruvaik kaṇṭu
vaṇaṅka, avarum ivaraik kaṭaikkaṇṇittu
aruḷiṇṇār. akkaṇamē ivar civaṅṇam
kaivarapperruk kaṇṇivu mikunta māṇikkam
pōṇṇra vācakaṅkaḷaip pāta, iṇṇaiṇṇ ivarukku
“māṇikkavācakan” eṇṇra peyaraic cūṭṭiṇṇār.
koṇṭu vanta poruḷaiyellām ivar
ālayattiruppaṇiyil cela viṭṭār. pāṇṇiyaṇ ivar
tirumpi varāmai kaṇṭu āḷaṇuppi aḷaikka,
ivar ceṇṇru iṇṇaiṇṇ kaṭṭaḷaip paṭi oru
māṇikkattai avaṇiṭam tantu “āvaṇi mūlattil
kutiraikaḷ varum” eṇṇār. āṇḷ kutirai varum
tōṇṇamē illāmaiyaḷ, aracaṇ ivaraic
ciraṇiyiṭṭup peritum tunpuruttināṇ. iṇṇaiṇṇ
tiruvaruḷaiyē ivar eṇṇiyirukka, maturaip
perumāṅ narikaḷaik kutiraiyākki, kuṇṇitta
tiṇattil perum kutiraip paṭaiyai aracaṇ muṇ

the Lord gave him a benign look and blessed
him. At that exact moment, he obtained the
śivajñāna, and when he sang the hymns that
were like precious gems, God gave him the
name of Māṇikkavācakar. He spent all the
wealth he had on temple services. Seeing
that he was not coming back, the Pandya
king sent [a messenger] to call him; when he
reached, Māṇikkavācakar gave him a gem
by God's will and told him that the horses
would have come on the day of the 19th
nakṣatra in the Āvaṇi month. But since
there was no sign that the horses were
coming, the king imprisoned and tortured
him. Since he was thinking of God's grace,
the Lord turned the jackals into horses in
Madurai and, on the appointed day, a large
force of horses was brought before the king.

koṅṭu niṟuttiṅār. aracaṅ kaṅṭu maḱiṅtu māṅikkavācakarai ciraiviṭuttup peri tum upacarittāṅ. āṅṅāl aṅṟu iravē iraiyaruḷāl kutiraikaḷ narikaḷāy oṭa, aracaṅ mikavum ciṅantu ivaraic caṭumaṅalil niṟuttiṅ palavāru taṅṅittāṅ. iraivaṅmītē pārattaip pōṭṭu avaṅ tiruvaṭiyaiyē eṅṅiyirunta ivaratu perumaiyai ulakiṅarukkuk kāṭṭa eṅṅiya iraivaṅ, vaikaiyil veḷḷamperukac ceyya, veḷḷattāl maturai nakar aḷivataik kaṅṭa aracaṅ, māṅikkavācakar perumaiyai uṅarntu, ivarai viṭuvittu, aruḷpuriya vēṅṅiṅāṅ. kuṭikaḷukkuk karaiyil ovvoru pakuti aḷantuviṭṭu uṭaippai aṭaikkumāru ceytāṅ. vanti eṅṅa kiḷavikkuriya pakuti maṭṭum aṭaipaṭavillai. tuṅaiyarṟavaḷākiya avaḷuṭaiya paktikku muṅṅamē maḱiṅtirunta perumāṅ, avaḷukkuk kūliyāḷāka vantu, avaḷ koṭutta piṭṭai maṭṭum tiṅruviṭṭu

Being happy to see them, the king released Māṅikkavācakar and was exceedingly hospitable. But when that night the horses turned back into jackals again by God’s grace, the king got furious and punished him in many ways making him stand in the boiling sand. God wanted to show the whole world the greatness of Māṅikkavācakar, who was imagining putting his feet upon the Lord; when he made a flood rise in the Vaikai [river], the king, who saw Madurai being destructed by the flood, understood the greatness of Māṅikkavācakar, released him, and prayed for God’s grace. He asked the villagers to guard every part of the bank and plug the breaches. Only the part belonging to an old lady named Vanti was not closed. The Lord, who was already pleased by the devotion of the unmarried woman, came as her hire, only ate the food that she offered him,

uṭaippaṭaikkātu viḷaiyāṅṅār. aracaṅ pārttu ak kūliyāḷaip pirampāl aṭikkavum, avvaṭi ulakil uḷḷa ellāp poruḷkaḷiṅmēlum paṭṭatu. vanti kailāyam ceṅṅrāl. kūliyāḷ maturaip perumāṅē eṅṅpatai uṅarnta aracaṅ māṅikkavācakarukkāka iraivaṅ purinta tiruvicāyāḷalai uṅarntu avar tiruvaṭiyil vīḷntu vaṅaṅkiṅāṅ. piṅ ivar tirupperunturai ceṅṅrār. aṅku tamatu kuru tillaiḱku varumāru kaṭṭalaḱiṭṭu maṅraiya, ivarum pala talaṅkaḷ vaḷipaṭṭup pāṭit tillaiyai aṭaintār. aṅkup perumāṅai vaṅaṅkiyiruntapōṭu, īḷa nāṭṭu aracaṅum, avaṅ ūmaip peṅṅum, tam putta kurumārōṭu tillaiyaṭaintu aṅkullōrai vāṭirku amaikka, ivarum perumāṅ kaṭṭalaippaṭi ceṅṅru avvūmaip peṅṅē vāy tiṅantu puttaruṭaiya vātattai maṅrutturaikkumāru ceytār. cila kālam kaḷintapiṅ naṭarācap perumāṅē oṟ antaṅa uruvōṭu ivar muṅ tōṅṅi ivaratu pāṭalkaḷ muḷumaiyum kūru māru kēṭka, ivar pāṭiṅār. avar eḷuti, “māṅikkavācakaṅ colla aḷakiya tiruccirṟampalamuṭaiyāṅ eḷutiyatu” eṅṅru kaiccāṭṭiṭṭup paṭiyil vaṭṭār. tillavāḷantaṅar, nūlai maṅunāt kālai kaṅṅeṭṭu “itaṅ poruḷ yātu?” eṅṅru ivaraik kēṭka, ivar “ipperumāṅē poruḷ” eṅṅru naṭarācap perumāṅaic cuṭṭik kāṭṭi, āṅi

and played around without closing the breach. The king saw this and hit that hired man with a bamboo stick, and that hit also fell on all the things that are in the world. Vanti went to heaven. When the king understood that the hired man was the Lord himself and that this was a divine play of God for the sake of Māṅikkavācakar, he fell at his feet and worshipped him. Afterward, [Māṅikkavācakar] went to Tirupperunturai. There, having conceded his *guru* to go back to Chidambaram, the two of them worshipped in many places, chanted the hymns, and reached Chidambaram. When he was praying to God there, the king of the Eelam country and his mute wife reached Chidambaram with their Buddhist priest; when they called them, who were there for a speech, both of them went as per Lord’s order, made the mute woman open her mouth, and refuted the Buddhist’s argument. After some time, when Lord Naṭarāja appeared before him as a Brahmin and asked him to recite all his hymns, he sang them. He wrote, “The beautiful Lord Śiva has written what Māṅikkavācakar said”, and he signed the document. When the inhabitants of Chidambaram found the

makattil, avanatu tūkkiya tiruvaṭi yin
kīlccenru pēriṅpap peruvālvil onri viṭṭār.
māṅikkavācakar, nālvaril ṅāṅamārkkam
enra caṅmārkkattaip pulappaṭuttupavar
āvār.

muntaiya ācāriyar mūvarpōla, paṅṭaik
tavattāl tōṅrip perumāṅāl āṅkollap perutal
aritu; āṅāl ṅāṅanūlai oṭi, ācāriyaḷai nāṭi
caṅmārkkam neṛi.

yilē aruḷ vēṭṭuniṛra lonrē aṅaiivarum
ceyyattakkatu enpatai ivar vāḷkkai
uṅarttum. cāttiraṅkaḷ ulakil tōṅrum
periyōrai iru vakaiyiṅarākkak kuṛippitum.
onru, paṅṭai nal tavattāl tōṅrip paramaṅaip
patti paṅṅuvōr; ivarkaḷukku iṛaiṅāṅē
muṅtōṅri aruḷceytu vīṭupēru alippan.
marratu, ṅāṅanūḷ muṛaiyāka oṭi
vīṭupēṛṛirkāṅa neṛiyil oḷukupavar. mutal
vakaiyiṅar cāmucittar enrum, pintiya
vakaiyiṅar vaiṅayikar enrum peyar
peruvar. iruvar peruvatum mīṅṭu vārā
neṛiyākiya paramuttiyē. campantar appar
cuntarar mūvarum cāmucittar.
māṅikkavācakar vaiṅayikar. inta nālvarum
caivacamaya ācāriyar enappeyar peruvar.
ivarkaḷ taṅkaḷ aruḷ pācuraṅkaḷ mūlam
caivamakkaḷ vāḷkkaiyiṅ nilaitta iṭam
peṛṛirukkirārkaḷ.

43

cantāna ācāriyar-meykantār

iṅi caiva cantāṅa ācāriyarāka nālvar kollap
paṭuvar. ivarkaḷ caivaṅāṅa cāttiram
muṛaiyāka upatēcikkapperṛa cantāṅa
paramparaiyil varum mutal nālvar.
ivarkaḷuḷ mutalvar meykaṅṭār. ivar
peṅṅakaṭattil accutakaḷappāḷar enpavaratu
putalvarāyp piṛantār. ivar tantaiyār
neṭuṅkālam puttirap pēru illātu, tam
kuruvākiya cakalākama paṅṭitarai aṭaintu
kēṭṭapōtu, avar tēvārattil kayiṛu cāt
tippārkkā, atil vanta “pēyaṭaiyā” enra
tēvārattaip pārṭtu, atil tiruvenkāṭṭu mukkuḷa
tīrtattil nīrāṭi valipāṭu ceytōrukkup piḷḷai
varam niccayam kiṭaikkuṅ enṛirukkak

book the following day and asked him,
“What does it mean?”, pointing to Lord
Naṭarāja, he said, “The meaning is that he is
the Lord”, went at his feet, and merged with
the eternal bliss in the Āṅi month.

Among the four [ācārya], Māṅikkavācakar
exemplifies the caṅmārkkam, that is, the
jñānamārga.

Just like [what happened with] the other
three ācāryas, it is very rare to be accepted
as a servant by God by means of ancient
austerities. Still, his life has demonstrated
that everyone should read the jñāna
scriptures, approach a spiritual master,

and seeks God’s grace in the caṅmārkkam
path. The Śāstras have talked about two
kinds of great men who have appeared in the
world. The first are those who devoted
themselves to the Supreme Lord, arising
from ancient austerities; God appeared in
front of them, bestowed his grace, and
conceded them mukti. The other one is the
group of those who adhered to the path to
obtaining mokṣa, having read the jñāna
scriptures. Those of the first group are also
called cāmucittar, while those of the latter
group are also called vaiṅayikar. As both get
the mukti, they won’t be reborn again.
Campantar, Appar, and Cuntarar were
cāmucittar; Māṅikkavācakar was a
vaiṅayikar. All these four are called Śaiva
camayācāryas, religious preceptors. Thanks
to their compassionate devotional poems,
they have obtained a permanent place in the
life of the people.

Cantāna ācārya - Meykantār

Now the four cantānācāryar will be
discussed. They are the first four in the
cantāna lineage, who have exposed the
śivajñāna Śāstras properly. The first among
them was Meykantār. He was born in
Peṅṅakaṭam and was the son of Accuta
Kaḷappāḷar. When his father was not able to
have a child for a long time, he went to the
pandit Cakalākam, who was his guru, and
inquired him, [Cakalākam] looked at the
Tēvāram and [read a poem] where there was
the world “pēyaṭaiyā”; when he found out

kaṇṭu, avvāru ceyyumāru colla, ivarum avvārē ceyya, cuvēṭaṇap perumāl eṇra kuḷantai pīrantār. ik kuḷantai mūnru

vayatāyiruntapōtu, ākāya vaḷiyē ceṇra parañcōtiyār eṇra civañāṇi ivviṭam vantatum tam ākāya kamaṇam tataippaṭṭamai kaṇṭu kāraṇam uṇarntu, kīḷiraṅki ik kuḷantaikku uṇmai ṇāṇattaip pukattiṇār.

civaperumāṇiṭattil upatēcam peṇra muṇivar nālvaril caṇatkumār aruvar. ivar cattiya ṇāṇa taricaṇi eṇra cītarukkuc civañāṇattai upatēcittār. ivar tām peṇra civañāṇattait tam māṇākkarākiya parañcōti muṇivarukku upatēcittār. ivarē ippōtu tiruveṅkāṭu vantavar. tām upatēcitta kuḷantaikku tam kuruvīṇ peyariṇ tamīḷ vaṭivamākiya mey kaṇṭār eṇra peyaraic cūṭṭiṇār. meykaṇṭār tam tantaiyōṭu piṇṇar tiruveṇney nallūraṭaintu, aṅkuḷla pollāp piḷḷaiyārai upācittu avarāl civañāṇak teḷivum mutirvum peṇrār. immeykaṇṭār caiva cittānta ṇāṇa cantāna marapukku mūlamāvār. pala māṇākkarukkuc civañāṇa upatēcam ceytiruntu uriyakālakattil paramutti aṭaintār.

44

arunanti-maraiñānacampantar

meykaṇṭār tantaiyīṇ kuruvāyirunta cakalākama paṇṭitar, meykaṇṭāraip pārṭtu, “āṇavam eppaṭi yirukkum?” eṇru viṇava, avar tammaiyē kāṭṭak kaṇṭu, akkaṇamē tamakku meyñāṇam varapperru avariṭam māṇākkarāki aruḷupatēcam peṇru, avarukkuppiṇ ācāriyarāy amarntu ṇāṇaparamparaiyai vaḷarkkalāṇār. ivar muttiyaṭainta piṇ ivaruṭaiya māṇākkarāṇa peṇṇākaṭam maraiñāṇa campantar civañāṇap payir vaḷarttār. ivar orunāl tillai vītiyil ceṇrapōtu, aṅkuc civikaiyil ceṇra umāpatiyai nōkki, “paṭṭa

45

kaṭṭaiyil pakal kuruṭaṇ pōkiṇrāṇ” eṇrār. ic collaik kēṭṭa umāpati paripakkuvamaṭaintu, uṭaṇē civikaiyiliruntu iṇraṅki

that those who bath in the holy pond of Tiruveṅkāṭu temple would surely get children and told him to do so, he and his wife did it and a child was born, whom they called Cuvēṭaṇa Perumāl. When this child was three years old, the Śaiva sage

Parañcōti was walking through the sky [towards heaven]; as soon as he reached that place, in seeing that there was an obstacle in the skyline, he understood that [the child] was the reason; thus, he came down and instilled the true knowledge in that child.

Caṇatkumār is one of the four sages who received the teaching from Lord Śiva. He taught the śivajñāna to his disciple Cattiyañāṇa Tariciṇi, and Cattiyañāṇa Tariciṇi taught the knowledge he obtained to his student Parañcōti. He is the same Parañcōti who came to Tiruveṅkāṭu. He named the child Meykaṇṭār (“the one who has seen the truth”) as the Tamil form of the name of the guru who taught him [the true knowledge]. Then Meykaṇṭār, having reached Tiruveṇṇeynallūr with his father and worshipped Pollā Piḷḷaiyār, he obtained clear knowledge of the śivajñāna and spiritual maturity. Thus, this Meykaṇṭār was the founder of the cantāna lineage of Śaivasiddhānta. He obtained the supreme liberation, having preached the śivajñāna to many disciples.

Arunanti-Maraiñānacampantar

The pandit Cakalākam, who was the guru of Meykaṇṭār’s father, saw Meykaṇṭār and asked him, “How is āṇava?”; in the exact moment he saw Meykaṇṭār indicating himself, he obtained the true knowledge, received his compassionate sermons as his disciple, followed him as his ācārya, and increased the jñāna lineage. After he obtained mukti, his disciple Maraiñānacampantar from Peṇṇākaṭam sang the śivajñāna. One day, when he was going to Chidambaram, he said to Umāpati, traveling on a palanquin, “A blind man

is going on a pyre in the daytime”. When he heard these words, Umāpati felt compassion and immediately got down from the

maṛaiñānacampantar tiruvaṭiyil vīntu vaṇaṅki, avaruṭaiya cīṭarāka atu mutal oḷukalāṇār. maṛaiñāṇa campantar orunāḷ kaikkōlar vīṭiyil cenru pāvārrum kañciyai vāṅkik kuṭikka, umāpati avar muḷaṅkai vaḷi oḷukiya kañciyai ērruk kuṭittār. cīṭaratu pakkuvam uṇarnta maṛaiñāṇa campantar ivarukku upatēcam ceytu ācāriyarākki, uriyakālattil tām muttiyaṭaintār.

umāpati

umāpati naṭarācap perumāṇaip pūcikkum pēruperra tillai mūvāyiravaruḷ oruvar. maṛaiñāṇa campantariṭam ivar oḷukiya taṇmaiyarintu ēṇaiya mūvāyiravar ivaraik kōyililiruntu vilakki vaittānar. ivar nakarukkuk kīlpālulla korraṇaṅkuṭi enra iṭattil taṅki naṭarācapperumāṇai vaḷipaṭṭu vantār. maṛukāḷ kālaiyil naṭarācap perumāṇ ālayattil arccakar pūcaip peṭṭakattait tirantu pārṭtapōtu aṅkup perumāṇ illai. ellōrum tikaik tirukka, “nām umāpatiyiṇ peṭṭakattil irukkirōm” enru oru kural eluntatu. ellōrum veṭki, avariṭam cenru paṇintu mīṇṭum avaraikkoṇṭu pūcai ceyvittānar. piṇṇar umāpati tamatu maṭattukku viṛakaḷittu vanta perrāṇ campāṇ enra ōr aṭiyavaṅkukup perumāṇ koṭutta cīṭuppaṭi tīksai alittu muttikoṭuttār. itaṇ uṇmaip poruḷ uṇarātu mayāṅkiya cāmpānātu currattārum, aracaṇum kāṇumpaṭiyāka, avar kōmukai yarukē civa perumāṇ tiru maṅcaṇa nīril vaḷarnta oru muḷlicceṭiyiṇmītu tam aruṭpārvaiaic celuttiya māttirattē,

46

atu oḷimayamāki vāṇircenru kalantatu. vantōr maṇa amaitiperrānar. piṇṇar orunāḷ tiruviḷāvil koṭiyērāmai kaṇṭu, koṭikkavi pāṭik koṭiyērruvittār. pala nūlkaḷum pala cālṭirāṅkaḷum ceytu, uriyakālattil ivar civaperumāṇōṭu iraṇṭarak kalantār.

palanquin, fell to the feet of Maṛaiñānacampantar, and worshipped him; he was his first disciple since then. One day, when Maṛaiñānacampantar was walking on the street of a handicraftsman, bought some rice water and drank it; Umāpati collected the water that was flowing down from what he was swallowing and drank it. Maṛaiñānacampantar, who understood the spiritual maturity of his disciple, preached to him, made him an ācārya, and at the proper time, he obtained *mukti*.

Umāpati

Umāpati was one of the three thousand blessed ones of Chidambaram who worshipped lord Naṭarāja.

Having found out his behavior towards Maṛaiñānacampantar, the other three thousand sages kept him away from the temple. He went to live in a place called Korraṇaṅkuṭi, which was on the East side of his city, and worshipped Lord Naṭarāja [from there]. The following day, when the priests opened the *pūjā* vault in Lord Naṭarāja’s temple, the [idol] of God was not there. To everyone’s astonishment, a voice called out, “We are in Umāpati’s vault.” As everyone felt ashamed, they went to him, bowed down, and took him to perform *pūjā* again. Then, Umāpati gave the initiation to a devotee named Perṛāṇ Cāmpāṇ, who provided firewood for his monastery according to the prescription given by the Lord, and gave him *mukti*. The relatives of Cāmpāṇ and the king who saw this were astonished because they did not understand the true meaning of the [event]; therefore, he drove a compassionate look on a torn plant that grew on the water used for the ablution of Lord Naṭarāja near Kōmukai;

the plant lightened up and he went to heaven. Those who had come [there] got relieved. Then, one day, having seen that the flag was not hoisted during a holy festival, he sang a hymn to the flag and it raised. Having written many scriptures and Śāstras, he merged with Lord Śiva at the proper time.

innālvare caivacantāṇa ācāriyar enappatuṅvōr; ivarkaḷ paramparaiyē caivaṅṅāna cantāṇam.

These four are called Śaiva *cantāṇa ācāryas*; their tradition is the lineage of the *śivajṅṅāna*.

cantēcar

in̄ku mar̄roru varalārraik kuṛippiṭṭal avaciyamānatu. atuvē caṅṅēcar varalāru. ivar vicāra carumar en̄ra peyarōṭu cēyṅṅalūril antaṅa kulattil piṛantu, piṛaviyil kalaiṅṅānam vallavarāki, āṅṅinattiṅṅitam eḷunta aṅṅiṅṅāḷ ā mēykkum toḷilai mēṛkoṅṅār. ivaratu aṅṅpu niṛainta parāmarippuk kāraṅamāka, pacukkaḷiṅṅam aḷavillāta pāl urpattiyāka, avai ceṅṅra iṅṅamellām pāl corintāna. ivar maṅṅṅiyārraṅkaraiyil ōr āttimara niḷalil maṅṅalāl civaliṅṅkam amaittu, pacukkaḷ corinta pālaik kuṅṅam kuṅṅamākak koṅṅuvantu tirumaṅṅcaṅṅam āṅṅiṅṅār. āṅṅiyum, pacu uṅṅaiyavarukkuk kuṅṅavillāta pāl kiṅṅaittu vantatu. ivar pāl corintataik kaṅṅa oruvaṅ kōḷ mūṅṅiyatāl ūriṅṅar kōpikka, uṅṅmaiyaṅṅiya vēṅṅi ivar tantai ivar ceykaiyai nēril kāṅṅa eṅṅi vantu pārkka, ivarum avvitamē ceyvataik kaṅṅu kāliṅṅāḷ pāṅṅkuṅṅaṅṅalai iṅṅariṅṅār, pāṅṅta kuḷantai arukilirunta oru kōlai eṅṅuttu atu koṅṅu pātakam ceytavaratu kālait tuṅṅittār. ivaratu paktikku maṅṅiṅṅta perumāṅ viṅṅaimēl eḷuntaruḷik kātci tantu ivaraic caṅṅēcuvava patattil amartti aruḷ ceytār. caṅṅēcar. civālayattup paṅṅcamūrttikaḷil aintāmavar. kōyilil

Cantēcar

There is another important life that needs to be noted here. That is Caṅṅēcar's life. Born in a Brahmin family in Cēyṅṅalūr with the name of Vicāra Carumar, he was skilled in arts from birth but conducted the activity of shepherding because of his love for cows. Due to his loving care, the cows produced abundant milk and oozed it wherever they went. Having built a *śivaliṅga* with the sand in the shadow of a bidi leaf tree on the banks of the Maṅṅi river, he brought the milk poured by the cows pot after pot and performed the holy ablution. [Despite this], the owners of goats and cows used to get plenty of milk. When villagers got angry because one boy saw him spilling the milk, his father, willing to know the truth, came to see what he had done; seeing him behaving in that manner, he kicked the milk pots; the son, who saw this, took a stick that was nearby and struck his leg. The Lord, pleased by his devotion, appeared as sitting on a cow, named him Caṅṅēcar, and blessed him. Caṅṅēcar is the fifth among the five *mūrttis* [of Lord Śiva] in the temples.

in̄rum ivarai valipattē caivar civālaya taricaṅṅap palānaip perattakkār.

Being still worshipped in the temples up to now, Śaivas benefit from his *darśana* in the temples.

nāyanmār

cēkkiḷār pāṅṅiya periya purāṅṅam nāyanmār aṅṅupattumūvar varalārraik kūrūkiratu. mēlē kuṛippiṭṭa camaya ācāriyarkaḷuḷ mutal mūvarum caṅṅēcarum aṅṅu pattu mūvar en̄ra tokaiyuḷ aṅṅaṅṅuvar. aṅṅiyavar valipāṅṅu āṅṅavaṅṅ valipāṅṅu eṅṅpattu caivattil pira tāṅṅamāṅṅa oru koḷkai. atarṅṅiṅṅaṅṅa, caiva makkaḷ taṅṅkaḷ illaṅṅkaḷil aṅṅiyavar muttiyaṅṅainta tiru naṅṅcat tiraṅṅkaḷil āṅṅuttōrum viḷākkōṅṅāṅṅa vēṅṅiyavarkaḷ. ācāriyarkaḷukkum aṅṅiyavarkaḷukkum

Nāyanmār

The *Periyapurāṅṅam* sung by Cēkkiḷār speaks about the lives of the sixty-three Nāyanmār. The first three among the abovementioned *camaya ācāryas* and Caṅṅēcar are included in the sum of the sixty-three [Nāyanmār]. One main principle of Śaivism is that worshipping the servants is like worshipping God. Śaivas are supposed to celebrate a festival on the star sign day in which the servants obtained

ceykiṅra inta vilā, kurupūcai eṇappaṭum. kurupūcaiyiṅpōtu kurippiṭṭa aṭiyavarukku valīpāṭu ceytu ēlaiikalāy uḷla caiva aṭiyavarukku unavalittal mukkiyam. vantirukkum civa paktarkaḷaic civamākavē karutip pūcaiceyya vēṅṭum. makēcuvaraṅ aṭiyavarukkuc ceyyum pūcaiyātalāl itu mākēcuvara pūcai eṇappaṭum.

civācāriyar

ālayattil muppōtum tirumēṇi tīṅṭum urimai perruḷla arccaka kurukkaḷmāraic civācāriyar eṅru collukiṅōm. ivarkaḷum caivarukku ācāriyarāvārkaḷ. civācāriyarum caivarum civaparamporuḷ oṅraiye valīpaṭupavarkaḷ. pīrateyva valīpāṭum, cīruteyva valīpāṭum ivarkaḷukku illai. iṅraiya pīrāmaṅar civattilum pārkkat tirumāliṅiṅattil atika iṭupāṭu uṭaiyavarkaḷ. “nāṅē pīramam” eṅpatu ivarkaḷatu koḷkaiyātalāl, etaṅiṅattilum ivarkaḷ vērrumai kāṅātu iruppatu ivarkaḷ camayattīrku iyalpu. ivarkaḷ caivar

48

kaḷukkup purōkitarāka irukkalām. enta vitattilum ācāriyarkaḷāka irukkum takuti uṭaiyavarkaḷ allar. itu pōlavē civālayattilum kūṭa, civamē paramporuḷ eṅru collum caivaraiviṭa atikamāṅa etta urimaiyaiyum, nāṅē paramporuḷ eṅru collupavarkaḷukku irukka muṭiyātu. cōla cāmraṅyam (pēraracu) nilaviya nālil civācāriyarē cōlarukkuk kuruvāyiruntārkaḷ. pīrāmaṅar evvalavu cīrappu uṭaiyavarāyiruntālum, caivarukku ṅāṅa kuru ākār.

4

caiva valīpāṭu

49

caiva camayattil civālaya valīpāṭu eṅpatu camaya oḷukkattukku nīraivu tarukīra ōr aṅkam. civāṅupavam perra ṅāṅikaḷum kūṭa, uṭalōṭu irukkiṅra varai, tamatu cutta nilaiyiṅ nīṅki, ulakamukappaṭatal uṅṭu; ikkilaiyil, yāṅ eṅatu eṅṅum mācu oṭṭātaṭaṭi ceyyattakkavai, tammōṭu otta meyyaṅparōṭu kalantu nīrralum, tirukkōyilil uḷla uruvat tirumēṅikaḷaiyum tiruvēṭatkaiyum civaṅ eṅavē teḷiyak kaṅṭu toḷutalumākum. ikkāraṅam parriyē, “aṭiyār naṭuvuḷ irukkum

mukti every year. This festival, which is celebrated both for the ācāryas and the servants, is called gurupūjā. During the gurupūjā, worshiping a particular servant and offering food to a poor Śaiva devotee is important. You must worship the Śiva bhakta considering him as Śiva. Since the pūjā is performed for a servant of Maheśvara, it is also called maheśvarapūjā.

The śivācāryas

We call śivācāryas the priests who have the right to touch God’s idol in the temple three times [a day]. Even they are ācāryas for Śaivas. The śivācāryas and Śaivas worship only Lord Śiva. They do not worship other gods or minor deities. Nowadays, Brahmins are more devoted to Viṣṇu than to Śiva. Since their principle is that they are Brahmā, it is characteristic of their religion that they do not see any difference in anything. They can be

purohitas for the Śaivas, but they don’t have any authority to be ācāryas at any rate. Similarly, even in the Śiva temples, those who say “I am the Supreme Being” do not have more authority than the Śaiva who says that “Śiva is the Supreme Lord”.

During the time of the Chola Empire, the śivācāryas were the guru for the Chola kings. No matter how much great authority Brahmins may have, the jñānaguru is more important for the Śaivas.

4

Śaiva Worship

In Śaivism, the Śiva temple worship is a part of the religious discipline. Even the jñānins who have obtained the Śiva experience are departed from their pure state and subjected to worldliness as long as they are alive; in this situation, we should not get attached to the ego; it is necessary to socialize with the devotees who are alike, [that is, the other Śaivas], and worship Śiva, who is clearly seen through the idols and the different disguised forms that are in the temples.

aruḷaip puriyāy” enra vēṅṭu kōḷum, “kōyil illā ūril kuṭiyirukkalākātu” enra vaḷakkum eḷuntaṇa.

kōyil valipātu

caivarāyulḷōr anaivarum nāḷtōrum civālayam cenru civa valipātu ceyyum kaṭappātu uṭaiyavar. iraivaṇ eṅkum niraṅtiraṅtālum, avāṇai maṇattināḷē maṭṭum valipātu ceyvatu ellōrukkum iyalvatanru. itaṅālēyē valipāṭṭil ālayattiruk cirappāna iṭam amaikiraṭu. ālayam, makkaḷ anaivaruṭaiya valipāṭṭukkum enru amainta taṇi iṭam. pacuviṇiṭam enta iṭattil pāl tōnrukinraṭu enru colla muṭiyāviṭṭālum, atu maṭi valiyākac curappatu pōla, eṅkum viyāpittirukkum iraivaṇ, civaliṅkat tirumēṇi mūlamākat tōṅri, āṇmākkaḷukku aruḷ purikiṅrār. mārkkaṅṭēyarukkum kaṅṅapparukkum aruḷ purinta varalārukaḷ ciranta eṭutuk kāṭṭākum. ātalāl, civa

liṅka valipāṭṭum tirukkōyil valipāṭṭum mikka avaciyamākiṅraṇa.

tirukkōyil valipātu ceyyumpōtu, poruḷ terintu valipāṭṭuvatu cirappu. tirukkōyilil pala teyva vaṭivaṅkaḷ amaippukkaḷ iruntapōtilum, avarruḷ onrēṇum poruḷarratāka illai; yāvum tattuvārt taṅkaḷai aṭakkiyuḷḷaṇa. cilavarraik kuṟṟipṭṭuc celvōm. caivaṅnukkuṭ tiruvitikaḷ yāvumē teyvikam poruntiyavai. ulḷē iruppatu cūksma liṅkam, kōpuram stūla liṅkam. neṅuntolaivil purattēyiruntu pārttālē teriyumpaṭiyāka amaikkappaṭṭiruppatu kōpuram. enta nēramum teyva niṅavu maṇattil irukka vēṅṭum eṅṅpataṟkā kavum, akkāḷattil kōyilukkulḷē aṅumatikkapperātavar kūṭat tolaiviliruntu kaṅṭu teyva niṅaivu peruvataṟkā kavum, kōpuramāṇatu periya vaṭivamāka nirmāṅikkappaṭṭuḷḷatu.

tillai naṭarācap perumāṅ ālayattin kōpuramāṇatu, cuṟri aintu-āru mailkaḷ varaiyil naṅku teriyum. ivvaḷavu tolaivil vāḷkiṅra caiva mutiyavarkaḷ aṅēkar iṅrum kūṭa mālaiyil cūriyaṅ maraiyum nērattil aṅuṭṭāṇam muṭittuk kōpura taricaṇam ceyta

It is regarding this, precisely, that [the *śivācāryas*] wrote the demand “Understand the grace that is amid a servant” and the saying “One should not live in a town where there is no temple”.

Temple worship

All the Śaivas have the bounden duty to go to the temple every day and worship Śiva. Even though God is all-pervasive, not everyone is able to worship him with his mind only. This is why the temple represents a special place for worshipping. The temple is the only place where everyone can perform the worship. None can tell in which part of a cow the milk is originated but only that it flows through the udder; similarly, the all-pervading God appears through the *śivaliṅga* idol and grants his grace to the souls. The best examples are the stories of Mārkkāṅṭēya and Kaṅṅappar obtaining [God’s] grace. Therefore, both the *śivaliṅga*

worship and the temple worship are essential.

During temple worship, it is important to understand the meaning [of the ritual actions]. Although many idols of deities are established in the temples, not even one among them is meaningless; all hold a philosophical meaning. Let’s mention some. For a Śaiva, all the streets [for the processions] have a divine meaning. The *gopura*, the tower gate, represents the *sthūla liṅga*, while the *sūksma liṅga* is inside of it. The *gopura* is built in a way that it is visible even from a long distance. The *gopuras* are constructed in such a massive form as one must think about the deity at any time, and even those who were not allowed inside the temple in the past could see it from a distance and remember God.

The *gopura* of Naṭarāja temple in Chidambaram is clearly visible for five to six miles. Even today, many old-age Śaivas who live at such a distance have the habit of eating dinner only after having finished the rituals at sunset, in the evening, and having looked at the *gopura*. If the *gopura* is not

*pirakē iravu uṇṇum niyamam uṭaiyavarkaḷ.
maḷaik kālattil vāṇam mappum
mantāramumāy iruntu, kōpuraṅkaḷ
maraikkappaṭṭuk kaṇṇukkup pulappaṭāmāl
iruntāl, ivarkaḷ aṇṇiravu uṇavu koḷvakillai;
maṇunāl polutu pularntu kōpura taricaṇam
āṇapiraku tāṇ unṇpārkaḷ.
kōpurattait taricittu uḷ nuḷaintavutaṇ koṭi
maram kāṇappaṭum. koṭimarattil iṭapam
poritta*

*koṭiyaiyum ataik kaṭṭiya taruppaik
kayirraiyum kāṇalām. koṭimaram civam,
koṭi āṇmā, taruppaik kayiru pācam eṇpatu
oru karuttu.
koṭimarattaik kaṭantāl palipīṭamum,
nantiyum, atarkappāl karuvaraiyiṇullē
civaliṅkamum kāṇappaṭum. civaliṅkam
paramporuḷ; civaliṅkattai nōkkiyirukkiṇra
nantiyē āṇmā; palipīṭamē nām pali koṭukka
vēṇṭiya maṇam allatu āṇavamākiya pācam.
palipīṭattirṅkum civaliṅkattirṅkum iṭaiyil
amaintirukkum nantiyāṇatu pācattai viṭṭa
āṇmā, iṇaivaṇuṭaiya aruḷ oḷiyilē kalantu
civamāvāṇ eṇra nilaiyaik kāṭṭukiratu.
ālayattuḷ amaikkapperra civaliṅkam
āṇmākkal valipāṭṭukkāka ērpaṭṭa parārta
liṅkam eṇpar. civaperumāṇ aruvamāyum
uruvamāyum iruntu āṇmākkalukku
aruḷukiṇrār. aruvat tirumēṇiyai avaṇaruḷ
perṇa ṇāṇikaḷē aruṭkaṇṇāl akattē kāṇpar.
urcavam koṇṭu varukiṇra cōmāskantar,
cantira cēkarar, piḷṣāṭaṇar, naṭarācar,
kaṇēcar, murukar mutalāṇa mūrttikal
aruvat tirumēṇikaḷ. civaliṅkamāṇatu,
aruvamam allāmal uruvamum allāmal uḷḷa
oru mūrttam, aruvuruvam (rūpārūpam).
civālayaṅkaḷ perumpāṇmaiyaṇavai kiḷakku
nōkki irukkum. cila maṭṭum mēṇku nōkkiya
cannitikal; ivai ṇāṇam aruḷpavai eṇra
karuttu uṇṭu. kaṭampar kōyil eṇra ōr ūriṇ
canniti maṭṭum vaṭakku nōkkiyatu. caivar,
kōpura vāyilil paṇintu tiru nantitēvariṇ
viṭaiperru uṭceṇru, mutalil tuvāra
vikāyakaṇraik taricikka vēṇṭiyavar.
vināyakar civaperumāṇiṇ putalvar eṇru
colvatu*

51

visible when the sky is overcast during the rainy season, they will not eat food at night; they will eat the day after only once they have seen the *gopura*.

Having had the visualization, *darśana*, of the *gopura*, the flagstaff will be visible as

one enters the temple. On the flagstaff, it is possible to see the flag where [the image of] the bull is engraved and also a rope of dharba grass tied along with that. One interpretation is that the flagstaff symbolizes Śiva, the flag symbolizes the soul, and the dharba rope symbolizes the attachment.

Once one walks past the flagstaff, one can see the *śivaliṅga* in the sanctum, beyond the altar, and the Nandi. The *śivaliṅga* is the Supreme God; the Nandi that is turned towards the *śivaliṅga* is the soul; the altar where he has to perform the sacrifices is the mind or the attachment called *āṇava*. The Nandi, which is between the altar and the *śivaliṅga*, is the soul that has left the attachment; it shows the state of becoming as Śiva by merging with the light of the Lord's grace.

The *śivaliṅga* that is established inside the temple for the worship of the souls is called *parārtha liṅga*. Lord Śiva, who is both with-form and formless, bestows grace to the souls. The *jñānins* who have received the grace of God can see the formless body inside of them through their blessed eye. Cōmāskanta, Cantiracēkara, Piḷṣāṭaṇa, Naṭarāja, Kaṇēcar, and Murukaṇ, who are taken into the ceremonial procession, *urcavam*, are examples of idols with a body which has a form. The *śivaliṅga* is an idol that is both formless and manifested, [thus] *aruvuruvam* or *rūpārūpa*.

The majority of Śiva temples face East; only a few shrines face West, and those are said to give the blessing of knowledge. Only one city's shrine faces North, and that is the temple in Kaṭampar. A Śaiva, having

worshipped at the *gopura* entrance, greeted the Nandi and entered [the temple], as a first thing has to see Gaṇeśa at the

upacāram. vināyakar civaperumāṇi aruṭcakkīyē; avariṇ vērallar. vināyakar om enra piraṇava oli vaṭivinar. ātalāl, avarai mutalāvatāka vaṇaṅka vēṅtum. avarai valipattup piṇnar civaliṅkap perumāṇai valipaṭa vēṅtum. pūcā kālaṅkaḷil ceṅru kaṇṇūra tīpa āratānai naṭaiperumpōtu valipaṭuvatu cirappu. ceypavar, tānum valipāṭṭukkuriya malar, paḷam, kaṇṇūram mutaliyaṇa cērppittu valipaṭutal avaciyam. valipaṭumpōtu avaravar perumāṇai aruṭpācurāṅkaḷāl tutittut tam kuṛaikaḷai viṇṇappittal takkatu. civālaya valipāṭṭil, pūcākaḷattipōtu civa cannitiyil paṅca purāṇam pāṭuvatu marapu. tēvāram, tiruvācakam, tiruvicaippā, tiruppallāṅṭu, periyapurāṇam ākiya aintilum ovvoru pāṭal pāṭuvatu paṅca purāṇam eṇappaṭum. patikam perṛa talamāyiṅ talappatikam iyaṅra aḷavu oṭa vēṅtum.

52

natarāca valipātu

piṇnar naṭarāca taricaṇam. naṭarāca vaṭivamāṇatu ulakattilēyē maṇitaṇṇūtaiya cirpap paṭaippukkaḷil oppuyarvarra perumaiyum pēraḷakum, kaṇṇānait tiraṇum, aruḷ vaṭivum vāyṅtatu. caiva cittānta tattuvak karuttukkaḷiṅ pūraṇa amaippē naṭarāca vaṭivam. caiva mantiramākiya paṅcākkarattiṅ uruvamē naṭarāca vaṭivam eṇpar. avaruṭtaiya tillai naṭaṇam āṇantat tāṅtavam eṇrum colluvar. uṭukkai yēntiya kaiyiṅāl māyiyaiṇ pōkki, neruppēntiya kaiyiṅāl valviṅaiyaic cuṭṭu, āṇavamalamāṇa muyalakaṇṇai ūṇriya pātattāl pōkki, eṭutta karattāl aruḷ tantu, tūkkiya tiruvaṭiyiṅālē āṇmāvai nittiyamāṇa pēraṅnantattil

main entrance. Gaṇeśa is commonly defined as the son of Śiva; he is the power of the grace of Lord Śiva, not different from him. Gaṇeśa is the form of the *mantra* “*ōm*”; therefore, one must worship him first. After having worshipped him, one has to worship the *śivaliṅga*. During the *pūjā*, it is important to worship when the offering of camphor and lamp, *arcana*, is taking place. For those who do it, it is also necessary to add flowers, fruits, camphors, etc., for the worship. While worshipping, one should invoke his own Lord by [reciting] the devotional poems and request to clear his defaults. In the temple worship, during the *pūjā*, there is the tradition of reciting the five Purāṇas in the shrines. For “five Purāṇas”, one means taking one poem from the five scriptures that are the *Tēvāram*, the *Tiruvācakam*, the *Tiruvicaippā*, the *Tiruppallāṅṭu*, and the *Periyapurāṇam*. One should recite the poems as much as possible.

Natarāja worship

Then the *darśana* of Naṭarāja follows. The form of Naṭarāja is one of the greatest, most beautiful, creative, and gracious among the sculptural men’s creations in the whole world. The form of Naṭarāja is the perfect embodiment of the philosophical principles of Śaivasiddhānta. Naṭarāja form embodies the five syllables that represent the Śaiva *mantra*. His dance in Chidambaram is called *āṇanta tāṅtavam*, the dance of bliss. The meaning of Naṭarāja’s dance is: removing *māyā* through the hand that holds the drum; burning the bad deeds through the hand that holds the fire; removing *Muyalakaṇṇ*, a symbol of the *āṇavamala*, by planting firmly his foot on him; giving grace through his raised arm; and immersing the souls in the

53

tōyac ceystalē naṭarāca naṭaṇattiṅ poruḷ; itu paṅcākkara naṭaṇam.

eternal bliss through the raised holy foot; this is the dance of the five syllables.

captikkinra uṭukkaiyil tōṅriya nātattiliruntu ciruṭṭit toḷil toṭaṅkirru. amaitta karam kāttal toḷilaik kāṭṭukiratu. kaiyilēntiya akkiṇi caṅkārat toḷilākum. muyalakaṅ mītu ūṅriya malarppatam āṅmākkaḷ viṅaikkīṭākak kaṅmam aṅupavittal vēṅṭi, maṅraittal toḷil ceyvatu. tūkkiya tiruvaṭi aṅukkirakam ceyvatu. itu aintolil (pañca kiruttiya) naṭaṅam. perumāṅnatu aruṭcatti, naṭarācap perumāṅ naṭaṅam ceyyumpōtu, civakāmacuntari eṅra tirunāmam tāṅkiyiruppār.

pira mūrttikal

naṭarāca taricaṅattiṅ piṅ umātēviyārait taricikka vēṅṭum: umātēvi eṅru taṅiyāka oru teyvam illai; civapirāṅnatu arulāiyē cakki eṅru taṅiyākap pirittuc colli vaṅaṅkukirōm. ulakukkellām tāyākinra civapirāṅnatu karuṅait taṅmaiyaīyē taṅippaṭutti ampikai eṅkirōm. umātēviyārai vaṅaṅkiyapiṅ murukapperumāṅai vaṅaṅkūtal marapu. murukap perumāṅaic caivar caṅkuru pāvaṅaiyiṅāl vaṅaṅkuvar. murukapperumāṅ civaperumāṅiṅ putalvar eṅru kūruvatu upacāram; avar civapirāṅiṅ vēṅrallar. civa pirāṅnatu caktiyē murukaṅ. murukaṅukku vaḷḷi ammaiṅār iccā caktiyum, teyvayāṅai kiriyā caktiyum, kaiyilēntiya vēḷ ṅāṅnacaktiyum āvar. murukaṅai vaṅaṅkiya piṅ caṅṭēcarai vaṅaṅkal vēṅṭum. caṅṭēcar civālaya taricaṅa palaṅai aḷippavar eṅru karutūtal marapu; āṅmākkaḷukku irai

54

yarulil pūraṅa nampikkai yūṭṭupavar. ipperumāṅ cātāraṅak kuḷantaīyākap pirantu vēru niṅaiyillāta aṅpu kāraṅamākac civālayantōrum taṅikkōyilum, kirīṭamum, pōṅakamum, civaperumāṅnatu mālaiyum, īcaṅ eṅra peyarum peṅriruppātu, āṅmākkaḷ aṅaivarukkumē uytī uṅṭu eṅra peru nampikkaiyai ūṭṭu vatākum.

The act of creation originated from the sound that comes from the thumping drum. The raised arm indicates the action of protection. The fire burning in his hand will become the act of destruction. The flower feet he plants firmly on Muyalakaṅ represent the act of concealment, requiring the souls to experience even the bad *karma*. This is the dance of the five occupations (*pañca kṛtya*). The lifted holy foot performs the act of [bestowing] grace. When Naṭarāja grants the supreme grace and performs the divine dance, he will be called with the holy name of Śivakāmasundarī.

Other mūrttis

After the Naṭarāja *darśana*, one must have a vision of the goddess Umā: she is not a separate deity; we should worship her by invoking her separately as the power of grace of Lord Śiva. We call her *ampikai*, mother, highlighting her nature of [being] Lord Śiva's grace that has mothered the whole world. After having worshipped the goddess Umā, there's the tradition of worshipping Lord Murukaṅ. Lord Murukaṅ is worshipped as a representation of a Śaiva *satguru*. He is traditionally defined as the son of Śiva; he is not different from Lord Śiva. Murukaṅ is Lord Śiva's power indeed. Murukaṅ has Vaḷḷi, who represents the *icchāśakti*, and Teyvayāṅai, who represents the *kriyāśakti*, as his consorts and possesses the lance, which he holds in his hand, that represents the *jñānaśakti*.

After worshipping Murukaṅ, one must worship Caṅṭēcar; it is traditionally believed that Caṅṭēcar is the one who confers the benefits of the *darśana* in the Śiva temple; he is the one

who feeds the souls' absolute faith in the grace of God. This Lord was born as an ordinary child. Since he had no other affection [than his love for Śiva], he obtained a separate shrine in every Śiva temple, a crown [of matted hair], food offerings, garlands [that are also offered to] Lord Śiva, and the name of God; this

vināyakarukku valipātu ceyyumpōtu,
 talaiyil kuṭṭikkōṇṭu tōppukkarāṇam
 pōṭuvatu marapu. caṇṭēcar cannitiyil
 viralaic coṭittu avarukku viḷippūṭṭik
 kumpiṭavēṇṭum. civaperumāṇ aṇukkīrakam
 ceyya, entanēramum avaratu tiruvaruḷilē
 ivar tōyṭantiruppavar ātalāl, ivarukku
 viḷippūṭṭi aṇivikka vēṇṭu menpatu karuttu.
 campantar, appar, cuntarar,
 māṇikkavācakar enra nālvar pāṭiya
 aruṭpācuraṅkaḷ inru caivattiṇ uyir nāṭi.
 ipācuraṅkaḷ, ōr ainnūru varuṣa kālam cōḷa
 maṇṇarait tamīl nāṭeṅkum peruṇ
 kōyilkaḷaik karrāḷikalāka eṭuttup
 paripālikkumāru tūṇṭiṇa. ik kōyilkaḷālēyē
 inru caivacamayam uyirttattuvam tatumpik
 koṇṭirukkīratu. ākavē nālvaruṭaiya koṭaiyē
 inraiya caivam enpatu pilaiyākātu. enavē,
 civālayattil caṇṭēcar valipāṭṭukku mun,
 nālvar valipātu ceyyat takkatu.
 inta aḷavu valipātu ellāk kōyilkaḷilum
 nikaḷattakkatākum. ampikaiyiṇ kōyil
 potuvāka cuvāmi cannitiyiṇ vaṭapurattil
 terku nōkki irukkum, āṇāl ampikai pūcittut
 tirumaṇam koṇṭaruḷiya talaṅkaḷil cuvāmi
 kōyilukkup pakkattil terkil allatu vaṭakkil
 ampikai kōyil kiḷakku nōkki

55

yiruppatum, talavicēṭaṇ kāraṇamāka
 ampikai vevvēru iṭattil vēṇṭicai
 nōkkīyiruppatum, purattē taṇik kōyilil
 iruppatum uṇṭu. cātāraṇak kōyilkaḷ
 aṇaittilum artta maṇṭapam, karuvaṇai
 ivarriṇ tenpurak kōṭṭaṅkaḷil narttaṇa
 kaṇapati, naṭarācar allatu juraharēcuvarar
 (ivararukē pēyvaṭivaṇ koṇṭa kāraikkāl
 ammaiyaṇ vaṭivam iruppatu marapu),
 akattiyar, takṣiṇāmūrṭti enra muṇaiyil
 amaintiruppar. mēlpurattil maiyakkōṭṭattil
 liṅkōt pavarēṇum, tirumālēṇum iruppar.
 vaṭapurak kōṭṭaṅkaḷil kōmukaiyiṇ mītu
 piramaṇum, aṭuttu turkkaiyum iruppar.
 piṇṇum piḷṣāṭaṇar mutaliyōr iruppatum
 uṇṭu. caṇi mūlaiyil pairavar, caṇi, cantiraṇ,
 cūriyaṇ pōṇrōr iruppatum uṇṭu. mutal
 pirākārattil niruti ticaiyil taṇi vināyakar

instilled the great faith that all the souls will obtain salvation.

When worshipping Gaṇeśa, there's the tradition of squatting and standing alternately, holding the ears with hands. In Caṇṭēcar's shrine, one must wake him up by clicking the fingers and then fold the hands. There is the belief that one must wake him up and make him aware [of one's presence] since he is constantly immersed in the holy grace as Lord Śiva bestowed his blessings. The devotional poems that were sung by the four [camaya ācāriyas] Campantar, Appar, Cuntar, and Māṇikkavācakar are the pillars of Śaivism today. These devotional hymns have led the Chola kings to build stone temples throughout Tamil Nadu for more than five hundred years. Śaivism is still overflowing with vitality today thanks to such temples. Therefore, it wouldn't be a mistake to say that today's Śaivism is a gift of these four preceptors. Hence, it is essential to worship these four before worshipping Caṇṭēcar.

This level of worship has to be followed in every temple. The goddess temple is usually on the North side of Śiva's shrine, facing South. But in those places where the goddess is worshipped as Śiva's consort, her shrine will be on the South side or North side near Śiva's temple facing the East;

in some other places, the goddess will be facing different directions or set in a separate shrine based on the specialty of the site. In all ordinary temples, the ardhamaṇḍapa is located in a way that the dancing Kaṇapati, Naṭarāja, or Juraharēcuvar (according to the tradition, he took the form of Kāraikkāl Ammaiyaṇ), Akattiyar, and Dakṣiṇāmūrṭti are in the circumambulatory halls on the South side of the sanctum. In the upper part of the central circumambulatory hall, there are the liṅgodbhava and Viṣṇu. On the cow-shaped platform, kōmukai, which is in the Northern circumambulatory hall, there are Brahmā and next to him Durgā. Then, there are Bhikṣāṭana, etc. In the Śani corner, there are Bhairava, Śani, Candra, Sūrya, etc. In every

kōyilum, karuvaraikkū nēr piṅṅē murukar
kōyilum, vāyu ticaiyil ilakkumi kōyilum ellā
iṭaṅkaḷilum irukkum. periya kōyilkaḷukku
aintu parirākāraṅkaḷ colvar. uṭṭirā kārattiṅ
vaṭapurattil, caṅṅēcar cuvāmi ticaiyai
nōkkiyavāru taṅikkōyilil iruppar. nālvarum
arupattu mūvarum vacati uḷḷa iṭaṅkaḷil teṅ
tirumāḷikaic curril iruppar. ituvē potuvāṅa
kōyilkaḷiṅ amaippu. ciṛappāṅa kōyilkaḷil
iṅṅum atikamāṅa makēcuvāra mūrttaṅkaḷ
irukkum.

marravai

civaperumāṅkuriyatu iṭapavākaṅam.
ituvum caivar vaḷipāṭṭukkum,
pōṛṛutalukkum uriyatu. intiya maṅṅil,
maṅṅita vāḷkkaikkū ellāvitattilum ukaviyatu
āṅṅam-pacuvum kāḷaiyum; iraṅṅaiyum
vaḷipāṭṭukkuriyaṅavāye caivar koṅṅamai
poruttamē. taruma

tēvataiyē iṭapa vaṭivam koṅṅu perumāṅai t
tāṅkukiratu; perumāṅ tarumaktaik
kāppavaṅ; ātalāl eṅṅum av iṭapamē
vākaṅamākum. civaperumāṅ tiripura
caṅkāram ceyta kālattil, ellāt
tēvataikaḷaiyum uruppākak koṅṅa tēr,
attēvataikaḷiṅ karvam kāraṅamākap
poṭiyāka noruṅkiyapōtu, kāttar
kaṭavulākiya tirumāl iṭapavākaṅamākap
perumāṅait tāṅkiṅār. iṭapam vēru, tiru nanti
tēvar vēru, ivar civakaṅat talaivar, ṅāṅa
paramparaikkū mutalvar.

civālayaṅkaḷil navakkirakaṅkaḷukku
iṭamillai. navakkirakaṅkaḷai oru poruḷāka
eṅṅi vaḷipaṭuvatu caivarukku uriyatanru.
cumārttap pirāmaṅak kalappiṅṅāl miṅap
palavāṅa kōyilkaḷil iṅṅru navakkirakap
piratiṅṅai ērpaṭṭirukkiratu. perumāṅ
tirumaṅam koṅṅaruḷiya kōyilkaḷil,
navakkirakaṅkaḷum tirumaṅam kāṅa
vantārkaḷeṅṅru orē varicaiyil amaintirukkak
kāṅalām. marrappaṭiyuḷḷa navakkirakaṅkaḷ
civālayaṅkaḷil putitākac cērkkappaṭṭavaiyē.
caiva camayattil, tirukkōyilum ataṅkaṅ
eḷuntaruḷiyirukkum mūrttiyum
akkōyilukkuriya tīrttamum ciṛappuṭaiyavai.
periya kōyilkaḷil civakaṅaiyākiya tīrttam
matil cuvarukku uṭṭuramē irukkum. marra

place, in the first *prakāra* there will be
separate Gaṅeśar shrines in the South-west
direction, Murukaṅ shrines right behind the
sanctum, and Lakṣmi shrines in the North-
west direction. The big temples have five
prakāras. On the Northern side of the inner
prakāra, there will be Caṅṅēcar in a separate
temple facing Lord Śiva. In places where
there is enough space for the four preceptors
and all the sixty-three saints, they will be
located around the Southern temple. In
special temples, there will be further *mūrttis*
of Maheśvara.

Others

The bull is Lord Śiva's vehicle. Even this
deserves to be worshipped and praised by
Śaivas. In India, cows and bulls have been
helpful to human life in every way;
therefore, both are worthy of worship by
Śaivas. The *dharma*

deity in the form of a bull supports Lord
Śiva; the Lord is the protector of the
dharma; therefore, the bull has become his
vehicle. When Lord Śiva destroyed the three
demon cities, the chariot that was carrying
all the deities got smashed into pieces
because of the arrogance of those same
deities; after that, Viṣṇu, the guardian god,
took the form of a bull and carried Śiva.
[Nevertheless,] that bull and Nandi are
different. Nandi is the chief of the celestial
guards of Śiva, the first of the *jñāna* lineage.
In Śiva temples, there is no place for the
nine planets' deities. Worshipping the nine
planets' deities, Navagraha, as meaningful
ones is not suitable for Śaivas. Currently, the
nine planets' deities are installed in a myriad
of temples because of the influence of the
smārtha Brahmins. In the temples where
lord Śiva has a consort, it is said that the
Navagraha came to witness the marriage
and are located in one row. The Navagraha
and others alike were only recently added in
Śiva temples.

In Śaivism, the temples, the *mūrti* installed
there, and the water ponds that belong to
them are outstanding. In the Śivaganga
(Civakaṅkai), the water ponds will be within

īṭaṅkaḷil cannitikkū ekirppurattilum,
kōpuravāyilukku veliyilum, periya
tīrttamāka iruppatuṅṭu. tīrttattil mūlki
valīpaṭutal cīrappu. mukkuḷa tīrtta snāṇa
vicēṭattāl meykaṅṭār pīraṅṭār eṅpatu
niṅaiyū kūraṭṭakkatu. tirutturutti
civakaṅkait tīrttam cuntararukku uṭampin
piṇi pōkkiyatu. mūrṭti talam tīrttam eṅra
toṭarum kāṅka. tīrttac cīrappait
talapurāṇam kūrum.

tala viruṭca valīpāṭum cīrappuṭaiyatu. tala
viruṭcam kōyilkaḷiṅ vaṭapirākārattil
iruppatu potu vaḷakku. carittiram kāṅṇata
paḷaṅkālaktil, civapirāṅ antantat talattilum
oru marattiṅṇaiyil aruvuvuvat tirumēṅiyāka
oru paktarukkuk kāṅciyaruliṅṅār. atumutal
avvattalattil civa valīpāṭṭōṭu talaviruṭca
valīpāṭum oṅriyullatu.

valīpaṭac celvōr nīrāṭip putiya āṭai uṭuttu,
tirunīru akkamālai aṅintu, tiruvainteluttu
ōṭic ceṅru valīpaṭuvatu muṅaiyum mikka
cīrappumākum. nāl tōrum taricittalē muṅai;
iyalātavarkaḷ cīrappu nāṅkaḷilēnum
taricittal vēṅṭum. taricaṅam muṅintapiṅ
pīrataḷṣiṅam ceyvatu mukkiyam; kuṅaintatu
mūṅru muṅai yēnum ceyyavēṅṭum. ceytapiṅ,
palipāṭṭiṅ velippuramāka eṭṭuruppum
nilaṅkōya namaskāramceyṭu, oṅriṭattil
amarntu civamantirattai muṅinta uru
cepittup pīraku veliyē pōkavēṅṭum. iṅkuc
collappaṭṭuḷḷa taricaṅa muṅaikaḷum, kōyilil
ceyyattakāta kuṅraṅkaḷ mutaliyaṅavum,
caiva nūlkaḷil virivākaḷ collappaṭṭirukkum.
tirukkōyilil perumāṅ urcavam koṅṭu vīti ulā
varumpōṭu mūlavaraic ceṅru taricittal
muṅaiyaṅru; ulā varum perumāṅaiyē
taricittal vēṅṭum.

tani valīpāṭum kūttu valīpāṭum
ālayam ceṅru valīpaṭuvatu parric cila
karuttukkaḷai arivatu payaṅuṭaiyatu.
uṅmaiyaḷa āṅṭavaṅuṭaiya civaliṅka
vaṅivaktaiyō vēru uruvattirumēṅiyaiyō
uḷḷaṅpōṭu valīpaṭa eṅṅupavar, potuvāka,
cantaṅiyillāta nēraṭtil ceṅru

the temple walls. In other places, big tanks will be opposite the sanctum or outside the tower gates. Worshipping [God] by immersing in the holy pond is essential. It is worth remembering that Meykaṅṭār was born thanks to the specialty of bathing in three temples' tanks. The water of the Śivaganga in the temple in Tirutturutti cured the disease of Cuntarar. Note the phrase "God is present in the holy water". The Talapurāṇam of the temple will speak of the holy water.

It is of great importance to worship the sacred tree. Generally, it will be on the Northern prakāra of the temple. In old times that are not historically recorded, Lord Śiva appeared to bhaktas at the foot of a tree in a place, in an aniconic form or with a form, respectively. Since then, in those temples, the worship of the holy tree is performed along with the Śiva worship.

For people who go on pilgrimage, the proper way of worshipping is by taking a bath, wearing new clothes, applying the sacred ashes, wearing the rudrāḷṣa beads, and reciting the five syllables mantra. It is important to worship every day; those who cannot have to do it at least on special days. After the darśana, it is important to do the pradakṣiṅā; it must be done at least three times. After that, one must prostrate reaching out the altar, sit in a place, pray the complete form of the śivamantra, and after all these, get out [of the temple]. The methods of darśana that were said here, the crimes not to be committed in the temple, etc., are described in detail in the Śaiva scriptures.

When going to the temple ceremony of the Lord's street procession, [Śaivas] don't have to go to the sanctum, as they must worship the God in procession.

Individual worship and congregational worship

Learning some notions about how to worship in the temple may be useful. If one wants to worship the śivaliṅga or other physical forms of Lord Śiva truthfully,

58

valīpaṭuvatu tāṅ maṅattaik kuviyac ceyyum.
iṅru nam makkaḷ valīpāṭṭiṅpōtu amaitiyāka
valīpaṭum muṛaiyaik kaṭaippiṭikka
aṛiyārkaḷ. ātalāl, kūṭṭattōṭu ceṅru
taricikkumpōtu amaiti kiṭaikkātu. taricittōm
eṅra or niṅaiyu maṭṭum irukkumē tavira,
pūraṇa taricaṇa palaṅ kiṭaippatu aritu.
evvalavu pakkuvam uṭaiyavarāyiṅum,
kūṭṭattiṅāl ēṛpaṭum āravārattilum
nerukkaṭiyilum maṅam citaruṅṭu pōy,
taricaṇa camayattil teyva niṅaiyu caṅṅē
kuṛaintutāṅ pōkiṛatu. ātalāl, otta
maṅattavar cilarōṭu māttiram ceṅru
ēkāntamāka valīpaṭutal ciṛappu; itil
taricaṇa iṅpamum maṅa oṭukkamum
atikam. muṭintāl tēvārap patikaṅkaḷai
icaiyōṭu oṭavallavar uṭaṅ iruntu oṭuvatu
mēlāṅatu. ittakaiya orunilai, kōyilil ciṛappu
viḷā illāta camayam, taṅiyākat
taricikkumpōtu kāṅ kiṭaikkum.
cāmāṅiya makkaḷ kaṅcilaikaḷukku veḷḷik
kavacam mutaliyaṅa cātti valīpaṭa
ācaippaṭukirārkaḷ. aṛivil tāḷnta nilaiyaiyē
itu kāṭṭukiratu. vēru colvatu mikai.
itu varaiyil iṛaivalīpāṭṭil ālaya ēkānta
cēvaiyiṅ ciṛappai oruvāru kūṛiṅōm. eṅiṅum,
peru viḷākkalil peruṅkūṭṭattil kalantu
valīpaṭuvatil oru taṅicciṛappu irukkavē
ceykiṛatu. utāraṅamāka, tillai naṭarācap
perumāṅuṭaiya tiruvātirai naṭaṅam,
kuṭantai kumpēcuvararuṭaiya makāmaka
tīrtta viḷā, tiruvaṅṅāmalai
aṅṅāmalaiyāruṭaiya kārttikai tīpaviḷā,
māyūrakāta cuvāmiyiṅ tulā muḷukku viḷā,
cīkāḷi tiruṅāṅacampantarūṭaiya
tirumulaippāl viḷā pōṅṅravarrāik
kuṛippitalām. iṅkellām
pallāyirakkaṅakkāṅa jaṅattiraḷ

59

oṅru cērntu orē nōkkattōṭu, harahara eṅra
orē muḷakkattōṭu, iṛaivaṅ tiruvuvum
varukiṅra ticaiyai nōkkic cintaṅaiyaiyum
pārvaiyaiyum celutti meymmaṅantiruppatu

going [to the temple] when there is no crowd will

generally allow his mind to concentrate on worshipping. Nowadays, our people don't know how to worship silently. Therefore, when they go [to the temple] in group and have the *darśana* of the deity, they will not get silence. They will only have the impression of having the *darśana*, but they will rarely obtain the full benefits of it. No matter how much maturity for absorption one has, the mind will be diverted because of all the bustle and straits created by the crowd and, during the *darśana*, the divine thought will definitely decrease. Therefore, it is more propitious to go [to the temple] only with those few who are of the same mind and worship in solitude; in this [way], both the enjoyment of the *darśana* and the mind control will increase. Lastly, it would be better to recite the *Tēvāram* hymns with music in the presence of the *ōtuvārs*. This kind of situation is possible only when there is no special festival at the temple and one has the *darśana* alone.

Ordinary people wish to worship the *śakti* [by putting] a silver armor etc. upon the stone statue. This shows a low level of knowledge. There is nothing more to add. So far, we have somehow mentioned the importance of individual worship of God in the temple. Nevertheless, there is something special about doing congregational worship during the big festivals. For example, we should mention the Tiruvātirai dance of Lord Naṭarāja in Chidambaram, the Makāmaka tank festival of the Kumpēcuvarar temple [in Kumbakonam], the Kārttikai lamp festival of the Aṅṅāmalaiyār temple in Tiruvaṅṅāmalai, the Tulā bathing festival of the Māyūranātacuvāmi temple, the festival of Tiruṅāṅacampatar's Tirumulaippāl in Sirkali, etc. During all these festivals, the vision of thousands and thousands of people

gathering together with the same purpose, directing their thoughts and sights towards the direction where the idol of God comes at the one single shout of [his name] "Hara

marakka muṭiyāta oru kāṭciyākum. teyva nampikkai arṇavarkūta anta nēram oru paravacanilai aṭaikirār. iraiyaṇ paṭaitta palakōṭi uyirkaḷil tānum arṇamāna or uyir enra unārṇu tōṇri, yāṇ ennum akantaiyai anta nēratukkāvatu pōk kit teyva aruḷukkup pāttiramākum pātaiyil, ciritu nēra viḷākkāṭci avaraic celuttukiratu. itu peru tarṇariya or aṇupavam. ivvaṇupavam ittakaiya peru viḷākkāḷilāṇrip piracamayaṇkaḷil elātu. ātalāl caivarāyulḷōr peruvilākkāḷil kalantu vaḷipaṭutalum avacyamākum. kurippitattakka marṇoru peruvilā, kumpāpiṣēka viḷā.

caiva makkaḷ oru karuttai naṇkuṇartal vēṇṭum. civālayam caiva makkaḷukkē uriyatu. civālaya vaḷipāṭu caivarkaḷiṇ cāttira nūlkaḷil vitikkappaṭṭatu. akam pirammāsmi enra koḷkaiyuṭaiya pirāmaṇarukku ālaya vaḷipāṭu avarkaḷ cāttirattil collap peravillai. avarkaḷāka, apimāṇattāl, caivar ceyyum vaḷipāṭṭaip pārttut tāṇkaḷum civavaḷipāṭṭai mēṇkoṇṭārkaḷ. innum pirāmaṇar kuṭiyiruppukkaḷil nārāyaṇaṇ kōyil kaṭṭuvārkaḷēyaṇri, civaṇ kōyil kaṭṭuvatu mikavam arumai.

civācāriyar pirāmaṇar allar; ivarkaḷaic civa vētiyar enru kūruvatu upacāram. ivarkaḷ muppōtum tirumēni tūṇṭum atikāram perṇavarkaḷ; pirāmaṇarukku ivvatikāram illai. ākavē, civācāriyar caivācārattil pirāmaṇariṇum uyarvāṇavarkaḷ enṇpatu caivar

karuttu. ivarkaḷ taṇkaḷai verum pirāmaṇar enru collit tāḷttik koḷvatu varuntattakkatu. inta unmai nilaiyai iṇiyēnum caivarum civācāriyarum unarntu oḷukuvārkaḷāka.

uruva vaḷipāṭṭin tattuvam

iṇi, uruvavaḷipāṭṭaik kurittuc cila karuttuk kaḷaik kūri inta attiyāyattai muṭippōm. uruva vaḷipāṭṭai vikkiraka ārāṇanai enru collukirōm. vikkiraka ārāṇaiyaik kurittup pirar kurai kūrumpōtu taṇkaḷ camayanilai iṇṇatenru ariyāmaiṇiṇāl caivar palar talaikuṇiyak kāṇkirōm. itu mikka avalakilai.

Hara”, is an unforgettable one to be mesmerized by. Even a person who does not have faith in God would get great joy at those times. On those specific occasions, the vision of the festival will make him worthy of God’s grace by making him feel that his life is an insignificant one among the billions of lives that God created and remove the arrogance of the ego. This is a worth-having experience. Such an experience does not come up at any other time except for the great festivals of this kind. Therefore, Śaivas must worship even by participating in the big festivals. Another big festival we must mention is the Kumpāpiṣēka.

Śaivas must know one concept. The Śiva temple is meant only for Śaivas. The Śiva temple worship of the Śaivas has been laid down clearly in the Śāstric scriptures. The Brahmins, who have the principle of “Aham Brahmāsmi”, did not have temple worship in their scriptures. They adopted it for their sake out of admiration after having seen the worship done by the Śaivas. Moreover, in the areas where they reside, they build temples for Viṣṇu and only rarely temples to Śiva.

The śivācāryas were not Brahmins; they are traditionally called civavētiyar; [the śivācāryas] always had the authority to touch the main deity [in the sanctum]; Brahmins did not have this authority. Therefore, it is the opinion of the Śaivas that, in Śaiva liturgy, the śivācāryas

have a higher status than Brahmins. It is deplorable that they lower their status by calling themselves mere Brahmins. May Śaivas and śivācāryas realize this truth and behave accordingly.

The philosophy of idol worship

We will end this chapter by mentioning some notions about idol worship. What we call idol worship is the worship of an icon. When others criticize idolatry, many Śaivas remain speechless without knowing what it means in their religion. This is very distressing.

ulakattil makkaḷ tōṇriya nālāka ellā mataṅkaḷilum uruvavalipāṭu enṇatu, vikkiraka āraṅṅai enṇu conṇālum allatu vēru peyar conṇālum, ētō oru vakaiyil iruntu vantirukkīratu. ulakattil tōṇriya entac camayamum itaṅku vilakku aṅṇu. intu matattiṅ ellāp pirivukaḷilum ārampa mūtal uruva valipāṭu iruntē vantirukkīratu. kālap pōkkil puraṅcikaḷ tōṇri uruva valipāṭṭai pōkkum muyaṅci ovvoru matattilum nataiperru irukkīratu. eniṇum, am muyaṅcikaḷ tōlvīyuru, uruva valipāṭu ētō oruvakaiyil āṅkāṅku nilaviyē varukkīratu. potuvāka oru karuttaic collalām. ulakeṅkum, ellā makkaḷitaiyēyum, ētō oru tattuvam itaiyitillāmal nilattu irukkīratu enṇāl, atil aḷikka muṅiyāta or uyirp paṅpu poruntiyirukkīratu enṇē nām muṅivu ceyya vēṅṅum. avaciyamāṅāl antak tattuvattai nām cemmaipattutta muyalavēṅṅumēyaṅṇi, atai aṅiyōṭu aḷikka muyalvatu aṅivutaṅmaiyaṅkātu. uruva valipāṭu attakaiya oru tattuvam.

nāmarūpam kaṅanta nirkkuṅamāṅa paramporuḷai, karuvi kāraṅkaḷōṭu toḷipaṅṅinra maṅitaṅṅaiya maṅam, vētaṅkaḷ colvatu pōla, ituvalla ituvalla enṇu collakkūṅumēyaṅṇi, itutāṅ enṇu collattakkatāka onṇumillai. ātalāl, itutāṅ enṇu collattakka oru nilai vēṅṅi, nāmarūpam uṅaiya oru poruḷ ēṅpaṅṅatu. itaic cakūṅat tirumēṅi enṇum, uruvattirumēṅi enṇum collukīrōm. intak tirumēṅiyait tāṅ nam maṅam intiriyaṅkaḷāl kaṅṅu vaḷiṅṅavum aṅṅupa pavikkavum muṅiyum; itaittāṅ itaya kamalattil eḷuntaruḷuvikka muṅiyum; itaṅ tiruvaṅiyil tāṅ tuḷḷumaṅiyām maṅattaip palikoṅṅukka muṅiyum. iṅaivaṅṅukku enṅa enṅa kiṅappukkaḷ irukkumenṇu kaṅpaṅṅai ceykiṅōmō attaṅaiyum inta uruvattukku ēṅṅukīrōm. ākavē, caivar kōyilil uruvattirumēṅiyaik kāṅumpōtu, aṅkuk kallaiyum cempaṅiyum kāṅavillai); carva viyāpakamāyūm carva caktimāṅāyūm, nittiyaṅāyūm ṅāṅamayaṅāyūm karuṅāmūrṅtiyāyūm uḷḷa paramporuḷaiyē kāṅkiṅār: uruvattiṅṅuḷ aruvamāṅa poruḷaik kāṅa muṅikīratu. caivattiṅ marroru ciṅappu, aruvamum

From the day people came into existence in the world, there was the idol worship of statues. Idolatry, however you call it, has existed in all religions since the dawn of men, in one form or another. No religion that has existed in the world is an exception. All sects of Hinduism have had idol worship from the beginning. As time passed, revolutions have occurred and efforts have been made to eradicate idolatry in every religion. However, these efforts have failed and idolatry in one form or another continues to exist here and there. A general comment can be made. If a philosophy persisted everywhere in the world and among all [kind of] people with no interruption, then we must conclude that there is an indestructible core trait attached to it. If necessary, we should try to refine that philosophy, but it would be unwise to try to eradicate it. Idol worship is one such philosophy.

There is nothing that the human mind, which works with instrumental causes, can say about what the *nirguṅa* Supreme Lord – who is beyond the interdependence of name and body, *nāmarūpa* – is; it can only say what he is not, as the Vedas say. Therefore, as it needed a condition where it could say that “[God] is this”, an object of his *nāmarūpa* was created. That is the *saguṅa* body or what we call the idol with-form. Since we can perceive this form through our senses, we can worship and experience it; we can evoke it in our hearts; we can sacrifice our wondering mind to its feet. Whatever peculiarities we imagine the Lord has, we adapt to this image.

Therefore, when a Śaiva looks at the idol of God in the temple, he does not see stone and copper there; he sees the Supreme God only, who is all-pervasive, omnipotent, eternal, omniscient, and merciful: he can see the intangible meaning laying within the idol. Another crucial aspect of Saivism is that we worship the *śivaliṅga* that is neither manifested nor formless, but between form and non-form: the creation called *rūpārūpa*

allāta tāy, uruvamum allātātāy,
 aruvuruvamāyulla civaliṅkat tirumēṇiyaiyē
 vaḷipaṭukirōm: aruvuruvam enra oru
 paṭaiṭṭu mikka āccariyakaramāṇatu.
 maṇitaṅ kallaiyō cempaiyō allatu oru
 marattaiyō atuvākavē vaḷipaṭumpōtu, atu
 aṅṅāṇam kuṭikoṅṭa nilai. āṅṅāl, ataiyē carva
 viyāpakamāṇa iraiṇaṇi velippāṭṭuk kuriya
 iṭamākak karuti vaḷipaṭumpōtu, aḷapparūṇ
 kuṇamuṭaiya perumāṇuṭaiya iyalpil
 avaravar caktikku ērra aḷavu maṇattil
 niṇṇitta itu utavukiratu. uruvam illāvittāl
 tiyāṇam illai. corūpamaṇṇatait
 tiyāṇikkamuṭiyātu. tiyāṇattin mūlam
 maṇitaṅ vaḷar

vataṅku uruvat tirumēṇiyē utavukiratu.
 aruvuruvat tirumēṇi, aruvamāyulla
 paramporuḷaic cuṭṭik kāṭṭukiratu.
 uruvavaḷipāṭṭil camūkam muḷumaiyum
 kalantukoḷ kiratu. palaruṭaiya maṇam oru
 poruḷil vantu kuvikiratu. eṇṇattirku ārral
 uṅṅu enru colluvārkaḷ. palaruṭaiya eṇṇaṅkaḷ
 orumukappaṭumpōtu, anta iṭattil teyva
 cānnittiyam kuṭikoḷkiratu. ippaṭi paktikku
 nilaikkaḷamāka amaikīṅra
 uruvattirumēṇiyāṇatu, talaimuṇrai
 talaimuṇraiyaṅka maṇita kulattai āṇma neriyil
 mēlum mēlum uyartta vallatāka amaikīṅratu.
 kirēkkatēcam pōṅra nāṭukaḷil, poṅṅilum
 velliyilum, tantattilum teyva vaṭivaṅkaḷai
 amaittārkaḷ. aṅku, amaitta mūlap poruḷukkē
 perumatippu uṅṅu. āṅṅāl nam nāṭṭilāṅ,
 matippillāta kallālum cempālum teyva
 vaṭivattai nirmāṇittirukkīrōm. iṅku mūlap
 poruḷukku matippillai; eṇṇattiṅāḷtāṅ
 matippu ērukiratu. antap poruḷai oru
 kalaiṅṅaṅ taṅ kaicattīramaiyāl oru karpaṅait
 teyva vaṭivamākkumpōtu, atu pēraḷakum
 matippum uṭaiyatākīṅratu. makkalūṭaiya
 pakti atil cellac cella, atu teyvattaṅmai
 uṭaiyatākavum ākīṅratu. kallilum cempilum
 oru ciṅpi teyvavaṭivattai amaikka
 murpaṭumpōtu, avaṅ, iravivarmā paṭam
 pōla, uḷḷa oru uruvattai appaṭiyē pārttuc
 ceyyavillai; taṅ karpaṅaiyīṅṅāl oru lakṣya
 vaṭivam amaikkīṅṅaṅ. inta lakṣya vaṭivam,
 uṅṅmaiyaṅa lakṣyattai nōkki nammaic
 celutta utavukiratu.

62

is really astonishing. When men worship a stone, a copper, or wood in its complete form, that is a state in which ignorance abides. But when they worship considering them as a place where the all-pervasive God is manifesting, it helps to keep in mind the nature of the all-pervasive God to the extent that is appropriate to his power. Meditation is not possible without a manifested [object]. One cannot meditate on something immaterial. The idol with-form helps men grow

[spiritually] through meditation. The rūpārūpa idol represents the intangible Supreme Being.

The whole community participates in idol worship. Many people's mind focuses on one thing. They say that thought has power. When the thoughts of many are united, the divine presence dwells in that place. Like this, the idol with-form, established as a source of devotion, can spiritually uplift humankind more and more from generation to generation.

In countries like Greece, the idols of the deities were all made in gold, silver, and ivory. There, the material in which they were made itself held great value. In our country, instead, we erect divine idols in worthless materials like stone and copper. Here, the source material has no worth; its value increases only through our thought. When an artist transforms that object into an imaginary deity through his skill, it becomes magnificent and valuable. As people's devotion goes into it, it becomes divine. When a sculptor tries to set a deity in stone and bronze, he does not simply look at an image he possesses, like a drawing of Ravi Varma; he creates a statue through his imagination. This form created by him directs us towards the real form [of God]. Besides, our women make divine creations just by thinking. A handful of sand, a little turmeric or sandal paste, or a little amount

anriyum, nam peṇmakkaḷ, niṇaitta
māttirattil teyvattaic kuruṣittu viṭukirārkaḷ.
oru piṭimaṇal, koṇcam maṇcaḷ allatu
cantaṇam, allatu ciṛitaḷavu

63 cāṇam-ivai orē vināṭiyil teyvattanmai perru
viṭukinraṇa. itu eppaṭi cāttiyam?
neṭuṅkālamāka pakti irattattil ūri ūri, orē
kaṇattil maṇṇaiyum cāṇattaiyum maṇakkac
ceytu, eṅkum niraṇta orē paramporulai
anta nēram aṅkuk kāṇum akakkāṭciyaiṭ
tarukiratu: antaṭ peṅkaḷukku maṭṭumalla,
kāṅkira ellōrukkuntāṇ. itu mikap periya
uṇmaiyaṇa cāṇai. itu verum kuṛiyiṭu eṇru
karuti otukka muyalvatu aṛivutaṇmaiyaṅkātu.
kaṇita cāstiram muḷumaiyumē kuṛiyiṭutāṇ.
antaḷ kuṛiyiṭu mūlamāka aṛivai vaḷarttu
vaḷarttu, paṭikaḷ ovvonrākak kaṭantu,
kaṇpaṇaik kōṭṭaiyaṅkac kaṭṭik kaṭṭi, maṇitaṇ
cantiramaṇṭalam varai iṇru pōka
muṭintirukkiratu; pōvatu iṇru uṇmai.
kaṇpaṇai kaṭṭumun muṭivai yārum kaṇṇāḷ
kaṇṭatillai; coṇṇāḷum nampa muṭivatillai.
āṇāḷ kaṇpaṇaiyē, uṇmaiyaṅkac kāṅkura
nilayaik kaikūtaḷ ceytirukkiratu. ākavē,
kaṇitaḷ kuṛiyiṭu poy eṇru colla muṭiyātu.
ivarraip purakkaṇ koṇṭu tiṭṭamākak
kāṅkirōm.
itupōlavē akakkaṇ koṇṭu kāṇavēṇṭiya
ārapak kuṛiyiṭākiya uruvat tirumēni,
āṇmaneriyaḷ ārapa nilai. itaṇ
muṭivāṇanilai, paramporuḷ kāṭciyaṇa
civāṇupavam. kaṇita cāstirattil kuṛiyiṭukaḷ
poruḷalla. avai uṇarttukinra iyarkai
uṇmaikaḷē poruḷ. atupōla, vikkiraka
ārāṇaiyilum, vikkirakam poruḷaṇru; atu
kuṛiyiṭāka niṇra pēruṇmaiyaṅkac poruḷ. nām
vikkirakattai vaṇaṅkukirōm, uruvavaliṭpātu
ceykirōm eṇrāl, avvaliṭpātu nam
uḷḷattiruntu eḷuntu, kāṇum uruvattaiyum
kaṭantu, aṛiya muṭiyāta oru poruḷaic ceṇru
parrukiratu eṇpatai naṅku uṇartal vēṇṭum.

of cow dung; they become divine in a
second. How is this possible? Devotion has
seeped into our blood since time
immemorial and, in a moment, makes us
forget the soil and the dung, and makes us
innerly visualize the omnipresent thing that
is found there: not only to those women but
to all who visualize it. This is a real great
achievement. It would be ignorant to try to
dismiss it as a mere code.

Mathematics treatises are all codes only.
Our knowledge has gradually increased
through those codes step by step, built
imaginary castles, and today man has been
able to go on the moon; going [there]
became true. It wouldn't have been possible
without imagining it first. Imagination itself
has made it possible to realize. So, it cannot
be said that the mathematics codes are a lie.
We ignore these and see them as a scheme.
Similarly, an idol is the first symbol that has
to be visualized, the initial level in the
spiritual path; at the end of it, there is the
Śiva experience, which is the vision of the
Supreme Being. In mathematics treatises,
the symbols are not objects. Similarly, even
in idol worship, the idol is not an object;
there is a more profound significance in that
symbol. If one worships an idol, if one does
idolatry, that idolatry rises from his heart
and transcends the manifested image. He
must feel that he is grasping something that
cannot be known.

5

caivac caṭaṅkukaḷ

64

caṭaṅkukalin avaciyam
kiriyaikaḷ allatu caṭaṅkukaḷ ellāc
camayaṅkaḷilum uḷḷaṇa. ivai camaya
tattuvattukkup pōrttiya oru pōrvaiaṅkum.

5

Śaiva Rituals

Importance of rituals

Kriyā or rituals exist in every religion. They
are like a blanket that covers religious
philosophies. Most people know only this

makkaḷil perumpāṇmaiyōr intap pōrvaiyai maṭṭumē arivārkaḷ; uḷḷē potintirukkum uṇmaiyai ariya māṭṭārkaḷ. itarṅku avaravar pakkuvamē kāraṇamākum. āṇāl, pōrvaiyillāmal camayatattuvam maṭṭumē taṇittu ninru makkaḷai nalvalip paṭuttiyatillai.

uḷḷiruppatu ariciyē yāyiṇum, atai umi mūṭiyiruppatu pōla, cāramāṇa tattuvattaic cakkaiyāṇa caṭaṅku mūṭiyirukkīratu. ṇāṇikku maṭṭumē caṭaṅku cakkaiyākat tōrrum; ēṇaiyōrukku itu uyirulla uṇmaip poruḷē. ṇāṇikaḷ vittai kurri ariciyai eṭuttu varuttu uṇṭu viṭukīrārkaḷ; avarkaḷukku viṇai kiḷaipatillai; piṇavi illai. āṇāl ṇāṇikaḷallāta piṇar pōkattai virumpukīrārkaḷ; mēlum mēlum tāṇiyattait tēṭukīrārkaḷ. ākavē umiyōṭu ariciyaip pēṇippātukaṭtu mūlaikkavaittu mēlum mēlum perukkukīrārkaḷ. ātalāl avarkaḷukku umi mukkiyam; ākavē caṭaṅkukaḷ iṇriyamaiyā tavai.

caṭaṅkukaḷin payan

camayac caṭaṅkukaḷukku, camūka vāḷkkaiyiṇ pala tuṇaikaḷilum poruḷ kāṇa muṭiyum. caṭaṅkukaḷē camayattaic cārnta aṇaivaraiyum orrumaip paṭuttukīṇraṇa. kūṭtu

65

vaḷipāṭṭil itai naṅku kāṇalām. appaiyē, kuritta oru camuṭāyattil camayavunārviṇ toṭarpu nilaiperriruppataṅku mukkiya cāṭaṇam caṭaṅkukaḷē. ivai ceṇra kālattil vāḷnta makkaḷ koṇṭirunta koḷkaikaḷum nampikkaikaḷum iṇruḷḷa makkaḷitaiyē uyirōṭu ninru nilavavum, etir kālattil toṭarntu makkaḷai iyakki nalvalip paṭuttavum, ātāramāy irukkiṇraṇa. tillait tirunaṭaṇam caiva makkaḷukku mikavum puṇitamāṇatu. itaik taricippataṅkāka iṇrum pallāyiram makkaḷ ettaṇaiyō vakaiyāṇa araciyal tāṭaikaḷaiyum mīri vantu koṇṭē irukkīrārkaḷ-nōyō, payanattunpamō, uṇavuk kaṣṭamō, paṇat tontaravō, avarkaḷait taṭuttu niṇrutta muṭiyavillai. aṭuttu caṭaṅkukaḷ, makkaḷ koṇṭulla camaya nam pikkaikkuk kūriyikaḷāka amaintirupatai nām uṇaralām. iṇaivanukku aḷikkum naivēttiyam nam

blanket; they do not know the truth within it. This is due to their spiritual immaturity. However, without that blanket, religious doctrines alone have never guided the people on the right path.

The external ritual covers the core philosophy [of a religion] just like the husk covers the rice inside it. Ritual is something superfluous only for the *jñānins*; it is essential for all the other people. The *jñānins* crush the seeds, take the rice, roast it, and eat it; their *karma* will not accumulate for this; they won't get another birth; [thus, they don't need rituals]. But the other people, who are not sages, desire the enjoyments, *bhoga*; they look for more and more grain. Therefore, they preserve the rice with the husk, make it germinate, and multiply it more and more; hence, the husk is essential to form them; therefore, rituals are indispensable [to ordinary men].

Benefits of the rituals

Religious rituals are meaningful in many spheres of social life. Rituals unite all the members of a religion. This is well seen in

congregational worship. Similarly, rituals are the instrument to maintain the religious sentiment stable in a given society. An evidence of this is that the principles and beliefs of the people who lived in the past still live and exist among the people of today and will continue to guide people on the right path in the future. The dance [of Śiva] in Chidambaram is very sacred for the Śaivas. Tens of thousands of people continue to come to see it even now, defying political barriers of all kinds—neither illness, travel difficulties, food shortages, nor financial constraints can stop them.

Next, we can realize that the rituals are set as symbols of the people's religious beliefs. The offerings to the Lord imply the offering of our gratitude [to him]. The anointing and burning of incense to the eternally pure Lord are symbols of our inner and outer

naṅṅiyaritaliṅ kāṅikkai. eṅṅum tūyavaṅāka
 irukkum āṅṅavaṅukkuc ceyyum apiṅṅekamum
 tūpaṅṅipamum, nammaip puṅṅattilum
 akattilum tūymai cey tu koḷvataik kuṅṅikkum
 aṅṅaiyāṅkaḷē. karuttaḷavil maṅṅtum pakti
 uṅṅarviṅ velippāṅṅiṅku vaḷiyillai. āṅṅal puṅṅattē
 ceyyum caṅṅaṅkukaḷāl pakti uṅṅarvu,
 amaitiyum niṅṅaivum peṅṅukiṅṅratu. itu
 maṅṅōtattuvarūṅṅiṅyāṅa uṅṅmai. mēlum,
 caivaruṅṅaiya kalai uṅṅarvai ivai evvaḷavu
 tūram peṅṅi vaḷarttaṅa eṅṅpatarku, iṅṅrulla
 kōyilkaḷum mūṅṅrttikaḷum kōyil mēḷa icaiyum
 cāṅṅru pakarum. caṅṅaṅkukaḷ illāvīṅṅṅāl
 ikkalaikaḷ viḷakkam peṅṅa vāyil
 iruntirukkātu.

aṅṅriyum, ivai ciṅṅanta oḷukkattai vaḷarkka
 utavukiṅṅraṅa. vēru vakaiyilē amaiyap
 peṅṅāta oḷuṅṅkum,

aṅṅakkamum, paṅṅivum, tiyākamum,
 orṅṅumaiyum caṅṅaṅkukaḷāl amaikiṅṅraṅa.
 tēca pakti-nāṅṅiṅ cutantiram eṅṅra oṅṅ uṅṅarcci
 cāmaṅṅiṅya makkaḷai evvaḷavu orṅṅumaip
 paṅṅuttirru, ettakaiya tiyākattukkut tūṅ ṅiṅru,
 evvaḷavu ciṅṅanta viṅṅrarkaḷākkirru eṅṅru inta
 irupaṅṅam nūṅṅraṅṅiḷ kaṅ muṅṅṅē kaṅṅōm. itu
 pōlavē, camayac caṅṅaṅkukaḷ pallāyiram
 āṅṅukaḷāka, ellā makkaḷaiyum orṅṅumaip
 paṅṅutti, avarkaḷuṅṅaiya uṅṅarccikaḷaiyum
 nōkkaṅkaḷaiyum orumukamākki, camūka
 nalvāḷvukkum mēmpāṅṅukkum āṅṅaramāy
 iruntu vantirukkiṅṅraṅa.

caṅṅaṅkukaḷ irai aṅṅupavam ākamāṅṅṅā. ṅāṅa
 aṅṅupavattiṅ mūḷamtāṅ āṅṅmā iraiṅvaṅai
 uṅṅarntu tāṅṅum avaṅṅōṅṅu oṅṅri otta viyāpakat
 taṅṅmaiperukiṅṅraṅ. inta orumaippātu kai
 kūṅṅuvataṅṅku, takka aka amaitiyaiyum puṅṅa
 amaitiyaiyum cūḷṅṅilaiyaiyum caṅṅaṅkukaḷ
 amaittut tarukiṅṅraṅa. iraiṅvaṅ aṅṅiyap
 paṅṅātavaṅ, aḷavu paṅṅātavaṅ. aḷavu paṅṅa
 karuvikaḷaik koṅṅṅu avaṅṅai aṅṅiya
 muṅṅyalkiṅṅōm. nammuṅṅaiya ciṅṅraṅivāl aṅṅiya
 muṅṅiyavillai. caṅṅaṅkukaḷil cila pakuti nām
 aṅṅivana, cila pakuti nam aṅṅivirku
 uṅṅpaṅṅātana. inta uṅṅpaṅṅa taṅṅmaiṅē aṅṅiya
 muṅṅiyāta iraiṅvaṅaik kuṅṅrippiṅṅāl
 uṅṅarttukinṅṅratu. nām aṅṅintu viṅṅṅōm eṅṅru colla
 muṅṅiyātu; caṅṅaṅkukaḷ kāṅṅi viṅṅṅōm eṅṅru
 collavillai. āṅṅalum oru cuṅṅṅu, oru kuṅṅippu

cleansing. There is no way to express
 devotional feelings in an abstract way. But
 the devotional feeling, peace, and
 fulfillment come from the ritual performed
 externally. This is a psychological truth.
 Moreover, today's temples, mūṅṅrttis, and
 temple music stand as testimonies of how
 far they nurtured the artistic spirit of the
 Śaivas: if there was no ritual, these arts
 would have remained unexpressed.

Besides, they also help in developing higher
 morals. Modesty, humility,

sacrifice, and unity are developed through
 rituals. In this twentieth century, we have
 seen in front of our eyes how much the
 feeling of patriotism – [namely,] the
 freedom of the country – has united the
 ordinary people, what kind of sacrifices they
 have made, and how much those have made
 them great soldiers. Similarly, religious
 rituals have been a source of social well-
 being and development for thousands of
 years, uniting all people and unifying their
 emotions and aspirations.

Rituals are not God's experience. It is only
 through the knowledge's experience that the
 soul realizes the Lord, becomes one with
 Him, and attains a pervasive nature. Rituals
 create the suitable inner and outer peace and
 the conditions for this union to take place.
 God is beyond our understanding and
 immeasurable. We try to understand him
 through limited instruments. We cannot
 understand him with our limited knowledge.
 Some parts of the ritual are known to us, and
 some others are beyond our understanding.
 This impenetrable character indicates that
 God cannot be known by evidence. We
 cannot say that we have understood him, nor
 we can say that we have shown it [through]
 the rituals. Nevertheless, there is just one
 shoot, a hint. This is the greatness of rituals.
 This feeling transcends language.

maṭṭum uḷḷatu. ituvē caṭaṅkukaḷiṅ cirappu. inta uṇarvāṇatu moḷikkum appārpaṭṭatu. kuṭumpattilum camukattilum, maṇita camutāyattilum uḷḷa caiva camayac caṭaṅkukaḷ yāvai, avai ettaṇmai yāṇavai eṇpataic curukkamāka iṅkuk kūralām. cila

ōriṭattil vaḷaṅkalām, marrōriṭattil vaḷaṅkāmaṇ pōkalām; eṇiṇum, ivai caivamakkaḷ aṇaivarukkum potu.

vaitikac cataṅkukaḷ-camūkam

vaitika karmākaḷ pala vitikkappaṭṭuḷḷaṇa. avaraṇḷ caivaritaiyē vaḷakkilullavai cilavē. taṇi maṇitaṅ vāḷkkaiyaip porutta cila iṅkuk kurippitattakkaṇa. kuḷantai piṇakku munṇum, atāvatu tāy karuvuṇra kālattiliruntē, ivai toṭaṅkukiṇraṇa. ēḷu māta karppamāyirukkum pōtu tāyḷku orukāppu viḷac ceykirārkaḷ. itai vaḷaiyal kāppu eṇrum, pūc cūṭṭal eṇrum, cittirāṇṇam aruttatal eṇrum pala camūkaṅkaḷil pala peyarōṭu naṭai perukiṇratu. karuttu, tāyaiyum karuvaiyum teyvaṅkaḷ kākka eṇru vēṇṭuvatonrē. kuḷantai piṇantavutaṅ ceyyum caṭaṅku jāta karmam eṇru peyar perum. piṇanta patiṇārām nāḷ illattaic cuttam ceytu teyvattai vēṇṭik kuḷantaikkuk kāppuc cūṭṭatal oru viḷā. itu nāma karaṇam eṇappaṭum. appōtu kuḷantaikkup peyariṭuvārkaḷ. cila camayam itai mutalāṇṭu niṇaivu viḷāvutaṅ cērttuc ceyvatum unṭu.

intak kāppuviḷā mikavum purātaṇamāṇatu. paṇṭaiya taṃiḷ nāṭṭu vīrar tāṅkaḷ pōriṭṭuk koṇra puliyiṅ pallaik kōttut taṅkaḷ piḷḷaikaḷukku vīra uṇarvu vara vēṇṭum eṇpatarkāka aṇivittārkaḷ. piṇṇar kāttarkaṭavuḷākiya tirumāliṅ paṅcāyu taṅkaḷaiyum (caṅku cakkaram vil katai taṅṭu) poṇṇilamaittuk kōttu aṇivittārkaḷ. itu aimpaṭait tāli eṇru peyar perratu. iṇraipa maṇa viḷāvil aṇivikkum tirumāṅkalyam ivvaimpaṭait tāliyiṅ ciṅṇamēyākum.

We can briefly state what all are the Śaiva rituals occurring in the family,

community, and human society. Some may be performed in some places and not in others; however, these are general rituals for all the Śaivas.

Vedic Rituals – Society

Many are the Vedic rituals that have been prescribed. Among them, few are in practice among the Śaivas. A few relevant to men’s individual lives are worth mentioning here. These are performed even before the child’s birth, that is, from when the mother is pregnant. When the mother is seven months pregnant, the protection ceremony is performed for her. It is practiced in many communities with many names, such as: *vaḷaikāppu* [or adorning her with bangles]; *pūccūṭṭu* [or adorning her head with flowers]; *cittirāṇṇam aruttu* [or the offering of rice dishes treated with lemon juice, tamarind, or jaggery]. Their only purpose is to ask the deities to protect the mother and the fetus. The ritual performed immediately after the child’s birth is known as *jātakarmam*, [the horoscope ceremony]. Sixteen days after the birth, there is the ceremony of cleaning the house, praying to the deities, and adorning the child with bangles. This is called *nāma karaṇam*, [the naming ceremony]. Then, they name the child. Sometimes this is done along with the first year completion ceremony.

These protection rituals are very ancient. Ancient Tamil warriors wore the tusk of a tiger they had killed in battle, made a necklace out of them, and put it on their children to instill a sense of heroism. Then, they used to decorate the child with the five weapons of Viṣṇu, the protecting God (conch shell, discus, bow, mace, staff), and golden chains. This is called *aimpaṭai tāli*. The sacred garland worn in today’s

uriya kālattil toṭṭil iṭatal enṛa viḷā avaravar vacatikku ēṛrapaṭi koṅṭāṭappaṭum. aintu vayatil vittiyārambam; atāvatu paḷḷikku vaittal: itu pirāmaṅar ceykiṅra upanayanattai ottatu. vāḷkkaiyil mikavum mukkiyamāṅa caṭaṅku aṭuttu varuṅṅa tirumaṅaviḷā. māṅṅaṅkaṅ taṅ piramacariya nilaiyil kalvi kaṅṅu muṭittu, illarattil pukuvataṅkāṅa peru viḷāvē itu. ilakkiyaṅkaḷil maṅam eṅvakai enṛu virivākaṅ collappaṭṭiruntuṅ kūṭa, caivaraiṭaiyē iruntatu orēvakai; atāvatu kulattālum takutiyaḷum otta nilaiyil irukkum iru kuṭumpaṅkaḷil uḷḷa peṅṅukkum piḷḷaikkum, curṛattār, iṭaiyil iruntu poruttam pārttu, akkaṅi cāṭciyaṅkaṅ ceytu muṭikiṅra vivākaṅ. peṅ viṭṭār taṅkaḷuṭaiya takutikku ēṛravāru varicaikaḷ aḷippar; itu kaṭṭāyam illai. ik kalyāṅam maṅamakaṅ viṭṭil naṭakkumēyaṅṅri, maṅa makaḷ viṭṭil ceyvatu keḷaravak kuṅraivu enṛa karuttu muṅpu nilavi vantatu. ittirumaṅam, kaṅṅnikāṭāṅam pāṅṅikkirakaṅam mutalāṅa pala vakaiyāka irukkum. purōkitar iruntu akkaṅi cāṭciyaṅkaṅ maṅam naṭatti vaippar. maṅa viḷā iraṅṅu mūṅṅru nāḷ varai naṭaiperum. nirai nāḷi viḷakkōṭu maṅamakaḷai illattil aḷaittal, puttāṭai uṭuttal, māḷai māṅṅrutal, captacati mantiram colluttal, tirumāḷiṅ paṅcāyutaṅkaḷ amaṭṭa poṅṭāli kaṭṭuttal, akkaṅi valam varuttal, ammi mitittu aruntati kāṭṭuttal enṅpaṅa maṅa viḷāviṅ mukkiya amcaṅkaḷ. curṛattār aṅaivarum viḷāvil paṅku koḷvar. irutiyaṅkaṅ collattakkatu, āṅmā ivvulakai nṅttup pirintu cellum nilaiyil ceyyum maṅa kālattuc

caṭaṅkukaḷākaṅ. ivai uyir pirinta iṭattilum mayāṅattilum naṭakkum. maṅṅuṅṅaḷ mayāṅattil ceykiṅra pāl teḷi enṛa kiriyai,

marriage ceremony symbolizes this *aimpaṭai tāli*.

At the proper time, the ceremony of placing the child in the cradle will be celebrated according to their convenience. At the age of five, there is the *vittiyārambam*, [the ceremonial beginning of a child's education, that is,] putting the child into school: this is similar to the *upanayanam* practiced by the Brahmins.

The next most important ritual in life is the wedding ceremony. This is a great ceremony, through which the unmarried student, having completed his education, enters the household life. Even though the scriptures distinguish eight varieties of marriages, Śaivas only have one kind of marriage; that is, the marriage where the parents of a girl and a boy – belonging to two families of the same caste and rank – check their compatibility and that is concluded with the fire as witness. The householder on the bride's side will give a dowry according to their status, but it is not mandatory. Earlier, there was the belief that performing this wedding [ceremony] at the bride's house was less honorable than [doing it] at the groom's house. There are many ways to call the marriage ceremonies, like *tirumaṅam* [or “marriage”], *kaṅṅnikāṭāṅam* [or “donation of a virgin girl”], *pāṅṅikkirakaṅam* [or “holding hands”]. A purohita will perform the marriage with fire as a witness. The marriage ceremony lasts from two to three days. The main aspects of the wedding ceremony are inviting the bride to the groom's house with a bright lamp, wearing new clothes, exchanging garlands, reciting the *saptaśaṭi mantra*, tying a golden garland made by the five weapons of Viṣṇu, encircling the fire, and keeping the foot [of the bride] on the crusher. All the relatives will participate in the ceremony.

Finally, it must be said that there is a ritual at the time of death when the soul

departs from this world. It can be performed in the house where life has departed or the graveyard. The next day, the ritual action of

citaiyaik kalaittu elumpukaḷaik kiriyā pūrvamācak cērttu ārrilitūtal. patinārām nāl kiriyai virivācak ceyyapperum. iranta uyirukkup pirantatu mutal irantatu varai viṭupaṭṭirunta kiriyaikaḷ ellāvarraiyyum tokuttuc ceytu, akkiṇi pūrvamākat tēvataikaḷukkup pirīti ceytu, pirāmaṇarkaḷukkut tāṇam vaḷaṅki, civālaya vaḷipāṭu ceytu, aṭiyavarkaḷukku amutu ceyvittalōṭu caṭaṅkukaḷ muṭikiṇraṇa. cirāttam enpatu iranta tiṇa āṇṭu viḷā. irantu pōṇa perrōr mutaliya periyavarkaḷiṇ nālai āṇṭu tōrum niṇaiyu kūrntu, avarkaḷuṭaiya āṇmā cāntiyataiya vēṇṭip piṇṭakkiriyaikaḷ ceytu, pirāmaṇarkaḷukkut tāṇam koṭuttu, ēlai makkaḷukku uṇavu vaḷaṅkuvatōṭu intac caṭaṅku muṭivurum. itu, irantu pōṇa mūtātaiyariṭattu vaittirunta perumatippaiyyum anpaiyyum kāṭṭum amcam.

āṇmārttam

ituvarei kūriyavai, camūkattil aṅkamāka vāḷum maṇitaṇ ceyyattakka peḷatika allatu camūcak caṭaṅkukaḷ ākum. ivaiyaṇri, caivaṇ āṇmārttamākavum parārttamākavum ceyyattakka vaitikac caṭaṅkukaḷ pala uḷḷaṇa. ivai ākamaṅkaḷil vitikkappaṭṭavai. āṇmārta vaḷipāṭtil mutaṇmaiyaṇatu kālaiyum mālaiyum ceyyattakka cāntiyāvantaṇam eṇṇum aṇuṭṭāṇamākum. itu tīkṣai perrōr ceytarkuriyatu. iv vantaṇattuḷ mukkiya pakuti, civakāyattiri ōtutalum upatēcam perra paṅcākkara mantirattaic cepittalum ākum. mantira

cepam mutaliyaṇa tīkṣā kuruviṇiṭam upatēcam perruc ceytarkuriyaṇa. ivarrōṭu cērttuc collattakkatu āṇmārta pūcai eṇṇum iṣṭa teyva vaḷipāṭu. iṣṭateyvamāvatu, param poruḷākiya parama civattiṇ mūrtaṅkaḷuḷ oṇru. utāraṇam: kaṇapati murukaṇ ampikai naṭarācar takṣiṇāmūrta carapamūrta pōṇrār. ivarkaḷ param poruḷiṇ oru tōrramēyāvar; vēru teyvam eṇru eṇṇalākātu. iccirappu vaṭivaṅkaḷai vāyiṇāl pāṭi maṇattiṇāl cintittuk kaiyiṇāl malariṭṭu vaḷipaṭutal ellāc cittikaḷaiyum tarum. param poruḷ vēru iṣṭa teyvam vēru eṇru karutukal ākātu. “eṅkum

sprinkling milk on the graveyard, burning the corpse, and collecting the bones is performed. A ritual will be performed extensively on the sixteenth day [after the death]. The rite concludes with the summing up of all the deeds left for the deceased from birth to death, offering fire to the deities, offering food to Brahmins, doing temple worship, and offering food to the servants. *Śrāddha* is the death anniversary ceremony. This ritual ends with remembering the anniversary of elders like deceased parents, praying for the peace of their souls, cooking boiled rice, making donations to Brahmins, and giving food to poor people. It is a way through which one shows great respect and love for a deceased ancestor.

Ātmārtha rituals

What has been said so far are the external or social rituals performed by a man living as a member of society. Besides these, there are many Vedic rituals that a Śaiva can perform for one's sake, *ātmārtha*, or for the sake of others, *parārtha*. These are prescribed in the Āgamas. The main *āṇmārtha* ritual is the *sandhyāvandanam*, which should be performed in the morning and the evening. Initiated parents should do this. The central part of this salutation ritual is the recitation of the Śivagāyatrī *mantra* and the *japa* of the five syllables, a *mantra* which has been preached [by a *guru*].

The *japa* of the *mantra* should be done after receiving the initiation from a *guru*. Along with this, it is worth mentioning the worship of a personal deity called *ātmārthapūjā*. The personal deity has to be one among the *mūrttis* of Lord Śiva, who is the Supreme Being. For example: Gaṇapati, Murukaṇ, Pārvatī, Naṭarāja, Dakṣiṇāmūrta, Śarabha. They are embodiments of the Supreme God; one must not consider them different deities. The worship performed by chanting these particular forms with the mouth, meditating with the mind, and putting flowers with the hands will give all

*niraintuḷḷa param poruḷ eḷiyēṅ poruṭṭāka
inta vaṭivaittāṅki vantu aruḷ ceykiṛatu” enru
maṅattiṅālē pāvittu vaḷipatuvaṭē murai.
ippaṭi yātoru teyvaṅ koṅṭavarukkellām.
aṅkē mātoru pākaṅār tām vantaruluḷvār.
potuvāka āṅmārṭta mūrṭti vaḷipāṭu civaliṅka
vaḷipāṭē yākuṁ.*

*vaḷipāṭṭuk kiriyaiyil palavakai upacāraṅkaḷ
aṭaṅkiyuḷḷaṅa. tūpa tīpa naivēṭṭiyam enra
mūṅru cātāraṅamāṅatu; kantam puṣpam
iraṅṭaiyum cērttu jaṅṭākak koḷvatumuṅṭu.
kōyil vaḷipāṭṭu muṛaikaḷil mēṛkoḷvatu
cōṭacōpacāram ennum paṭiṅāru
upacāraṅkaḷ; āṅmārṭta vaḷipāṭṭukkuṁ ivai
uriyaṅa. ivai āvākaṅam, stāpaṅam,
cannitāṅam, cannirō taṅam, ava kuṅṭaṅam,
tēṅnumuttirai, pāṭṭiyam arukkiyam,
ācamaṅam puṣpam, tūpam, tīpam,
naivēṭṭiyam, pāṅṅiyam, cepam, āṛāṭṭirikam
enpaṅa. ivarṛukkāṅa kiriyaiyum
tattuvārṭṭap poruḷuṁ kuṛippiṭattakkaṅa.
āvākaṅam teyvattai varavēṛru irukkac
ceyṭal. ācaṅam =*

the *siddhis*. It cannot be assumed that the Supreme God differs from the personal deity. The [right] method is to pray with the belief that “the all-pervasive Supreme God came having this form for the sake of simplicity and bestowed his blessings”. Whatever form of deities Śaivas worship, to them [Śiva] will come in the form of that deity. Generally, the *ātmārtha* worship of a *mūrṭti* is the worship of the *śivaliṅga*. Many types of offerings are included in the act of worship. Three common ones are incense, lamps, and offering food before a deity; [the offering of] fragrant pastes and flowers should be added to them, thus becoming five [kinds of offerings]. Sixteen offerings called *śoḍaśa upacāra* are performed in temple worship; these also belong to the *ātmārtha* worship. They are: *āvāhana*, *sthāpaṅa*, *sannidhāna*, *sānnirodhana*, *avakuṅṭhana*, *dhenumudra*, *bādhyā*, *arghya*, *ācamaṅya*, *puṣpa*, *dhūpa*, *dīpa*, *naivēḍya*, *japa*, and *ārāṭrika*. The practical and theoretical implications of these are worth referring to. *Āvāhana* is the invocation of God; *āsana*

*ācaṅam aḷittal. stāpaṅam-nīlaiperu
amaracceyṭal. cannitāṅam-teyvam
āvēcittirukkac ceyṭal. cannirōtaṅam-teyva
cannitāṅattai ōṛitattē nilai peruttukai.
avakuṅṭaṅam-mūṭṭal, kavacam amaṭṭal.
tēṅnu muttirai-pacuvīṅ maṭivaḷiyāka
amutatārai poḷivatākap pāvittal. itu varai
mūrṭtattai varavēṛru nilai peruttukai.
iṅṅivaruvaṅavē ammūrṭṭikkāṅa upacāraṅkaḷ.
pāṭṭiyam-pātam alampa nīr aḷittal.
arkkiyam-pōṛṛutalukku aṭaiyālamākac
cantaṅamum ariciyum kalanta
aṭcataiyalittal. ācamaṅam-vāyucuttikku nīr
aḷittal. snāṅam-nīrāṭṭu. vastiram-
āṭaiyalittal. upavītam-pūṅṅūḷ aḷittal. kantam-
vācaṅaip pūccukkāṅa cantaṅam aḷittal.
puṣpam-malar cūṭṭal. tūpam-narumpukai
pōṭṭal. tīpam-karṅpūravoḷi kāṭṭṭal.
naivēṭṭiyam-aṅṅamō paḷa varkkamō
karṅkaṅṭu pōṅṅra poruḷō uṅavukkāka aḷittal.
pāṅṅiyam-kuṭṭitatarṅkāṅa poruḷ. cepam-
mantiracepam, āṛāṭṭirikam-tuticeyṭal.
mukavācam, tāmpūlam, taruppaṅam*

is giving seat [to the God]; *stāpaṅam* is installing [the idol]; *sannidhāna* is making the deity enter the idol; *sānnirodhana* is circumscribing [the idol where] the deity is present; *avakuṅṭhana* is covering [the God], putting the armor; *dhenumudra* is pouring nectar through [the hands symbolizing] the cow’s udder. [The offerings] up to these are aimed at greeting the idol. What follows are the offerings for the idol. *Bādhyā* is offering water for washing its feet; *arghya* is the offering of sandalwood and rice as a sign of adoration; *ācamaṅam* is the offering of water for rinsing the mouth; *snāṅa* is bathing [the idol]; *vastra* is putting garments [on the idol]; *upavīta* is putting the sacred thread; *gandha* is offering sandalwood paste for smearing its fragrance; *puṣpa* is the offer of flowers; *dhūpa* is burning the incense; *dīpa* is presenting a light [in front of the idol] through a camphor; *naivēḍya* is offering food like cooked rice, fruits, or sweets; *pāṅṅya* is offering drinking liquid;

(kaṇṇāṭi), cattiram (kuṭai), cāmaram aḷittal, niruttam kītam, vāṭṭiyam enpaṇa innum atikamākavum colvatuṇṭu. ippurac ceykaikaḷukkuṭ tattuvamāṇa poruḷum collappaṭum. maṇitaril ṇāṇattālum oḷukka cīlattālum patavi pōṇra pīra takutikaḷālum periyōrāyullōrai varavērru upacāram ceykiṇra muṛaiyilē, carvavallamaiyuṭaiya ṇāṇamayaṇāṇa paramporuḷait tāṇ valipaṭumiṭattil varuvittu varavērru upacarittu taṇ valipāṭṭai ērraruḷumāru pīrārttittalē ivvupa cāraṅkaḷiṇ poruḷākum.

cīru teyva valipāṭu

cīru teyva valipāṭu enpaṭu caivattil illai. māri mutalāṇa cīru teyva valipāṭu iṣṭa teyva valipāṭu

ākātu. iṣṭa teyvam enpaṭu, niṣkaḷamāyulla (aruvamāyulla) paramporuḷ cakaḷikarittu (uruvamāy) vanta oru mūrṭti vaṭivamākum. “ceṇru nām cīru teyvam cērvōm allōm-civaperumāṇ tiruvaṭiyē cērap perrōm” enrum, “cettuc cettup pīrappatē tēvenrupatti cey maṇappāraikaṭku ērumō?” enrum appar cuvāmikaḷ pāṭiyiruppataic cintikka.

tinacarik katamai

caivar tinacari niṛaivērravēṇṭiya kaṭamaikaḷ aintu. oṇru, tirumuraikaḷaiyum civa punṇiyak kataikaḷaiyum oṭal, oṭuvittuk kēṭtal. iraṇṭu, teyvattukku upacāram tūpatīpa naivēṭṭiyam valaṅkutaḷ. mūṇru, pitirkaḷukkuṭ tarppaṇam: itu cantiyāvantaṇattiṇ pōṭu niṛaivērrukiratu. nāṇku āvukkōru vāyurāi-pacuvukku oru piṭi pul aḷikkavēṇṭum enru collinum, ellāc cīvarācikaḷiṭattilum aṇpu pūṇṭu oḷukuvatē itaṇ virinta poruḷākum. aintu viruntōmpal; munpiṇ ariyātu tōṇrum atitiyai iraivaṇākavē kaṇṭu avanukku uṇaḷittal; nāyaṇmār varalārukaḷil pala iv uṇaḷittaliṇ cīrappaiyē kūruvaṇa. inta aintum caivar vāḷkkaiyil nittiya karumaṅkaḷāka amaiyum.

japa is the repetition of the *mantra*; and *ārātrika* is waving [the light before the idol]. One can offer powders to apply on the face, betel leaves, money, a mirror, and an umbrella. The offerings of a fly-flapper made of a bush tail, hymns, and musical instruments are further provided. All these external actions carry a philosophical meaning. The meaning of these aforementioned activities is to pray to the omnipotent, enlightened Supreme Being in the place of worship, welcome and treat him, and accept their worship for him to welcome and offer hospitality to the elders due to their wisdom, moral virtues, and other qualifications.

The worship of minor deities

There is no worship of minor deities in Śaivism. The worship of minor deities like Yama is not accepted as worship of a

personal deity. The personal deity is a *mūrṭti* that has embodied (incarnated) the intangible (formless) Supreme God. We should think of what Appar has sung: “Let’s go and reach the minor deity - we get to reach the feet of Lord Śiva himself” and “Won’t devotion towards God uplift our mind as we die and get reborn again and again?”.

Daily duties

There are five duties that a Śaiva should perform daily. The first is reciting or listening to someone reciting the *Tirumuṛai* hymns and the Śiva Purāṇas. The second is giving offerings, incense, lamps, and food to the deity. The third is offering libations to the ancestors: this is performed three times a day. The fourth is giving one handful of grass to four cows, but its broad meaning is to spread love among all living beings. The fifth is hospitality; [it implies] seeing the previously unknown guest as the Lord himself and feeding him; the lives of the Nāyaṇmārs indicate the importance of this feeding. All these five [duties] are established as eternal duties in the life of Śiva devotees.

75

yālamāka amaintamaipōla,
 civaperumāṇuṭaiya iṭapak koṭiyum
 avaruṭaiya arulārralai unartti nirpatākum.
 vilāviṇ toṭakkam purru maṇ eṭuttalum
 mūlaiyiṭuttalum: ivai ciruṣṭi(paṭaiṭṭu)t
 toḷilaik kuṟikkum kiriyaikaḷākum. piṇ
 koṭiyērram. perumāṇuṭaiya koṭi iṭapak koṭi.
 iṭapam tarumatēvataiyiṇ vaṭivam, kāttar
 kaṭavuḷāṇa tirumālēyākum. ikkoṭiyai
 uyarttuvatu, ulaka pantattil cikkiya āṇmāvai
 viṭuvittuc civaṇōṭu pantippatu eṇra
 poruḷatu. āṇmāvai uyartti ulakukku
 nalvālyu taruvate itaṇ nō kkam. pattu nālum
 yākam naṭaiperum. inku uyirppali illai;
 tamil nāṭṭil eṇrum iruntatillai. itu stiti
 eṇnum kāttal toḷiliṇ aṭaiyālamākum.
 irāṇṭām kāḷ cūriya cantira pirapaikaḷil
 eḷukantarūvittal. itu iraivaṇ cūriya
 cantirar mūlamāka ulakukku uyiraiyum
 iṇpattaiyum ūṭṭukirāṇ eṇpataik kāṭṭum.
 itaṇāl kuṟikkappaṭṭatu stiti eṇnum kāttal
 toḷil. mūṇṇrām nāl atikāra nanti,
 pūtavākaṇam; itu caṅkārattiṇ aṭaiyālam.
 nāṅkām nāl nāka vākaṇam. nākamāvatu
 cuḷumuṇai nāṭi. itu tirōpavamākiya
 maraiṭṭu. jantām tiruviḷā iṭapa vākaṇam.
 itu iraivaṇ uyarkaḷukkup pati eṇpatai
 unarttuvatu; tiruvaruḷ ceykiṇṇa kōlam,
 aṇukkirakam. capparam allatu teruvaṭait
 tāṇ eṇra oru puttamaipputaiya caṭṭat tēril
 civa perumāṇ ulā varukirār. ellāvāṇṇaiyum
 aṭaittu varum capparam, aṇaivarukkum
 aṇukkirakam eṇra kuṟip puṭaiyatu. mēlum
 itu, makkaḷ kalaittirāṇukku oru ciranta
 veḷippāṭu. itaṇōṭu oru vakaiyil tōṇṇam allatu
 vaḷarccik kiramappaṭikkāṇa ain toḷilkaḷum
 niraivuperukinṇaṇa.

76

aṭutta āru nālum oṭukkam ceykiṇṇa muṇaiyil
 varukiṇṇa aintoliṇ kōlaṅkaḷākum. āram
 tirunāl yānai vākaṇam-ciruṣṭik toḷil. ēlām
 tirunāl-tirukkaliyāṇa urcavam, kāttar
 poruḷatu. eṭṭām tirunāl kailāya vākaṇam,
 irāvaṇṇaṇ kailaiyai eṭuttal. caṅkāram eṇpatu
 poruḷ. oṇpatān tiruviḷā pikṣāṇaṇar tiruviti
 ulā; itu tirōpavamākiya maraiṭṭu pattām

a kingdom, a flag is set as a symbol of a king's power;

similarly, even the bull flag of Lord Śiva represents the power of his grace. The ceremony begins with digging and sprouting the soil: these activities represent *sṛṣṭi* (the creation). Then there is the flag hoisting. The Lord's flag is the one with a bull. The bull is a form of Dharmadeva, an embodiment of Viṣṇu, the protecting god. Hoisting this flag means liberating the soul from worldly bonds and joining Śiva. Its purpose is to uplift the soul and bring prosperity to the world. It will be performed for ten days. There is no sacrifice here, it never existed in Tamil Nadu. It is a symbol of the protecting action called *stiti*.

On the second day, there is the [idol's] procession [on the vehicles of the] Sūrya and Candra Prabhā. This shows that the Lord gives life and joy to the world through the sun and moon. Thus, they call *stiti* the action of protection. On the third day, there is the [idol's] procession on Nandi, his vehicle; this symbolizes the [function of] destruction. On the fourth day, there is the [idol's] procession on a snake. The snake indicates the *suṣumnā nāḍī*. This is the symbol of the veiling action, *tirōbhava*. On the fifth day, there is the procession on the bull. This means that the Lord is the *pati* of the living beings; this is the ceremony through which he bestows his grace, namely the blessings. Lord Śiva comes in procession riding a chariot that blocks the street called *capparam* or *teruvaṭai*. The chariot, which blocks everything, is a symbol of the blessings to everyone. Moreover, it is an excellent expression of people's artistry. With this, the five occupations are completed in a way.

For the next six days, the five functions are carried out in a more condensing way. On the sixth day, there is the procession on the elephant, [symbolizing] the action of creation. On the seventh, there is the marriage festival, representing the protection function. On the eighth day, the procession on mount Kailāsa occurs, which

tirunāl tiruttēr. tiripura cammāramākiya mummala kāriyaṅkaḷiṅ aḷippum, ataṅ mēl vilaikiṅṅra aṅukkirkamum. ivarriṅpiṅ caṅṅcāṅukkiraka urcavamum koṭiyirakkamum nikaḷntu, pirammōrcava vilākkaḷ muṭivu perukiṅṅra. ik kurippukkaḷāl pirammōrcavamāṅatu aintoḷil aṅukkirkattai uṅartuvatu eṅpatu telivākum. (talavicēṅattāl vilā muraikaḷil mārūtal irukkak kūṭum.)

cataṅkukalin porul-civānupavam
caṅṅkukaḷiṅ muṭivāṅa poruḷ civāṅupavam. itaṅ poruṅtuttāṅ uruva vaḷipātu. nammuṭaiya paṭippariyāta peṅkaḷ kūṭa vīṅṅil cāṅaktāl piḷḷaiyār piṅṅittu vaikkirārkaḷ. maṅa vilākkaḷil purōkitar caṅṅattāḷum maṅcaḷālum piṅṅittu vaikkirār. makkaḷ maṅattil ivai ellām oṅrutāṅ. eṅkum nirāinta param poruḷaic ciṅṅitu nēram iṅku eḷuntaruḷuvikkirōm. anta nēram avviṅam iraivaṅ canniti ākiratu. terintō teriyāmalō, purōkitarum makkaḷum collukiṅṅra mantiraṅkaḷum ceykiṅṅra muttiraikaḷum kiyācaṅkaḷum, anta nēram aṅku teyva uṅarcciyait tēkkiṅṅac ceykiṅṅra. puṅpaṅkaḷum cāmpirāṅip pukaiyum kaṅpūra jōṅṅiyum oṅru cērum pōtu, pulāṅkaḷ vēṅṅitam pōkāmal orumukap paṅukiṅṅra. annēram atu

indicates the killing of Rāvaṅa that usurped the mountain. This is a symbol of the function of destruction. On the ninth day, there is the street procession [of God] in the form of a beggar. On the tenth day, the chariot symbolizes the concealment action, *tirōbhava*. It implies the destruction of the three impurities, called *tripura cammāram*, and the blessings arising from it. After this, there is the procession in the form of *liṅga*, then the flag is brought down, and the *brahmotsavam* ceremonies end. From these references, it is made clear that *brahmotsavam* signifies the bestowing of God’s grace through the five functions. (The ceremonies may vary depending on location.)

Meaning of Rituals - śivānubhava

The final aim of the rituals is the *śivānubhava*, the experience of God. This is what idol worship is meant for. Even our illiterate women keep at home the stone for grinding the sandalwood. During marriage ceremonies, the *purohita* holds it with sandalwood and turmeric. People think that they are all the same. For a short time, we evoke the omnipresent Supreme Being here. At that time, that place becomes the place where God abides. Knowingly or unknowingly, at that time, the *mantras* that the *purohita* and the people pronounce and the *mudrās* and the *nyāsas* performed make the divine emotion linger there. When the flowers, incense fumes, and camphor light are added together, the senses are focused and don’t divert to any other place. At that moment,

uṅmaiyaṅa teyvacanniti ākiratu. maṅṅitaṅai intac caṅṅkukaḷ ciṅṅitu nēramēṅum uyarnta nilaiyil koṅṅtu pōy niruttukiṅṅraṅa eṅpatai yārē maṅukkamuṅiyum?
caṅṅkukaḷukku aṅippaṅaiyāka iruntu varupavai purāṅa varalārukaḷ. ṅāṅikaḷāy uḷḷa iṅattil purāṅaṅkaḷukku vēlaiyillai. perumpāṅmaiyaṅa makkaḷ cāmāṅiya makkaḷē. ātalāl ivarkaḷukkuc caṅṅkukaḷum peḷarāṅikaḷum tēvai. purāṅam eṅra collukkē paḷāṅkatai eṅpatutāṅ poruḷ.

that really becomes the place in which God dwells. Who can deny that these rites elevate men, even if just for a short time? The Purāṅic literary works are the sources for the rituals. Yet, they have no utility in those places where there are the *jñānins*. The majority of people are ordinary. Therefore, they need rituals and pompous behaviors. The word “Purāṅa” means “story of ancient times”; but those old stories are not false; as time passed, they became part

*paḷaṅkakai poyyalla; paḷamai kālam cellac
 cellac camayamākiratu. purāṇamē
 camayam enru collāviṭṭālum kūṭa,
 camayattirku oru karuviyākavē atu
 amaikiratu. caiva camayattilum, purāṇa
 varalārukaḷ camayapaktikkum
 nalloḷukkattirkum nilaikkaḷaṅkaḷāka
 amaikiṅṅa. naṭaimuṅṅaiyil, uyarnta
 ṅṅaṅṅaiyum cāmāṅṅiyap
 purāṅṅakataiyaiyum taḷuvi eḷuntavaiyē
 kōyilkaḷ. kōyilkaḷil stūlamāṅa poruḷ
 purāṅṅak kataikaḷē. kukmamāṅa poruḷ ṅṅaṅṅa
 māṅṅkattiṅṅ tattuvaṅṅkaḷ. camayattiṅṅ
 kuṅṅiyiṅṅkaḷukkum cilārūpaṅṅkaḷukkum
 cāmāṅṅiya makkaḷ maṅṅattil poruḷ aṅṅivipatu
 peḷarāṅṅikam. itaṅṅ vaḷiyē cenṅṅrutāṅṅ uyarnta
 ṅṅaṅṅa tattuvaṅṅkaḷaiyum uṅṅara muṅṅiyum.
 paṅṅippu vācaṅṅaiyaṅṅṅavaṅṅiṅṅattuk kūṭa, avaṅṅ
 taṅṅ iṅṅṅa tēvataiyiṅṅ muṅṅpu malaritṅṅtut tēṅṅkāy
 uṅṅaittuk kaṅṅpūram ēṅṅṅrumpōtu, inta stūlam
 cūṅṅṅmam ākiya iraṅṅṅiṅṅ orumaippāṅṅṅaiṅṅ
 kāṅṅkiṅṅōm. avaṅṅ taṅṅṅai aṅṅiyāmalē taṅṅ muṅṅ
 kāṅṅum iṅṅṅa tēvataitāṅṅ ellāvāṅṅṅaiyum kaṅṅanta
 param poruḷ enṅṅa uṅṅarcciyaip peṅṅukirāṅṅ.
 ulakil tōṅṅriya paḷam peruṅṅ camayaṅṅkaḷ
 pala aḷintu pōyirukka, taṅṅilaṅṅ tōṅṅriya aṅṅṅē
 tōṅṅri aṅṅṅatikālamāka vaḷarntum virintum
 vanta caiva camayam iṅṅṅum uyirōṅṅṅu niṅṅṅru
 nilavuvatarku intap paṅṅputāṅṅ
 kāraṅṅamāṅṅkum.*

of religion. Even if Purāṅṅas are not strictly
 religious texts, they are a tool for
 [understanding] religion. In Śaivism also,
 the Purāṅṅic stories are the basis for religious
 devotion and good discipline. In practice,
 temples arose from a combination of higher
 wisdom and common Purāṅṅic stories. The
 Sthālapurāṅṅas are the most important
 Purāṅṅic stories for the temples. The
 philosophical concepts of the jñānamāṅṅga
 are their subtle meaning: the pompous
 behaviors are meant to give meaning to the
 symbols and representations of religion in
 the minds of ordinary people. It is through
 this that one can realize the highest wisdom.
 Even an illiterate person, when placing the
 flowers, breaking the coconut, and lighting
 up the camphor in front of the deity, can see
 the unity of the two [aspects], the *sthūla* and
 the *sūkṅṅma*. He unknowingly gets the
 feeling that the personal deity he sees in
 front of him is the Supreme Being who
 transcends everything. This characteristic is
 the reason why, although many of the
 religions that existed in the world are
 extinct, Śaivism developed and grew from
 time immemorial when Tamils first
 appeared and still exists today.

6

caiva tarumam

78 *ovvoru camayamum, taṅṅ camaya
 tattuvaṅṅkaḷukku aṅṅippaṅṅaiyāṅṅac cila
 tarumaṅṅkaḷāk koṅṅṅirukkikaru. ivāṅṅṅait
 tarumam allatu oḷukkam allatu nīti enṅṅru
 kūṅṅalām. caiva camayattiṅṅ tarumaṅṅkaḷē
 intu camayattiṅṅ tarumaṅṅkaḷākac
 collappaṅṅṅuḷḷaṅṅa. āyiṅṅum itaiyil, pintiyaṅṅil
 poyyūm vaḷuvum pukuntu viṅṅṅaṅṅa. ātalāl,
 taṅṅiyāṅṅa caiva camayattiṅṅ tarumaṅṅkaḷ
 yāvai enṅṅru cila corṅṅkaḷāl iṅṅku varaiyaṅṅai
 ceytu koḷvatu utaviyāyirukkum.*

tarumam

*oru camayattiṅṅ tarumam enṅṅpatu, kāla tēca
 vartta māṅṅaṅṅkaḷai aṅṅucarittu makkaṅṅ*

6

Śiva Ethics

Every religion has set a few ethical
 principles that constitute the basis for its
 religious philosophy. We can call them
dharma or discipline, or right conduct. The
dharma of Śaivism is equal to the *dharma*
 of the Hindu religion. However, in between,
 some falsehoods and deceits entered into the
 latter. Therefore, it might be helpful here to
 define in a few words what precisely is the
dharma of Śaivism.

Dharma

When we talk about the *dharma* of a
 religion, we refer to the totality of the life
 values that a society holds according to a

camūkam koṅṭa vāḷkkaik kurikkōḷait
 taluviyatāy irukkum. utāraṇamāka, āyiram
 āṅṭukaḷukku murpaṭṭa inkilāntil,
 camūkanōkkamāṇatu lakṣya maṇitaṅ
 peruvīraṇāka irukkavēṅṭum, peṅkaḷiṅ
 pātukāppukkāka uyiraiyē koṭukkavēṅṭum
 eṅpatāka iruntatu. inru anta nōkkamillai.
 āṅḷ intiya nāṭṭil eṅrumē nōkkam vēru: inku
 vāḷkkaiyiṅ nōkkam puramukamāṇatanru;
 akamukamāṇatu. “yātum ūrē yāvarum
 kēḷir-tūtum nanrum pīrar tara vārā” eṅra
 koḷkaiyuṭaiya makkaṭ camūkattil,
 taṅmaṇitaṅ āṅmavaḷarcciyl
 mēmpaṭavēṅṭum eṅpatē kurikkōḷāyiruntatu.
 intac camūkattil nilaviya maṇita
 tarumaṅkaḷ cila. tarumam eṅru collumpōtu
 inku upakāram ceystal allatu paccai pōṭutal
 eṅra poruḷil collavillai. mur

kūriyavāru, niki, kaṭamai allatu oḷukkam
 eṅra āḷnta poruḷaittāṅ kūrukīrōm. tarumam
 eṅrālum aṅam eṅrālum oṅrutāṅ. pīraṅi
 nilaiyaik kaṭantu āraṅrivu paṭaitta
 maṇitanilaikku vantavaṅiṭattil putti
 pūrvamāṅa nalloḷukkam amaital vēṅṭum.
 ituvum maṅam moḷi mey eṅra tirikaraṅa
 cuttiyāka amaital vēṅṭum. ituvē ellākat
 tarumaṅkaḷukkum aṭippaṭai.

parru

kaṭamaiyaic ceyyumpōtu palāpalaṅkaḷ eṅra
 pēccu eḷamar pōkātu. cila camayam
 nallavar tuṅpurutalum tīyavar iṅpurutalum
 kaṅmuṅṅē nikalḷiṅraṅa. maṇitaṅṭaiya
 aṅrivu ivarrai āraṅyumpōtu, “ēṅ ippaṭi?”
 eṅra kēḷvi eḷukīratu. kāṭcip pīramāṅam
 oṅrumaṭṭum itarku viṭaiyaḷikka muṭivatillai.
 āṅmā alivarṅratu eṅpatai oppukkoḷḷukiṅra
 nam camayam, nām ceykiṅra nalviṅnai
 tīviṅkaḷ iraṅṭum intap pīraviyil
 maṭṭumallāmal, toṅarntu palaṅ koṭuttu
 varukiṅraṅa eṅru kūrukiṅratu. ākavē,
 toṅarntu palaṅkaḷai aṅupavippaṭarku
 maṅupīraṅi uṅṭu eṅpatum oṅ aṭippaṭait
 tattuvamākiṅratu. potuvāka intu
 camayaṅkaḷilum ciṅrappākac caiva
 camayattilum, maṅupīraṅi nīccayamāka
 uṅṭu, pul pūṅṭu pīraṅi varkkam
 maṅitavarkkam yāvum oṅrutāṅ eṅpatu
 oppukkoḷḷappaṭṭa karuttu. nām ceyyum

79

particular time, place, and environment. For
 example, a thousand years ago in England,
 the social norm was that the ideal man must
 be a hero and sacrifice himself for the
 protection of women. Nowadays, there is no
 such aim. But in India, the aim was always
 different: here, the purpose of life does not
 refer to an external domain but to an
 introspective one. In a community of people
 holding the principles that one should
 welcome others since “any place is my place
 and all people are my kin” and “good and
 bad do not come because of others”, the
 main goal was to improve the spiritual
 development of an individual. In this
 society, some *dharma* existed for the
 people. When we say “dharma”, we do not
 mean giving assistance or doing charity.

As mentioned earlier, we must understand it
 in the deep meaning of right conduct,
 [personal] duty, or discipline. Whether we
 call it *dharma* or ethical code of conduct, it
 is the same thing. A basic good conduct
 should be established for the people whose
 consciousness has crossed the animal state.
 This should also purify the three instruments
 of mind, language, and truth. All these three
 are the basis for *dharma*.

Wordly attachment

When fulfilling [personal] duty, one should
 not question its results. Sometimes we
 witness the suffering of the good people and
 the joy of the wicked ones. While analyzing
 this, humans wonder why it is so. It is not
 possible to answer it by relying only on
 empirical evidence. Our religion, which
 supports the unperishable nature of the soul,
 states that both the good and the bad *karma*
 we accumulate in this life will continue to
 produce results in future rebirths. Therefore,
 there is the basic principle that rebirths are
 meant for the continuous experience of
 those fruits. In all the Hindu religious
 traditions in general and especially in
 Śaivism, the soul’s rebirth is certain and it is
 an accepted notion that humankind is equal
 to plant and animal species. The deeds we
 do are actions that cause a result, so we have

viṇaikaḷ payaṇaik karutiya viṇaikaḷ ātalāl, viṇaikkuriya payaṇai aṇupavittē tirkka vēṇṭiyirukkīratu. viṇai tōṇṇirip palaṇ tarum taṇmaiyai oṭṭi, ataip palavakaiyāka āṇṇōr pākupaṭuttik kūruvar. palaṇ karutāta viṇai ceykiravaṇ ṇāṇiyākīrāṇ. piṇṇāl aṇupavikka vēṇṭiya viṇaiyiṇ tokuti avāṇaip poruttavaraiyil illāmal pōkīratu. tiru

varuḷālē ṇāṇam kaikūṭap perātavaraiyil, payaṇitattup parrutal nīṅkātu. ākavē, aṇupavikka vēṇṭiya viṇai, tokutiyaḷap perukikkoṇṭētāṇ irukkum. ātalāl viṇai ceyyum kālattu, piṇṇum iṇṇamum tuṇṇamum tarukīra piṇṇavikku ētuvākāmal maṇitaṇ mēl nilaikkup pōka utavum poruṭṭē, nīti pōṭaṇaiyum nalloḷukka pōṭaṇaiyum ēṇṇaṇa: nalloḷukkam pāva neṇṇiyai vilakkip puṇṇiya neṇṇiyir celuttu mātalāl.

parrin mai

tarumaṅkaḷil mēlāṇatu taṇṇai maṇanta cēvai. entap paṇi ceytālum atai iraivaṇ paṇiyākak karuti, taṇṇaik karttāvākak karutāmal iraiṇaiyaic ceyyum oru karuviyāka maṭṭum karuki viṇai ceyyumpōtu, etir kālattil aṇupavippataṇkāṇa viṇai tiraḷāmal pōkīratu; viṇaiyai aṇupavippataṇkāḷap piṇṇavi eṭuttalum kūraikīratu. ituvē mutti allatu viṭutalaikku vaḷi. vāḷviṇ nōkkaṅkaḷāka vaṇaṇūlār collukiṇṇa tarumam, arttam, kāmam, mōkṣam eṇṇa nāṅkum taṇṇilum caivattilum, aṇam poruḷ iṇṇam vīṭu eṇṇum nāṅku uruṭtipporuḷkāḷāka appaṇiyē koḷḷappaṭṭuḷḷaṇa. maṇita vāḷḷkaiyiṇ nōkkam, aravaḷiyil poruḷ iṭṭi ataṇāl varum iṇṇam tuyttu, ivvāru varum iṇṇam aḷiyum nīṇṇamaittu eṇṇatu uṇarntu, aḷiyāta pēriṇṇattai nāṭi, ivarriṇṇitattup parrinṇirum nīṅkutal ākum. vāḷvil perum aṇupavaṅkaḷ ulakavāḷḷkai nilaiyaṇṇatu eṇṇatai naṅku uṇarttukiṇṇaṇa. maraṇam āṇmāviṇ aṇupavattukku oṇ muṭivu alla. itai uṇarkiṇṇa maṇitaṇ nilaiyaṇṇa vāḷviliruntu nirantaramāṇa oṇ viṭutalaiyit tēṭukīrāṇ.

80

to extinguish them by experiencing those results. Depending on the nature of the deeds that appear and the fruits they give, men fall into different groups. The person who does an action without thinking about its result is called a *jñānin*; he won't have to experience any deeds in the future.

As long as wisdom is attained by the grace of the Lord, it will continue to increase in volume. Therefore, the deeds to be experienced will continue to increase in volume. Thus, the teaching of discipline and the teaching of good conduct have arisen to help men to go to a higher [spiritual] level without being subject to the birth that gives happiness and pain when performing an action: good conduct will definitely divert you from a sinful behavior and guide you on a virtuous path.

Non-attachment

The highest of *dharmas* is [performing] service with no egoism. If one does any action considering it as an act of God – without considering oneself as the Lord, but only as an instrument for performing God's action – then there won't be an accumulation of *karma* to be experienced in the future; [if that is the case,] then [the number of] rebirths for the experience of *karma* also decreases. This is the path to *mukti* or salvation. *Dharma* [or moral values], *artha* [or economic values], *kāma* [or pleasure], and *mokṣa* [or liberation], which the Sanskrit scriptures defined as life goals, constitute essential concepts even in Tamil Śaivism and are defined as virtue, wealth, pleasure, and salvation. The purpose of human life is to renounce material possessions and pleasures that come from material objects, realize that the pleasures coming from those are perishable, seek eternal bliss, and get freed from them. Life experiences make it clear that worldly life is impermanent. Death is not an end to the soul's experiences. A man who realizes this seeks an everlasting liberation from the impermanent life.

ituvē intu camayap pirivukaḷ aṇaittiṇ
 pōṭaṇaiyumākum.
 ulakavāḷkkaiyē catam, poruḷum iṇpamumē
 catam eṇru karutukinra camayappirivukaḷ
 pala; ivarrai intu camayamum
 caivacamayamum peritum kaṇṭittu
 otukkaṇa. ivai pōlavē, aṇamē muṭivāṇa
 nōkkam eṇru karutiyavarum iruntaṇar.
 ikkaruttu vāḷvil oru niṇaiṇu tantatillai. ēṇ
 aravaḷi oḷukavēṇṭum eṇra kēḷvikku,
 koḷḷattakka viṭai ivarkaḷ kūriyatillai. aṇam
 etaṇ poruṭtu eṇrāl, ellāvāriṇum mēm
 paṭṭatāṇa oṇ aṇma cutantirattukkākavē
 aravāḷkkai; kaṭṭiliruntu viṭupaṭa, aṇṇāṇattai
 vilakka, ēṇpaṭṭa vaḷiyē aravaḷi. iv aṇṇāṇa
 nīkkamum kaṭṭiṇ nīkkamum cutantirattait
 tarukinraṇa. iṇkuk karutukinra
 cutantiramāvatu, carva viyāpakamāṇa oru
 pēriṇṇattil tāṇum irāṇṭarak kalantuviṭutal.

81

varunam

intap pīṭikaiyōṭu, aṭippaṭait tarumaṇkaḷ
 cilavaṇraik kavaṇikkalām. varuṇācirama
 tarumam eṇra toṭar paḷamaiyāka vaḷaṇki
 varukiratu. ituparri caivattiṇ kōṭipāṭukaḷaic
 carrē aṇintukoḷḷutal naṇru. mutalāvatāka,
 caivattil “oṇrē kulamum oruvaṇē tēvaṇum”
 eṇra karuttu aṇātikālamāka nilavi
 vantirukkak kāṇkiṇōm. uyirkaḷ yāvum orē
 kaṭavuḷiṇ paṭaiṇṇu eṇru karuti varukira
 camūkattil, maṇitarukkiṭaiyil piṇap piṇāl
 vēṇrumai iruntatillai. vaṭaṇulār karuttu
 carrē mārupaṭṭirukkum. nālu yukāṇkaḷilum
 nālu varuṇaṇkaḷ ātikkam perriruntāṇa eṇru
 ivarkaḷ colvārkaḷ. nāṇku varuṇattār
 piṇāmaṇar kṣattiriyar vaiciyar cūttirar
 eṇpōr. innālvarum aṭippaṭai

82

yāṇa toḷil vēṇrumaikaḷ kāraṇamāka ivvāru
 pāku pāṭu ceyyappeririruntaṇar. cāttuvika
 kuṇattiṇ pirati palippu piṇāmaṇa camūkam;
 irācata kuṇakkiṇ piratipalippu kṣattiriyar
 camūkam; tāmaca kuṇattiṇ pirati palippu
 maṇra iru camūkaṇkaḷum eṇpar.
 ikkūrukkaḷ yāvum muḷumaiyum
 poruttameṇrō, poruḷ uṭaiyaṇa eṇrō
 karutuvataṇkillai. makkaḷuḷ kalviyālum

This is the religious teaching of all the traditions of Hinduism.

Many religious traditions believe that worldly life is permanent and wealth and pleasure are also permanent, but these concepts were widely condemned and set aside by Hinduism and Śaivism. Similarly, [those religions] thought that ethical conduct was the ultimate goal. This concept does not bring any fulfillment in life. They have not given an acceptable answer to the question of why one should behave according to ethical conduct. Ethical conduct is meant for spiritual freedom, which is the highest [aim] of all; then, the path of good conduct is a path that arose to get rid of fetters, to remove ignorance. This removal of ignorance and removal of bondage gives freedom. The freedom here considered implies merging with the all-pervading divine bliss.

The varnas

With this preamble, let's note some basic dharmas. The dharmas of the varṇāśramas have been provided a long time ago. It is good to know some stands of Śaivism in this regard. First of all, we find that in Śaivism the concept according to which there is only one community and one God has existed since time immemorial. In a society where all living beings are considered to be creations of only one God, there was no difference among the people by birth. The stand of Sanskrit scriptures about this is very different. They say that the four varṇas were the dominant ones in all the four Yugas. The four varṇas' members are the Brahmins, the Kṣatriyas, the Vaiśyas, and the Śūdras. All these four [varṇas]

were classified according to differences in their basic occupations. Brahmin community is the reflection of the sattva guṇa; the Kṣatriya community is a reflection of the raja guṇa; the other two communities are conceived as the reflection of the tamas guṇa. All these claims are not accepted, they are not considered to be suitable. Brahmins were said to be those who prevailed among

oḷukkattālum uyarntār pirāmaṇar enappaṭṭār; pīrkālattiḷ itu pīrappaiyoṭṭiya pākupāṭākiviṭṭatu. avarkaḷuṭaiya toḷil upaniṭataṅkaḷil colliyaṭai, cuvāṭṭiyāyamum, pīravacaṇamum; atāvatu oṭalum, oṭuvittalum. ivai oru lakṣyamākac collappaṭṭaṇavē anri, muḷumaiyum appaṭṭiyē ceyalmuṇaiyil iruntaṇa eṇru karutuvataṅkillai.

caivam eṇru pārkkumpōtu, aṅku ivvakaiyāṇa nālu varuṇap pākupāṭu iruntamai teriyavillai. oṇrē kulamum eṇramaiyiṇālē, makkaḷ taṅkaḷ vaḷipāṭṭiṇālum, vāḷkkai muṇaiyiṇālum, caivar eṇrum allātavar eṇrum collappaṭṭaṇar. arupattu mūvar nāyaṇmār varalārrai mēleḷunta vāriyākap pārttālum kūṭa, ivvuṇmai naṭaimuṇaiyil iruntamai naṅku viḷaṅkum. apparum appūṭiyum, apparum campantarum, tirunīlakaṇṭa yāḷppāṇarum campantarum, tirunīlakkārūm tirunīlakaṇṭa yāḷppāṇarum campantarum mutalāṇa toṭarpukaḷai ciṇṇitu ūṇriḷ kavaṇittālum itu naṅku viḷaṅkum. ivarkaḷ cāṭiyiṇāl vērupaṭṭiruntum kūṭa, caivam eṇra aḷavil ivarkaḷuṭaiya camūka vāḷkkai cāṭiyaik kaṭanta orē camūkamāka amaintiruntatu.

cila camayaṅkaḷil iruntamaipōla caivattil pīrappiṇāl peṇṇukkut tāḷvu illai. nāyaṇmār varalār

riḷum caṅkanūḷ pulavar varalārrilum, pīrkālac cōḷar varalārrilum itai viḷaṅkak kāṇalām. vēriṭattilum ikkaruttai viḷakkaiyirukkīṇōram.

āciramam

aṭuttu, potuvāka intiyac camayaṅkaḷ aṇaittilum, āciramam eṇra karuttukku tarappaṭṭuḷḷa mutāṇmai iṅkuk karutattakkatu. ākiramam eṇpatu maṇita vāḷviṇṇ nilaikaḷ allatu paṭikaḷ. kalvi payilum paruvam pīramacariya nilai. aṭuttuc collappaṭṭuvatu, maṇam ceytu koṇṭu oruvaṇum oruttiyum kūṭi vāḷum illaṇam; ilvāḷkkaiyiṇ muṭivil oruvaṇum oruttiyumākat toṭaṅkiya vāḷkkai mutirntu, kuṇukiya kuṭumpap paṇṇukkaḷaik kaḷaintu, makkaṭkulam muḷumaiyum orē

the people for their education and conduct; later, this became a discrimination based on birth. According to what is said in the Upaniṣads, their occupations are *svādhyāya* [or studying without the help of a teacher] and *pravacana* [or recitation of a scripture], that is, reciting or teaching [the Vedas]. Although those [occupations] were mentioned as their aims, one doesn't have to think that it was like this in practice.

When we analyze Śaivism, there is no such classification [of society] in four *varṇas*. Since [there is the notion that the Śaivas belong] to one single community, people were called “Śaivas” or “non-Śaivas” according to their worship and way of behavior. Even if we look at the lives of the sixty-three Nāyaṇmārs superficially, the existence of this practice emerges. This can be clearly understood if we pay a little attention to the relationships between Appar and Appūti, Appar and Campantar, Tirunīlakaṇṭa Yāḷppāṇam and Campantar, and Tirunīlanakkar, Tirunīlakaṇṭa Yāḷppāṇam, and Campantar. Although they differed by *jāti*, they were Śaivas; therefore, their social life was set as [belonging to] one single community that transcended *jātis*.

In Śaivism, women are not considered to have a lower status by birth, as was the case in some religions. This

can be noted from the lives of the Nāyaṇmārs, those of the Caṅkam literature's writers, and from the histories of the late Cholas. We have explained this concept elsewhere.

The āśramas

Next, the importance generally given to the concept of *āśrama* in all the Indian religions is worth considering here. The *āśramas* are stages or steps of human life. The *brahmācarya* stage is the period during which one studies. Next follows the stage in which a man and a woman get married and live the life of householders; at the end of this life, when the husband and wife have become old, the narrow family ties are removed, and the entire world is considered

kuṭumpamāyk karutum pakkuvam perra vānappiratta nilai. itaṅ piṅ varuvatu nāṅkāvatāna pūraṅak turavu nilai; caṅṅiyācam enru collappaṭum. innilaikaḷaiyum, potuvākat tamīṅnāṭṭilum, ciṅrappākaḷ caiva camayattilum, ivarṅrukku amaintuḷḷ iṭattaiyum nām ūṅrip pāṅkkumpōtu, cila karuttukkaḷ teḷivākaḷ terikiṅraṅa.

mutalāvatu, pīramacariyam ākiya māṅāka nilai. itu nūḷkaḷ mūlam naṅku pulappaṭukiṅratu. ilakkaṅa nūḷkaḷum camaya nūḷkaḷum, māṅākaṅ ilakkaṅam āciriyaṅ ilakkaṅam enru teḷivāyp pakuttuk kūṅumiṭattu, pīramacārikkuriya vāḷḷkai muṅaiyum kuṅrikkōlum viḷakkamākap pulappaṭukiṅraṅa. camaya tiḷṅṅai maṭṭum perruc caivanilaiyil niṅru, civālaya vaḷipāṭum, ācāriya vaḷipāṭum ceyya vēṅṅiyavaṅ māṅākaṅ. eḷuttari vittavaṅ iravaṅākaḷum enra cāmāṅiyac corḷalellām avāṅukku irukkavēṅṅiya kuṅrikkōḷai naṅku uṅarttukiṅraṅa.

māṅākaḷaṅ kalvi karṅu muṅintapiṅ akkāḷattil muṅaiyāka oru peṅṅai maṅantu illarattil irukkavēṅṅiyavaṅ. ilvāḷḷkai cemmaiyaṅ naṅantāḷtāṅ piṅ ācīramaṅkaḷ cemmaiyaṅ niṅru nilavum eṅpatu ellā nūḷkaḷukkum oppa muṅinta karuttu. mēlum, caiva camayattil aṅiyavar vaḷipāṭum oru mukkiyamāṅa kaṅamai. aṅṅiyum, jampulattārai oṅpavēṅṅum enru nūḷkaḷ kūṅukiṅraṅa. ittaṅaikkum ākāram illaram. mēlum, ālayaṅkaḷum āṅciyum nāṅum niṅru nilavuvatu illarattōṅrāḷtāṅ. uṅavu uṅpatti ceypavaṅ illarattāṅ. “aṅṅattaip perukkuvāyāka” eṅpatu, paṅippu muṅittu illarattil amarappōkum nilaiyiluḷḷavaṅukku upaṅiṅatam kūṅum upatēcaṅkaḷuḷ oṅru. ākaṅē itai virittuccolla avaciyaṅmillai. iṅku oru karuttaik kuṅriṅpiṅṅalām. illarattil iruntu vāḷpavaṅ orukāḷattil oṅtaliṅ poruṅṅut taṅ maṅaiviyaiyum curṅrattaiyum piṅintu celvatuṅṅu enru nūḷkaḷ kūṅum. ikkaruttu caivattil koḷḷattakkaṅtē. illarattil iruppavaṅ vicēṅta tiḷṅṅaiyum perru āṅmārṅta pūcaiyum māḷēcura pūcaiyum ceyṅarḷkuriyāṅ ivaṅ nāṅaṅnūḷkaḷai oṅtiṅāḷtāṅ ipṅpūcaikaḷiṅ

as one family. After this follows the fourth stage of complete renunciation; it is called *saṅṅnyāsa*. Some notions become clear when we consider these stages and their place in Tamil Nadu in general and Śaivism in particular.

The first is the learning stage, called *brahmācārya*. This is well understood through the texts. Grammatical texts and religious texts clearly analyze and transmit the required qualities of the student and the *ācārya*, and clearly explain the lifestyle of the *brahmācāri* and his goals. A disciple is one who becomes a Śaiva through a religious initiation, who has to perform temple worship, and praise [his] *ācārya*. All the common sayings about the *guru* being like the Lord clearly convey the goal he should have.

After the disciple has completed his education, he has to marry a woman properly and [conduct] the life of a householder. A concept accepted by all the scriptures is that once one has fulfilled this life [‘s duties], the stage of asceticism will be well settled. Moreover, in Śaivism, worshipping the servants is an important duty. Besides, the scriptures also prescribe preserving the five-fold rule of conduct, *aiṅpulattār*, [that is, towards the ancestors, God, his guests, his relations, and himself]. The household life is the basis for these. Moreover, householders maintain the temples, the government, and the country. A householder produces food. “Increasing the wealth” is one of the teachings given by the Upaniṅsads to a man who has completed his studies and settled down in the household. So there is no need to explain it further. A comment may be made here. The scriptures say that once a person who lived in the household used to leave his wife and family for the sake of reciting [the scriptures]. This concept is accepted in Śaivism. The householder obtains the *viṅṅeṅṅadīkṅṅa* and

cirappu ivanukkup poruntum ātalāl, ōtarpirivu enpatu caivattilum koḷlattakkatē. iṇi, mūṇṇāvātākiya vāṇappiratta nilai. “kāmañ cāṇra kaṭaikkōṭkālai-ēmam cāṇra makkaḷoṭu tuvaṇṇi-arāmpuri curramoṭu kiḷavaṇum kiḷattiyum-cirantatu payirral irantataṇ payaṇē” enṇa cūttirattil tolkāppiyar inta nilaiyaik kuṇṇipitukirār enṇu āṇṇōr kūruvar. nāyaṇmārkaḷuḷ palar varalārukaḷ inta nilaikkū eṭuttukkāṭṭukkaḷāy uḷḷana. utāraṇam, tiruṇḷlakaṇṭattuk kuyavaṇār. eṇiṇum, vāṇap

performs the *ātmārtha pūjā* and the *Maheśvara pūjā*. Since he gets the merits of these prayers only if he recites the *jñāna* scriptures, the recitation section is also accepted in Śaivism.

Now, the third stage is that of the *vānaprastha*. The learned ones say that the *Tolkāppiyam* is referring to this stage in the *sūtra* that says: “When husband and wife reach the maturity of *kāma* [stage of life], having lived with their offspring and realized their religious duties, they perform great [community services] along with the virtuous ones and die for it – this is their benefit!”²³³ Many lives of the *Nāyaṇmārs* exemplify this condition. For example, the potter *Tiruṇḷlakaṇṭam*. However, it cannot be assumed that

piratta vāḷkkai caivattiṇ aṅkamāy iruntatu enṇu colla iyalātu. iṇi muṭivākat turavu vāḷkkai. turavu caivattil ciranta iṭam perrirukkīratu. akatturavum ataṇ aṭaiyālamākap purattē uḷḷa kāvi uṭaiyum, caivam tōṇṇiya nāḷākap perumatippup perrirukkiṇṇa. caivattiṇ tiruvētaṅkaḷāṇa vipūti uruttirākkāṅkaḷoṭu, turaviṇ ciṇṇaṅkaḷāṇa caṭaiyum kāvi uṭaiyum, cērttuc collutalum poruntum. āṇṇāḷ kāvi uṭaiyaic caivak turavikaḷukkē uriyatākak collukiṇṇār. turavikaḷ ulakapparrai uṇmaiylēyē turantu” uṭai kōvaṇam uṇṭu, uraṅkap purantiṇṇaiyuṇṭu, uṇavukku iṅku aṭaikāy ilyuṇṭu, aruntat taṇṇiṇṇuṇṭu, aruntuṇaikkē viṭaiyērum iṅcar tiruṇāmam uṇṭu” enṇu vāḷntavarkaḷ. caivattil turaviṇ cirappai evvaḷavu uyarttic conṇālum takum. celvamaṇaittaiyum orē kaṇattil turantu, cuṭukāṭṭuc cāmpal mēṭṭiṇ mītu amarntirunta paṭṭiṇṇattārai nōkki, “jayā, itil eṇṇa cirappaik kaṇṇirka!?” enṇu kēṭṭa aracaṇukku, avar conṇa maṇumolīyākiya “nīṇṇirka, yām irukka” enṇa cila corkaḷ turavarattiṇ ēṇṇattai naṅku kāṭṭum. caivattil kuṇṇipitṭuc conṇāl illaṇam

the *vānaprastha* life was part of Śaivism. Finally, there’s the ascetic life. Asceticism holds an essential place in Śaivism. Both the internal austerity and the saffron-colored clothes that are its external distinguishing marks have been held in great respect since the origins of Śaivism. It is appropriate to add that the saffron-colored clothes and the matted lock hair are symbols of renunciation along with the Vedas of Śaivism, the sacred ashes, and the *rudrākṣa*. *Āṇṇāḷ* said that the saffron colored-clothes were reserved for Śaiva ascetics. Truly renouncing the worldly things, ascetics live thinking that “they just need a *kōvaṇam* for cloth, an outer yard for sleeping, betel leaves for food, water for drinking, the sacred name of God for requesting his graceful help”. No matter how much the excellences of the ascetics in Śaivism are exaggerated, [it is well deserved]. To the king who had asked, “Sir, what good do you see in this?”, [an ascetic] who had instantaneously renounced all the wealth would say as a reply the few words “You stand, I will sit here”, while looking towards the starving people sitting on the pile of cremation ashes; this exemplifies his

85

²³³ I thank Professor K. Nachimuthu from the EFEO, Pondicherry, for his help on this quotation. Nevertheless, note that he supported the translation of *kiḷavaṇum kiḷattiyum* as “the hero and the heroine”. See also the translation of Indra Manuel and Gloria Sundramathy (2010, 259).

turavaram enra irañṭē arañkaḷ; irañṭum onrai onru taḷuvi uyartti nirpaṇa. caina putta camayattotarpu, turavukku atikac cirappu aḷittatu. potuvākac caivam illaram turavaram irañṭukkumē camamāṇa cirapput tantiruntatu. ākavē, ellām turanta paramayōkiyākiya tirumūlar, uṭampai nanṅu pēṇavēṇṭum, uṭampai oruttāl, viṇaiṇṇipayanai

anupavittuk kaḷittal nikaḷātu, ātalāl uṭampai orukkum turavu vēṇṭuvatillai, uṭampaip pēṇi vaḷarppatāṇa illara vāḷkkaiyil kuraiṇṇai illai enru karuttuppaṭap pāṇiyiruppatum inṅuk karuta takkatu. inṇaṇam varuṇam āciramam enra irañṭu tarumaṅkaḷaiyum paṇṇic caivattiṇ karuttaik telivu paṭuttik koḷḷutal nallatu. varuṇam enpatu caivattil piṇṇappiṇāl uyarvu tāḷvu karutum cāti enpatanru eṇavum, āciramaṅkaḷil illaram turavaram enra irañṭē caivattil vitantu oṭappaṭṭaṇa eṇavum nām ituvarai telivupaṭuttinōm.

viruntōmpal
aṭuttuc collattakkatu viruntōmpalākiya peruṅ kaṭamai. itu intu camaya muḷumaikkum potu. “atiti tēvō pava” enpatu upuniṭatam. eṇiṇum, caivattil itarkuḷḷa peruṅcirappu pira camayappirivukaḷil illai, caiva camayattil, atitiyaic civamāḷkavē karutippōṇra vēṇṭum. ituvē aṭiyavar vaḷipāṭu enpatākac camaya tattuvaṅkaḷil onrākavē itu amaintuḷḷatu. aṭiyavar vaḷipāṭṭiṇ iyalpaiyum atan cirappaiyum periya purāṇa varalārukaḷ namakku nanṅu uṇarttukiṇṇaṇa uṭaṅ kūrattakkatu āvukkōr vāyurai enra karuttu. pacuvum kāḷaiyum caivaṇṇukku ellā vitattilum cirappu vāyntaṇa. unṇumun pacuvukku oru piṭi pul aḷippatu caiva tarumaṅkaḷuḷ aṭippaṭaiyāṇa onru. itaic carru virittup poruḷ koṇṭāl, ellā uyirkaḷiṭattum anpu kāṭṭuvatarṅku itu aṭaiyāḷamenpatu viḷaṅkum. itaṅ payaṇāka,

86

superiority. Within Śaivism, there are only the two religious codes of conduct of householding and asceticism; they depend on each other.

The contact with Jainism and Buddhism provided asceticism with greater importance. Śaivism generally recognized an equal status to both asceticism and householding. Therefore, Tirumūlar, who had renounced everything as a great *yogi*, [has shown that] one should take good care of his body and that if one rejects his body, then

he will not experience the *karma*; thus, there is no need to sacrifice one's body and it is worth noting that there is no deficiency in the family life, which takes care of the body and nurtures it.

It is good to clarify the stand of Śaivism about the two *dharmas* of the *varṇāśramas* in this manner. So far we have explained that in Śaivism the superiority or inferiority [of a person] does not depend on birth, and householding and asceticism are the only two *āśramas*.

Hospitality

Next, the great duty of hospitality is worth mentioning. This is a common [practice] in the entire Hinduism. “The guest is like a God”, say the Upaniṣads. However, in other religions it is not as prominent as in Śaivism. In Śaivism, a guest is considered as Śiva. This is one of the religious principles conveyed by the servants' worship. The hagiographies of the *Periyapurāṇam* make us well aware of the nature and excellence of saints' worship. The concept that the cow and the bull are important in every way for a Śaiva is also worth noting. Offering a handful of grass to the cow before eating is a fundamental part of the Śaiva *dharma*. Giving this concept a broader meaning, it can be explained as showing love to all living beings. As a result, all living beings are creations of God, they are sacred in nature, there is no superiority or inferiority among

uyirkaḷ yāvum tayvattiṅ paṭaiṅṅu, avai
yāvum puṇṇitattai taṅmai vāyntaṅṅa, avar

ruḷ uyarvu tāḷvu illai, pul, pūṅṅu, pulu,
maṅṅitar, muṅṅivar, tēvar ākiya yāvāriṅṅattum
caivaṅṅ camamaṅṅa pārvai uṭaiyavaṅṅāy
iruttal vēṅṅṅum eṅṅra nīti naṅṅku uṅṅar
ttappaṭuvatu pulappaṭum.

nallolukkam

taṅṅi maṅṅicaṅṅiṅṅattu amaivaṅṅēṅṅiya
nalloḷukkapp paṅṅpukaḷai ellā nūḷkaḷum
virittuk kūrukiṅṅraṅṅa. ivai illarattārukkum
tuṅṅavikkum, kūṅṅiyum kūṅṅaintum,
poruntuvaṅṅavākum. inta nūṅṅrāṅṅiḷ maḷātmā
kāṅṅanti tam āciraṅṅattil vāḷṅṅta tēcapaktar
ellōrukkum amaivaṅṅ vēṅṅiya kuṅṅaṅṅaḷeṅṅru
palavarraṅṅait tokuttuc coṅṅṅār. avar putitāka
etaiyum collavillai: nam taruma
cāttiraṅṅaḷil cirappāy varpuṅṅuttiya
paṅṅpukaḷaiyē avar mīṅṅṅum valiyuruttinār.
ivarraṅṅaip pēcāta taṅṅiḷ nūḷkaḷ illai. virivaṅṅcic
cilavarraṅṅai maṅṅṅum iṅṅku cuṅṅṅikkāṅṅi niṅṅuttik
koḷkiṅṅōm.

87

kāṅṅtiyaṅṅiḷ iruperum tattuvaṅṅkaḷāṅṅa
akimcai cattiyam eṅṅra iraṅṅaiyum
tiruvaḷḷuvar, “oṅṅrāka nallatu kollāmai-
maruṅṅu ataṅṅ piṅṅcārap poyyāmai naṅṅru” eṅṅru
atē varicaiyil etirmaṅṅaiyākac colliyirukkak
kāṅṅkiṅṅōm. uṅṅaṅṅpāṅṅṅu muraiyil akimcayē
aṅṅpuṅṅaimaiyākum. “evvuyirum niṅṅṅuyirpōḷ
eṅṅṅi iraṅṅkavum niṅṅ teyva aruṅṅkaruṅṅai
ceyyāy” eṅṅpatu caivaruṅṅaiya pirāṅṅṅṅai.
ippēruṅṅmaiyaip palaviṅṅaṅṅaḷilum viḷakki
yuraittirukkiṅṅōm. uṅṅaṅṅ kūṅṅrattakkatu
cattiyam. āṅṅṅavaṅṅ cattiya vaṅṅiviṅṅaṅṅ. ituṅṅē
cat-cic-aṅṅantam eṅṅra kaṅṅavul ilakkaṅṅattil
mutalāvatu uḷḷa cat ākum. aṅṅaittukkum
avaṅṅē āṅṅāramāyiruntu tāṅṅki naṅṅattukiṅṅrāṅṅ.
maṅṅitaṅṅ tāṅṅum tirikaṅṅaṅṅa cuttiyāka,
cattiyattiṅṅinṅrum-uṅṅmai,

vāymai, meymmai eṅṅra mūṅṅriṅṅinṅrum-
piṅṅalāta vāḷḷkai vāmaṅṅēṅṅiyavaṅṅ.
iyaḷpākavē pācaṅṅkaḷiṅṅ nīṅṅkiyavaṅṅ eṅṅpatu
iraivaṅṅ kuṅṅaṅṅaḷaiṅṅ pēcum peyarkaḷul
oṅṅru. maṅṅitaṅṅ yāṅṅ eṅṅatu eṅṅṅum paṅṅru allatu
cerukku aruttu vāḷa vēṅṅiyavaṅṅ. ipparraṅṅai
aruttāl, piṅṅravi vēṅṅ arupaṅṅṅup pōkiṅṅratu.
āṅṅararivu paṅṅaitta maṅṅitaṅṅ pulāṅṅkaḷiṅṅ vaḷi tāṅṅ
pōvatai viṅṅṅu, taṅṅ vaḷiḷḷu avarraṅṅaik

88

them, and every Śaiva should have equal
behavior towards a plant, an animal, a man,
a sage, or a God.

Good conduct

All the scriptures elaborate on the virtues
that an individual should possess. These are
suitable for the householder and the ascetic,
sometimes more and sometimes less. In this
century, Mahatma Gandhi summarized
many qualities that every devotee who lived
in his *aśram* should have. He was not saying
anything new: he reiterated the same
qualities that had been so significant in our
Dharmaśāstras. There is no Tamil scripture
that does not mention these. We will point
out only a few in detail for brevity’s sake.

We see Tiruvaḷḷuvar conveying the two
great philosophies of Gandhi, namely
ahimsā and *satyam*, in the same order, “the
abstinence from killing is the first of the
good qualities; the second is to say no
falsities”. Accordingly, non-violence is
love. Śaivas have the prayer: “Think of
every living being as our own, and may the
divine grace bless them”. We have
explained this phenomenon in many places.
Truth is worth mentioning. God is an
embodiment of truth. Therefore, *sat* is the
first element appearing in the epithet *sat-cit-
ānanda* that defines God. He is the source
and sustainer of everything. Men also
should live a life that does not deviate from
the three principles of truth, righteousness,
and reality, which

are the three means for purifying the three
stains. When one is free from attachments,
his name becomes one among the names
that represent the qualities of the Lord. A
man has to live by cutting off his attachment
or arrogance. If the attachment is cut, the
root of rebirth is cut. When the enlightened
man leaves the way of the senses and uses
them only as tools for his life, he attains

karuvikaḷākak koḷḷumpōtu, vāḷkkaiyil
 camanilai kaikūtukīratu.
 camanilaiyuṭaiyavaṅ vāḷvil kalakkam illai,
 accam illai. camanilai eṅpatu tiruvaruḷ
 pērrukkuṭ taṅṅaiṭ pāṭṭiramākki, taṅ
 ceyalaṅṅu ellām avaṅ ceyalē eṅṅu pāvittu
 vāḷum nilai. inta nilai mutirntu mutirntu,
 teyva nilaiyai eḷiṭil aṅuka ucavukīratu.
 iruṭiyāka, tūymai eṅpatu atuvē taṅṅiyāṅa
 peruntattuvam. ellāc camayaṅkaḷilum
 tūymai irai nilai eṅṅē collapperum. maṅam
 moḷi meykaḷiṅ tūymaiyai vaḷarttuk koṅṅavaṅ
 irainilaiyai vaḷarttuk koṅṅavaṅē eṅṅu
 kūruvatu mikaiyākātu.
 mēlē nām narḷkuṅaṅkaḷaik kurippitṭōm.
 appaṭiyē tikkūṅaṅkaḷ taṅṅaiṭ parrāṭapaṭi
 maṅitaṅ kāttuk koḷḷa vēṅṅiyavaṅ eṅpatu
 collāmālē amaiyum. ivarrai arupakai eṅṅu
 tēvāram collum; ivai yāvaṅa: kāmam
 kurōtam lōpam mōkam matam mārcariyam
 eṅpaṅa. “kāmam vekūḷi mayakkam ivai
 mūṅṅiṅ nāmam keṭak keṭum nōy” eṅṅa
 varikaḷ ellōrum aṅṅintavai. ivarraiṭ pakai
 eṅṅē tamil vētam kurippitṭatu. palavākap
 pirittuk kurippitṭa pōkilum, aṭṭipṭaiyākak
 karuta vēṅṅiyatu oṅṅṅē: atuvē, eṅakku eṅṅum
 avā; ivvavā nitta māṭṭirattilēyē mīṅṅtu

vārāta perunerī cittikkum. avā eṅpatu
 cuyanālattāl viḷainta ācai. ācaiyai
 aṅṅukkavēṅṅum eṅṅu tirukkuṅaḷum
 tirumantiramum naṅku upatēcikkiṅṅaṅa.
 “tūymai eṅpatu avāviṅṅmai”, “avā eṅpa ellā
 uyirkkum eṅṅāṅṅum-tavāp piṅṅappiṅṅum
 vittu” eṅṅa karuttukkaḷ iṅku āḷntu
 cintittarḷkuriyaṅa.
 ivvāru kūriya kuṅaṅkaḷ potuvāka, vaḷarum
 camayaṅkaḷ aṅṅaittukum poruntuvaṅa; intu
 camayap pirivukaḷ aṅṅaittukum,
 caivattukkum poruntuvaṅa eṅpatil
 taṭaiyillai. caiva tarumam
 innarḷkuṅaṅkaḷaiṭ pēṅṅik kāttu
 vaḷarppatākum.
 “īcā vāsyam itam carvam” eṅṅpatu,
 tacōpaṅṅitātāṅkaḷuḷ mutal upaṅṅitātattiṅ
 mutal mantirattiṅ mutal toṭar. ivai
 aṅṅaittilum īcuvaraṅ irukkiṅṅāṅ eṅpatu itaṅ
 poruḷ. itu koḷḷaiyaḷavil maṭṭumaṅṅri, tinacari

balance in life. A balanced person has no disturbance in life and no fear. Equanimity is the state of making oneself a vessel for God and believing that all one’s inaction is His action. This stage gradually matures and enables easy access to godhood.

Finally, purity is one of the greatest qualities one should have. Purity is said to be a divine condition in all religions. It is not an exaggeration to say that the one who develops purity in the mind, speech, and truth is the one who has developed a divine status.

We mentioned the good qualities above. Accordingly, it goes without saying that a man should guard himself against bad attributes. The *Tēvāram* calls these as *arupakai*. They are: *kāma* [or desire], *krodha* [or anger], *lobha* [or greed], *mada* [or arrogance], *mōha* [or infatuation], and *mātsarya* [or envy]. Everyone knows the lines “Desire, anger, and confusion: where the name of these three are destroyed, the evil will perish”. The Tamil Veda refers to these as enmities. Although they are subdivided into many parts, there is basically only one of them to consider: *avā*; the moment you leave out this desire, a great way of life

will be attained. *Avā* is the selfish desire. The *Tirukkuṅaḷ* and the *Tirumantiram* clearly taught that desire should be cut off. The concepts of “purity is the absence of *avā*” and “*avā* is the main seed of all living beings’ eternal rebirth” are worthy of deep thought here.

These qualities are generally fitting to all the flourishing religions; they apply to all sects of Hinduism and are suitable to Śaivism too. The Śaiva *dharma* is to maintain and nurture these virtues.

“God lives in everything” is the first sequence of the first *mantra* of the first Upaniṅṅad among the Daśopaniṅṅad. It means that God is present in everything. This is not only a principle but also a behavior pattern that dominates a Śaiva every second of his daily life. The word “Śaiva” means “vegetarianism”, which is a unique feature

vālvil ovvoru vināṭiyum caivaṇai āṭkolḷum taṇṭitarumam. caivam enra collukkē pulāl unṇāmai enra poruḷ tōṇri inṇum iruntu varuvatu, caiva tarumattukkuriya taṇṭipperumaiyākum. itu parri munnamē viḷaṅkak kūriyirukkirōm.

caiva tarumam

caivam veṇṇum tattuva cāttiram maṭṭumalla, camayamum kalantatu. iccamayattil civālaya valipāṭu mukkiyamāṇa or aṭippaṭai. caivar tiṇantōrum kōyil valipāṭu ceyya vēṇṭiyavar. uyarntavar tāḷntavar, kalviyāḷar, ṇāṇi, kalviyarravar, āṭavar peṇṭir enra evvita vērupāṭumillāmal, caiva makkaḷ aṇaivarum kōyilil ceṇru civaperumāṇai muṇaiyāka valipāṭuvatu caiva tarumaṅkaḷil mukkiyamāṇatonru.

itukārum kūriyavarrait tokuttuc colvatā ṇāl, caiva tarumam eṇpatu kāmak kurōtam mutalāṇa pakaikaḷai veṇru, aṇpu cattiyam ākiya mēlāṇa paṇpukaḷai vaḷarttu, ellā uyirkaḷiṭattum aṇpu pūṇṭu oḷukutal; vāḷkkaiyil eḷum kaṭamaikaḷai irai paṇi enra karuttōṭu palaṇil parriṇric ceṭtal; tūṇ eṇpatai maṇantu cēvaiyil tannai arppanittal eṇru kūralām. caiva tarumattil illaṇam tuṇavarāram iraṇṭum perum ciṇappuṭaiyaṇa; cāti enra pēccu illai, ataṇāl varum uyarvu tāḷvum illai. ālaya valipāṭum aṭiyār valipāṭum ciṇappāṇa tarumaṅkaḷāy uḷḷāṇa. vāḷkkaiyiṇ urutip poruḷkaḷil irutiyaṇa vīṭṭaiyē caivam peritum mutāṇmaiyaṅk karutukiratu. vīṭu pēṇrukkku ariviṇāl ṇāṇa māṅkkattaip parrit tiruvaruḷ tuṇaiyai nāṭuvatai viṭa, pakṭi pūṇṭu oḷuki ataṇ mūlam aruḷ peṇru vīṭuperutal eḷitu eṇpatē caiva tarumamākum.

caiva tarumaṅkaḷ aṇaittukkum orē aṭippaṭai: iraiyaṇ oruvaṇ irukkirāṇ. avaṇ karuṇāmūrṭti, aruḷ vaṭivāyullavaṇ. uyirkaḷiṇ pakkuvattukku ēṇpa avaṇatu aruḷ vantu poruntum. avaṇatu perumaiyum avaṇ aruḷiṇ kāraṇamum nammāl aṇiyappaṭāṭatu; nām avaiṇraic cōtittariya muṇpaṭṭup payaṇillai. ātalāl arulukkup pāttiramākumpaṭi nammait tayārittuk koḷvataik tavira vēru nām ceyyattakka tonrum illai. ivvaṭippaṭai eppōtum caivar niṇaiyil irukka vēṇṭum.

of the Śaiva *dharma*. We have already explained about this previously.

Śaiva dharma

Śaivism is not just a philosophical system but also a religion. In this religion, the Śiva temple worship is an important basis. A Śaiva must perform temple worship every day. An important *dharma* for all the Śaivas is to go to the temple and worship lord Śiva properly without making any difference between superior and inferior status, literate, sage, illiterate, man, or woman.

According to what has been said so far, the Śaiva *dharma* is: overcoming the enmities starting from desire and anger; cultivating the superior qualities like love and truth; bestowing love to all living beings; getting detached from the fruits [of an action] with the idea that fulfilling life duties means providing a service to God; dedicating oneself to public service forgetting the ego. Both householding and asceticism are very important in the Śaiva *dharma*; there is nothing to say about the castes, as there is no superiority or inferiority. Temple worship and saints' worship are important *dharmas*. To a great extent, Śaivism considers *mokṣa* of primary importance among the important things in life, although it is the ultimate one. It is easier to obtain Lord's grace through devotion than to seek God's help in the path of enlightenment: that's the Śaiva *dharma*.

Every Śaiva *dharma* has one single basis: there is only one God. He is the *karuṇāmūrṭti*, the embodiment of grace. His grace comes and reaches [everyone] according to the spiritual maturity of the beings. We cannot understand his greatness and the reasons for his grace; there is no point in trying to discover his divine schemes. Therefore, it appears that there isn't anything we have to do apart from

preparing ourselves to receive his grace. A Śaiva must always remember this basic principle.

7
caiva cātaṇam

nāṅku pātam

cātaṇam eṇpatu māṛkkam allatu neri eṇru poruḷpaṭum; iṅku camayattuṛaiyil mutti cērvataṛkuriya neṛiyaiyē kuṛippitukirōm. caivattil itu nāṅku vakaiyākac collappaṭum. cariyai, kiriyai, yōkam, ṅāṇam eṇa. caiva vāḷkkai civārppitamāṇa vāḷkkai. itaṅuḷ cariyaiyāvatu uṭalaiyum, kiriyai intiriyāṅkaḷaiyum, yōkam karaṇaṅkaḷaiyum, ṅāṇam āṇmāvākiya taṅṅaiyum civārppitam ceṭtal eṇru poruḷpaṭum.

91 *civaperumāṅ tirukkōyilil amarntuḷḷa tiruvaruvattai nōkkic ceṅṅum puṛakattoḷil aḷavāṇa valipātu cariyai eṇappaṭum. civaperumāṅṅaiya aruvuvavat tirumēṅiyākiya civaliṅkattai nōkkic ceṅṅum puṛat toḷilum akat toḷilum aḷavāṇa valipātu kiriyai ākum. civaperumāṅṅaiya aruvavat tirumēṅiyai nōkki akattoḷil aḷavāka maṭṭum ceṅṅum valipātu yōkam eṇappaṭum. uruvam aruvuvavam aruvam eṇra mūṅrum kaṭanta mutalvaṅṅittatu, akam puṛam eṇra iruvakait toḷilumiṅṅi, aṛivalavākac ceṅṅum valipātu ṅāṇamāṛkkam eṇappaṭum. inta nālvakai māṛkkamum ṅāṇaneriyiṅ pīrivukaḷ; ivai nāṅkum ṅāṇa māṛkkattil kūṛukiṅṅa cariyai mutalāṇa nāṅku pīrivukaḷ eṇru karuta vēṅṅum.*

inta nāṅkum oṅṅiliruntu oṅṅru vēṅṅavaiyalla; kalantē vāḷkkaiyil aṅucarikkap perupavai. ataṅatan cīrappiyalpu parrit taṅṅittaiyākac kūṛukirōm.

92 *cariyai ivarruḷ cariyaiyāvatu, civaperumāṅ eḷuntaruḷiyirukkiṅṅa tirukkōyilil tiruvalakiṅṅutal, tirumelukkiṅṅutal, tiruviḷakkēṅṅutal, tiru nantavaṅṅam vaittal, pattira puṣpam eṅuttal, tiruppaḷḷit tāmattukkut tirumālai iṅṅai kaṅṅi*

7
Śaiva Practice

The four pādas

Sādhana means *mārga* or path; here, we are referring to the proper ways for obtaining *mukti*. In Śaivism, they are said to be of four types: *caryā* [or good conduct], *kriyā* [or ritual action], *yoga* [or meditation], and *jñāna* [or knowledge]. A Śaiva life is a life dedicated to Lord Śiva. It means offering to Śiva: your body, that is *caryā*; your senses, that is *kriyā*; your mental faculties, that is *yoga*; and your soul, that is *jñāna*.

Caryā is the external service towards the manifested idol set in the Śiva temple. *Kriyā* is both the external and internal service performed towards the *śivaliṅga*, which is the *rūpārūpa* idol of Lord Śiva. *Yoga* is an internal worship only, performed towards the formless embodiment of Lord Śiva. *Jñānamārga* is both the external and internal worship of the three manifested, formless, and *rūpārūpa* manifestations of God performed through knowledge.

All these four *mārgas* are parts of the *jñānamārga*; we must consider all these four sections starting from *caryā* as included in the *jñānamārga*.

These four are not mutually exclusive; they can be observed in life mixed together. We will talk about their characteristics separately.

Caryā

Among these [paths], the *caryāmārga* implies: pilgrimages to temples erected for Lord Śiva; ablutions; lighting the lamps; taking care of the flower garden; plucking the flowers; dressing up the deity with the garland, the bead, the mirror, etc.; burning fragrant incense; making his praise; singing

mutaliyaṇa puṇaintu avaṇ tirumēṇiyil amaikkac ceṭtal, cukanta tūpam iṭṭal, avaṇ pukaḷai vāyāra vāḷttutal, āṇantak kūttāḷal, pūcaik tiraviyaṅkaḷ koṭuttal, aṭiyavaraik kaṇṭāl vaṇaṅki avarukkākavum paṇiviṭai ceṭtal pōṇṇravai.

civaṇaṭiyār valipāṭu caivattil oru cirappāna pakuti. civa paktarkaḷ civaṇ eṇavē vaṇaṅkutarku uriyār. civaṇaṭiyāriṇ tiṇaṅkaḷaik koṇṭāṭṭal mākkēcuvara pūcai eṇappaṭum. caiva ācāriyarum, caiva cantāṇa ācāriyarum, periya purāṇam kūṇum nāyaṇmārum ivar pōṇṇa pīrarum muttiyaṭainta tiṇaṅkaḷil avaravarai niṇaittu vicēṣa ārāṭaṇai ceṭtu aṭiyavarkaḷaiyum ēlai makkaḷaiyum amutu ceṭvittal mākkēcuvara pūcai eṇappaṭum. mākkēcuvara pūcaiṇ ellōraiṇyum camamākavē pāvittu amutu paṭaikka vēṇṭum. itaṇāl viḷaiyum civa puṇṇiyam miḷap peritu. mākkēcuvara pūcai eṇpatu ēlai aṭiyavarukku uṇaḷittal; uṇaviṇarukkum celvarukkum viruntu ceṭtalalla. itarkuṭ tarkāla moḷiyil poruḷ colvatāṇāl, oru varaiyaṇaikkutpaṭṭa camūka cēvai eṇṇu col lalām.

kiriyai

kiriyā māṅkam eṇpatu, maṇam poruntiya malarkaḷ eṭuttu, tūpam tūpam tirumaṅcaṇam tiruvācam tiru amutu pōṇṇravaraik tokuttu vaittuk koṇṭu, pūta cutti tala cutti tiraviya cutti mantira cutti ilinḷa cutti ākiya paṅca cutti ceṭtu, uriya ācaṇattil amarntu, taṇ iṣṭa mūrttiyāṇa param poruḷai ācaṇa mūrtti mūlaṅkaḷiṇālē āvākaṇam paṇṇi, ṇāṇa oḷi vaṭiviṇaṅkaḷap pāvittu, tūymaiyāṇa mey aṇṇiṇāl aruccaṇai ceṭtu pūcittu, uḷḷam urukit tutittu, valipāṭu ceṭtu, nittiya akkiṇi kāriyamum ceṭtal ākum. malarkaḷai vitippaṭi eṭukka vēṇṭum. ṇāṇi utirnta pūkkalūm eṭukkalām. pūviṇṇiṇ paciya ilai koṇṭēyum aruccikkalām. intap pūcai āṇmārta pūcai eṇappaṭum.

yōkam

yōka māṅkam aṇupava pūrvamāka āṇmāvil tāṇē uṇarat takkatu. ivvaṇupavam collukku appārpaṭṭa nilai. eṇṇum, cāttiraṅkaḷ kūrum

and dancing joyfully; offering ritual substances; offering attendance to a devotee when one sees him and assisting him.

The worship of Śiva's servants is a crucial part of Śaivism. The Śiva *bhaktas* are worthy of being worshipped as Śiva. The daily celebration of the Śaiva saints is known as Maheśvara *pūjā*. It is called Maheśvara *pūjā* when devotees and common people perform special worship in memory of the *śaivācāryas*, the *cantāṇācāryas*, the Nāyaṇmār – about whom the *Periyapurāṇam* talks about – , and others like them on the day in which they obtained *mukti*, think about them, perform a special worship, and offer food to the devotees and poor people. During the Maheśvara *pūjā* one must treat everyone equally and make food offerings. Therefore, even the deeds resulting from this are very great. The Maheśvara *pūjā* implies feeding the poor devotees: it is not the offer of food to relatives and wealthy people. Since there is no corresponding term for this in contemporary language, we can define it as a social service.

Kriyā

The *kriyāmārga* implies: plucking flowers that have a good fragrance; putting together and keeping incense, lamp, and water for the idol's ablution, fragrant pastes; performing the five purifications that are *bhūta śuddhi*, *sthala śuddhi*, *dravya śuddhi*, *mantra śuddhi*, and *liṅga śuddhi*; sitting in the proper *āsana*; invoking the Supreme God in the form of personal deity by the *āsana mūrtti*; considering *jñāna* as a form of light; performing the worship with a clean body; praising passionately; performing the worship; and lighting the eternal fire. Flowers should be plucked according to the rules. The *jñānins* can collect the fallen flowers also. One can even perform the worship with the green leaves only, devoid of flowers. This *pūjā* is considered an *ātmārtha pūjā*.

Yoga

arivānum, arikinra arivum, ariyappaṭum
poruḷum ākiya vērupāṭinri attuvitamāyc
caccitānanta vaṭivamāy nirkinra
mutalvaṇōṭu kalakkinra taṇmai

uṭaiyatu-ñānamārkkam. tarmaṅkaḷ ākiya
tavam cepam tiyānam ākiya ivai
onrukkoṅru uyarntukoṅṭu pōkum. ivai
yāvum pōkattai uṭṭum. ātalāl viṭu eytum
nōkkamuṭaiyōr ivvaḷiyilē ceṅrālum kūṭa,
ivarriṅku mēlākum ñānattāl civaṇai aruc
cikka vēṇṭiyavarkaḷ.

in̄ku, pira mārkkakaḷil kūrum
cātaṅkaḷōṭu caivattaip porutti uṅartal
payaṇuṭaiyatāy irukkum. vētānta mārkkattil
karma yōkam, pakti yōkam, ñāna yōkam
enpatu vaḷakkam. yōkam enra collukku
onrāyk kūṭutal enpatē en̄kum poruḷ. virinta
poruḷil itai iraivaṇōṭu iraṅṅarak kalattal
enru collalām. curuṅkiya poruḷil itai, eṭutta
kāriyattōṭu onri nirral enru kollalām.
vētāntattil iccol mārkkamenrē poruḷ
paṭukinratu. makkaḷ taṅkaḷ pakkuvattir̄kum
arivu mutircikkum ērpa inta mūnriḷ onrait
tāṅkaḷ pinparrat takka neriyākak koḷvar. itu
iyalpē. karma yōkam enpatu ellāp
parrukalaḷiyum viṭṭu iraivaṇaiyē parrākak
koṅṭu, tāṅ eṭutta karumattiṅ palaṅaic
civārppanam ceytu, niraivērrutal. caivattil
cariyā mārkkamum kiriyā mārkkamum
ōraḷavu itaṅuḷ aṅaṅkum. ñāna yōkam enpatu
nānattālēyē viṭṭu aṅaiyūm mārkkam. pakti
yōkam enpatu, ñānam kaivanta piṅṅum
allatu atarku munnum kūṭa, iraivaṇaiyaṅri
vēronraiyum ariyāta aṅaṅṅiya pakti
paṅṅutal; itu kiriyai ñānam ākiya
iraṅṅin̄pālum paṭum.
caiva nāyaṅmār varalārukaḷ yāvum inta
mārkkakaḷuḷ aṅaṅkum. perumpāṅmaiōr
varalāru cariyai

yul̄lum pakti yōkattiṅnullum aṅaṅkiyirukkak
kāṅalām. kaṅṅiṅaṅ tappiya kaṅṅappār
varalārum, tantaiyait tāl tuṅitta caṅṅēcar
varalārum, pakti mārkkattir̄ku eṭuttuk
kāṅṅāka uḷḷavai. ivviruvar varalārum
tamiḷnāṅṅiḷ mika mikap purātaṅamāṅavai.

mutti nilai

form of *sat-cit-ānanda* – through the five
methods of reciting, making someone recite,
listening, making listen, and thinking of the
scriptures – regardless of the knower,
knowledge, and the

known object. The *dharmas* of austerity,
japa, and meditation need to be cultivated
together; they will lead to the attainment of
bhoga [or enjoyments]. Therefore, those
who intend to attain salvation should
worship Śiva by wisdom beyond these, even
if they follow this path.

It would be more useful to compare here
Śaivism with the practices taught in other
paths. *Karma yoga*, *bhakti yoga*, and *jñāna
yoga* are common [practices] in the
Vedāntic tradition. The word *yoga* in all
these contexts means “merging together”. In
a broader sense, it can be defined as the total
union with God. In short, this can be called
the union with a given object. In Vedānta,
this word is a synonym of *mārga*. According
to their spiritual maturity and knowledge,
people choose one among these three as the
norm they should follow. It is natural.
Karma yoga is the act of clinging to God
having left all the other attachments and
offering all the benefits of one’s actions to
Śiva. Śaivism includes the *caryāmārga* and
the *kriyāmārga* to some extent. The *jñāna
yoga* is the path of attaining *mukti* through
knowledge alone. *Bhakti yoga* is the
devotion that knows nothing but God, both
after or before the enlightenment; it can be
classified as both *kriyā* and *jñānamārga*.

All the lives of the Śaiva Nāyaṅmārs
occurred in these paths. It can be noticed
that the majority of them

are concerned with *caryā* or *bhakti yoga*.
The life of Kaṅṅappār and that of Caṅṅēcar
are considered models for the *bhaktimārga*.
These two stories are very ancient in Tamil
Nadu.

The path of *mukti*

The four paths starting with *caryā* are also
called, respectively: *tācamārkkam*, or “in

95

96

cariyai mutalāṇa nāṅku mārkkamkaḷum muraiyē tāca mārkkam-aṭimait tīram, carputtira mārkkam-kaṭamaiyaic ceṭtal, cakamārkkam-yōkap payiṛci, caṇ mārkkam-ñāṇanūl ōti atan vaḷi niṛral enavum collappaṭum. camayācāriyar nālvarum innāṅku nerikaḷukkum eṭuttukkāṭṭācac collap perumar. itu ulakukku uṇarttum mukamākak kūriyatē aṅri, pūraṇa uṇmaiyaṭi viḷakkiyatu ākātu. nālvarum avaravar antanta neriyil niṅru eṅkum viyāpakamāy uḷḷa iraivaṇait tammiṭattilē kaṇṭu tammaiyaṭi avviraivaṇōṭu viyāpakamāy uṇarntu, pūraṇa cattiya ṇāṇāṇanta vaṭivilē iraṇṭarat tōyntavarkaḷ.

mēlum cariyaiyul niṛpōr cālōkam perumar enrum, kiriyaiyil niṛpavar cāmīpam perumar enrum, yōkattil niṛpavar cārūpam perumar enrum, ṇāṇattin vaḷiccenrōr maṭṭumē cāyucciyaṭi ākiya attuvita mutti perumar enrum cāttiraṅkaḷ colvatunṭu. ikkaruttu ōraḷavukkē poruntum. ṇāṇa mārkkattiṇuḷ cariyai, kiriyai, yōkam, ṇāṇam ākiya mārkkamkaḷil etanil niṅrōrum uṇmaiyaṇa paramuttīyākiya civa cāyucciyaṭiāyē perukiṛārkaḷ. cālōka, cāmīpa, cārūpam eṇpaṇa patamutti nilai eṇpar periyōr; intappaṭi patamutti nilai kaivarap perōrōrukku mīṇṭum vantu piṛattal unṭu. āṇāl cāyucciyaṭi perōr mīṇṭu

vārā neri peravar. ivarkaḷ civaparamporuḷōṭu iraṇṭarak kalantavarkaḷ. ivarkaḷukku mīṇṭum piṛappu ekkālattum illai. nāyaṇmār arupattu mūvarum inta neriyil cenravarkaḷē. avarkaḷ perṛatu patamuttiyaṅru, paramuttīyē.

civacinnaṅkaḷ-tirunīru

97

caivaruṭaiya vāḷkkaiyil civa ciṇṇaṅkaḷ mukkiya iṭam perukiṇraṇa. ciṇṇaṅkaḷ mūṅru. purattē carīrattilē aṅikiṇra tirunīru, uruttirākka maṇi eṇa iraṇṭum, akattilē eppōtum cintikkat takaka tiruvainteluttu eṇa oṅrum ākum. tirunīru vaṭamoḷiyil vipūti eṇappaṭum; iccollin poruḷ mēlāṇa aicuvariyaṭi eṇpatākum. palavakaiyālum iṅkup potuvāka vaḷakkil uḷḷa vipūti pacuviṇ cāṇattai eṭuttu

the way of a slave”; *carputtiramārkkam*, or “doing one’s duty”; *cakamārkkam*, or “practicing *yoga*”; and *caṇmārkkam*, or “reciting the *jñāna* scriptures”. The four *camācāryas* are said to exemplify these four paths. Although they are considered models for perceiving the world, it does not clarify the complete truth. All four stood in their respective paths, saw the all-pervasive God in them, realized the unity between them and God, and were immersed in the form of complete truth and enlightenment.

Moreover, the Śāstras say that those who stand in the *caryā* path will obtain the *sālōka* [or the blissful condition of being in God’s world]; those who stand in the *kriyā* path will get *samīpa* [or the nearness to God]; those who stand in the *yoga* path will get *sārūpa* [or the same form of God], and only those who have followed the path of wisdom will get such a pearl called *sāyujya* [or the intimate union with God]. This notion is accepted to some extent. Those who stand on the path of wisdom among the four paths of *caryā*, *kriyā*, *yoga*, and *jñāna* will obtain the ultimate union with Śiva, which is the real supreme salvation, *paramukti*. *Sālōka*, *samīpa*, and *sārūpa* provide an inferior state of bliss, *padamukti*; thus, those who obtain the *padamukti* will get another birth, but those who obtain the *paramukti*

will not. They will merge with Lord Śiva. They will never be born again. All the sixty-three Nāyaṇmārs walked on these paths: they did not get the *padamukti*, but the *paramukti*.

Śaiva insignia – the sacred ashes

Śiva’s emblems are very important in the life of a Śaiva. They are three: the sacred ashes that they apply on the external body; second is the *rudrākṣa* beads; and the third one is the *japa* of the five syllables *mantra* in one’s mind.

The sacred ashes are called *vibhūti* in Sanskrit; this word implies God’s quality of boundless compassion. Although there are many kinds of *vibhūti*, generally they take the cow dung, burn it, and make it into

vitippaṭi cuṭṭup perra cāmpalē ākum. vipūti tarikka vēṇṭum enpatai upaniṭataṅkaḷ valiyuruttik kūriyirukkinraṇa. tamil vētattil tiruñāna campantar pāṇṭiyaṅ curattait tīrttapōtu vipūtiyiṅ perumaiyaik kūrit taṇiyāka oru tirunīrup patikam pāṭiyirukkiār. vipūtiyai maṇamuḷla malarkaḷ iṭṭu vaippatu muṛai. vaṭakku allatu kiḷakku mukamāka iruntu aṅṅāntu tarittal muṛai. nīriṭṭuk kuḷaittu vitippaṭi uriya tāṅkaḷil iṭalām; allatu tūḷākap pūcik koḷḷalām. vipūtiyaic cintalākātu. periyōr tarumpōtu vaṅaṅkip peṛa vēṇṭum. vipūti ḍṇitalāṇatu, ṇāṇa oḷiyāl cuṭṭa pacu mala nīkkattiṅpōtu viḷaṅkukinra civattuvap pēṛriṅku aṛikuriyākum.

uruttirākkam

uruttirākkam enpatu civaperumāṅ tirukkaṅṅil tōṅriya maṇi enru poruḷākum. tiripurattu acurar

mūvarāl nikaḷnta tuṅpattait tēvarkaḷ perumāṅiṭam viṅṅappittapōtu aruḷ curanta avaratu tirukkaṅkaḷ poḷinta nīrttuḷikaḷē am maṅikaḷ. ippōtu kiṭaikkinra uruttirākkam imayamalaiyil uḷḷa oru marattiṅuṭaiya vittu. civācāriyarum caivarum enta nēramum akkamaṇi aṅital ciṛappu. caivakkiriyaikaḷ ceyyum poḷutēnum aṅital inriyamaiyātatu. uruttirākkamāṇatu tiru aruṭpēṛriṅku aṭaiyāḷamāy viḷaṅkum.

ainteluttu

mūṅrāvatu ciṅṅam, tiru ainteluttu. tiruvain teluttu takka ācāriyariṭattu upatēca mūlam perattakkatu. upatēcikkiṅra kuru cāmāṅiya maṅitarāyiṅum, avaraip param poruḷ enrē karuti māṅākkāṅ upatēcam peral vēṇṭum. upatēcam perra paṅcāk karattaik kālai mālai iru cantikaḷilum uruttirākkac cepamālai kaiyil ēntic cepikka vēṇṭum. nūṛreṭṭu uru cepittal muṛaiyāṅatu. paṅcākkara mantirattai maṅattilē cepikka vēṇṭum. mantiram enra collirku, “niṅaiṅpavaṅaik kāppatu” enpatu poruḷ. kālaiyil kiḷakku mukamā kavum, mālaiyil vaṭakku mukamā kavum takka ācaṅattil amarntu cintaṅaiyai mantirattiṅ poruḷil celuttic cepikka vēṇṭum. mantirattiṅ

ashes. The Upaniṣads emphasize that one must apply the ashes. Tiruñānacampantar sang the greatness of the sacred ashes in the Tamil Veda when he cured the fever of the Pandya king. It is customary to keep the holy ashes with fragrant flowers. When applying the sacred ashes, one must face either the North or the East and raise the head. One can apply the ashes by dissolving them with water and mixing it with the right paste or smear them like a powder. They should not get wasted. When the great people give it, one must receive it with reverence, having worshipped them. The burning of the cow dung symbolizes that someone is obtaining enlightenment.

Rudrākṣa

The rudrākṣas are said to be the gems that appeared in the eyes of Lord Śiva. When the deities told Śiva about

the sufferings occurring because of the three demons in the Tripura, the tears dropping from his eyes became like gems. From that moment, the rudrākṣa became the seed of a particular tree in the Himalaya. It is very important for the śivācāryas and the Śaivas to wear it always. It has to be put on at least during the Śaiva rituals. The rudrākṣa is a symbol of the obtainment of grace.

The five syllables mantra

The third symbol is the five syllables mantra. This mantra has to be obtained through the proper teaching of an ācārya. Although the ācārya who teaches it is an ordinary man, the disciple must receive the teaching, considering him a supreme being. One must recite the five-syllable mantra taught to him by holding the rudrākṣa beads in hand at the two junctions of the morning and the evening. It is proper to do the japa 108 times. One must recite the five syllables mantra mentally. The meaning of the word mantra is “protection to the one who thinks [about God]”. One must do the japa keeping the mind upon the meaning of the mantra, sitting, and facing the East in the morning and the North in the evening. The true

tūlamāṇa poruḷ, māyayai vilakki viṇaiyaic
cuttu ānmā aruḷōtu cenru civaparam
poruḷittattu onrutal; pīra poruḷkaḷaik
kurumukamāy arīka.

kuruvalipātu

ellā vaiṭika camayaṅkaḷilum uḷlatu pōlavē,
caivattilum kuruvaip paramporuḷākak
karuti valīpaṭatal vēṅṭum. ikkālattil
cuvāṇupūti perrōr mikamika

ariyar. itu kālakkīṅ kōḷāru; ariviyal maṭṭum
vaḷarntu vaḷarntu, āṇmaviyal maṅkip
pōyirru, āṇ māṇupavam perrōrē
iraiyaṇupavaktai māṅākkarukkut
taramuṭiyum. ivvaṇupavam ācāriyaṇukku
inru illātu pōyiṇum, pāvaṇaiyālē tāṅ koḷḷa
vēṅṭum. pāvaṇai uraippāl, oru kālattil
ācāriyaṇittēṇum cīṭaṇittēṇum
uṇmaiyaṇupavam viḷaital kūṭum; itu ulaka
aṇupavamum curuti vākkiamum kūṭa.
tiruvaruḷ aṇupavam perra ācāṇ iruppiṇ,
avaṇ pārvaikkutpaṭṭa cīṭaṇittattu ṇāṇam
tōṇrac ceyyum valimai avaṇukkuṇṭu.
vivēkāṇantarukku iraiyaṇupavattaik tanta
irāmakiruṣṇaparamahamcar pōṇra
aṇupūtimāṅkaḷ nūrrāṇṭukku oruvar
tōṇruvatu arumai. illātavarai, kiṭaitta
kuruvaic civamā kavē karuti valīpaṭa
vēṅṭum.

99 ik kālattil pōlikkurumār ērālamāy muḷait
tirukkīrārkaḷ. iru vakaiyil yōki enap peyar
vaittuk koḷkīrārkaḷ. oru vakaiyār yōkācaṇap
payirci ceytu uṭalai vacappaṭutti
viyakkattakka cila cāṭanai ceytu
kāṭtukīrārkaḷ. itu carkkas vittai pōṇratu.
itarkum ṇāṇamārkkattil nām karutukīṅra
yōkattukkum campantamē illai. inta yōkam,
tiruvaruḷ tuṇaiyāl, āṇmā taṇṇap param
poruḷiṅ tiruvaṭiyil onrac ceyyum oru
pakkuvamākam. itupōlavē, cilar ētō oru
viṇaiyiṅ payaṅkāc ceytarkariya ceyalkaḷ
ceyyum ārral perrirukkīrārkaḷ.
antarattiliruntu tēṅkāyum paḷamum
tirunīrum karkaṇṭum pīra pīracātaṅkaḷum
vara vaḷaikkīrārkaḷ. pārppavarkaḷukku
ituperitum pīramikkat takkatāy iruppatu
iyalpu. cenra talaimuṇaiyil makkaḷ
meyṇṇāṇa nāṭṭam uṭaiyavarkaḷāy

meaning of the *mantra* is removing *māyā*,
burning the *karma*, and merging the soul
with Śiva along with his grace; other
meanings are learned through the *guru*.

Guru worship

Like in every Vedic religion, even in
Śaivism one must consider the *guru* as God
and worship him. Nowadays, it is very rare
to find

someone who obtained self-realization,
svānubhūti. This is the calamity of the time;
as only science kept on developing,
spirituality faded away. Those who obtain
self-realization can give the disciples [the
teaching of] the *śivānubhava*. Although
nowadays the *ācāryas* do not obtain this
experience, we must pretend they do.

By assuming so, at some point, an *ācārya* or
a disciple might obtain the true experience;
this is, of course, a world experience and a
kind of premonition. If there is a preceptor
who had the experience of the divine grace,
then he has the ability to make the disciple
obtain the knowledge. The appearance of a
person who has obtained self-realization
every hundred years is rare, like
Ramakrishna Paramahansa, who gave the
experience of Śiva to Vivekananda. As long
as this is not possible, one has to worship the
available *guru* as Śiva.

Nowadays, many fake *gurus* have sprouted
here and there. They name themselves
yogins with two meanings. There is one type
of people who, having done some *yogāsana*,
control their body and show some surprising
achievements. This is like a circus trick.
There is no connection between this and the
yoga occurring in the *jñānamārga*, whose
yoga is a spiritual maturity that makes the
soul unite with the Supreme God in his
abode, by his grace. Similarly, some people
have obtained the skill to do a few rare
things. They bring a coconut, a fruit, the
sacred ashes, a stone, or other offerings out
of nowhere. It is a big surprise for those who
see it. In the earlier generation, since the
people had a real religious involvement,
they left these tricks alone

iruntapaṭiyāl, ivarraiellām oru cittu
vilaiyāṭṭu enru otukki

viṭṭut taṅkaḷ kāriyattaip pārppārkaḷ;
ivarraip peritupaṅṅa māṭṭārkaḷ. āṅāl,
āṭampara nāṭṭamē koṅṅa ikkālattiḷ, ariyāta
makkaḷ inta vilaiyāṭṭukkaḷum payiṛciyum
civāṅṅupavam enrē mayāṅki viṭukirārkaḷ;
arivu paṭaittōr enpōrum mayāṅkukirārkaḷ.
itu peritum iraṅkat takka nilai. ippaṭippaṭṭa
pōli yōkikaḷ tamil nāṭṭilum āntira nāṭṭilum
aṅṅekar muḷaittirukkiṅṅārkaḷ. ivarkaḷē
teyvam enru karutukiṅṅa aṭiyār kūṭṭaṅkaḷ
ērālam. ivarkaḷaik karutiyē “kuruṭṭiṅṅai
nīkkāk kuruviṅṅaik koḷvar. kuruṭum kuruṭum
kuruṭṭāṭṭamāṭik kuruṭum kuruṭum
kuḷivīlumārē” enru tirumūlar pāṭiṅṅār. inta
vilaiyāṭṭukkaḷ ṅāṅa māṅkkamalla; kaṭavulai
aṅṅukuvikkum neṛi alla. iv yōkikaḷ nam pōṅṅa
cāmāṅiya makkaḷē. aruḷneriyil ōr aṭikūṭa
eṭuttu vaittavarkaḷ alla.

tīksai

100 cīṭaṅ camaya ācārattiḷ aṭiyēṭuttu vaittu
vaḷarntu mēḷ nilaikkuc cella utavuvatu
ācāriyaṅṅuṭaiya aruḷ nōkkam; itu tīksai
enappaṭum. tīksai kaḷ palavitam. ippala
vakaikaḷuḷ mūṅṅru tokuppukkaḷ
ciṛappāṅṅavai. ivai camaya tīksai, vicēṣa
tīksai, nirvāṅa tīksai enpaṅa. ivarruḷ
mutalāvataṅṅa camaya tīksai, āraṅpa tīksai
ākum. itu caivar ellōrum perat takkatu.
tīksai perravaṅṅē caiva camayattukkuriya
kiriyaikaḷ yāvum ceyyum takutiyaṅṅaiyaṅṅ.
pirāmaṅar cantiyā vantaṅṅam ceyvatu pōla,
kālai mālai iruvēḷaikaḷilum caivar ceyyum
vaḷipāṭṭuc caṭaṅkukku aṅṅuṭṭāṅṅam enpaṭu
peyar. tīksai perrōr aṅṅuṭṭāṅṅam ceyyat
takkār. aṅṅuṭṭāṅṅattiḷ civa cūriya
vaṅṅakkamum

101 civa kāyattiri mantira cepamum, ācāriyaṅṅ
upatēcitta paṅcākkara mantira cepamum
aṭaṅkiyuḷḷaṅṅa. vicēṣa tīksai enpaṭu itaṅṅiṅṅum
atikac ciṛappuṭaiyatu. itu āṅmāṅṅamāṅkac
civapūcai ceyyum takutiyaik taruvatu
ippūcai tiṅṅantōrum kālaiyil nīrāṅi uriya

and minded their business; they would not make it big. But nowadays, where there are such pompous activities, illiterate people get entangled in these kinds of games and their experience of God fades away. Even the wise are deluded. This is a very pathetic situation. These kinds of fake *yogins* have sprouted out in large numbers in Tamil Nadu and Andhra. There are so many devotees who assume they are all deities. Tirumūlar sang: “People don’t choose the *guru* who removes blindness, they accept the *guru* who does not remove blindness. Both the blinds playing a blind game, both the blinds fall in the pit”. These games are not the *jñānamārga*; this is not the way toward the union with God. These *yogins* are ordinary people like us. They didn’t even put one step on the path to Lord’s grace.

Dīksā

The compassionate purpose of the *ācārya* is to initiate the disciple in the religious codes and practices, make him grow [spiritually], and help him reach a higher status; this is called *dīksā*. There are many grades of *dīksā*; among them, three are very significant. They are: *samaya dīksā*, *viṣeṣa dīksā*, and *nirvāṅa dīksā*. The first among them, the *samaya dīksā*, is the starting stage and can be obtained by any Śaiva. The person who gets this *dīksā* is qualified to perform all the activities related to Śaivism. The worshipping practice that a Śaiva performs two times a day, in the morning and the evening, just like the *sandhyāvandanam* of the Brahmins, is called *anuṣṭhāna*. Those who got the initiation are qualified to perform it. The invocation of the sun that is Śiva,

the *japa* of the Śivagāyatṛī *mantra*, and the *japa* of the *paṅcāksāra mantra* taught by the *ācārya* are included in the *anuṣṭhāna*. The *viṣeṣa dīksā* is more special. It qualifies [the Śaiva] to perform the *ātmārtha* Śivapūjā. This *pūjā* must be performed every day after

muraiyil unavu kollumun āyul uḷḷavarai ceyyat takkatu. aṭutta nirvāṇa tīkṣai enpatu inṇum ciṟappuḷḷatu; itu mōkṣam tarattakka mārkkattil cātakan tannaip payirra utavuva tākum.

tīkṣai enra collin poruḷ aruḷ nōkkam atāvatu, aruḷaik koṭukka marulai nīkkutal. param poruḷāy uḷḷa civaperumān, ācāriyaṇai akiṭṭittu niṇru tīkṣai perupavaṇiṭattu ulaka viyāpārattai vilakki, pīravikku ētuvākiya malattaik kaḷittu, carva viyāpakamāṇa civam pīrakācittarku ētuvākiya ṇāṇattaik koṭuttup pīraviyaip pōkkukirāṇ enpatu karuttu. caivar enru collappaṭum takutikku mutal paṭi tīkaiṣa.

āṇmākkaḷ mala pantattai oṭṭi mūṇru vakaiyākac collappaṭuvar. viṇṇāṇa kalar enpōr āṇava malam oṇriṇāl maṭṭum pantikkappaṭavar. ivarkaḷukku iraivaṇē uḷṇiṇru unartti āṇava malattaip pōkki mutti aḷippaṇ. irantāvatu pīralayākalar enpōr; āṇavam kaṇmam ākiya irumalam uṭaiyōr, ivarkaḷukkup paramēcuvaraṇ iṭapārūṭarākak kāṭci aḷittu iru malaṅkaḷaiyum pōkki mutti aḷippaṇ. ivviru vakaiyinaraiyum inṇru nām kāṇutal aritu. nām kāṇum makkaḷ aṇaivarumē mum malam uṭaiyōr ākiya cakalar. ivarkaḷai āṇavam, kaṇmam, māyai ākiya

102

mummalaṅkaḷum pantittu niṛkum. uḷṇiṇru unartta unarum taṇmai ivarkaḷukkilla; iṭapārūṭarāyk kāṇum taṇmai yum illai. ākavē iraivaṇ ivarkaḷukku maṇita uruvattōṭu ācāriyaṇāka vantu pakkuvamaṇintu upatēcam ceytu, malattaip pōkkip pakuva nilai varumpōṭu mutti aḷippaṇ. intac cakalarukkē tīkṣai pōṇra kiriyaikaḷ ellām uriyaṇa.

kuru upatēcattil mantiram mukkiyamāṇa pakuti. mantiraṅkaḷil kāyattiri mantiram oṇru. kāyattiri enpatu vaṭa moḷiyil oru yāppiṇ peyar; avvalavē. pīrāmaṇar colvatu cūriya kāyattiri. caivar collat takkatu civa kāyattiri. (itu mantiramākaiyāl inkē colla villai. kuru mukamāy aṛika).

taking a bath and before eating in the morning throughout [a Śaiva's] life. The next [initiation], the *nirvāṇa dīkṣā*, is even more important; it helps the practitioner to reach the path leading to *mokṣa*.

The meaning of the word *dīkṣā* is “the aim of grace”, that is, the removal of the bewilderment of mind to obtain [Lord's] grace. There is the notion that Lord Śiva, who is the Supreme God, comes as an *ācārya*, removes the worldly affairs from the person who gets the initiation and then the impurities that cause rebirths, provides him with the knowledge that he is the all-pervasive Śiva, and removes him from the births' cycle. The *dīkṣā* is the first step to being called a Śaiva.

The souls are classified in three ways based on the impurities affecting them. Those who are called *vijñānākala* are affected only by arrogance or ego, *āṇava*; God himself will come to them, remove *āṇava*, and give them *mukti*. The second class is the *pralayākalar*; they possess both *āṇava* and *karma*. Parameśvara will appear to them sitting on the bull, remove their impurities, and give them salvation. It is very rare nowadays to see these two classes of people. It is rare to see these two classes of people nowadays. The people we get to see are those with all three impurities, called *sakala*. They are affected by *āṇava*,

karma, and *māyā*. This kind of people is unfit to understand themselves because of the impurities they carry and do not get to see Śiva sitting on the bull. Therefore, God comes to them in human form as an *ācārya*, understands their spiritual maturity, gives them the teaching, removes the impurity, and gives them *mukti* when they are mature. The *sakala* performs all the activities like the initiations.

The *mantras* are an important part of the teaching of the *guru*. One among them is the *Gāyatṛī mantra*. The word *gāyatṛī* in Sanskrit refers to a poetic meter; that's all. The Brahmins recite the *Sūryagāyatṛī mantra*, while the Śaivas recite the *Śivagāyatṛī mantra*. (We won't talk about it

upatēcattiṅ irutiyaḷ pañcākkara cepam mika mukkiyamāṇatu, pañcākkara mantiramākiya tiruvainteluttu “namacivāya” eṇappaṭum. itu stūla pañcākkaram. civāya nama eṇpatu cūkkuma pañcākkaram, piṇṇum ati cūkkumam pañcākkaram mutalāyina tirumuraikaḷilum cāttiraṅkaḷilum payiṇru varukiṇṇa. kuru pañcākkarattaic cīṭaṇukku upatēcikkum pōtu cīṭaṇatu pakkuvattukku ērpa ainteluttukkaḷaiyum muraippaṭutti māṇṇiyamaittu mantiramāka upatēcikkirār. ainteluttukkaḷil ovvoṇṇum verum eluttaṇru: civam, tiruvaruḷ, āṇmā, maṇaikkum cakti, malam ākiya perum tattuvaṅkaḷiṅ kuṇṇiyiṭukaḷākavē eluttukkaḷiṅ niṇṇiṇṇa. ākavē, eluttukkaḷiṅ niral peritum poruḷuṭaiyatākiṇṇatu. itu kurumukamāy upatēcikkap peṇa vēṇṇiya poruḷātalāl iṅku virittuc colla villai.

103

tiruvainteluttu vētattil uḷḷatu. kuruṣṇa yajur vētam (tāittirīya caṅkitai), nālām kāṇtam aintām pirapāṭakattil, ōm nama: civāya ca civatarāya ca eṇavarum uruttirāṭṭiyāya mantirattil piranavattōtu kūṭiya pañcākkaram payilvatu kāṅka.

here since it is a *mantra*. One must find out from the *guru*).

The *pañcāksāra mantra* is the most important among the teachings; it is the five syllables of *namaśivāya*. We learn from the *Tirumurai* and the *Śāstras* that as this [*namaśivāya*] is the *sthūla pañcāksāra*, [at same time] *śivāya nama* is the *sūkṣma pañcāksāra*. When the *guru* teaches the *pañcāksāra mantra* to the disciples, he does it by changing the order of the syllables [according to their spiritual maturity]. The five syllables of the *mantra* are not mere letters: they are symbols of philosophical concepts like Śiva, grace, soul, power of concealment, and fetter. Therefore, the order changes depending on the religious status of the disciple. Since its meaning depends on the *guru*'s teaching mode, we won't discuss it here.

The *pañcāksāra mantra* is found in the Vedas. In the *Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda (Tāittirīya Saṃhitā)*, fourth canto, fifth chapter, the five-syllable *mantra* is also taught together with the *Rudra mantra*.

8

caiva camaya tattuvam (caiva cittāntam)

104

ituvaraiyil caiva camayattiṅ pala amcaṅkaḷai vevvēru talaippukkaḷil ciritālavu āṇyantu vantōm. caivam eṇra collāl kurippitappaṭum karuttukkaḷiṅ yāvai, caiva cāttiraṅkaḷ, ācāriyar, vaḷipāṭṭu muraikaḷ, caṭaṅkukaḷiṅ yāvai, caiva tarumam eṇpatu yātu eṇṇum kaṇṇōm. caiva cāṭaṇam eṇru pārttapōtu ōṇalavu camayak karuttukkaḷaiyum kalantē colla nērntatu. iṇi, caivam eṇra camayattiṅ tattuvam allatu kōṭpātukaḷiṅ yāvai eṇru pārkkaḷām.

caiva cittāntam

caiva camayak kōṭpātukaḷiṅ pira camayak kōṭpātukaḷiṅ eṇṇum taṇiyē pirittuc caiva cittāntam eṇru vaḷaṅkap peṇum. cittāntam eṇpatu, ituvē camayam aṇaittiṅum muṭinta muṭivu eṇpataip pulappaṭuttum. caiva

8

The philosophy of Śaivism (Śaivasiddhānta)

So far, we have investigated, to some extent, many stands of Śaivism on different topics. We have also explained the concepts related to Śaivism, the Śaiva Śāstras, the *ācāryas*, the ways of worshipping, the rituals, and the *dharma* for Śaivas. The Śaiva *sādhana* that is performed is, to some extent, based on religious tenets. Therefore, we will see the philosophy or doctrines of Śaivism.

Śaivasiddhānta

The [theological] doctrine of Śaivism is different from the other religious theories and is called Śaivasiddhānta. When we say “Siddhānta,” it means that it is the final [exposition] of all [Śaiva] traditions. Śaivism was not founded by a person. Śaivism is without beginning and end.

camayattait tōrruvittavar enru oruvar illai. caiva camayam anātiyānatu. ātalāl caṅkararuṭaiya atvaitam, irāmānucarūṭaiya viśiṣṭātvaitam, matvaruṭaiya tuvaitam enru colvatu pōla, caiva camaya muṭivākiya cuttātvaitattai ōr ācāriyar peyaraic cārtti vaḷaṅkum vaḷakkam illai. muṅṅamē nāṭṭilum nāyaṅmār pāṭalilum vaḷaṅkiya karuttukkaḷait tokuttu, piṅvanta meykaṅṭār enru ācāriyar putitākac caiva camaya ilakkaṅam eluṭiṅār. ataṅāl ivaraip piratama ācāriyarākac caivar kolkiṅārkaḷ. meykaṅṭārukku

mūṅṅamē vaṭamoḷic caivākamaṅkaḷ iruntaṅa enru kurippiṭṭōm. iruppiṅum, iṅraiya caiva cittāntattukku mukkiya pīramāṅa nūlkaḷ, ṅāṅa māṅkkattil meykaṅṭārum avarukkup piṅ vanta cantāṅa ācāriyarum ceyta tamīl meykaṅṭa cāttiraṅkaḷē; kiriyā māṅkkattil vaṭamoḷi ākamaṅkaḷ. tamīlc caiva cittānta ācāriyarāṅa umāpaticivam, “vētāntat teḷivām caiva cittāntam” enru kūriyiruppatum, iṅku mutanmaiyyā ariyat takkatu.

mupporul
ellāc camayaṅkaḷilum ārāyccik kuriya poruḷ mūṅṅrē. mutalāvatu, tāṅ-nāṅ eṅatu enru collukiṅra poruḷ. ituvē uyir eṅrum āṅmā eṅrum āvi cētaṅaṅ jīvaṅ jīvātmā eṅrum pala peyarkaḷāl vaḷaṅkaḷ paṭukiṅratu. iraṅṭāvatu, ip poruḷiṅ aṅupavattukku viṣayamāy intiriyaṅkaḷāl kaṅṭu kēṭṭu uṅṭu uyirttu urru ariyappaṭuvatāy uḷḷa; veli ulakam, atai yoṭṭiya karuttukkaḷ, toṭarpukaḷ. ulakam enru kūruvatu stūlamāṅa poruḷ; pantam eṅrum pācam eṅrum kurippiṭṭuvatu cūkṣmamāṅa karuttu. pirakiruti eṅrum māyai eṅrum pācam eṅrum camayaṅkaḷ itai vevvērāyc collum. collilēyē ataṅataṅ karuttu vērrumaikaḷ aṅaṅkik kāṅappaṭum. mūṅṅrāvatu, ivarukkum appāl uḷḷatākiya, ivarṅāl eṭṭa muṭiyātatākiya, param poruḷ-paramātmā, pīramam, pati, kaṭavuḷ iraivaṅ enru colvatellām ipporuḷaiyē. im mūṅṅriṅ taṅmaikaḷaiyum ivarruk kiṭaiyuḷḷa toṭarpukaḷaiyum, mutalil colliya uyirāṅatu iraṅṭāvatu colliya pantattiliruntu taṅṅai

Therefore, it is not customary to associate the Śuddhādvaita as the conclusion of Śaivism, to the name of an ācārya as in the case of the Advaita of Śāṅkara, the Viśiṣṭādvaita of Rāmanuja, and the Dvaita of Madhva. A later priest named Meykaṅṭār compiled the notions expressed in the hymns of the Nāyaṅmārs and wrote a new definition of Śaivism. Therefore, the Śaivas consider him as the first ācārya. We mentioned that

before Meykaṅṭār there were the Śaivāgamas in in Sanskrit. However, nowadays the most authoritative scriptures of the Śaivasiddhānta are the Tamil Meykaṅṭa Śāstras written by Meykaṅṭār and the cantāṅācāryas who came after him in the jñāna path; the Sanskrit Āgamas concern the kriyā path. It is important to note that Umāpati, an ācārya of the Tamil Śaivasiddhānta, has clearly said that the Śaivasiddhānta is the conclusion of the Vedānta.

Three entities

Three are the entities that have to be investigated in any religion. The first is the interpretation of the word ‘I’. It has many names like living being, soul, spirit, life, and individual soul. The second is the external world that is experienced by the senses of touch, sight, hearing, smell, and taste that pertains to the experience of the first entity and the ideas and connections related to it. While the world is a *sthūla* thing, the bonds of *pāśa* are a *sūkṣma* one. Religions call this in different ways: *prakṛiti*, *māyā*, *pāśa*. The words themselves show the difference occurring between them. The third entity is the Supreme Being, called as Supreme soul, Brahmā, Lord, Almighty, God. The differences among religions arise in stating the nature of these three, the relationship between them, and the way in which the first-mentioned soul detaches itself from the second-mentioned bonds and

viṭuvittuk koṇṭu, mūṇrāvatu colliya
patiyākiya

iraivaṇai aṭaiyum māṛkkattaiyum
kūruvatiltān camaya vērupāṭukaḷ
eḷukinraṇa.

pati-civam

īṇi, caiva cittānta tattuvaṅkaḷaic curukki
īṅkuk kūruvōm. caivattil param poruḷaip
pati eṇru collukirōm. ēṇaiya pacu
pācaṅkaḷku appāṇpaṭṭu, ellāvāṛrukkum
talaimai pūṅṭiruttaliṅāl ip peyar. pati eṇra
collukkuk kāppavaṅ eṇpatu poruḷ.
āṇmāḷkaḷākiya pacukkaḷaik kāttaliṅāl
pacupati eṇpatum oru peyar. ip peyaram
yajār vētattil kāṇappaṭuvatu. uyirkaḷ tōrum
taṅki iyakkukalāl iraivaṅ. maṇam molī
meykaḷaiyum pīra ellāvāṛaiyum
kaṭantiruttalāl kaṭavuḷ. pīramam eṇru
vētāntam. kūrum poruḷē caivattil civam eṇru
collam perum. civam aruvamum allar,
uruvamum allar; aruvuruvap poruḷum
allātavar; iruppiṇum, yār entat teyvamāka
eṇṇiṅālum, antat teyvamāka vantu
aruḷpuripavar. avar kuṅaṅkaṭanta poruḷ.
(nirkkuṅar). taṅvayattan ātal, tūya
uṭampīṇaṅ ātal, iyarkai uṅarviṅaṅ ātal,
murrum uṅartal, iyal pākavē pācaṅkaḷiṅ
nīṅkutaḷ, pēraruḷ uṭaimai, muṭivil āṛral
uṭaimai, varampil āṛral uṭaimai eṇra eṇ
kuṅaṅkaḷai uṭaiyavaṅ iraivaṅ eṇru colvar;
itu upacāramākat tokuttuc conṇatēyākum.
eṇiṅum, apparamporuḷiṅ taṅmaiyaip piṅ
varumāru kūralām. appati, pīravāṛrukkut
tōṛramum īrum ceypavarāki, tamakku ivai
illātavar; ātiyum antamum illā arum perum
cōti. eṅkum ekkālattum niṇaintavar.
civaperumāṅukku orukālattum
avatāramillai, māyā kāriyamākiya
uṭampōṭu avaruk

kut toṭarpillai. pūtakāriyamallāta aruḷē
uṭampāka uṭaiyavar. ēkatēcamillātu, carva
viyāpaka arivuṭaiyavar;
ṇāṇamayamāṇavar. caiva camayam
collukiṅra pācat toṭarpukaḷai avar
uṭṭukiṅravar; iyalpākavē avarukku avarriṅ
toṭarpu illai. avar carva caktimāṅ. pīramā
viṣṇu ruttirarkaḷaik koṇṭu ulakil tōṛral
kāttal aḷittal ākiya toḷilkaḷaic ceyvikkiṅrār.

reaches the third-mentioned *pati*, the Lord.

Pati – Śiva

Now, we can mention the philosophical principles of Śaivasiddhānta briefly. In Śaivism, the Supreme Being is called *pati* because he presides over all the other creatures and bonds. The meaning of the word *pati* is “protector”. The name *Paśupati* is also given for his love towards the creatures, namely the souls. This is also found in the Yayurveda. He is called *iraivaṅ*, God, because he resides in all living beings and directs them. He is called *kaṭavul* as he transcends mind, language, truth, and everything else. What they call “Brahmā” in the Vedānta is called “Śiva” in Śaivism. Śiva is not formless, nor manifested, nor in an abstract form; however, no matter in which form one thinks of him, he will come and bestow his grace. He transcends all attributes (*nirguṇa*).

Therefore, God is said to have eight attributes: independence, pure body, self-knowledge, omniscience, freedom from bonds, benevolence, omnipotence, and bliss; this is just a summary. However, we can describe the qualities of the Supreme Being as follows. This *pati*, who creates and destroys everything, has no beginning or end; he is the Vast Grace-Light, *arut perum cōti*. He is in every place and at every time. Lord Śiva did not have an *avatāra* at any stage; he has

no connection with the body, which is a form of *māyā*. He is an embodiment of grace, which is not a product of the elements; he is the embodiment of knowledge. He is the one who nurtures the bonds that Śaivism calls *pāśa*; naturally, he has no attachment. He is the omnipotent God. He makes Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Rudra perform the functions of creating,

mūvaraiyūm atīṭṭittu niṅṅru ittoḷilkaḷaic
 ceykiṛār eṅṅru cāttiram collum. uruttiran
 vēru; avar aḷittal toḷil maṭṭum ceykiṛa oru
 mūrṭti; civam vēru; civam paramporuḷ, avar
 oruvarē paramporuḷ, maṛṛoru param poruḷ
 illai. avar eṅṅrum uḷḷavar, piṛa yāvum
 tōṅṅrum oṭuṅṅkum, avar avarraik tōṅṅruvittu
 oṭukkuvār. avar pūraṅar; ellāvārrilum
 eṅṅkum ekkālattum niṛaintu niṅṅrālum, tām
 piṅṅnap paṭātavar, pōkkuvaravu illātavar.
 uyirkaḷukku aṛivāka viḷaṅkupavar. kuṅāṭitar
 (kuṅaṅkalaik kaṭantavar); eṅṅiṅum,
 āṅṅantamē vaṭivāka uḷḷavar. avaṅ aruḷē
 kaṅṅāka, avaṅ taṅṅṅaik kāṭṭiṅṅālanṅri ivan
 iṛaiṅṅan eṅṅru cuṭṭik kāṅṅa muṭiyātavar.
 eṅṅraikkum uḷḷa poruḷ avar oruvarē.
 aṅṅuvirku aṅṅuvāyūm, appāḷukku (evvaḷavu
 periya poruḷukkum) appālāyūm
 viḷaṅkupavar. āṅṅmakōṭikaḷāl kiṭṭutarṅku
 ariyavar; eṅṅiṅum, avarē ellāp poruḷukkum
 pukaliṭamāy iruppavar. karuṅaiyē vaṭivāka
 uḷḷavar. viṅṅaiyai āṅṅma kōṭikaḷukku avar
 ūṭṭuvippār. avarukku viṅṅaiyillai. ātalāl avar
 orupōtum piṛarukkuk kaṭṭuppaṭṭavarallar;
 eppōtum tam vayamē uṭaiyavar.
 param poruḷukku caivattil corūpa
 lakṣaṅam, taṭatta lakṣaṅam eṅṅa iṛaṅṅu
 nilaicollappaṭum. ivarraṅṅi muṛaiyē potu
 iyalpu, kiṛappu iyalpu eṅṅa

108

lām. corūpa lakṣaṅam eṅṅra nilaiyil,
 kaṭavuḷukku oru nāmam ōr uruvam oru
 kuṅṅam oṅṅrum illai; uruvam aruvam
 aruvuruvam etuvumillai; intap poruḷ
 maṅṅam vākkuk kāyam mūṅṅriṅṅālum aṛiya
 muṭiyātatu; ip poruḷē param poruḷ,
 paramacivam allatu cutta civam. inta
 nilaiyil uḷḷa civam tāṅṅāka uyirkaḷiṭattuk
 karuṅai kūrntu taṅṅ nilaiyiliruntu iḷintu
 varukiṛatu; eṅṅ eṅṅru kēṭṭāl, uyirkaḷiṭattuḷḷa
 tuṅṅpattaiṅṅ pōkkavēṅṅtum eṅṅra pēraṅṅuḷē
 kāraṅṅam. inta civam piṛamā viṣṅṅu ruttiran
 mutalāṅṅa pala nilaikaḷil uḷḷa teyvaṅkaḷai
 atīṭṭittu niṅṅru avarkaḷ mūlamāka āṅṅaiyaic
 celutti aintoḷilac ceykiṛatu. oṅṅrilum tōy
 villāmal taṅṅṅunṅmaiṅṅiḷ niṛkum poruḷ civam.
 ulakelām āki uṭaṅṅumāy vēṛāy uyirkaḷiṅṅ vaḷi

protecting, and destroying the world. The
 Śāstras say that he settles in them and
 performs these functions. Rudra is different
 from Śiva, he is a mūrṭti that just performs
 the function of destruction; Śiva is not [a
 mūrṭti], he is the Supreme Being, the only
 one; there is no other Supreme God. He is
 omnipresent; all other things will appear
 from him and disappear in him. He is the
 one who makes them appear and fade away.
 He is complete; though he is omnipresent,
 everywhere, and at every time, he is not
 bound by anything and has no coming and
 going. He remains as chief of all lives. He is
 above all qualities (he transcends them);
 however, he is an embodiment of bliss. It is
 through his blessings alone that we can see
 [the truth]; we cannot see that he is the God
 unless he himself manifests himself. He is
 the only one who is omnipresent. He is the
 smallest of the small and beyond everything
 (no matter how big). It is very rare for souls
 to grasp him; however, he is the shelter for
 all things. He is the embodiment of
 compassion. He is the one who feeds the
 karma to all the souls, but he doesn't have
 karma. Therefore, he is never bound to other
 things; he always has control of himself.

In Śaivism, two states are provided for the
 Supreme Gog: svarūpa lakṣaṅam and
 tatasthā lakṣaṅam. We can say that these
 refer to a general and special

character. At the level of svarūpa lakṣaṅam,
 God has no name, no form, no quality,
 anything at all; he is not with-form, nor
 formless, nor rūpārūpa; this entity cannot be
 known by mind, words, and physical
 appearance; this Supreme Being is
 Paramaśiva or Śadāśiva. In this stage, Śiva
 descends from his position, showing mercy
 to the living beings; if one wonders why the
 reason is that he wants to relieve the
 sufferings of the living beings. This
 Paramaśiva settles in the deities that appear
 at many levels starting from Brahmā, Viṣṅṅu,
 and Rudra and performs the five functions
 through them. Śiva is the entity that stands
 in self-reliance, devoid of any fetter. The
 power of this entity is standing in the path of

nirkiṛa taṅmaiyil ipporuḷ cakti. aintoliḷ mutalāṇa toḷikalai iyaruḷvikkum taṅmaiyil itē poruḷ pati enru peyar perukiratu. ivvāru piramaṇ mutalāṇavarkaḷai atittittu ninru toḷil ceyyum nilaiyē civattiṇ taṭatta lakṣaṇam enru collappaṭum.

pacu

aṭutta poruḷ pacu. pacu enrālum uyir, āṇmā enrālum onrutāṇ. patiyaippōlavē pacuvum aṇātiyāka uḷlatu, nittiyamāṇatu, aḷivarṛatu. āṇmākkal eṇṇikkai illātaṇa. āṇmāvai iraivaṇ paṭaikka villai. iraivaṇ paṭaippatu uyirkaḷukkāṇa uṭal karuvi karaṇaṅkaḷ ulakaṅkaḷ pōkaṅkaḷ maṭṭumē. uyirkaḷ pul pūṇṭu mutal maṇitar tēvar varai eṇṇarṛa vakaiyākap pirakkum. aṇātiyāka ivai pācattāl piṇippuṇṭu kiṭakkum. uyirukku iyalpu cārntataṇ

vaṇṇamāyiruppatu. acattāṇa ulakaic cārntu acattup poruḷākavum, aruḷ vacattāl iraiyaic cārntāl cattākavum irukka vallatu. aḷivatu uyiraṇru; uyirukku amainta uṭal mutalāṇa karuvi karaṇaṅkaḷē. āṇava malattōṭu poruntik kēvalanilaiyil kiṭakkum āṇmā, cūkkuma nilaiyiluḷla kaṇmattuk kiṭāṇa uṭampait tiruvaruḷālē poruntum. avvāru poruntumiṭattu, uyartiṇai aḷriṇaip poruḷkaḷāka uṭampeṭuttu, avvūṭampiṇālē ellaiyillāka pōkaṅkaḷai nukarum. nukarumpōtu ceykiṛa viṇai kāraṇamāka mīṇṭum puṇṇiya pāvaṅkaḷait tēṭi, mīṇṭum mīṇṭum piṛappilum irappilum ūcalāṭum. ivvāru cuḷaluṅ kālattil, aruḷ vacattāl, cempil kaḷimpupōla aṇātiyē poruntiṇa āṇava malam pariṇākaṇaiyūm kālam varum. appōtu ṇāṇāciriyaṇ tōṇri aruḷ upatēcam ceyvāṇ; ceytu āṇmāvai mutti neriyil celuttuvāṇ. kuru upatēcattāl perraṇāṇam civa ṇāṇamācum. accivaṇāṇam āṇmāviṭattuḷla āṇava malattiṇ valiyaip pōkkum. anta nilaiyil āṇmā vāṇavaṇ iraivaṇ tiruvaṭiyil irāṇṭarak kalantu civāṇupavattai aṇupavittuk koṇṭiruppaṇ. nāṇ nāṇ enru pēcumpōtu anta nāṇ enra collāl kuṛippitappaṭum poruḷāka uḷlatu uyir. itu pirāṇavāyuvuṇṭum vēṛāṇatu. aim pulāṅkaḷālum maṇam puttipōṇra karaṇaṅkaḷālum arivatu uyir. uyirukku

the different living beings along with the whole world. This same entity is called *pati* due to the performance of the activities starting from the five functions. We call *tatasthā lakṣaṇam* of Śiva the state in which he performs the functions by residing in the other deities starting from Brahmā.

Paśu

The next entity is *paśu*. Whether you call it *paśu*, life, or soul, it is the same thing. Just like *pati*, *paśu* is without beginning, eternal, and imperishable. The souls are innumerable. God did not create the souls. What God created is just the material body for the souls and all the worldly enjoyments. Living beings

are born in innumerable classes starting from plants and till men and deities. They are forever bound by attachment. The nature of the souls is to be linked with it. Having joined the impure world as an impure thing, [the soul] will become pure if it obtains the grace of the pure God. There is no destruction of the soul but only of the material tools starting from the body in which the soul abides. The soul – that is in a miserable condition, attached by the impurity of the ego – will obtain, by the grace of God, a body that is suitable to its *karma*, which is in a *sūkṣma* state. Where applicable, human beings and other beings take a material body and will experience unlimited enjoyments through that body. When experiencing them, they will accumulate virtues and sins again because of the actions they do and then oscillate between birth and death again and again. Thus, while circling [between birth and death], the *āṇavamala* of the soul will fall apart like the verdigris on a copper by God’s grace. At that time, the *jñāna ācārya* will appear and preach the grace [of God]; done this, he will drive the soul on the path of *mukti*. The knowledge it obtains through the *guru*’s teachings is the knowledge of Śiva. This *śivajñāna* relieves the soul’s pain of the

niṅaiippum marappum uṅṅu; iraivan oruvaṅē murrunarviṅṅaṅ.

pācam

mūṅṅāvatu poruḷ pācam. pācam eṅṅa karuttu vēru, vēṅṅantattil māyai eṅṅu colvatu muḷumaiyum vēṅṅāna karuttu.

ānavam

uyirai aṅṅātiyē piṅṅittirukkira pācam eṅṅpatu mūvakai. piṅṅipattāl pācam eṅṅu peyar. pācam, kaṅṅṅu, taḷai, paṅṅtam eṅṅpatum, malam eṅṅpatum oṅṅṅē. āṅṅmāvaip piṅṅitta aḷukkātalāl itu potuvāka malam eṅṅu collappaṅṅum. āṅṅavam kaṅṅmam māyai eṅṅa malam mūṅṅru. ivarruḷ āṅṅavamāṅṅatu aṅṅuttanmaiyaic ceyvatu. caṅṅkāra kālattin piṅṅ māyaiyil uyirkaḷ yāvum ceyalum aṅṅrivumiṅṅri oṅṅuṅṅik kiṅṅakkum, paṅṅi ceyka poruḷ āṅṅavamākum. āṅṅavattukku iruḷ eṅṅu oru peyaruṅṅu. pūta iruḷāṅṅatu puṅṅrapporuḷaik kāṅṅṅātu, maṅṅaikkum; āyiṅṅum tāṅṅ iruḷ eṅṅu kāṅṅṅik koḷḷum. āṅṅāl aruvamāyirukkīṅṅra inta āṅṅava iruḷ, puṅṅap poruḷaiyum maṅṅaittut taṅṅṅaiyum kāṅṅṅāmal maṅṅaittuviṅṅum. itaṅṅāl āṅṅava iruḷil aḷuntik kiṅṅakkiṅṅra āṅṅmā nām iruḷil aḷuntiyirukkīṅṅrōmeṅṅru uṅṅaramuṅṅivatillai. ivviruḷ oṅṅṅāyiruppiṅṅum aḷavillāta caktiyuṅṅaiyatu. cempilē poruntiyakalimpupōla aṅṅutiyāka uḷḷatu. itu aḷivillāta mūla malam. āṅṅmāviṅṅuṅṅaiya iccā cakti, kiriyācakti, ṅṅānacakti eṅṅra mūṅṅraiikum muḷutum maṅṅaippatu. āṅṅava malameṅṅpatu āṅṅmāviṅṅ taṅṅmaiyanru; ataṅṅiṅṅattu ēṅṅpaṅṅa aḷukku.

kaṅṅmam

iraṅṅāvatāṅṅa malam kaṅṅmam. kaṅṅmam eṅṅpatu vīṅṅai nalviṅṅai tīviṅṅai iraṅṅṅum. kaṅṅmamē piṅṅavikkuk kāraṅṅam. ellā uyirkaḷum orē vitamāṅṅa piṅṅavi eṅṅuppatillai. piṅṅaviyiṅṅ taṅṅmaiikum āṅṅralum atil viḷaṅṅkum

āṅṅavamala. At that stage, the soul will merge with God at his abode and will be experiencing the *śivānubhava*.

The soul is what we refer to when we say “I”. It is different from the *prāṅṅavāyu*. The soul knows [the world] through instruments like the five senses, *manas*, and *buddhi*. The soul has memory and forgetfulness; God alone is omniscient.

Pāśa

The third entity is *pāśa*. The concept of *pāśa* is completely different from the concept of *māyā* [that occurs] in the Vedānta.

Ānava

Three kinds of fetters bind the soul. Since they bond it, they are called *pāśa*, attachments. Attachments, ties, fetters, and bondages are the same as *mala* [or ‘impurity’]. It is generally called *mala* because it is a dirt that grasps the soul. There are three *malas*: *āṅṅava*, *karma*, and *māyā*. Among them, *āṅṅava* creates a sense of limitedness. After the destruction, all the living beings and [their] actions are subdued by illusion in a state of ignorance and *āṅṅava* is what grasps them. Another meaning for *āṅṅava* is “darkness”. It won’t show the external things as entirely dark; it will hide them. However, it will show itself as darkness. But this darkness of *āṅṅava*, which is formless, ends up hiding itself too by hiding the external things. Therefore, the soul – that is totally immersed in the darkness of *āṅṅava* – does not understand that it is immersed in the darkness. Although it is one with this darkness, it has unlimited powers; it is without beginning, like the verdigris on the copper. [*Āṅṅava*] is the indestructible source of impurity. It hides the three energies of the soul, namely *icchāśakti*, *kriyāśakti*, and *jñānaśakti*. When we say “*āṅṅava*” we do not mean a quality of the soul but an impurity that occurs in it.

Karma

The second impurity is *karma*. *Karma* implies two kinds of deeds, the virtuous and the sinful ones. *Karma* is the cause of births.

arivum vevvēru vakaiyāka irukkiṇṇa.
itaṛkuk kāraṇam mūla kaṇmam eṇru
collappaṭum. kēvala nilaiyil āṇa

vattil aḷuntik kiṭanta uyirkaḷukku āṇavat
toṭarpil vaṇmaiyum meṇmaiyum uṇṭu.
ippaṭiyē tiruvaruḷ toṭarpilum uyaru
kuraivu uṇṭu. ivarṛāl uṭaletukkumuṇ
uyirukku aṇāṭiyākavē nalviṇai tīviṇaikaḷ
poruntukiṇṇa. iṇi pīravi eṭuttapiṇ
ceykinṇa viṇaikaḷum uḷḷaṇa. intak
kaṇmamāṇatu vittum muḷaiyumpōla
nācattaiyum tōṛrattaiyum uṇṭākkuvatu.
āṇmākaḷ tōṛum cūkkumamāy uḷḷatu.
maṇam vākkuk kāyam mūṇṇiṇālum kaṇmam
viḷaiyum. uyirkaḷ tōṛum itu iṇpa tunpaṇkaḷ
viḷaivataṛkuk kāraṇamākiya punṇiya
pāvaṇkaḷākap poruntum.

111

uyirkaḷ eṭukkiṇṇa eṇṇillāta pīravikaḷ tōṛum
ceyta viṇaikaḷiṇ tokuki mikap periyatākum.
ittokutiyaī āṇrōr mūṇṇrākap pākupaṭuttic
colli yirukkiṇṇaṛkaḷ. viṇai oru vakaiyil nām
uṇṇum uṇavu pōṇṇratu. nāram piṇṇāl eṭuttup
payaṇpaṭuttic koḷvataṛkākak kaḷaṇciyattil
nellaic cēmittu vaittirukkiṇṇōm. itu pōṇṇratē
uyirkaḷ muṇṇpīravikaḷil cepta viṇaikaḷiṇ
tokuti. itu caṇcitam eṇappaṭum. oru pakuti
nellai ariciyākki ulaiyiliṭṭuc camaittu
ippoḷutu uṇkiṇṇōm. itaip pōlavē ippoḷutu
eṭuttirukkiṇṇa pīravikku vittākavum ippoḷutu
aṇupavikkīra, iṇpa tunpattīrkuk
kāraṇamākaḷum uḷḷatu viṇaiyiṇ oru pakuti:
itaṛkup peyar pīrāṛattam. iṇi mūṇṇrāvātāka,
vayalil cila nāl kaḷittu anuvatai cepta
kaḷaṇciyattil koṇṭu vantu cērppataṛkāka
ippōtu viḷaintu pakkuvappaṭtu varukīra nel
oru vakai. itai oppatu ippoḷtu eṭutta pīraviyil
ceyyum ceypalkaḷāl vantu tiraḷak kūṭiya
viṇait tokaiyākum. itaṛku ākāmiyam eṇpatu
peyar. iṇṇaṇamāka

mūṇṇru vakai viṇaikaḷ uḷḷaṇa. mūṇṇrum
nīṅkum vakaiyum vevvēru.

112

māyai
mūṇṇrāvātākac collappaṭum malam māyai
eṇpatu. māyā eṇra collukkuk tōṇṇri
oṭuṇkuvataṛku iṭamāyullatu eṇru poruḷ.

Not all living beings have the same form of birth. Each birth has different kinds of characters, capacities, and knowledge. The reason for this is said to be the *karma* of earlier births. At a lower state, there are the souls

that are immersed in the *āṇava* impurity, which have strength and wickedness according to it. In this way, the blessing of God also decreases accordingly. Because of this, good and bad *karma* is always matched to the living being before dying. Therefore, there is also a *karma* that is done after death. This *karma* is the one that produces the destruction and the genesis [of the soul] like the seed and the sprout. The living souls are in a *sūkṣma* state. *Karma* is produced by thought, speech, and body. Depending on its being virtuous or sinful, it is the cause of the happiness and suffering of every life.

The series of *karma* made by the innumerable births that come to life is huge. The wise ones have classified these series into three types. In a way, *karma* is like the food that we eat. We save the paddy in the storeroom so we can use it later. Similarly, living beings are [the result of] the accumulation of *karma* done in earlier births. This [*karma*] is called *saṇcita*. We take a portion of the paddy, put it in the vessel, cook it, and eat it at that time. Similarly, one part of the [past] *karma* is both the seed for the present life and the reason for the happiness and sufferings that we experience in it: the name for this [*karma*] is *prārabdha*. Now thirdly, there is a type of grown and ripened paddy that we take to the storeroom a few days after having harvested in the field. The amount of *karma* that accumulates through the actions we perform in the present life is like this [paddy]. This is called *āgāmī*. These are

the three types of *karma*. There are different ways to extinguish them.

Māyā

The third impurity that has been mentioned is *māyā*. The meaning of the words *mā* and *yā* is that it is a space for the appearing and

māyai ellāk kāriyaṅkaḷum taṅṅiattil oṭuṅkavum, taṅṅiattil tōṅṅravum karaṇamāka iruppatāl itu māyai eṅappaṭum. (mā-oṭuṅkatal, yā-tōṅṅrutal.) māyai ulakattaip paṭaippataṅku oru kāraṇap poruḷ. itu aruvamāy uḷlatu. ulakiṅku mutarkāraṇam māyai eṅpatākum. cūkkumamāṇa māyaiyiliruntu tūlamāṇa ulaku uṅṅākiratu. ulakat tōṅṅrattirku iraivaṅṅuṅṅaiya catti tuṅṅaik kāraṇam; iraivaṅṅ nimitta kāraṇaṅ eṅappaṭukirāṅ. āṅmākkal viṅṅaikaḷiṅ payaṅṅai arunti iruviṅṅai oppu ēṅṅpaṭuttuvataṅkāka, iraivaṅṅ taṅṅatu parama Iruṅṅaiyīṅāl māyaiyiliruntu taṅṅukaraṅapuvaṅa pōkaṅkaḷaip paṭaittāṅ. taṅṅu-uṅṅampu; karaṅam-aṅṅupavippataṅkuriya karuvikaḷ; puvaṅṅam-ulakaṅkaḷ; pōkam-aṅṅupavippataṅri kuriya poruḷkaḷ. ivai māyaiyīṅ kāriyam eṅappaṭum. āṅṅavamāṅṅatu āṅṅmāvai iruḷil aḷuntik kiṅṅakkumpaṅṅi ceyya, kēvala nilaiyil aṅṅivīḷantu kiṅṅakkum āṅṅmāvukku māyaiyē uṅṅalum karuviyumaṅka amaintu, āṅṅmāviṅṅattil aṅṅivākiya oḷi ciṅṅritu viḷakkam perac ceyvatākum. itaṅṅālēyē “māyātāṅṅu viḷakku” eṅṅru collappaṭṅatu. eṅṅiṅṅum, āṅṅavattīṅ toṅṅarpāl cila camayam māyaiyē āṅṅmāviṅ aṅṅivuc ceyalkaḷai maṅṅaip patum uṅṅu. māyai eṅṅru iṅṅku pēcuvatu vēṅṅu. vēṅṅānta mārkkattil pēcukiṅṅratu vēṅṅu. aṅṅku māyaiyīṅ maṅṅaip

113

piṅṅāl āṅṅmāvukku, nāṅṅē piraṅṅam eṅṅra aṅṅivu illāmaṅ pōkiṅṅratu; māyai vilakiya piṅṅ āṅṅmā taṅṅṅaip piraṅṅamākaḷ kāṅṅkiṅṅāṅ. āṅṅāl caiva cittāntattil māyaiyīṅ nilai vēṅṅu; itu āṅṅmāvukku taṅṅukaraṅa puvaṅṅa pōkaṅkaḷait tantu viṅṅai aṅṅupavittuk kaḷiṅṅa utavi ceykiṅṅratu; tāṅṅ cūkkumakāraṅamāka iruntu stūla kāriyaṅkaḷai u ṅṅākkukiṅṅratu. itu maṅṅaipalla. im māyai caiva cittāntattil mūṅṅru viṅṅamāka collappaṭum. ivai cuttamāyai acutta māyai pirakiruti māyai eṅṅpaṅṅa. inta mūṅṅru vakai māyaikaḷukkum viḷakkam kūṅṅriṅṅāl atuvē caivam oppuk koḷḷum muppattāru tattuvaṅkaḷukkum viḷakkam kūṅṅriyatākum.

cuttamāyai

concealing [of things]. It is called *māyā* because it is the reason for all the things to be hidden in themselves and to appear in themselves (*mā* = to be hidden, *yā* = to appear). *Māyā* is a causal source for the creation of the world. It is intangible. *Māyā* is the first cause of the world. The *sthūla* or gross world comes from the *sūkṣma* or subtle *māyā*. The *śakti* of God is the instrumental cause for the appearance of the world. God is the *nimitta kāraṇa*. God, due to his supreme compassion, creates the *tanu-karaṅam-bhuvana* and the *bhogas* from *māyā* for the souls to enjoy the benefits of the actions and to balance the evil and good deeds. *Tanu* means body; *karaṅam* are the tools for experiencing; *bhuvana* are the worlds; *bhogas* are the objects to be experienced. All these are a product of *māyā*. Although the *āṅṅava* makes the souls to be immersed in darkness and *māyā* [manifests] in the form of body and instruments for the souls – that lie unconsciously in a lower status –, the light of knowledge makes the souls realize [the truth]. Therefore, it is called the lamp for the illusory body. However, due to *āṅṅava*, sometimes *māyā* hides the intellectual activities of the soul.

What he has said here about *māyā* is different from what is said in the Vedāntic tradition, where the soul

fails to understand its identity with Brahmā because of *māyā*'s concealment; after *māyā* is removed, the soul sees itself as a supreme being. Nevertheless, in the Śaivasiddhānta the state of *māyā* is different; having provided a body, the means for experiencing, the world, and the objects meant to be enjoyed, [*māyā*] helps experiencing the *karma*. It brings forth the *sthūla* things from its *sūkṣma* nature. It is not concealment.

Śuddhamāyā

Śuddhamāyā (also called *bindu*) is the basis for the Lord himself to perform the five functions. It is eternal, pervasive, and not illusory. The five *Śivatattvas* called *śuddha*

cuttamāyai (vintu eṇavum peyar) eṇpatu, iraivaṇ nērē aintoḷil naṭattuvatarḱuriya mūlapporuḷ. itu nittamāṇatu, viyāpakamāṇatu, mayakkam ceyyātatu. cutta māyaiyil tōṇruvaṇa civa tattuvaṅkaḷākiya cutta vittai, īcuram, catācivam, catti, civam eṇṇum aintum. intat tattuvaṅkaḷ aintiṇaiyūm kalantu nivirtti, piratiṭṭai, vittai, cānti, cāntiyatītai eṇra aintu kalaikaḷum niṛkum. vākkukkaḷ nāṅku: vaikari, mattimai, cūkkumai, paicanti eṇa. ivai tūlavaikari, cūkkuma vaikari, mattimai, cūkkumai, paicanti eṇa aintākap pirintu, muraiyē ivvaintu kalaikaḷaiyūm parri niṛkum.

āṇmākaḷ malapanta pētattiṇāl mūvakaiyar: mūṇru malaṅkaḷālum piṇippuṇṭavar cakalar, māyaiyolinta marrak kaṇmam āṇavam ākiya iraṇṭālum piṇippuṇṭavar piraḷayākalar, āṇavam oṇriṇāl maṭṭum piṇippuṇ

ṭavar viṅṅāṇa kalar eṇru muṇṇamē kūriṇōm. mēr kūriya cutta māyaiyākiya puvaṇam, āṇava malam māttiramuṭaiya viṅṅāṇa kalarukku uraiṇṭam. im māyai tuṇpattōṭu viravutalinri inṇam māttiraiyē payappatu ātalin cuttam eṇappaṭum.

acutta māyai

acutta māyai (atō māyai eṇrum mōkiṇi eṇrum peyar) eṇpatu, cutta māyaiyil tōṇrum civa tattuvaṅkaḷil kuṇainta cutta vittaikkum kīlppaṭṭatu. ituvum nittamāy aruvamāy viṇaikkup parruk kōṭāyiruntu, vittiyā tattuvaṅkaḷiṇ piṇappiṭamāy iruppatu. ivai ēḷu: kālam niyati kalai vittai arākam puruṭaṇ māyai (ituvē pirakirutti māyai) eṇpaṇa. ivarruḷ puruṭaṇ eṇru inṇkup pēcuvatu, marravai pōla oru cata tattuvamaṇru; atarḱu muṇṇuḷḷa aintu vittiyā tattuvaṅkaḷum kūṭap peṇru, aṭutta tattuvamākiya pirakirutti māyaiyil pōka nukarcciyaic karuti niṛkiṇra uyiriṇ nilaiyē puruṭa tattuvam eṇru collappaṭum. kālam niyati kalai vittai arākam ākiya tattuvaṅkaḷilulḷa puvaṇaṅkaḷil uraiyūm āṇmākaḷ, āṇavam kaṇmam eṇṇum iru malaṅkaḷāl pantikkappaṭṭavar. ivarkaḷukkup piraḷayākalar eṇpatu peyar.

vidyā [or pure knowledge], īśvara, Sadāśiva, śakti, and Śiva emerge from śuddhamāyā. The five-fold combinations of these tattvas produce the five kalās [or subtlest aspects of the objective world]: nivṛtti, pratiṣṭhā, vidyā, śānti, and śāntiyatītai. There are four forms of speech: vaikharī, madhyamā, sūkṣmā, and paśyanṭī. They are further divided into the five forms of sthūlavaikharī, sūkṣmāvaikharī, madhyamā, sūkṣmā, and paśyanṭī, which stand for the five kalās, respectively.

The souls are of three types on the basis of the mala affecting them. We have already said this before: the sakala are those who are bonded by all the three malas; the pralayākala are those who are affected by the two malas of karma and āṇava, leaving aside māyā;

and the vijñānākala are those who are affected only by āṇava. The world that emerges from the abovementioned śuddhamāyā is the place where the vijñānākala, who have only the āṇavamala, reside. This māyā is called śuddha as it makes experiencing only happiness, without mixing it with sufferings.

Aśuddhamāyā

Aśuddhamāyā (it is whether called like this or mōhinī) is ranked below the śuddhavidyā, which is the lower among the Śivatattvas that emerge from śuddhamāyā. Since it also is eternal and intangible and influences the attachment to the deeds, it is the source of the vidyātattvas. They are seven: kāla, niyati, kalā, vidyā, rāga, puruṣa, and māyā, also called prakṛtimāyā [or limited time, limited freedom, limited skills, limited knowledge, limitation of fullness, limited spiritual consciousness, and the material cause, respectively]. Among them, the one called puruṣa is not a concrete tattva like the others; manifesting after the five vidyātattvas, what we call as puruṣatattva is the condition of the souls wishing for bhogas [that they experience] in

murkūriya cutta māyai allātapaṭiyāl itu acuttamāyai eṇappatūm.

pirakiruti māyai

pirakiruti māyai (mān eṇrum peyar) eṇpatu mur kāṭṭiyapaṭi vittiyā tattuvaṅkaḷil irutiyākac coṇṇa tattuvamākiya māyaiyākum. itu pōka nukarcci nikaḷvatarṅku mūlamātalāl, mūlappirakiruti, mūlappakuti eṇrum peyar perum. avviyaktam eṇra oru peyarum itar

kuṇṭu. mukkuṅaṅkaḷum itaṇṭattuc cūkkumamāy veḷip paṭāmal (avviyaktamāy) nirpatāl appeyar. mūlappirakirutiyē paṅcakkilēcamākiya aviccai āṅkāram avā ācai kōpam eṇpaṇa viḷaitarṅkuk kāraṇam. mūlappirakirutiyē vittiyā tattuvaṅkaḷ irupattu nāṅkum tōṅṅuvatarṅku mūlam. iv virupattu nāṅkum piṅ varuvaṅa: pirutivi appu tēyu vāyu ākācam eṇap pūtam aintu, cuvai oḷi ūru ōcai nāṅṅam eṇat taṅmāttirai aintu, kaṅmēntiriyamāṅṅa vāṅku pātam pāṅi pāyuru upattam eṇa aintu, ṅāṅēntiriyamāṅṅa mey vāy kaṅ mūṅku cevi eṇa aintu, maṅam putti cittam akaṅkāram eṇa antak kāraṇam nāṅku-āka 24.

115

āṅavam kaṅmam māyai eṇa mūṅṅru malaṅkaḷālum pantikkap paṭṭavarkaḷ mūṅṅrāvatu vakaiyiṅarāṅṅa cakalar eṅpōr. ivarkaḷ uraiviṅtam pirakirutimāyai. nām aṅaivarum cakalar.

paṅca malam

paṅca malam eṅru kūrum oru vaḷakkum uṅṭu. āṅavam kaṅmam māyai eṅra mūṅṅrōṭu, tirōka malam māyēyam eṅra iraṅṅtum cērntu aintākum. mūla malamāṅṅa āṅava malattōṭu porunti niṅṅru ataiṅ pakkuvap paṭac ceyvatu tirōtāṅṅa catti eṅpatu. ituvum iraivaṅṅatu aruṅ cattitāṅ. itu viṅaiṅṅpayāṅṅai āṅmāṅkaḷ aṅupavittut tīrttar poruṅṅtu, uṅmaiṅyai uṅara voṅṅāmal ciṅṅṅṅalavu maṅṅaiṅṅtalāl ituvum oru

prakṛtimāyā, which is the next *tattva*. The souls that reside in the worlds where they are affected by *kāla*, *niyati*, *kalā*, *vidyā*, and *rāgatattva* are bonded by the two *malas*, *āṅava* and *karma*, are called *pralayākala*. Since this is not the afore-mentioned *śuddhamāyā*, it is called *aśuddha māyā*.

Prakṛtimāyā

Prakṛtimāyā (also called *māṅṅ*) is the last *tattva* among the aforementioned *vidyātattvas*. Since this is the source for the occurrence of enjoyments, it is also called *aprakṛti* or *source matter*. Another name for it is also

avyakta. The reason for this name is that it is not manifested due to its subtle nature, constituted of the three *guṅas*. *Mūlaprakṛti* is the cause of the emergence of the *paṅcagleśa* [or five afflictions]: *avidyā* [or ignorance], *ahaṅkāra* [or arrogance], *avā* [or passion], *ācai* [or avarice], and *krodha* [or anger]. *Mūlaprakṛti* is the source for the production of the twenty-four *tattvas*. They are: the five *mahābhūtas* [or elements] that are *prthvī*, *āpas*, *tejas*, *vāyu*, *ākāśa* [or earth, water, fire, air, ether]; the five *tanmātra* [or sense perceptions] that are *rasa*, *oḷi*, *ūru*, *ōcai*, and *nāṅṅam* [or taste, sight, touch, hearing, and smell]; *vāṅ*, *pāda*, *pāṅi*, *pāyuru*, and *upastha* [or mouth, feet, hands, anus, and genitals] that are the five *karmendriya* [or organs of action]; *mey*, *vāy*, *kaṅ*, *mūṅku*, and *cevi* [or skin, tongue, eye, nose, and ear] that are the five *jñānendriya* [or organs of senses]; and the *antaḅkaraṅṅa* [or internal organs] called *manas* [or mind], *buddhi* [or intellect], *citta* [or consciousness], and *ahaṅkāra* [or ego] – thus, 24.

We have said that those who are bonded by all the three impurities of *āṅava*, *karma*, and *māyā* are called *sakala*. The place where they reside is *prakṛtimāyā*. We all are *sakalas*.

The five impurities

There is also a tradition that classifies five impurities; they become five by adding

malam eṇappaṭum. (tirōtāṇam-maṛaittal.)
im maraiṇṇu uyirukku utaviyēyākum.
maṛṛoru malam māyēyam eṇpatu. itu cutta
māyaiyiṇ tiraṭci allatu kāriyamākiya cutta
tattuvaṅkaḷē yām; āṇavattāl
maṛaikappattā āṇmāviṇ ṇāṇak

kiriya caktikaḷai veḷippaṭuttum poruṭṭum,
viṇaiṇṇu payaṅkaḷai aṇupavikkum poruṭṭum,
iṇriyamaiyāta taṇukaraṇa puvaṇa pōkaṅkaḷ
kāriyappaṭum ṇilaiyil acutta māyā
kāraṇattil civacaktikaḷāl
tōrruvikkappaṭuvatu. māyaiyiṇ kāriyamē
māyēyam eṇru collappaṭum.

aintolil

ivvāru aṇātiyē mūvakai malattālum toṭak
kuṇṭu kiṭakkum āṇmākaḷai
malapantattiliruntu viṭu vittup pēriṇpa
vāḷvu aḷikka vēṇṭumenra peruṇ karuṇai
mutalvaṇukku uṇṭu. ik karuṇaiyiṇ veḷip
pāṭṭai virāyāṭṭu allatu līlai eṇpārkaḷ. ik
karuṇaiyiṇ ceyalkaḷ aintākac colvatu
marapu paṭaittal, kāttal, aḷittal, maṛaittal,
aruḷal eṇa. ivarraiṇṇu civaperumāṇiṇ aintolil
eṇru caivam kūrum. aintolil ceyyum
avacaram naṭarācapperumāṇ eṇpatākum.
caiva valipāṭṭaik kūriya iṭattil
ivvaintolilkaḷaiyum naṭarāca tattuvattaiyum
viḷaṅka uraittōram.

paṭaikattal-ciruṣṭi, tōrruvittal. iṇraivaṇ
uyirkaḷaiyō ulakaiyō cūṇiyattiliruntu
uṇṭākka villai. uyirkaḷum ulakat
tōrrattukkuk kāraṇamāṇa cūkkumap
poruḷum iṇraivaṇaiṇṇu pōla eṇraikkum uḷḷa
poruḷ. ivai oru kālattilum aḷivatillai eṇpatai
munṇamē kurippitṭōm. itu caiva cittāntattin
aṭippaṭaik karuttu. itu pōlavē uḷḷatu pōkātu,
illatu vārātu eṇpatu maṛṛoru karuttu. itaic
caṅkāriya vātam eṇpārkaḷ. cūṇiyat tiliruntu
etuvum uṇṭākātu, uḷḷatetuvum cūṇiyamākātu
eṇpatu itaṇ poruḷ. iṇraivaṇ māyaiyai mutar

tirōdha and māyēya to āṇava, karma, and
māyā. The tirōdhasakti joins with the
primary impurity āṇava and makes it
mature. This also is a power of grace of God.
This is considered a mala since it hides the
truth for the souls to experience the fruits of
their actions. (tirōdhāna = to hide). Such
hiding is helpful for the souls.

The other impurity is called māyēya. It is an
accumulation of śuddhamāyā or [the group
of] śuddhatattvas that affect actions; it is
originated by the Śiva's śaktis because of
aśuddhamāyā that is the

essential cause for the experience of the
worldly enjoyments, in order for the
kriyāsakti to manifest the knowledge of the
soul hidden by āṇava and for the souls to
experience the fruits of the deeds. The
action of māyā is called māyēyam.

The five functions

Thus, the Supreme Lord has the great mercy
to free the souls – that are born with the three
kinds of impurities – from the fetters and
give them a blissful life. These
manifestations of grace are called ‘[divine]
plays’ or līlā. Tradition talks about these
manifestations of grace as being five-fold:
creation, protection, destruction,
concealment, and grace. Śaivism calls them
the five functions of God. Lord Naṭarāja is
the one who performs these five
occupations. We will explain the five
functions in the context of Śiva worship and
the principles of Naṭarāja [‘s dance].

The creation is called sṛṣṭi, “origin”. God
does not create the souls or the world from
śūnya [or emptiness]. Both the souls and the
subtle objects that are the material cause of
the world are eternal like God. We have
already mentioned that they never perish.
This is a basic tenet of Śaivasiddhānta.
Similarly, another notion is that “what exists
won’t cease to be, what does not exist
cannot be produced [from nothing]”. They
call it satkāryavāda [or theory of causation].
The meaning of this [theory] is that nothing
can be created from emptiness, and the
existing things cannot become emptiness. It

	<i>kāraṇamā kavum tāṇ nimitta kāraṇamā kavum</i>	is said that God created the world as being both the primary
	<i>iruntu ulakaip paṭaikkiṛāṇ enpar. itu pānai vaṇaiyum kuyavaṇ maṇṇai mutar kāraṇamāka vaiittu, cakkaramum kōlum tuṇaik kāraṇamāyk koṇṭu, tāṇ nimitta kāraṇamāyiruntu, pānai vaṇaivatu pōla. ciruṭṭi eppōtum nikaḷntu koṇṭē iruppatu; itarku muṭivillai.</i>	cause of <i>māyā</i> and the <i>nimitta kāraṇa</i> . It is like the making of a pot: the potter shapes a pot using the earth as the first cause and the wheel and the stick as sub-causes, while he is the instrumental cause. <i>Sṛṣṭi</i> is constantly occurring; it doesn't have an end.
117	<i>ulakattup poruḷkaḷ yāvum oru kālat til uṇṭākie ciṛitu kālam iruntu piṇ aḷiyum taṇmaiyutaiyaṇa. uyirkaḷ vālvataraku iṭamāyullatu ulakam. paṭaikku muṇ uyirkaḷ kēvala nilaiyil āṇava iruḷil aḷunti aṛivu viḷaṅkap perāmal māyaiyil viṇaiyāl kaṭṭuṇṭu kiṭantaṇa. intat tuṇpa nilaiyaip pōkki āṇmāvaip pēriṇpa nilaikkuc celutta eṇṇiya iṛaivaṇ viṇai aṇupavittut tīravum, āṇavam vilaki nāṇam viḷaṅkavum vēṇṭi, uyirukku uṭalum kaṇ kātu mutalāṇa karuvikaḷum, vālvataraku ulakum, pōkattukkup pala poruḷkaḷum tōrruvittāṇ. ituvē paṭaiippu. paṭaiippiṇ muṭivāṇa nōkkam iṅkuk kūriyamummala niṅkamē.</i>	All things in the world are created in a given time and, after a while, they perish. The world is the place where souls live. Before they come into existence, the living beings were in an abject state, immersed in the darkness of <i>āṇava</i> , unconscious, and bound by deeds in <i>māyā</i> . The Lord, who wants to remove this state of suffering and lead the soul to a state of bliss, demands to experience the deeds, remove <i>āṇava</i> , and realize <i>jñāna</i> ; he originates a body for the soul, instruments like eyes, ears, etc., a world where to live, and many objects to enjoy. This is the creation. The final aim of the creation is the removal of the three impurities mentioned here.
	<i>kāttal enpatu stiti. ittoliliṇ karuttāvatu, uyirkaḷaiyum tōrruvikkappaṭṭa tēkātip piṛapaṇcaṅkaḷaiyum avvavaṛrukkuriya kāla ellai varaiyil nilai perumāru kāttu, uyir viṇaippayaṇai aṇupavikkat tuṇai ceytalākum. ulakaip paṭaitta iṛaivaṇ uyirkaḷukkup pala vakaiyāṇa uṭalkaḷait tarukiṛāṇ. uṭalkaḷum vāḷnāḷum perru vāḷum uyirkaḷ viṇai ceykiṇraṇa. viṇai piṛaviyait tarukiṛatu. piṛaviyil ūcalāṭum uyir, viṇaikkū ēṛpa aṛivu viḷakkam perukiṛatu. ivvāru aṇupavittarkup poru</i>	Protection is called <i>sthiti</i> . The meaning of this occupation is to make the souls and the cosmic universe settle for the time appointed for them and help the souls to experience the deeds. God, who has created the world, gives different kinds of bodies to the souls. Having obtained a body and a lifetime, the living souls accumulate deeds that cause rebirths. The soul that oscillates from birth to birth receives a level of knowledge suitable to its <i>karma</i> . Thus, protection
	<i>ḷāka ulakaiyum karuvikaḷāka uṭal mutaliyavaṛraiyum tantu nilai perac ceytalē kāttal.</i>	is the condition of considering the world as the object of experience and the body, etc., as instruments [for experiencing it].
118	<i>mūṇrāvatu caṅkāram, aḷittal. uyirkaḷukkum pācaṅkaḷukkum aḷivu enpatu illai. ākavē, iṅku aḷittaliṇ poruḷ ilaippārrutal eṇru cāttiram kūrum. makāppiraḷayam enpatu aṇaittum oṭuṅkum kāla ellai. appōtu ellā ulakaṅkaḷum uyirkaḷum cūkkuma nilaiyil maṛaintu niṛkum. piṛappiṇilum iṛap piṇilum paṭṭuc cuḷaṇru kaḷaitta uyirukkuc cila kālam ilaippārac ceyvatē aḷittal eṇṇum poruḷatu. itaṇ nōkkam, mīṇṭum ciruṭṭik kālattil</i>	The third function is <i>saṃhāra</i> , destruction. It is not the destruction of the souls or fetters. Therefore, the Śāstras say that its meaning is “taking rest”. The time frame in which everything is suspended is called <i>māhapralaya</i> . At that time, the world and the souls disappear in the <i>sūkṣma</i> state. The meaning of destruction is giving rest for some time to the soul that has been spinning around and is tired after birth and death. Its

avvuyir ilaippu nāṅkit taṅkarāṇa puvaṇa
pōkaṅkaḷuṭaṅ kūṭi viṇaiṇṇai
aṇupavittut tīrppataṅku vēṅṭiya valimaiyai
taruvatākum.

tirōpavam eṇpatu maṅaittal. maṅaittalāl
uyir viṇaiyilīṭupaṭṭu aṇupavippatāl
kālakkiramattil iru viṇai yoppu nikalkīratu.
itu mala mutirccikku, atāvatu
paripākattīrku, utaviyākīratu.

aṇukkīrakam aruḷ ceṅtal. iruviṇai oppu
nikaḷntu malam paripākappaṭṭa aḷavil,
aṇukkīrakam nikaḷkīratu. itai aruṭcatti
patital-catti nipātam eṇpārkaḷ. pācaṅkaḷ
yāvum viṭavē, muttip pērukaikūṭum.

iraivaṅ cannitiyil eppōtum inta aintoḷil
iṭaiyarātu pala paṭikaḷil nikaḷntu
koṅṭēyirukkum. cūriyaṇuṭaiya cannitiyilē
cila malarkaḷ moṭṭākiyum, cila moṭṭu
virintum, cila naṅku malarntum, cila
kūmpiyum, cila utirntum pōvatu pōla,
iraivaṅ cannitiyil

ivvaintoḷilkaḷ uyiriṅ pakkuvattīrkeṅpa
nikaḷntu koṅ ṭēyirukkum.

catti

civam eṅra poruḷ onrē. civatkiṅ ārralaṅ
taṅiyē pirittuc catti eṅru collukīrōm. civat
taiyaṅṅrit taṅiyē catti eṅpatu illai. cattiyaṅ
ceyarpāṭum taṅmaiyaṅ vaittuc catti
palavākac collappaṭum. cattiyaṅ corūpam
uyirkaḷukku aṇukkīrakam māttiraṅ kuṅṅitta
ñāṅamonrē; atuvē parācatti eṅpatu.
uyirkaḷukku malaparipākam varuvittal
kuṅṅittu aintoḷil ceṅvikkum nilaiyil, ataṅ oru
kūru tirōtāṅna catti eṅappaṭum. mutalvaṅ
carvāṅmākkaḷaiyum muttiyil cērpikka
vēṅṭum eṅak koṅṭa karuṅaiyē iccā
cattiyākum. āṅmākkaḷ ceṅta iruviṇaiṇ
payaṅkaḷai aṇupavittut tīrka vēṅṭum eṅru
mutalvaṅ ninaṅppatu ñāṅna catti. atē
karuṅaiyāl, ciruṭṭi mutalāṅna kāriyaṅkaḷai
naṅṅatti varutal kiriyā catti. iccā cattiyāl
aṇukkīrakamuṅṅāy ñāṅnacattiyāl viṇaikaḷai
arintu, kiriyācattiyāl viṇaikkīṭākat tēkātip
pirapaṅcaṅkaḷait tōṅru vittal nikaḷkīratu. ic
cattikaḷ mutalvaṅnukkuk karuviyēyām.

119

purpose is to provide the soul with the
necessary strength to interrupt the rest at the
time of the next *srṣṭi* and experience the
fruits of the deeds getting together with the
worldly enjoyments.

Tirōdhana is the concealment. While the
soul is getting involved in the deeds and
experiencing them, two kinds of deeds are
produced through concealment. This is
helpful for the maturity of the impurities,
namely *paripāka*.

Anugraha is the action of grace. *Anugraha*
occurs after the two kinds of deeds have
reached their completion. It is also called
“power of grace”, *śaktinipāta*. Having
removed all the attachments, one obtains
mukti.

God will uninterruptedly perform these five
functions at different stages in the sanctum.
In the presence of the sun, some flowers
close themselves, some open, some
blossom, the petals of some of them get
close, and those of others fall; similarly, in
the temple of God, these five functions

will be continuously performed for the
spiritual maturity of the soul.

Śakti

Its meaning is the same as Śiva. We call
śakti the power of Śiva considered
separately. There is no *śakti* without Śiva.
The *śakti* can be called in different ways
based on the manners it functions. The form
of *śakti* that symbolizes only the grace
[bestowed] for the souls is called *jñāna*; this
is the *paramāśakti*. One of its components,
which performs the five activities that lead
to the maturity of the impurities for the
souls, is called *tirōdhanaśakti*. *icchāśakti* is
the grace of the Supreme Lord wishing for
all living beings to join *mukti*. *Jñānaśakti* is
the Supreme Lord’s thought that souls must
experience and extinguish the fruits of the
two kinds of *karma* they accumulate. Due to
this same compassion, *kriyāśakti* performs
the actions starting from *srṣṭi*. The cosmic
worlds are brought to existence through the
icchāśakti that is the power of grace,
jñānaśakti that is the power of knowledge of

civattiṇuṭaiya cattiyāṇatu civattiliruntu vēru pirikka muṭiyāta ārral aḷavēyākum. tīyiliruntu pirikkamuṭiyāta veppam pōla, civamum cattiyum iraṇṭum oru poruḷēyaṇri, iru poruḷkaḷalla. civaperumāṇ “āṇallai peṇṇallai aliyumallai” eṇṇār appar cuvāmikaḷ. avaraiyē “ammaiyē appā” eṇṇum, “appaṇ nī ammai nī” eṇṇum nam ācāriyar pāṭiṇar. ārralaip peṇṇākavum, ārraluṭaiyavaṇai āṇākavum

colvatu, camayat turaiyil ettaṇaiyō poruḷkaḷir kāṇpatu pōla, upacāra moḷiyattaṇaiyē. itaiyē purāṇa kāviyakkārarkaḷ “jakattukkup pitā mātākkaḷ ivviruvarum” eṇṇu conṇārkaḷ. purāṇak kataikku itu vēṇṭuvatē; āṇāl tattuvak karuttukku itu carrum poruntātu.

tacakāriyam

tacakāriyam eṇṇa oru toṭar cittāntattil collap perum; āṇmā ulakiṇ iyalpaik kaṇṭu, piṇ uyiriṇ iyalpaik kaṇṭu, piṇ civattiṇ iyalpu kaṇṭu, irutiṇiyil civattōṭu oṇṇum nilai varaiyil perum aṇupava muṇaikaḷaip pattuppaṭikaḷāka vakuttuk kūruvatu oru marapu.

pirutivi tattuvam mutal civa tattuvam īrāka uḷla muppattāru tattuvaṅkaḷaiyum ivai tattuvaṅkaḷ eṇṇu vaṭivu kāṇpatu tattuvārūpam. ivai caṭam eṇṇu uṇartal tattuva taricaṇam. civaṇ ācāriya mūrṭtamāy eḷuntaruḷi vantu ivai caṭameṇṇpataiyum, āṇmāviṇ ṇāṇam tattuvātītāmāy niṇṇpatu eṇṇpataiyum, uṇartta uṇarntu niṇṇpatu tattuva cutti. tattuvaṅkaḷ nīṅkiṇa kilaiyal, vanta atīta ṇāṇattait tāṇeṇṇu kāṇṇutal āṇma rūpam. taṇatu ceyal illai yeṇṇu kaṇṭu, tāṇ eṇṇpatu tōṇṇāmal, antac civameṇṇum paramāṇantap poruḷil kūṭi atuvāvatu āṇma cutti, tiruvaruḷaiyē iṭamāka niṇṇu kāṇṇutal civarūpam. kivappērril kaikūṭum aṇṇitarkariya paramāṇantattaic cērūtal civataricaṇam. aṇṇivikka aṇṇiyum āṇma pōtamum kaṇṇmappucippum avaṇṇeliya vēṇṇillai eṇṇu kaṇṭu, akamum puṇamum antac civattuṇāṇē kūṭiniṇṇal civayōkam.

karma, and kriyāśakti that is the power of doing deeds. These śaktis are activities of the Supreme Lord.

The śakti of Śiva is its power that cannot be separated from him. Just like you cannot separate the heat from the fire, Śiva and śakti are only one thing, and not two. Appar said, “[God] is not male, nor female, nor neither male nor female”. Our ācārya sang calling him “Oh mother, father”, and “You are the father, you are the mother”. In the religious context, there is the

formal saying that the power is female and the one who possesses it is male, like we see with many other things. Like this, the Purāṇas’s writers said that he is both the father and the mother of the whole world. Puraṇic stories are necessary, but they do not fit the philosophical tenets.

Daśakārya

In Śaivasiddhānta, there are series [of acts] called daśakārya; there’s a tradition to divide the ways of experience into ten stages by which the ātma discovers the nature of the world, then discovers the nature of the self, then discovers the nature of Śiva, and finally becomes one with Śiva.

Tattvarūpa is seeing the forms of all the thirty-six tattvas starting from pṛthvītattva and ending with Śivatattva. Perceiving their matter corresponds to tattvadarśana. Tattvaśuddhi is realizing them as matters emerging from Śiva in the form of an ācārya and [realizing] the philosophical concept of soul’s knowledge. Having left aside the philosophical principles, ātmarūpa is seeing oneself as supreme knowledge. Merging with the Supreme Being that is Śiva, understanding that that’s not our doing nor that we are him, is called ātmaśuddhi. Śivarūpa is realizing that the grace of Śiva is everywhere. Joining the Supreme bliss, known as being in his Śiva’s abode, is called śivadarśana. Having realized that there is no difference between the bhoga and karma he has arisen, śivayoga is the inner and outer union with that Śiva. In that situation, Śiva

anta nilaiyil, civaṅ ivaṅ uṭalum uyirumāy
niṅru, pirāratamākiya viṣaya

pōttaiyūm civa pōtamāy ceytu, ivaṅaip
pōtamaṛa niṅru tāṅākki viṭuvaṅ.
āṅmalāpamāṅa paramāṅantam poṅkik
karai puraṅṅu avacamurum nil civapōkam
eṅapperum. ivvāru kāṅkīra tattvarūpam
taricaṅam cutti, āṅmarūpam taricaṅam
cutti, civarūpam taricaṅam yōkam pōkam
ākiya pattumē taca kāriyam eṅappaṭum.

mutti nilai

caiva kittāntattiṅ oru mukkiyamāṅa kōṭpāṭu
mupporuḷ unmai eṅpatu, itaṅpaṭi, pati pacu
pācam ākiya mupporuḷkaḷum aṅātiyāṅavai,
nittiyamāṅavai (aḷivillātavai) eṅpatu.
āṅmākkalukku aḷivu illai. āṅmā iraivaṅōṭu
iraṅṅarak kalantapiṅ, atāvatu mutti
nilaiyilum, pācaṅkaliliruntu viṭupaṭṭa
piṅṅum, civattōṭu pūraṅamāy oṅrāvatiḷḷai.
121 pīrappiliruntum irappiliruntum-viṅayīṅ
toṭakkiliruntu-viṭupaṭṭatu unmai. viṭupaṭṭa
āṅmā, iraivaṅōṭu iriṅṅarak kalantu avaṅatu
aintoḷilkaḷil campantamiṅri, avaṅ pēriṅpam
aḷikkat tāṅ avviṅpattai aṅupavittuk
koṅṅiruppaṅ. ituvē iriṅṅarak kalattaliṅ
unmaiṅ poruḷ eṅru cittāntikaḷ kūruvar. inta
nilai ēkamum alla, tuvaitamum alla; unmai
a-tvaitam. ātalāl itu cuttāttuvaitam eṅpatu
caivaruṭaiya karuttu. ivvāru āṅmā oṅ
rākāmal iriṅṅumākāmal uḷḷa āṅantāṅupava
nilaiyil, mūṅrāvatu poruḷāṅa malam eṅṅa
ākiratu eṅpatu kēḷvi. itarkum aḷivillai
eṅpar; malamāṅatu varutta vittup pōla,
muttiyaṅainta āṅmākaḷaip pantikkum
valimaiyarrup pōṅa pōtilum, pūraṅamāy
aḷintuviṭa villai; pettāṅmākaḷaip pantittuk
koṅṅutāṅirukkīratu. makācaṅkāra kālattiḷ
itu, māyaiyil

oṭuṅki, mūṅṅum ciruṭṭik kālattiḷ āṅmākaḷ
uṭaletuttavaṅāṅē avarkaḷuṭaiya
paripākattukkuṭ takkavāru avarkaḷuṭaiya
arivai maṅrattuk taṅ toḷilaic ceytu koṅṅutāṅ
122 irukkīratu. itaṅāl muttiyilum mūṅru
mutalum uḷḷaṅa eṅru collukīrōm.
(tacakāriyamum mutti nilaiyūm mikavum
nuṅṅukamāṅa cikkal poruntiya karuttukkaḷ.
cāmāṅiyamāy camayattai aṅiya muiyalvōr
ivarriṅṅuḷ pukavēṅṅuvatiḷḷai.)

resides in its body and [the soul] experiences
the worldly *bhoga* deriving from the

past karma as well as Śiva's bliss, till the
soul is left with [Śiva's bliss alone, and
with] no enjoyment. *Śivabhoga* is the
uncontrolled state overflowing with
spiritual supreme bliss.

Thus, we have mentioned the *daśakārya* as
tattvarūpa, *tattvadarśana*, and *tattvaśuddhi*;
ātmarūpa, *ātmadarśana*, and *ātmaśuddhi*;
and *śivarūpa*, *śivadarśana*, *śivayōga*, and
śivabhoga.

The state of *mukti*

An important tenet of Śiva philosophy is the
threefold reality. According to this, there are
three beginningless and eternal
(unperishable) entities, that are *pati*, *paśu*,
and *pāśa*. Souls are indestructible. Although
the soul merges with Śiva – namely, reaches
mukti – after it detaches from the impurities,
it does not fully become one with him. It
indeed gets freed from the deeds coming
from birth and death. The liberated soul
unites with God and does not get involved
in his five occupations, continuously
experiencing the bliss he gives. This is the
true meaning of the union with Śiva, hence
called Śuddhādvaita. Thus, as it is
experiencing such bliss where it is not as
one nor as separated, the question is what
happens to the impurities, which are the
third entity. They do not get destroyed.
Impurity is like a roasted seed that, although
not having the power to bind the souls that
have reached *mukti*, does not even perish
completely; the bound souls remain bonded.
During the destruction,

they shrink in *māyā*, then again during the
creation the souls obtain a body appropriate
to their spiritual maturity, conceal their
knowledge, and perform their actions.
Therefore, we say that the three entities exist
even in *mukti*.

(The concepts of *daśakārya* and the state of
mukti are very difficult. Those who have a
basic knowledge of religion should not
investigate them).

mutti cātanam

ituvārai pati pacu pācaṅkaḷiṅ
ilakkaṅaṅkaḷaiyūm, caktiyiṅ taṅmai,
aintoḷiliṅ poruḷ, tacakāriya viḷakkam, mutti
ilakkaṅam ākiya poruḷkaḷaiyūm kūriṅōm.
iṅi mukti cātanam eṅpatu parrik kūri
ippakutiyaḷi muṭikkalām.

ōr aracaṅuṭaiya putalvaṅ iḷamaiyil yātu
kāraṅattālō araṅmaṅaiyai viṭtu vēṭar
kūṭṭattilē cērntu vēṭarāl vaḷarḷkap paṭṭāṅ.
tāṅ iṅṅa ciraṅpuyūṭaiyavaṅ eṅpatu avaṅukkuṭ
teriyavillai. vēṭaṅeṅrē taṅṅai mayāṅki
irukkiraṅ. anta nilaiyil aracaṅ vantu, “nī
eṅṅuṭaiya makaṅ” eṅru avaṅukku uṅartti
vēṭar kūṭṭattiliruntu pirittuc ciraṅppuc ceytu
taṅṅaiṅpōla aracakumāraṅākkiraṅ.
atupōla, uyiraṅatu, taṅṅaiyūm ariyātu, taṅ
talaivaṅaiyūm ariyātu, aimpula vēṭar
cuḷaliraṅpaṭṭut tuyaruṅukiraṅratu. appōtu
talaivaṅ, taṅatu aruḷ kāraṅamāka avaṅukku
oru kuruvāka eḷuntaruḷi vantu, pulāṅkaḷ
mutalāṅa tattuvaṅkaḷ nīyalla eṅru avaṅukku
uṅartti, avarrai uḷḷa paṭi uṅaracceytu,
avarraṅiraṅrum pirittu, avaṅuṭaiya

123

aṅṅāṅattaip pōkki, avāṅait tāṅākkir taṅatu
tiruvaṅiyil cērkkiraṅ. kuruvaṅivāka varuḷira
iraivaṅ taṅatu tiḷkaṅiyāl avvāṅmāvaic
cuttaṅākkukiraṅ. kuruviṅ pārvaiyālum
paricattālum caṅcita viṅai tīrukiratu.
ceykirra ceyalellām civaṅ ceyaleṅra
pāvaṅai yōṭu ivvāṅmā viṅai ceytu varavē,
ākāmiyam ēraṅāmar pōkiratu. uṭal uḷḷa
aḷavum pirāṅatta viṅai iruntu aṅupavittu,
uṭal nīṅkavē, atuvum illāmar pōkiratu.
ivvāru iruviṅaiyoppu kaikūtukiraṅ.
pacuṅāṅattaip pōkki, kuru ceyta pati ṅāṅa
upatēcattāl āṅava malamum akalkiraṅ.
ivvāru iruviṅai yoppum malaparipākamum
kaikūṭavē, avvāṅmāviṭattut tiruvaruḷ
patikiraṅ; patinta uyir paramuttiyil
cērkkiraṅ.
tiruvaruḷ neriyil niṅru civattaik kūṭa
virumpuvōr piṅpaṅrattakka vāḷḷkai nerikaḷ
cariyai kiriyai yōkam ṅāṅam eṅa nāṅku.
ivai muṅṅamē viḷakki uraikappaṭṭāṅa. iv
vāḷḷkai nerikaḷil niṅrum kālattu, aṅiyār
vaḷipāṭu ceytal mikka ciraṅpuyūṭaiyatu,

Mukti sādhana

So far, we have mentioned things like the definitions of *pati*, *paśu*, and *pāśa*, the nature of *śakti*, the meaning of the five functions, the explanation of the *daśakārya*, the definition of *mukti*. Hereafter, we will finish this section by talking about the way to obtain *mukti*.

A king's son left the palace in his youth for some reason, joined a community of hunters, and was raised by them. He did not know the greatness of his origins and had deluded himself that he was a hunter. In this context, the king went [to him], told him that he was his son, separated him from the hunter community, and made him a prince doing special things. Similarly, the soul does not know itself and does not know its Lord; it is just being deceived by the five senses and suffering. At that time, the Lord, due to his grace, appears to him as a *guru*, makes it realize that the *tattvas* starting from the senses are not [its real] self, makes it feel those as they [really] are, separates it from them,

removes its ignorance, and brings it at his abode where it becomes as the Lord himself. God, who comes as a *guru*, makes the soul pure through his initiation. [The soul] extinguishes the accumulated *karma* thanks to the vision of God and purifications. If this soul performs the actions thinking that they are all actions of Lord Śiva, the *āgāmya karma* will not occur. Thus, there will be the cancellation of good and bad deeds. Having dispelled the *paśujñāna*, even the *āṅavamala* will vanish thanks to the teaching of the *pati jñāna*. Therefore, having attained the cancellation of the two kinds of deeds and the maturity of the *malas*, the divine grace sinks into the soul; the freed soul reaches the supreme *mukti*.

There are four life paths that should be followed by those who wish to reach Śiva dwelling in the state of grace: *caryā*, *kriyā*, *yoga*, and *jñāna*.

All these [concepts] have been explained earlier. While living this path of life, the

avaciyamānātu. civaññānikkuc ceyyam
 tānamānātu, cīritāyiṇum mēlāṇa perum
 payanait tarum; nalla pīrappīr pīrakkac
 ceytu, mutan mūṇru mārkkankalilum cārātu
 unmai ṇāṇattait tantu, pīravīyai aruttu
 nātan aṭikkamalaṅkaḷai nanukuvikkum.
 enta nilaiyil niṇrōrum, civanūtaiya
 tiruvainteluttai vitippaṭi uccarikka,
 aṇṇāṇam nīṅki aṇmāvil araṇ utikka, malam
 arum. purattilum aranaip pūcippatu aṭiyār
 ceykaiyākum. yāṇ enatu eṇṇum kōṇai ṇāṇa
 eriyāl ērittavarkaḷukku, viṇaiyaip

pōkki iraiyaṇ taṇṇaiyaḷippāṇ. akkinī
 tampam vallavanukku aṇal cuṭātatu
 pōlavum, maruntum mantiramum
 uṭaiyavanukku viṭam ērātatu pōlavum,
 ṇāṇikku viṇai ērātu. curruvataik kuyavaṇ
 niṇṇuttiya pōtilum, vēkam uḷḷavarai
 cakkaram cuḷalvatupōla, uṭal uḷḷa varai atai
 oṭṭiya vātaṇaikaḷ iruntu, uṭal māyūm pōtu
 malam mutaliya yāvum māyantu pōm.
 inta nilaiyil civaṇ muttar iruppar. āyiṇum,
 iraiyaṇ aṭiyārkaḷōṭu kūṭiyiruntu, civa
 vēṭaṅkaḷākiya tirunīru uruttirākkam
 mutaliyavarai pūṇṭu avarriṇiṭam aṇṇu
 celutti, ālayaṅkaḷellām araneṇat toḷutu,
 124 “eṇṇum nām yāvarkkum iṭaivōm allōm
 irunilattil emakku etirāvārum illai” eṇṇa
 perumita nilaiyil vāḷvārkaḷ. iṇaṇukku
 aṇṇillātavar, aṭiyavarukkō evvuyirukkumō
 tamakkō aṇṇillātavarkaḷ; avarkaḷuṭaiya
 cērkkai pīrap pīrappaik kūṭṭuvippatu; ākavē
 atai nīṅki aṭiyāruṭaṇ kūṭiyirukka vēṇṭum.
 tirukkōyilūḷḷirukkum tirumēṇiyaic civaṇ
 eṇavē kaṇṭavarkkum, mantirattālē
 niṇṇaippavarkkum, iraiyaṇ āṅkāṅkē uraintu
 veḷippaṭṭu aruḷ ceyvāṇ. ṇāṇa kuruvē civaṇ
 eṇṇu vaḷipaṭṭōrukkup paramporulākiya
 civaṇ ivaṇāki, nayaṇam, vācakam,
 māṇatam eṇṇum mūṇru tīkṣaikaḷālum
 iṇaḷaic civamākavē ākkiviṭum.

servants’ worship is very important and necessary. The donations to the *śivajñānins*, no matter how small, will give the greatest benefits; they will provide [a Śaiva] with a good rebirth, give him the real knowledge without joining the three aforementioned ways of life, close his birth chain, and make him reach the abode of God.

In whatever stage [a Śaiva] is, if he pronounces the five syllables *mantra* as per rules, his ignorance will be dispelled, Hara will rise in his soul, and his impurities will be cut off. The outer worship of Hara is a duty of the devotees. God will remove the

deeds of those who have burnt with fire the limited knowledge of ‘I’ and give them himself. Just like the fire will not burn the mighty one, and just like the poison will not harm the one who holds medicines and *mantras*, *karma* will not affect the *jñānins*. Although the potter stops the circling, the wheel spins as long as there is speed; like that, as long as there is a body, the pains are attached to it, and when the body disappears, then the impurities etc. will disappear too.

In this way, the *jīvan* will be freed. Moreover, those who gather together with the devotees of God, carrying the sacred ashes, the *rudrākṣa* beads, etc. as symbols of Śiva, worshipping Hara in all the temples, saying, “We will never submit to anyone; none is our adversary in the wide world”,²³⁴ will live joyfully. Those who do not love God, don’t even love the devotees, nor any other life, nor themselves; getting along with this kind of people will get [the Śaiva] a further rebirth; therefore, one must get away from there and gather with the devotees. God will appear here and there and grant his grace to those who see the sacred idol of Śiva that is placed in the temples and to those who think of him through the *mantras*.

²³⁴ I thank Professor K. Nachimuthu from the EFEO, Pondicherry, for his help on this quotation.

tiruvarul

caiva camayattil iraivaṇatu tiruvaruḷ enra
karuttu mikka cirappāna itam vakikkiratu.
itaip pala iṭaṅkaḷil kuṛippiṭṭirukkīrōm.
tiruvaruḷ enpatu, uyirkaḷ uyyavēṅṅum enru
iraivaṇ koṅṭa peruṅkaruṇai. itu
kāraṇamākavē iraivaṇ uyirkaḷ

kaḷaippaṭainta kālattē oṭuṅkac ceytu,
mīṅṅum viṇaik kērpap pīraviyait tantu,
māyayiliruntu taṅukaraṇa
puvanapōkaṅkaḷait tōrruvittu viṇaiyaruntac
ceykiṛāṇ. uyirkaḷ viṇaiyai anupavittu
mutikkavēṅṅum, āṇava malapantattiliruntu
viṭupaṭavēṅṅum enpatē itakaṅ nōkkam.
pārkaṭalil vālum mīṅ appāl unṅa enṅāmal,
kaṭaliṅ kaṅ uḷḷa pīra cirruyirkaḷāṇa pūcci
mutaliyavarrai unṅuvāḷa muyalkiratu.
atupōla, uyirkaḷ tammaiṅum ariyāmal,
talaivaṇaiṅum ariyāmal ulakap poruḷkaḷil
parruvaittu ulalkiṅraṇa. ivvuḷarciyiliruntu
mīlac ceyvatē uṭal koṭuttataṅ kōkkam.
aḷukkuṭ tuṅiyil vaṅṅāṅ cāṇam uvarmaṅ
mutaliyavarraip pōṭṭu naṅaittu, tōrrattil
piṅṅum amaḷukkākki, pīraku avarrait
tuvaittuc cuttamākkuvatupōla, iraivaṅum
uyirkaḷai ulakapporuḷkaḷilē tōyac ceykiṛāṅ.
kaṅma valiyāl inṅam varumpōtu ellōrukkum
makiḷccitāṅ. tunṅam viḷaiyumpōtu varunti
iraivaṅaik kaṅṅillātavaṅ enrukūṭa makkaḷ
kurai kūrukīrārkaḷ. āṅāl vaikkiyaṅ, puṅ
uṭaiyavaṅukku vali unṅāṅa pōtilum kūṭa,
kattiyāl puṅṅai aruttup pīraku atai
ārrukīrāṅ. tunṅaḷum it takaiyaṅavē.
tāy tantaiyar perra piḷḷaikaḷ tām collukiṅra
nalvaḷiyil cila camayam naṭakkātapōtu
kōpittup pīrampāḷattittuk kaṭumaiyāṅa
taṅṅaṅaiṅum koṭuppārkaḷ. iv vaḷavum
piḷḷaiṅmēḷ ēṛpaṭṭa pariviṅāḷēyām. atu
pōlavē, iraivaṅ cilariṅattuk kōpittu aruḷ
ceyvatarḷkup patilākat tunṅamē
taruvatupōlak tōṅruvatum. ituvum
avaravaruṭaiya tīviṅaiyai anupavittuk

125

The *guru*, having become as Śiva himself for the worshippers of God, will make them as Śiva too through the three initiations that are by vision, speech, and mind.

The divine grace

In Śaivism, the concept of God's grace holds a very important place. We have mentioned it on several occasions. The divine grace is God's great compassionate thought that all living beings must be saved. It is because of this that God creates the living beings,

gives them new births according to their *karma*, makes the worldly objects to be enjoyed appear from *māyā*, and then removes all the deeds. Living beings' aim is to experience the *karma* and get freed from the bond of the impurities.

The fish living in the sea of milk does not intend to eat the other fishes but tries to eat other micro-organisms such as insects in the eye of the sea. In the same way, living beings are engaged in worldly things without knowing themselves and without knowing the Lord. The purpose of giving them a body is for them to recover from this suffering. Just like the washerman who soaks dirty clothes with dung, saline soil, etc., and keeps them dirty in appearance, and then washes them clean, the Lord also makes the living beings dip in worldly things. When pleasure arises from the power of *karma*, everyone is happy. When sufferings occur, people complain, also saying that God is not watching. But the doctor heals the wound only after having cut it with a knife, even though the patient is in pain. The sufferings have the same nature.

When sometimes children don't behave following the good conduct that their parents had taught them, the parents get angry and give them severe punishments. This happens because of the love they feel for their children. Similarly, God gets angry with some people, and instead of giving them grace, it appears as if he gives them suffering. This also is the outcome of his

*kaḷiya vēṅṭum enra karuṇaiyiṅṅāḷ
nikaḷvatēyākum.*

*ivvāru iraivaṅ uyirkaḷukku inṅpamum
tuṅpamum taruvatu viṅaiyai anupavittuk
tīrppataṅkāḷavē. āyiṅṅum, iraivaṅṅuṅaiya
aruḷiṅ taṅmaiyaḷ varaiyaṅai ceytu colla
muṅiyātu. māṅikkavācakarai mikavum
cōtittut tuṅpattil āḷṅṅaiya iraivaṅ atē nēraṅṅai
anta iṅṅattilēyē vanti enra piṅṅu vāṅiccikku
aruḷ ceytāṅṅenru nūḷkaḷiṅṅāḷ aṅṅirikōm. āḷavē,
tīruvaruḷiṅ pōkkai uṅṅarntu aḷaviṅṅuc colla
muṅiyātu. iruviṅaiyoppu nikaḷṅṅu, anta
nilaiyil mala pariṅpākamum uṅṅāki,
cattinipātam viḷaiyum enru aruḷ nūḷkaḷ
pēcukiṅṅraṅa. atāvatu, pariḷḷāmal nalviṅṅai
tīviṅ iraṅṅaiyūm anupavittup palaṅṅai
civārppaṅamākak karuti irukka, mēḷ
ākāmiya viṅṅai varuvatu niṅṅru, viṅṅai uṅṅalōṅṅu
kaḷikiraṅṅu. iruviṅṅai oppu viḷaikiraṅṅu.
ittakaiya uttamarkaḷukku, āṅṅava malam
pariṅpāka maṅṅaiyavē, tīruvaruḷ vantu
patiṅṅum enṅṅatu karuttākum.*

126

*vayalil umukiṅṅavaṅ vayalai uḷutu
puḷutiṅṅākki varampu kōḷikkoṅṅu maṅṅaiyaḷ
etiṅṅnōkki irukkiṅṅāṅ. āṅṅāḷ maḷai peyvikka
avaṅṅāḷ iyalātu. atupōla, nām nammaip
pakkuvappaṅṅuttit tīruvaruḷai etiṅṅnōkki
irukkalāmēyaṅṅri, tīruvaruḷaip perutal
nammuṅṅaiya putti pūrvamāṅa āṅṅṅalukku
aṅṅaṅkāṅṅu enru cāṅṅtiram collum. āṅṅalāḷ ippaṅṅi
naṅṅantutāṅṅ tīruvaruḷ peṅṅa vēṅṅṅum enru colla
muṅṅiyātu. vantikkut tīruvaruḷ
kaikūṅṅiyatupōla, yārukkuṅṅu enta nēraṅṅaiṅṅum
evvitaḷ kāraṅṅam illāmalum iraivaṅṅatu aruḷ
nōkkam vantu poruntaḷām. itai nirhētuka
kaṅṅāṅṅcam enṅṅpārkaḷ. “āṅṅpālavarkku aruḷum
vaṅṅṅamum āṅṅimāṅṅpum kēṅṅpāṅṅ puḷil
aḷavillaḷ. kiḷakka vēṅṅṅā” enṅṅṅatu campantar
vāḷḷḷu. ituvē tīruvaruḷiṅṅ iyalpu.*

compassion, for which one must experience his evil deeds.

Thus, God gives both pleasures and sufferings to the living beings for them to experience their *karma*. However, it is not possible to delimit the grace of God. We know from the scriptures that the God who tested a lot Māṅikkavācar and drove him into a state of suffering, was the same who had bestowed his grace to the woman selling steamed rice called Vanti. Therefore, it is not possible to understand and measure the direction of the divine grace and state it. The graceful scriptures say that as the two *karmas* will occur, in that context the impurities will mature, and the *śaktinipāta* will rise. In other words: having experienced both the good and the bad *karma* without attachment, one must think of the fruits [of the actions] as offerings to Śiva, then the *āḷḷāmya karma* won't accumulate, and the deeds will extinguish with the body. It is believed that as the two kinds of *karma* will occur equally, for this kind of good people the *āḷḷāmya* will get matured, and then then the divine grace will come and settle [in them].

When the farmer plows the field, he prepares the dry plowed soil, rises ridges, and waits for channels [to be filled with water]. But he cannot make it rain. Similarly, according to the Śāstras, although we mature and wait for divine grace, our intellect cannot predict its obtainment. Therefore, we cannot say that one should get his grace by behaving in a certain manner. Just like it happened to Vanti, the divine grace may come at any time, for any reason. They call this *nirhētuka* [or causeless] grace. “If one started asking about the manner in which [Śiva] bestows grace to the devotees and his old glories: they are limitless”²³⁵ is Campantar's saying. This is the nature of God's grace.

²³⁵ I thank Professor K. Nachimuthu from the EFEO, Pondicherry, for his help on this quotation. Note that he translated *kēḷ-* in its earlier meaning of “to listen to”, “to hear”. Nevertheless, I chose to translate it with its later meaning of “to ask” as it seems to better fit the context.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The nineteenth and twentieth centuries have been a period of profound change in the Subcontinent. The colonial dominance in Tamil Nadu led to new phases of balance and confrontation within the society, marking the emergence of the voices of the Velalars, who have been the main promoters of a new asset and a shift in the holding of power regardless of the reference domain. One of the consequences of the power they had managed to wrest from the Brahmins was a large-scale promotion of the Śaivasiddhanta, which since the sixteenth century – with the foundation of the Thiruvavaduthurai Adhinam and the Dharmapuram Adhinam – could boast of lineages of priests who were specifically Velalars.

Nevertheless, even within the Śaiva domain, a process of innovation was felt necessary to highlight the characters deemed as more representative of Tamil religiosity while leaving behind those that showed a major influence from the Sanskrit tradition. This need emerged from and was fueled by the strong association operated during this period between religion and a people's identity in the general context of Indian country.

Religion represents a crucial factor in forming or developing both personal and social identity. It provides both individual faith experience and collective activities in its public structures that create a sense of connection and belongingness in a community.²³⁶ During the last decades, the social sciences field registered a revival of interest in the link between religion and identity (Vail and Routledge, 2020; Eisenberg, 2016; Oppong, 2013). While through the personal faith experience, an individual can find answers and instruments to cope with self-existential crisis, thus benefiting from it, at the same time, religion as an institution creates relationships between worshippers of the same tradition or creed, involving them in collective activities in its public structures, and providing them with communal experiences, shared ideological context and worldviews, moral beliefs, and social norms. The observance of such a set of values is mainly carried out, for example, through the systematic strategy or practice of presenting spiritual personalities as models to emulate and with whom to identify. Despite in some contexts it may also represent a hindering factor, like in cases of religious discrimination or persecution, the result is that it can serve as an ideological, social, and spiritual context for the identity construction or shaping process.

²³⁶ This statement is true generally speaking, but it is important to specify that this role religion holds can vary depending on the society and epoch taken into account. It, for example, does not consider the atheist community. Nevertheless, it particularly fits the Tamil Nadu of the analyzed centuries.

A further aspect to consider is the connection between religion and ethnicity. Ethnic identity is outlined and defined by features shared by all members within a group, like the association to specific origins, history, customs, culture, and land. Going beyond the sociologists' debates concerning the possibility of completely overlapping the boundaries of religion and ethnicity (Ruane and Todd 2010), it can be stated that religion may represent a form of ethnicity in contexts where there is massive and active participation in religious or spiritual life, that is, where religion represents an essential sphere of a community's everyday life. This concept explains, for example, the religious dimension that ethnic conflicts can have, making religion a potential trigger for social mobilization (Brubaker 2016; Fawcett 2000).

In the Indian Subcontinent, where a solid religious pluralism is found, affiliation to a religious tradition has always been perceived as an inner necessity, a fundamental and foundational act for an individual, as intimately connected to one's identity. This is particularly true if we consider the transformations some pan-Indian traditions underwent while spreading in countries with a strong regional identity, sometimes leading to a brand-new tradition. The case of Śaivasiddhānta in Tamil Nadu perfectly exemplifies this scenario: the link between religion and ethnicity, namely Śaivasiddhānta and Tamil identity, became and grew strong²³⁷ thanks to the activities of charismatic Śaiva reformers, as well as Tamil scholars that were worshippers of Śiva. Despite not emerging as a great orator and maintaining a more secluded profile – as was the case of many revivalists –, Arunachalam is a peculiar example of a scholar who highly contributed to a significant spread of knowledge about Śaivism and Śaivasiddhānta, left aside Tamil literature. The fact that his works still are an authoritative and main source for the richness of information he provided, although the field of Tamil studies has gone on with thorough research, is representative of the value that this material carries.

Nevertheless, it also contains traces of beliefs that were a product of his times. Acknowledging them is necessary to contextualize better the works and the data provided, making a distinction between the objective and the personal ones, and having an overall understanding of the thought of a scholar and Śiva worshipper whose writings have influenced and still influence the research of others. Śaivism is a complex phenomenon of Indian religiosity and spirituality that has consistently raised the keen interests of Indologists for the number of currents, doctrines, and practices from and into which it developed.

²³⁷ This does not imply, of course, that since the origins of a more structured and fixed Śaivasiddhānta tradition every Tamil person has been affiliated with it. Nonetheless, through the political and economic power its institutions and priest had held during the preceding centuries, it is not surprising that it played an essential role in the making of Tamil Nadu history during the colonial rule.

As Goodall pointed out (2004, xiii), the surveys produced on Śaivasiddhānta towards the end of the twentieth century ignored or showed substantial confusion about the pan-Indian phase of this religion. While some accounts of the Sanskrit scriptures prior to the twelfth century found some space in specialized works on the topic, Goodall highlighted how the investigations with a more general character showed an interpretation of Śaivasiddhānta as of a totally Tamilian tradition. This notion was not simply deriving from the fact that the Āgamic literary production was preserved in the South and generally identified as South Indian, but also shows the influence of the prevailing idea of Tamil Nadu's authors about Śaivasiddhānta – and Śaivism on a broader level – being the product of Tamil intellect and religiosity, without contemplating a more complex genesis, namely not considering the Sanskrit sources besides the Āgamas.

A crucial breaking point with such conviction occurred with the study of the Tantric Śaiva literature, which started during the 1980s and increased during the last two decades. Although many aspects of the earliest developments of Śaiva traditions are still unclear and their deep and comprehensive understanding remains for now out of reach, scholarships have helped clarify some of its weavings, shedding light on streams of undetermined origins, uncertain dating of textual production, and practices and rituals that had been lost and forgot, besides highlighting an earlier pan-Indian phase of Śaivasiddhānta. The pioneering works of H  l  ne Brunner (1963-2003) on Śaiva rituals and scriptures' translations, the editions of N. R.

Bhatt, and the authoritative records of Alexis Sanderson (1983-2022) of the history of Tantrism and Śaivism and their literary production are examples of ground-breaking contributions that have inspired generations of scholars,²³⁸ opening the way to second wave of a broader study on Śaivism and, in particular, Tantric Śaivism.²³⁹

This led to the reconstruction of an earlier phase in the development of Śaivasiddhānta, during which it was not restricted to the Tamil-speaking areas but was found across the rest of India. One of

²³⁸ It is not by chance that collections of essays in their honor have been published, even very recently. The reference goes, in particular, to the volumes: *M  langes tantriques    la m  moire d'  l  ne Brunner: Tantric Studies in Memory of H  l  n Brunner*, edited in 2007 by Dominic Goodall and Andr   Padoux; *M  langes    la m  moire de Pandit N.R.Bhatt: Studies in Memory of Pandit N.R.Bhatt*, edited in 2022 by Goodall, Pierre-Sylvain Filliozat, and Peter Pasedach; and *Śaivism and the Tantric Traditions: Essays in Honour of Alexis G.J.S. Sanderson*, edited in 2020 by Goodall, Shamm Hatley, Harunaga Isaacson, and Srilata Raman. These reference books availed themselves of the contribution of many scholars through whose research it was possible to go through the history and developments of Śaiva traditions, to a great extent, thus clarifying and unriddling aspects of those that have been misunderstood for long time.

²³⁹ Both the   cole Fran  aise d'Extr  me-Orient (EFEO) and the Institut Fran  aise de Pondich  ry (IFP) represent, since the last sixty years, two crucial centers in Pondicherry for the study of Śaivism and Tantrism thanks to their active search, collection, and research on their early manuscripts, hence acting like renowned crossroads of investigations and ideas for all the Indologists and researches who are interested in these fields. It is not by chance that the majority of those cited above and afterwards are affiliated to or collaborating with these two institutions. In particular, many of their monographs and critical editions have been jointly published within the series *The Early Tantra Series* and the *Collection Indologie*.

the texts whose analysis and translation was crucial in this process is the *Niśvāsattattvasaṃhitā*, also referred to as *Niśvāsa* corpus, one of the earliest Siddhāntas (Goodall 2004, xlviii).²⁴⁰

Although the scholarships of the last decades have highlighted and analyzed a more complex past for the Śaivasiddhānta, delineating the limits of Arunachalam's works – as well as those of the other Tamil scholars and writers – when depicting it as a uniquely Tamil tradition, their value has not diminished. This is not only due to the information provided about Śaiva authors and their writings, many of which were not available till that moment in other sources which still remain valid, but even because they testify to an important phase of the history of this tradition that needs to be taken into consideration if one wants to understand and investigate its current status. In fact, while the pan-Indian past of Śaivasiddhānta is acknowledged and universally established in the academic field, the prevailing idea among the common people who worship Śiva remained its Tamil origins and characters. This is particularly true among the Velalars, who proudly claim its genesis. Therefore, research on authors like M. Arunachalam is a valuable basis for further comparisons and studies of the contemporary evolution and perception of Śaivasiddhānta and how it keeps on being considered a crucial factor of the Tamilness.

²⁴⁰ Although different investigations of the *Niśvāsattattvasaṃhitā* started since the early twentieth century, the most incisive one is the more recent of Goodall (2015), who edited a critical edition and annotated translation of its oldest Sūtras – namely the *Mūlasūtra*, the *Uttarasūtra*, and the *Nayasūtra* –, whose oldest layers were already dated back between the fifth and the sixth century AD in a previous contribution (Goodall and Isaacson 2007, 6). His volume, entitled *The Niśvāsattattvasaṃhitā. The Earliest Surviving Śaiva Tantra* and composed in collaboration with Sanderson and Isaacson, actually represents the first printing of this corpus, up to then transmitted and preserved in a palm-leaf manuscript from Nepal dated to the ninth-century on paleographical basis. Another important contribution to the study of these texts is that of Kafle (2015), who examined the *Niśvāsamukha*, providing for it a critical edition with annotated translation. Although counted as one of the texts of the *Niśvāsa* corpus, the *Niśvāsamukha* is recognized as an introductory book to it, written long after the earliest Sūtras (ninth-century). Finally, no critical edition has been provided yet for the *Guhyasūtra*, the last and largest book of this collection. Nevertheless, Goodall (2020a), who defines it as a series of appendices to the earlier texts, outlines its structure and gives an account of the topics it deals with. A few of those were also analyzed by Törzsök (2016) and Acri (2014).

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PHOTOGRAPHIC ADDENDUM

All the photos have been personally captured during my survey on May 2022.



Figure 1. Arunachalam's desk in his home office in Tiruchitrambalam.

May 10, 2022



Figure 2. Arunachalam's personal library in his home office in Tiruchitrambalam. A substantial part consists of his authored books.

May 10, 2022



Figure 3. Arunachalam's personal library in his home office in Tiruchitrambalam, where many of his English and Tamil journal articles, digital and handwritten, are archived.

May 10, 2022



Figure 4. Open view of Arunachalam's personal journal library in his home office in Tiruchitrambalam.

May 10, 2022



Figure 5. A section of Arunachalam's personal literary collection, at the Rōjā Muttaiyā Research Library in Chennai.

May 18, 2022



Figure 6. A section of Arunachalam's personal literary collection, at the Rōjā Muttaiyā Research Library in Chennai.

May 18, 2022



Figure 7. A closer view on two sections of Arunachalam’s personal literary collection, at the Rōjā Muttaiyā Research Library in Chennai.

May 18, 2022