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## SPIRITUAL JOURNEY IN ŚAIVA SIDDHANTA

Saivism is one of the three major religious faiths<sup>1</sup> that have moulded the thought and life of the Hindus in India. Its distinctive feature is the exaltation of Śiva as supreme God and the worship of him. But Śaivism itself is not a single cult; it covers many faiths with nuances according to belief and religious experiences. They are based on the nucleus of twenty-eight Agamas and they also accept the authority of the Vedas. In addition to the Vedas and the Agamas, each one of them added its own literature in the language of the region where it flourished. Of these śaiva faiths, *Śiva Siddhānta*<sup>2</sup> is an important one,<sup>3</sup> and it is known as the Śaivism of Tamilnadu.<sup>4</sup>

*Saiva Siddhanta* has been extolled by Indian as well as Western scholars as a 'remarkable efflorescence of the Tamil genius', as 'the

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1. The other two faith are Vaiṣṇavism and Śāktisms
  2. The concept *Śaiva Siddhānta* is suggestive at once of its kinship with other śaiva schools and its distinction therefrom. The point of divergence is noted by the term '*siddhānta*' (in Tamil *Cittāntam*). The term is a compound made up of '*siddha*' and '*anta*'; the former means 'the established truth' or 'termination' & or 'conclusion'. Cf. Isaac Thambyah, *Psalms of a Saivite Saint* (London: Luzac & Co., 1925), p. xv. The term as applied to Tamil Śaiva school means 'the end of ends' or 'the conclusions'. In other words, it means 'the conclusion of the examination of all other *siddhānta* or conclusions'. Cf. for further explanation of the term a Tamil Monthly, *Cittāntam*, Jan. (1912) p.1. For the proper understanding of the term *Śaiva Siddhānta* cf. S. Arulsamy, *Siddhānta Aṣṭakam of Umāpati Sivācāryar: A Study* (Unpublished Thesis submitted to the University of Madras, 1982). pp. 301-306.
  3. Viraśaivism and Kashmir Saivism are the other important faiths of Śaivism. Cf. R.G. Bhandarkar, *Vaiṣṇavism and Śaivism and Minor Religious Systems* (Varanasi: Indological Book House, 1965).
  4. *Śaiva Siddhānta* is also known and practised in the northern part of Sri Lanka and in Malaysia. It is also spreading to North America and Great Britain. Cf. K. Gnanasoorian, "Śaiva Siddhānta in the Western World—The Present Position and Future Trends", in *Śaiva Siddhānta*, vol XVII/1 (1982) pp. 10-15.

most elaborate, influential and the most intrinsically valuable of all the religions of India', as 'the best that South India possesses', as the one that has developed 'the highest form of theism', as a 'living philosophical system' and so on.<sup>5</sup> It is built on the spiritual experience of the śaiva saints and on the systematic writings of the teachers (*acaryas*). It holds in equal deference the devotional songs contained in *Tirumurais*<sup>6</sup> and the fourteen *Sastras* known as *Meykaṇḍa* or *Siddhanta Sastras*.<sup>7</sup> There is much philosophy in the devotional songs as there is a vein of devotion and *bhakti* in the *Śastra* works.

In this paper I intend to deal with the spiritual journey that is proposed by this faith. Before doing so, I shall very briefly sketch out

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5. Cf. *Collected Lectures on Śaiva Siddhānta* 1946-1954 (Annamalai-nagar: Annamalai University, 1965). G.U. Pope, *Tiruvācagam* (Oxford: At The Clarendon Press, 1900) p. lxxiv; Macnicol, *Indian Theism* (London, 1915), pp. 213, 214-215; R.C. Zaehner, *Hinduism* (Oxford. University Press, 1966), p. 91. F. Goodwill, "Śaiva Siddhānta" in *Siddhānta Deepika*, VI (1903), pp.144-53; K. Sivaraman, *Saivism in Philosophical Perspective* (Delhi—Patna—Varanasi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1973) p.2.
  6. Generally they are called '*Paṇṇiru Tirumuṟai*' (Twelve Sacred Songs). They are known as the canonical works of *Śaiva Siddhānta*. They are the written documents of the personal experiences of the mystics who through their personal life and preaching, succeeded wonderfully in strengthening śaiva faith in South India. These hymns were collected and compiled by Nambi Aṅṅār Nambi in the 10th century A.D. and in the course of time they came to be regarded as the "*Tamil Veda*". The most outstanding of these are the *Tēvārams* (sacred garlands) of Tiruḡṅānasambandhar, Tirunāvukkarasar, and Sundarar and the *Tiruvācagam* of Manickavacagar.
  7. *Meykaṇḍa* or *Siddhanta Sastras* are fourteen in number. They are the theologico-philosophical treatises of the school of *Śaiva Siddhānta*. Of these the most basic and fundamental one is known as *Śivajñāna-bodham* of Meykaṇḍa Dēvar. Though it is posterior to *Tiruvantiyar* and *Tirukkalīṟrupaḍiyar* and takes the third place in the order of sequence; it is the basic scientific study of the doctrine of *S. Siddhānta*. Arulnandi Sivacarya wrote a commentary in poetic form, known as *Sivajñāna-siddhiyar* in two parts: *Supakṣa* and *parapakṣa*. The same author has composed another *Śastra* called *Iruvavirupatu*, a dialogue between the *Guru* and disciple. Another disciple of Meykaṇḍa Dēvar composed a work called *Unmai Vilakkam* (Exposition of Truth). The rest of the *Sastras* (8) come from the hand of Umapati Sivacarya, generally known as *Siddhanta Aṣṭakam*.

the doctrinal and salvation background of *Śaiva Siddhanta* so as to enable the readers to understand better the significance of the spiritual journey.

## I DOCTRINAL AND SOTERIOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

*Śaiva Siddhanta* is a realistic and pluralistic system of philosophy. It postulates the existence of self, God, and bondage (*paśu*, *Pati* and *paśa*) as three eternal verities.<sup>8</sup>

1. *Śaiva Siddhanta* starts its quest from the seen to the unseen. The phenomenal world demonstrable as 'he', 'she' and 'it'<sup>9</sup> consists of sentient and non-sentient bodies (i.e., mind and matter). Behind the phenomenal world, there is cosmic matter into which all material things in the universe will ultimately resolve at the time of the final destruction which will take place at the end of one cycle of *yugas*. Then creation takes place again when the universe with all its various forms of life in all its complexities will be created by God. Thus the universe emerges into existence once again. Matter is eternal and imperishable in its subtlest (*sūkṣma*) form. This primordial cosmic matter out of which all forms of matter and universe arise and emerge into appearance and into which all the phenomenal world and gross (*sthūla*) forms of matter resolve is called *maya*. Material universe has its material cause in *maya*.<sup>10</sup> *Maya* in its own capacity is neither independent nor dynamic and therefore, is *asat*.<sup>11</sup> *Maya* furnishes the self with body (*tanu*) and

8. Bondage (*mala*) in *Śaiva Siddhanta* is of three kinds: *aṇava* (primordial impurity or defilement), *maya*, and *karma*.

9. Cf. *Śivajñāna-bodham, sūtra* 1 (hereafter SJB): *Avan, aval atu eṇum avai*

10. *Maya*—'mā' means involution; 'ya' means evolution. So *maya* stands for the material substratum. It is quite different from the concept of *maya* as understood in *Advaita Vedānta*. Cf. Śivajñāna Yogi, *Śivajñānapadiyam* (Tirumelveli—Madras: The South Indian Śaiva Siddhanta Publishing House), p. 149. *Maya* in *Śaiva Siddhanta* is something similar to *Prakṛiti* of *Sāṅkhya* System.

11. *Śaiva Siddhanta* uses the term '*asat*' in referring to the world in a different sense. The world is 'non-being' (*asat*) not in the sense of non-existence (*abhava*) but in the sense that it is mutable and non-conscious. Cf. V. A. Devasenapathi, *Śaiva Siddhanta: As Expounded in the Śivajñāna Siddhiyar and its Six Commentaries* (Madras: University of Madras, 1966), p. 125. K. Sivaraman, *op. cit.*, 63.

tools of experience i.e., with physical and mental powers (*karana*), an environment to live in (*bhuvana*) and objects to enjoy (*bhoga*). That is, *maya* provides the scene whereupon the drama of human history is to be enacted. In itself *maya* is inert and it needs to be activated by the *śakti* of God. Though capable of motion, it cannot move itself and it is set in motion by God.

2. God (*Pati*) is the ground of the involution and evolution of the world. He is the 'whither' and 'when'<sup>12</sup> of the world which is the effect of *maya*, as the ground of the phenomenal world he is intrinsically transcendent to the world and to the processes to which the world is subjected; as the cause of the world-process, he is also implied by it. Thus he is the super-cosmic principle of the nature of being and of the nature of personal will. In this light the cosmic functions of creation, conservation, and dissolution are attributed to God. He can retract the phenomenal world and re-create it. So dissolution precedes creation. Here it is not the question of chronological priority. "To say that destruction is *prior* to creation does not, of course, imply that *first* comes destruction and then creation in order of time. The temporal order of what comes earlier and what later inverts the logical relation. Dissolution is logically, objectively prior to creation as it conditions, and is not conditioned by creation. It is comparable to the objective priority of time to change."<sup>13</sup> Dissolution is logically prior to creation because of the principle of *śatkaryavada*, according to which nothing is created out of nothing (*nihil ex nihilo fit*) and what is created is only educed from its retracted state and hence only what is retracted is created.

Thus from the phenomenal world and its multiplicity, and from its conditions of dissolution, appearance and stay, the *siddhantin* forms the notion of God. "The ground and agent of world-dissolution is alone the ground and agent of world-creation and world-preservation. *Samkara-kartṛ* is the real *śṛṣṭi-kartṛ* and *sthiti-kartṛ*, not vice versa. *Saiva Siddhanta* is emphatic in repudiating the suggestion that Siva the supreme Reality is but one of the 'trinities' to whom are respectively assigned the three cosmic functions. The Destroyer—God is not the mere deity of destruction who has a coordinate function and existence

12. The expression is from K. Sivaraman, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 44.

along with the deities of creation and preservation. The term *hara* denotes the Supreme Being in a general as well as in a unique sense. Literally, of course, *hara* is one that destroys, and yet its application extends not to any destroyer nor again to a mere destroyer but only to a specific one to whom it belongs uniquely. Śiva, the Supreme, who is indicated suggestively by the name of *Hara* is not to be identified with 'rudra' to whom belongs the office of limited dissolution. Śiva is *maha-rudra*, not *guṇi-rudra*. He is the universal Destroyer of whom *rudra* and other deities are only the operative aspects."<sup>14</sup>

3. In between the phenomenal world and the transcendent God, there is a third reality called the self (*paśu*).<sup>15</sup> The self is distinguished alike from either of them (world and God). From an epistemological-standpoint the self stands in between pure intelligence and non-intelligent objects. God is pure intelligence (*satcit*) and self-luminous (*svayamprakasa*). He knows by Himself and is not in need of any manifestor. The phenomenal world which is the product of *maya*, is non-intelligent i.e., devoid of intelligence (*acit*). Whereas the self is intelligent but because its faculty of knowing is clouded eternally, it is not self-luminous; it is only '*viyanhka-prakasa*', that is to say, the self has only parviscience (*cirrarivu*) and so, of itself, it does not know; it is in need of being energized and illumined by others. Hence epistemologically the self is called *cidacit*.

The nature of the self from the metaphysical standpoint is also something in between the phenomenal world which is *asat* and God who is *sat*. Even though the self does not undergo changes in itself, it might appear that it has an end, insofar as it stands united with the things that appear, endure and disappear, and insofar as it knows and experiences only through them. In this sense it might be said to be *asat*. But the same self stripping itself of all those products of *maya* (viz., *tanu*, *karana*) attains freedom and is fully united with Śiva and shares in his nature;<sup>16</sup> in this sense it may be said to be *sat*. Since

14. *Ibid.*, pp. 46-47.

15. *Paśu* means soul; it is so called because it is beginninglessly associated with *aṇava*.

16. Cf. *Tiruvaruṭṭpayan* (hereafter TVP) which means 'Fruit of Divine Grace'. This work is one of the eight *Sastras* of *Siddhanta Aṣṭakam* consisting of 100 couplets (*Kural Veṅba*) and divided into ten chapters. Here the idea is found in couplet no. 2

the self stands thus in between *sat* and *asat*, its ontological status is called *sadasat*. Umāpati Sivacarya<sup>17</sup> explains this by an analogy. As the eye, which is neither light nor darkness, is as darkness itself when in darkness, and is as light when in light, so also the self, when associated with *mala* resembles *mala*, and when associated with Śiva resembles Śiva.<sup>18</sup> Therefore, the self receives the appellation of *sadasat*, that is, both *sat* and *asat* at once.

4. There is the primordial impurity existing from all eternity and being associated with the self. It is called *aṇava*.<sup>19</sup> It is coeval with the self and connate to it (*sahaja*). This eternal association of *aṇava* is explained by some analogies.<sup>20</sup> This primordial impurity obscures the intelligence of the self and creates nescience. Its veiling function is compared to a fierce serpent which hides the pearl in its poisonous mouth.<sup>21</sup> Consequently the self is not able to see anything. The relation between the self and *aṇava* is something similar to the relation between subject and object in Whitehead's philosophy. *Ānava* has secured the self, the subject in its grip, and the subject, the self, identifies itself

17. Umāpati Sivacarya is the fourth and last of the *Sanatanacaryas* who form the *Puraccantanam* of *Kailasa Paramparai*. Cf. S. Arulsamy, *op. cit.*, pp. 19-20; T.B. Siddalingaiah, *Origin and Development of Saiva Siddhanta upto 14th Century* (Madurai: Madurai Kamaraj University, 1979.) pp. 117-119.

18. Cf. *TVP*. 18. Are there not objects in the world which are dark in darkness, and luminous in the light? The question here directly concerns the objects like eye, mirror, crystal, ether etc, which become dark in darkness and luminous in the light. Similarly the self is said to be so.

19. The word '*aṇava*' comes from the Sanskrit word '*anu*' and it means literally that which reduces the powers of the soul.

20. Cf. *Pōṛṛipakṛōḍai* no. 7. This is another *Sastras* of *Siddhanta Aṣṭakam*. This means 'Song of Praises'. The next here says:

Like husk and bran to paddy, Verdigris  
To copper which beginningless exist,  
And like the pervasion of saltiness  
In the waters of the ocean—Stream ancient  
*Aanava malaa* exists eternal.

21. *Ibid.*, 9-10.

Like a mighty serpent that holds  
The great shapely gem in its fanged mouth,  
Like the wood that conceals fire within  
*Aanava Malaa* of cruel deeds wild  
Doth veil eyes of our soul's wisdom whereby  
All poor souls become dead to thoughtful deeds.

with *anava*. There is thus subjective unity and objective identity. *Anava* is always present with the self and is never aloof from it. The self always identifies itself with the *mala* and feels one with it. This subject-object combination (the self-*anava* bond) is a primordial bondage, which has come down beginninglessly. This concept of self-*anava* bondage almost resembles the two fundamental categories of eternal objects of subjective unity and objective identity of Whitehead.<sup>22</sup>

5. As it appears from what has been said above, the self is entangled into primordial defilement and it cannot come out of it by itself. Hence a two-stage process is proposed in *Saiva Siddhanta* for getting out of it. One is the initial stage in which the self gets some helps which could enable it to realize its real condition and to take some steps towards final release; the second stage consists in attaining complete release which is realized only in and through God who comes to help the self in the form of a *Guru*.

5.1. *Initial Stage*: To free the self from the condition of total obscuration, the Lord grants it some other means; he conjoins *maya*, and its products (*mayiya*) viz., the implements of knowledge and action with the self. They cause knowledge, volition, and action to arise in the self, because the self like God has within itself the affective (*iccha*), conative (*kriya*) and cognitive (*jñana*) powers (*śakti*). *Maya* supplies tools necessary for using the energy, namely the physical and mental powers. It also gives the embodied self a world to live in, and things in the world to enjoy. All these are the products of *maya*.<sup>23</sup> *Maya* and its products are considered to be a light to the self because they serve to enlighten the self and enable it to know the objects of sense-knowledge. Speaking on the positive value of *maya*, J.M. Nallaswami Pillai says: "Darkness can be removed completely by the bright light of the Sun. The soul lying unconscious in the deep waters of *Anava* recovers its consciousness a little when by the action of the wind and wave (*karma* and *maya*), its head is raised above the waters a little and the cool breath passes over its wave. But it has no hope till the Lordly

22. Cf. K. Kothandapani Pillai "The Theory of Mala in *Saiva Siddhanta* and Modern Science" in *Collected Lectures on Saiva Siddhanta* 1963-1973 (Annamalainagar: Annamalai University, 1978), pp. 97-98. Whitehead, *Process and Reality*. p. 337.

23. Cf. Sivapadasundaram, *The Saiva School of Hinduism* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1934), p.47.

Seaman comes and lifts it into His adamantine boat."<sup>24</sup> Though *maya* and its products are not perfect light, they serve the purpose at the initial stage when the self is far away from the light of God. Their illumination is compared to a lamp-light which serves as a source of light to see things at night when darkness is dense.<sup>25</sup> As until the day-break the lamp-light serves the purpose, *maya* and its products too serve the self till the dawn of knowledge which leads to final release.

However, *maya* which was supposed to help the self, becomes itself in turn bondage to the self. When *maya* begins to function through its products, it actuates the self to function, to desire, to know and to act, which in their turn beget *karma*, the fruits of which lead the self into the cycle of ceaseless births and rebirths. Thus, while helping the self to come out of the bondage of *anava*, *maya* turns to become bondage itself. Lord Siva uses *maya* only as means for purification as the washerman uses Fuller's earth to wash soiled linen.

5.2. *Final Stage* : *Maya* and *karma* can only set the self on the road to true knowledge, but they cannot bring about the final release, for they can remove the obscuration of the dark impurity only to some extent, and cannot fully dispel it. Hence until the dawn of divine grace the self has no hope of full liberation. Since *anava* is eternal it cannot be completely made to disappear or be destroyed. Complete liberation from this impurity would consist only in enabling the self to come out of its influence. This can be done only by increasing the powers of the self. It is in this context that the self undertakes a long spiritual journey.

## II THE SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

*Saiva Siddhanta* is a religion of grace and it gives great importance to divine grace in the attainment of salvation. However, it requires a certain maturity on the part of the self to receive this grace. As the Sun causes only the mature lotus buds to bloom, so also only the ready self will respond to God's grace. In order to attain this maturity

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24. J.M. Nallaswami Pillai, *Tiruvaruṭṭayan: Uraim Aṅkilamoshi-peyarppum* (Tamil, Dharmapuram: Dharmapuram Adhinam, 1959), p. 23.

25. Cf. *TVP*: 30. Like a might-lamp is Maayaa till day-break; With varied forms, it works, with Karma knit.

*Saiva Siddhanta* proposes a progressive spiritual journey to be undertaken. In this journey *Saiva Siddhanta* like any other Indian philosophical system considers knowledge (*jnana*) as the door to liberation. "Through knowledge alone is Release" says *Sivajnana-siddhiyar*.<sup>26</sup> This knowledge consists in the real grasp of the nature of the three verities: God, self, and bondage.

The spiritual knowledge is marked by stages. These stages of knowing correspond to the stages of perception in empirical life. In perception there can be what is called erroneous perception, doubtful perception and true perception. The distinctions of error (*viparyaya*) doubt (*samsaya*), and truth (*yathartha*) applicable to knowledge may be said to correspond to the three stages involved in this transition. The journey is from darkness through twilight to light. Accordingly there are three discernible stages of spiritual knowledge: (i) perception in a general indeterminate manner of oneself, world, and God, (ii) perception in which the subject surrenders to the object and experiences identity. Here the focus shifts from the continuum of God-self-world to the transcendent factor of God exclusively, (iii) finally the determinate vision of Being 'identical with all and yet as the groundless, different from everything.' The first is called *rupa*, the second is called *darsana* and the third *suddhi*.<sup>27</sup>

*Rupa* implies a definition of things with differentiation and designation in which there is a general comprehension but no self-critical understanding. *Darsana* is insight into reality obtained with the aid of revelation, but it is not yet an integral knowledge; still it is prone

26. *Sivajnana-Siddhiyar* (hereafter *SJS*) 279. The definition of *jnana* here differs from that of other philosophies. To the *Saṅkhyan* it is the knowledge of the utter separateness of *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*; to *Kēvala Advaitin* it is the identity of *atman* and *brahman*; to the *Saiva Siddhantin* it is the knowledge of the nature of the three verities. God, soul and 'defilement'— a knowledge in which the distinction of 'knower', 'knowing' and 'known' are transcended. Cf. Maheswary M. Arulchelvam, "The Concept of Liberation in Saiva Siddhanta" in S.V. Subramanian & R. V. Jayalakshmy (eds). *Philosophical Heritage of the Tamils* (Madras: International Institute of Tamil Studies, 1983) p. 5

27. Cf. *Uṇmaineri Viḷakkam* (hereafter *UNV*). This is also considered as one of the eight works of Umapati S. vacarya. For its authorship and authenticity cf. S. Arulsamy, *op. cit.*, pp. 43-49. Cf. also *Mapadiyam*.

to error due to impurities associated with the self. *Sudhi* is consummatory knowledge where knowledge is undistorted by hindrances of impurity. It is the direct and non-vitiated perception of Reality.

As there are three modes of reality in *Siva Siddhanta* viz., *Pati*, *pasu* and *paśa*, each one is associated with *rūpa darśana*, and *suddhi*. Thus we have nine interdependent stadia of knowledge: *Tattva-rūpa*, *tattva-darśana*, *tattva-śuddhi*; *Atma-rūpa*, *atma-darśana*, and *atma-śuddhi*; *Śiva-rūpa*, *Siva-darśana*, *Siva-yoga* in the place *śuddhi* as *Siva* being ever pure. All these ultimately lead to *Siva bhoga*.<sup>28</sup> These ten stadia of knowledge are called *daśakarya* in *Saiva Siddhanta*. They comprehend the means (*sadhanas*) and the fruit (*phala*). The first eight are the *sadhanas* and the last two, viz., *Siva-yoga* and *Siva-bhoga* constitute the penultimate and ultimate spiritual gains, i.e. *mokṣa*. All these ten do not occur in the order of sequence one succeeding the other. They synchronise in characteristic combinations. In broad outlines *Tattva-rūpa* and *tattva-darśana* go with *atma-rūpa*; *Tattva-śuddhi* and *atma-darśana* go with *Siva-rūpa*; *Atma-śuddhi* and *Siva darśana* go together; the ninth and the tenth follow *atma-śuddhi*.

In the whole process of spiritual advancement the self (*atma*) becomes the focal point. It is the true knowledge of the self that holds the key for comprehending the sphere of *tattvas* on the one hand, and the sphere of the Spirit on the other. When the self is able to distinguish itself from whatever is non-self, then there is a proper comprehension of the world; similarly only when the self is open to the Spirit, the latter emerges from its hiddenness in the self. Hence we can take *atma-rūpa*, *atma-darśana* and *atma-suddhi* as points of reference to explain the ten spiritual stadia.

### 1. Self-comprehension of the self (Atma-rupa)

The self can have a real understanding of itself only when it knows the true nature of the world as *asat* (mutable and non-conscious) and as distinct from itself. This is had by *tattva-rupa* and *tattva-darsana*. *Unmaineri Vilakkam* explains that *tattva-rupa* consists in knowing the

28. Cf. N. Murugesu Mudaliar. *The Relevance of Saiva Siddhanta Philosophy* (Annamalainagar: Annamalai University, 1968), pp. 89-91. Sankara in *Aparōkshanubhuti* refers to fifteen steps for those seeking Brahman knowledge, *ślokas*. 102-103.

origins and operations of the *tattvas*, namely that they are thirty six in the form of bodies (*tanu*), organs (*carana*), world (*puvana*) and objects of empirical experience (*bhoga*) and that they are separate from the self. *Tattva-darsana* would enable the self to discriminate itself and God from the world and also know that the *tattvas* are the outcome of *maya* and non-sentient (*jada*), and that they become a help or hindrance according as the self understands their nature and makes use of them. The understanding of the nature of the empirical world as *asat* and as distinct from itself, takes to the self-comprehension of itself which is *atman-rupa*. That is, the self discovers that its form (*rupa*) is knowledge or wisdom i.e. an intelligent and conscious being, of course as distinct from God who is pure intelligent (*cit*).<sup>29</sup>

The true understanding of the empirical world and of the self is called in *Saiva Siddhanta* *pasa-jnana* and *pasu-jnana* respectively. The knowledge of *pasa* refers to the knowledge concerning the true nature of *pasa* and not to the knowledge possessed by *pasa*. The 'of' is objective-genitive and not subjective-genitive.<sup>30</sup> In both cases (i.e. of *pasa-jnana* or *Pati-jnana*) it is the self which knows. The self comprehends itself as *sadasat* which means that the self is a knower who can have true knowledge (*pramatr*), that it knows through medium (*upadesin*) and that it knows by identification, by 'being' or 'becoming', the thing known.

## 2. Self-Insight (Atma-darsana)

The self-insight is concomitant with *tattva-suddhi* on the one hand and with *Siva-rupa* on the other. *Darsana* is a vision entailing contrast and always implies a revelatory source from within or without. At this stage the self becomes a *sadhaka*. It has to make use of *sadhanas*. According to *Saiva Siddhanta* liberation is not attained in one day; it is a continuous perennial process lasting as long as life itself. There are four graded steps in the process of liberation called *carya*, *kriya*, *yoga* and *jnana*. These fourfold *margas* represent a progressive un-

29. Cf. K. S.varaman, *op. cit.*, pp. 375-79

30. The *Tattvas* which are the products of *maya* are *jaḍa* and therefore non-intelligent (*acit*). *Puruṣa-tattva* which on account of its inseparable relation with self comes to be denoted as *cidacit*, as extensions and transformations of *maya* are also non-intelligent. Cf. K. Sivaraman, *op. cit.*, p. 378

doing of the screening powers and not alternative or exclusive path to liberation. They dovetail in such a manner that the *sadhaka* is finally led to the path of *jnana*.<sup>31</sup> *Jnana* is the *sadhana* par excellence; it is called *Sanmarga*, that is the 'true' or 'good' path. All other means are only means leading to *jnana* and *nana* leading to *moksa*.

2.1. *Carya* is the elementary process of the worship of God and it consists in physical acts of service connected with Siva, his devotees and temple. They are: cleaning the temple, smearing the floor of the temple with cow-dung, weaving garlands of different kinds of flowers for adorning the idol of Siva, uttering the praises of the Lord, lighting the temple lamps, maintaining flower gardens and offering one's service to any devotee of Siva. These are the external acts of worship directed to Siva in his form (*uruvam*). It may be likened to the service of a personal attendant to his master; hence it is also called *dasa marga*. This process affords to the self the necessary groundwork of concentration, faith and humility, so essential to the further stages of liberation. It gives ample opportunities to the self to come into close contact with nature. It also gives to the self the proper angle of vision and a theistic bent of mind. Those who practice this *marga* merit *Sivaloga* (*Saloka*) that is, living in the same world as Siva.

2.2. *Kriya* is the worship of Siva both in his form (*uruvam*) and formlessness (*aruvam*). This consists in getting ready flowers, incense, light, and water for bathing the idol, food for offering and in performing sacrifice at the fire etc. These acts are both external and internal acts of worship. The follower of this *marga* has to perform the five kinds of purification.<sup>32</sup> The mode of worship in this *marga* is likened to the service of a son to his father and this method is therefore, called *Satputra-marga*. *Kriya marga* preserves the faith and theistic bent of mind acquired in *carya*, while it gradually initiates the self into the secrets and truths underlying the universe. The fruit of this process is the attainment of *Samipa*, i.e. nearness to Siva.

31. The practice of *carya*, *kriya*, and *yoga* does not lead to final liberation. The joy they bring is compared to that of a man who hungers and eats, but hungers again.

32. The five purifications are related to *atman*, *sthana*, *dravya*, *mantra* and *linga*. Cf. V.A. Devasenapathi, *op. cit.*, 251.

2.3. The next *marga* is the way of self-integration and meditation through the practice of *astanga yoga*. The self in this path understands the autonomous nervous system and other complications of the human body, preserves the body for an incredible long time by proper breath control, uses it to the best advantage for exercises in divine contemplation. In the practice of yoga one encounters several bodily difficulties to be overcome. One should not be subjected to ordinary human passions like anger, lust, jealousy etc. A feeling of love for all creation and of universal brotherhood is at the very bottom of successful *yoga* practice. This *marga* is exclusively internal and the cult is rendered to Siva without form (*arupam*). It is half godliness. In this method the self moves with Siva as with a friend. Hence it is called *Saha-marga*. It leads the follower to *sarupa* (similarity to Saiva's form).<sup>33</sup>

The above three *margas* are stepping stones to the fourth way. These lead one to *pada-mukti* from whence the self must return to re-birth to follow the path of *jnana*. These are lower rungs in the 'ladder-path' to liberation of which the final rung is, of course, *jnana*.

2.4. Initiation (*diksha*) is part of the process of entering these *margas*. Nobody can undertake these *margas* without undergoing the initiation.<sup>34</sup> "...The *Saiva Siddhantas*, though far from being unanimous as to details, are of the opinion that Siva does not manifest himself to all souls in the same way. This explains why there are different methods of liberation. It is necessary 'to be initiated into the mysteries of the Saiva religion, before one may efficaciously perform one of the manifestations of *bhakti*, that follows the three paths of *carya*, *kriya*, and *yoga* which are the means by which the soul may place itself in a position for the reception of the imprint of grace.'<sup>35</sup> There are three grades

33 Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 252-53. M. Balasubramania Mudaliar. "Saiva Siddhanta", pp. 49-54 in *Collected Lectures* (1965), and Satchidanandam, in *ibid.* pp.31-33.

34. Cf. S. Arulsamy, "Diksha in Saiva Siddhanta" in *Indian Theological Studies*, Vol. XVI/1 & 2(1979). pp. 61-65. S. Satchidanandam Pillai, "Saiva Siddhanta", pp. 30-31 in *Collected Lectures* (1965). Hélène Brunner Lachaux, "Le Mysticisme dans les Agamas Sivaïtes" in *Studis Missionalia*, 26 (1977), p.21. Sivapadasundaram, *op. cit.*, pp. 178-80.

35. J. Gonda, *Change and Continuity* (The Hague—London—Paris: Mouton & Co., 1965). p. 430.

of *dikṣa* for the souls of *sakala* order. These are called *Samaya dikṣa*, *Viśesa-dikṣa*, and *Nirvāna-dikṣa*. The aim of the *samaya-dikṣa* is to initiate the entrant into religious life and make him fit to observe its discipline, and improve his purity. From now onwards he becomes a *samayin*; he has to scrupulously follow the prescriptions of *carya-marga*. During this period there is a progressive modification of interior dispositions and an increase of virtues with a parallel decline of defects because a powerful love for Lord Siva and an intense desire to be united with him pervades the *samayin*. *Viśesa-dikṣa* initiates the aspirant into the practices of *kriya-marga* and teaches him to do *Siva-puja* with some understanding of its inner significance. The initiated now becomes a *putra* (son). The third form of *dikṣa* is calculated to make him wholly pure, and to keep his mind constantly in touch with consciousness of the Divine. Now he attains the eight *siddhis* or powers known in the *yoga* system. He has to observe *nityakarma*, i.e., the daily observances like bath (*snana*), cult (*puja*), prayer (*japa*), meditation (*dhyana*) and *kamyakarma* i.e. the optional acts which one performs when he wants to obtain a determined result.<sup>36</sup>

2.5. The fourth and the final *marga* is *jñāna-marga*. Though it is the final and immediate means for the attainment of liberation (*mokṣa*), *jñāna* is involved in each of the four modes with an upward gradation making each successive stage. *Sivajñāna*, the revelation of God comes only to the self that turns away from the world and itself and leans on God. The purpose of the association of the self with the defilements of *maya* and *karma* in the *sakala* stage becomes now clear. That is, to give the self an experience of the pleasures and pains of the world and of its own egoism. This experience of the self through *paśa-jñāna* (a false identification of the senses and organs with the sense-objects) and *paśu-jñāna* (a realization that its organs and senses are distinct from its true self) leads the self to the realization of the inadequacy of the world and its own instruments of knowledge. The self is now ready to let go of the world and turn to God. It is ready for *Sivajñāna*.

36. The one who initiates others is the *guru* who receives *acarya-abhiṣēka dikṣa* (consecration) which enables him to perform *naimittik karma* i.e., occasional ceremonies like purification and *dikṣas* and to consecrate images (*pratishtha*). Those who receive this *dikṣa* are called the 'enlightened'.

Here mention must be made of the three stages in the self's progression towards liberation before the onset of *Sivajnana* (*Patijnana*). They are: *Karma-samya*, (*Iruvinaiyoppu* in Tamil), *Mala-paripaka*, and *Saktinipata*.

2.5.1. *Karma-samya* refers to the self's attitude of equal indifference to good and bad deeds and their results. As to the meaning of this *karma-samya* different opinions prevail among the writings of *Saiva Siddhanta*.<sup>37</sup> Nevertheless, the following understanding may be considered as commonly accepted: "*Karma-samya* as a preliminary to the slackening of the grip of *mala* should be understood to imply a condition when accumulated merits and demerits and their fruits come to entail no difference to the affective reactions of man. For a mind which is unmoved by the pangs of sorrow as well as by the lure of pleasure, *punya* and *papa* with regard to their results necessarily become identical. They remain infructuous as well because the soil is now unsuited for generation of new *karmas*. When the fruits of *punya* and *papa* are experienced with discrimination and reached to differently, that is, with attachment and aversion then and only then they fructify into good and evil consequences and so on endlessly. Pleasure and pain are of the same species so that the 'right' attitude to them must be a uniform 'nay', not discriminately 'yea' and 'nay'. An infinite resignation with respect to finite goods is a negative symptom of living in the finite but solely in virtue of a God-relationship.<sup>38</sup>

2.5.2. When such *karma-samya* occurs it naturally leads to *mala-paripaka*, i.e. the ripening of *anava-mala*. A tranquil frame of mind indifferent alike towards merits and demerits is, therefore, inimical to the active operation of the screening powers of *mala*. That is, the self is now willing to give up its egoism.<sup>39</sup>

37. The idea of complete detachment from the effects of praise or blame figures in the history of mysticism as a *sine qua non* of mystical illumination. It is a state of mind that is described in the *Bhagavadgīta*, as '*sthita prajna!*' Cf. K. Sivaraman. *op., cit.* p. 609. note no. 1 and P. Thirugñanasambandhan, "Recovery of Self in Saiva Siddhanta" in *Philosophical Heritage of the Tamils* p. 34

38. K. Sivaraman, *op. cit.*, p. 395

39. *Ibid.*, p. 395. Maheswary M. Arulchelvam, *op. cit.* p. 7

2.5.3. As the screening powers of *mala* are effectively neutralized because of the *karma-samyā* and as the self is now ripe enough for liberation, the third stage of *Saktinipata* takes place. Literally it means the 'onset of divine power', but generally it is considered as the 'descent of divine grace upon the *sadhaka*'. From the point of view of God it means that He bestows his grace on the devotee; his *tirodhana-sakti* which was so far playing the role of obscuration, now becomes *anugrahasakti* (*arulsakti* in Tamil). On the part of the *asadhaka* it means that he has attained the spiritual qualifications which make him competent to enter into *jnana-marga*.

2.5.4. The consequence of all these, namely of having gone through the graded paths of *carya*, *kriya*, and *yoga*, and of the consequent changes, is the entering of the *sadhaka* from *sakala avastha* into *śuddha avastha*. "It is the state of illumination as against the preceding stages of twilight (*sakala*) and 'darkness' (*kevala*) in the spiritual life of the self."<sup>40</sup> Now the revelation of *Siva* takes place.<sup>41</sup> This is *Śiva-darśana*. This is called *jñana* or *Pati-jñana*. At this stage *jñana* and *anugraha* (*arul*) are one and the same. (*Śaiva Siddhanta* calls it simply *aruljñana* (*anugraha jñana*).<sup>42</sup>

2.5.5. *Jnana*, the ultimate step gives the self a total liberation which is called *para-mukti*. That is, the self gradually enters into complete

40. K. Sivaraman, *op. cit.*, p. 396

41. The revelation of *Siva* in *śuddha avastha* should not be understood in the sense of a new arrival of the Lord. The Lord *Siva* is always present in the self in all its *avasthas*. In *Kēvala* he was in an unmanifest manner; due to the dominance of the *mala*, the self was not able to see and profit by the Divine illumination. In *Sakala* also he was working through *karuvi-karṇa* which were enlightening the self like a lamp-light. Now in *Śuddha avastha* he shines forth and dominates all others—*maias* and *karuvi-karṇa*. Cf. *Kodikkavi* 1, one more of the *Siddhanta Aṣṭakam*, of Umapati Sivacarya.

42. *Jñana* is certainly the highest *marga* (*Sanmarga*) in the process of spiritual journey and it is the door to *moksa*, liberation. Cf. *SJS*. 279. But the dawn of divine knowledge is grace itself. "His form is grace, his attributes are grace, his functions arise from grace, his limbs are grace, and his grace is for all souls and not for himself" (*SJS*. 67). Grace is eternally with God; without him grace does not exist, without grace he does not exist (*aruḷum avaṇaṇṇi illai; aruḷiṇṇi avaṇaṇṇē*—*SJB*. 5.4). Only when there *śaktinipata* i.e., the descent of grace, the self attains *Pati-jñana*. Hence it is called the grace of knowledge (*Aruljñana*—*SJS*. 282). Cf. *SVP*. 10.

intellectual and spiritual communion with Śiva. The bliss of such a union is indescribable. Śiva now is the spiritual guide or *guru*; he appears to the self and enlightens it and imparts it the true knowledge (*meynanam uṅarttum*). Now the self attains complete cosmic consciousness. This *marga* is also called *Sanmarga*. In *jnana* itself are again distinguished some stages from *śravaṇa* to *niṣṭha*: the gross form of hearing (*śravaṇa*), the less gross one of reflection (*manana*) and the subtle form of contemplation (*nididhyasana*) and the resulting experience of Bliss (*niṣṭha* or *samadhi*). These are termed respectively *carya* in *jnana*, *kriya* in *jnana*, *yoga* in *jnana* and *jnana*.<sup>43</sup> This final stage leads the *sadhaka* to *Sayujya* or union with God. Umapati Sivacarya calls this final stage of *jnana* *Sakkīratītam*.<sup>44</sup>

2.6. The way of *bhakti* (*anpu* in Tamil)<sup>45</sup> finds no special mention in *Saiva Siddhanta*. But *bhakti* (love) implies in all the four ways explained above. It is this *bhakti* that leads men into these ways and sustains them. In *carya-marga* the devotee sings the divine praises.<sup>46</sup> Love shown in this *marga* is like that of a servant to his master. In *kriya-marga* love shown is like that of a son to his parents; the *sadhaka* establishes God's symbol, invokes God's presence therein and worships him in pure love and ardent desire, and praises him.<sup>47</sup> One who follows the *yoga-marga* thinks of the Supreme Light and meditates on it with love.<sup>48</sup> And finally in the *jnana-marga* love is sublimated into union with Śiva who is love himself.<sup>49</sup> Thus all the four *margas* are infused

43. K. Sivaraman, *op. cit.*, p. 394

44. Cf. *Sivaprakasam* (hereafter *SVP*) 81. It is the first work of Umapati Sivacarya and also first in the order of sequence of *Siddhanta Astakam*. *Sakkīratītam* is a state beyond *Jagrat* in which the self, though in full possession of all its faculties, is yet detached. Cf. also *Mapadiyam*, p. 444.

45. *Bhakti* is loving devotion to God. Cf. M. Dhavamony. *Love of God according to Saiva Siddhanta* (Oxford: At The Clarendon Press, 1971), pp. 13-23. The Tamil equivalent to *bhakti* is '*anpu*' (which means love, attachment, friendship, benevolence, devotion, piety). Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 24-31 and T. Burrow and M. B. Emeneau, *A Dravidian Etymological Dictionary* (Oxford: 1961), p. 24, no. 279

46. Cf. SJS. 271—*pukaḷatu paṭi*

47. Cf. *Ibid.*, 272. *prarivīṇōtum*

48. Cf. *Ibid.*, 273

49. Cf. *Tirumantiram*, one of the twelve *Tirmurai* (hereafter *TM*) 257. *Anpum civamum iranṅenpar aṅivilar*  
*Anpe civamam yarum aṅikilar*

through and through with *bhakti*. One of the *Sastras* extols the importance of love above all the *margas*. "If one who follows any one of the four ways, gets rid of the pride of 'I' and 'mine' and loves God, then God who is invisible manifests himself to the *bhakta*."<sup>50</sup> Every act should be inspired by love of God. Without love there is no use of performing sacred functions. "Without love what fruit can come out of bathing in sacred water, meditation and acts of worship of Siva?"<sup>51</sup>

However, it must be noted that there is no contrast between *bhakti* (love) and *jñāna* (knowledge). In fact one implies the other. They go hand in hand. "*Bhakti* is essential to all the four stages, for without love these lose all their meaning and become hypocritical. *Jñāna* also implies in all these four stages, because otherwise they would become unintelligible and blind practices."<sup>52</sup> This is why Arulnandi Sivacarya says that one has to approach God with one's intelligence enlightened by divine knowledge (*Paṭiñanattalē*) together with love (*Nēcemōṭum*).<sup>53</sup> Concerning the inseparability of both *bhakti* and *jñāna* in man's approach to God T.M.P. Mahadevan explains as follows: "A distinction is sometimes made between *samayacaryas* (religious teachers) and *santanacaryas* (philosophical expounders). But this is only a distinction based on emphasis. To take southern śaivism, for instance, where this distinction is explicitly made, Tirujñānasambandhar who is regarded as a *samaya carya* did have a philosophy of life; and Meykaṇḍar who is the first of the *santanacaryas* was also a great saint. Similar to the distinction just mentioned is the one between *saints* and *sages*. The saint's approach to reality is said to be more emotional, whereas that of the sage is regarded as more intellectual. But this again is a distinction which is not absolute. In India, the saints have been known for their sagely qualities and sages for their saintly character. No one will deny, for instance, that the saint Ramakrishna was also a sage and the sage Ramana was a saint as well. The *Bhakta* (devotee) and the *Jñāni* (one with wisdom) are, it is true, distinguished by some people. But the devotion of the genuine *bhakta* is not purely an emotion, having nothing to do with knowledge, nor is the wisdom of the *jñāni* the result

50. *Tirukkaḷṟṟiupaṭiyar* (hereafter TKP), 15.

51. *Ibid.*, 55.

52. M. Dhavamony, *op. cit.*, p. 236.

53. *SJS*. 292: Paramparaṇaip paṭiñanattalē nēcamōṭum uḷlattē naṭi.

of intellection without emotional sublimation. In certain schools of philosophy, one or the other of the two paths, *bhakti* and *jñana*, may find relatively greater stress. Nevertheless, the need for both is recognized in all of them."<sup>54</sup>

### 3. Self-Purification (Atma-Suddhi)

Once the self gets a proper insight of itself, then its purification follows. This consists on the one hand, in being free from empirical knowledge and egoism (*Ivaṅ taṅmaiketṭu*) and on the other, in enjoying the sight of Śiva (*Śiva-darsana*) in all places.<sup>55</sup>

In this stage of *suddha avastha* certain spiritual disciplines are enjoined to the *sadhaka*, so that on the one hand he becomes firmly established in the vision of the Divine or in the knowledge revealed to him, and on the other, he does not fall back from this stage of spiritual advancement.<sup>56</sup> Here two *sadhanas* are worth mentioning: Meditation and Chanting of *pañcakṣara*.

3.1 *Meditation*: Dissociation with *asat* must go hand in hand with the association with Śiva (Sat). Hence Śiva is now constantly meditated upon as 'He is I' (*so'ham*). Arulnandi Sivacarya cites the analogy of the '*garuḍadhyaṇa*' or meditation of *garuḍa-mantra* by a *mantrika* in a mood of oneness with it. In the *Garuḍa*-meditation one overcomes the effect of a snake's poison by the power of the divine *Garuḍa* which he invokes through meditation of oneness with it. In Saiva discipline, meditation (*bhavana*) is never a mere exercise in imagination. It is real and the meditator becomes one with the meditated. But it should be remembered that the object of meditation here is not the *Garuḍa*, the bird but the inspiring divinity in the form of the *mantra*.<sup>57</sup>

54. T.M. P. Mahadevan. *The Saints in India* (Bombay, 1961). p. 3.

55. Cf. UNV. 4. 2—Parppiṭam eṅkumcivamay tōṅṅalatu mukamam.

56. There is always a possibility for the self which has attained self-purification to fall back into bondage, for there is still in it the *prarabdha-vasana*. The vessel that contained spices might retain the faint traces or impressions of the aroma but surely such traces are not serviceable as condiments for the purpose of cooking. In the same manner, in the case of the freed, who is anchored in the will of God, due to his embodied condition and also because *prarabdha* has not ceased, worldly desire may arise through sheer force of habit.

As a consequence of this meditation the *sadhaka* acquires the power to counteract the effects of the *malas*, and thus becomes pure.

3.2. The other *sadhana* is the chanting of *pancakṣara mantra*. The self which has undergone the above process is now able to understand the place of 'five letters.' It understands that from the beginning of its empirical life till now 'the five letters' were associating themselves with it; that there was not even a single moment when they had not involved themselves in its life. It is these 'five letters' which initiated the self into empirical life, actuated and directed the course of its whole life. Hence the self is able to see that the five stages of divine grace are nothing but the 'five letters'. It is through the actions of these 'five letters' that it has reached the present condition. These letters, therefore, are called by Umapati 'the grace of five letters'.<sup>58</sup> Thus these 'five letters' form the grand synthesis of the life of the self.<sup>59</sup>

These 'five letters' are called '*mukti pancakṣaras*' in view of the fact that its recital is designed to lead one from the state of *sadhaka* to that of *mukta*. All these 'five letters' stand for five different entities: Śiva(*si*), *anugraha sakti(va)*, the self(*ya*), *tirodhana sakti (na)* and *anava mala (ma)*. In the very life of the self both the cosmic dance (*ūna naṭana*) and the dance of wisdom (*jnana natana*) take place. When the self is oblivious of and indifferent to, Śiva (*si*) and *Sakti (va)*, and when *tirodhayi* and *mala (na and ma)* are in ascendance then the self is caught up in the vortex of phenomenal life and this cosmic dance. But when the self has attained *malaparipaka*, due to the ripening of *mala*

57. Cf. *Mapaḍiyam*, pp. 441-442.

58. TVP. Ch. 9 *Añcezhuttaruḷ nilai*. K.S. Sundaramurthi, *Tiruvārūḷ-payan—Teḷivurai—yuḷan* (Tiruppanandal: Sri Kumarakurupara Kasimadam, 1978), p. 51

59. Cf. S. Arulsamy. *op. cit.*, p. 251. Some scholars explain how the five realities are contained in the *Praṇava*. The *Praṇava* has three letters: *A U M* (*akaram*, *ukaram* and *makaram*). In *Si-va-ya-na-ma* the *nakaram* is subsumed into *vakaram*, *makaram* is subsumed into *yakaram*. Now only three letters (*Si-va-ya*) are left. Of these three the *cikaram* standing for Siva and the *vakaram* standing for grace will be subsumed into the first letter *akaram* (A), and the *yakaram* standing for the self will be subsumed into the second letter *ukara*, (U). and the third letter *makaram* (M) would signify the *mala*. Thus the 'five letters' and through them the five realities are contained in the *Om̐kara*.

(*ma*), *tirodhayi* (*na*) ceases to function and is as it were transfigured into *anugraha-sakti* (*va*); now the self is in between Siva and his *sakti* and this is called the dance of divine wisdom. In order to arrive at it, the self should first become aware of the distinction of *va* and *na* and then meditate on *Sat* as identity. That is, the self should realize that Śiva is everything; he alone does everything for it, who is his servant (*aḍimai*). If with this attitude the self chants the *pancakṣara mantra*, it will certainly get liberated from the defilement (*tirum pavam*).<sup>60</sup> As symbolic of this change, the five letters of *mukti-pancakṣara* are now really reduced to three: *si-va-ya*. Ultimately with the aid of *va(sakti)* the self should get united with *si* (Siva). Now the self and Siva stand in relation of owner and owned.<sup>61</sup> There is a total disvaluation or depreciation of the self (*va*), disvaluation in respect of its being as an independent thing and a complementary appreciation of Siva as the Supreme Being and value.

### III GAIN OF THE SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

When the self gets rid of its original defilement (*mala*),<sup>62</sup> that is, attains self-purification, then the great gain of the omnipresent Bliss of God will be within the sight of itself.<sup>63</sup> *Unmaineri Viḷakkam* develops this stage of Bliss into two phases as penultimate and ultimate gains which are called *Śiva-yoga* and *Śiva-bhoga* respectively within the ten stadia of the spiritual journey.

#### 1. Integration into Siva

The penultimate gain is the recovery of the self by integration into Siva. It consists first of all in understanding the nature of the world and of the self: that the world does not function except by being actuated by the Primal One, and that the self's affective, cognitive, and conative powers are activated by the corresponding powers of the

60. Cf. *TVP*. 87.

61. Cf. *SJB*. 9.3.1: *añcezhuttal uḷḷam aranūḍaimai kaṇḍu*.

62. Getting rid of the original *mala* i.e., *anava* should not be understood in the sense of destroying it, for it is also eternal. *Anava* exists even in *mukti* but in front of the dazzling light of divine grace, it is unable to exercise its obscuring function; hence it might appear as if it has disappeared. Cf. for further discussion, S. Arulsamy, *op. cit.*, pp. 271-280.

63. Cf. *SVP*. 78.

Primal One.<sup>64</sup> Secondly it consists in the understanding the nature of Śiva<sup>65</sup> which necessarily leads the self to remain steadfast in the service of the Primal One.

What does this divine service consist in? The self which has entered the threshold of self-realization should recognize that every action it performs now, good or bad, is done only by the power of Śiva. It has to understand that Śiva has taken possession of itself to such an extent that it considers all that is taking place in itself as being done by Śiva and all that is done to itself by others as done by Śiva himself. In other words, the self is 'one' with the Lord in such a way that it does not regard itself as other than God. It realises the Omnipresence of Śiva and sets itself in tune with him without losing its own individuality.<sup>66</sup>

The self sets its will at the service of Divine Will, ready to do whatever it commands. This is what is meant renouncing one's own action (*tanpaṇi nīttal*).<sup>67</sup> Now the empirical world does not confront the human will which is directly in contact with the Divine Will and has become 'one' with it. There are no more likes or dislikes for the things of the world. If it is so, one may ask: what about its freedom? Is the self that has surrendered its will to the Divine Will, free at all? If bondage consisted in submission of one's will to another, how can liberation be conceived on the same line? Can the ultimate freedom of the self be compatible at all with the submission of its will to that of God? Such are the questions one has to face while accepting the above statement.

Freedom of the self does not consist in being unrelated, nor does it consist in not being in compliance with another's will. Freedom does not also consist in not being coerced or controlled. Freedom consists rather in what one freely wills. "Freedom is conformity with one's own unrestrained will. This meaning of freedom defines at once the freedom of the Supreme Will and also the individual will in union with it."<sup>68</sup> So, freedom is a freedom of the will to enjoy.

64. *UNV*. 5.1-2: Epporuḷ vanturṟiṭṭiṇum apporuḷaip parttiṅku Eytum uyir taṇaikkaṇṭu.

65. *Ibid.*, 5.2-3: Ivvuyirkku mēlam oppil arul civattunmai kaṇṭu . . .

66. Cf. Chacko Valiaveetil *Liberated Life* (Madurai—Madras: Dialogue Series no. 1. 1980) pp. 124-25.

67. Cf. *SVP*. 80. 3. Uḷḷa ceyal aruttiḍa.

68. K. Sivaraman, *op. cit.*, p. 409.

Since the individual will's nature is to enjoy Siva, submitting its will does not hamper its freedom.<sup>69</sup> Already in the empirical life of the self, it could exercise its will only by its association with the *māyīya* (the senses like ear, eyes, etc.). The association with, as well as the functioning of, the *māyīya* becomes possible only when being initiated by the Lord. Hence submission of the individual will to another's cannot be considered as unfreedom.

## 2. Enjoyment of Bliss

The second phase of the spiritual gain is a blissful union with Siva and enjoyment thereof. This is *Siva-bhoga*, the ultimate goal of the spiritual journey. This is also called the 'advaitic experience of God'.

In *Unmaineri Viḷakkam* Umāpati Sivacarya explains the enjoyment of Bliss in the following way: When the self not feeling actions as its own (taṅakkeṇāvōr ceyalaṅṅu) merges its being into Siva, the Supreme Being (tan atuvay niṅkil), the Lord assuming the role of soul to the self which is considered as His body (ivaṅ uḍaluyirāy), performs all its actions such as eating, sleeping, and walking; becomes the agent of all experience (nānabōkaṅkaḷaiyum taṅakac ceytu), and all differences lost. He transmutes him into his own nature (pētamaṅa niṅṅu ivaṅai taṅakki viṭuvan). This is the blissful experience of Siva (*Sivabhoga*).<sup>70</sup> Because of the self's complete identification with Siva, He become the sole object of all its actions and it is not affected by the affairs of the world. If the self becomes the body for the Lord, then one might ask: who sees the Primal One, is it the self which stands as His body, or the Lord who is as its soul (*uyir*)? In this blissful experience both the intelligence of the self and that of the Lord have merged into one to such an extent that we cannot speak in terms of the self knowing or the Lord knowing independent of each other. What the Lord does (sees) on behalf of the self, it will see with the 'eye of divine grace' (*aruṅkaṅnal*).<sup>71</sup> "The inner significance of *advaita* consists in its being not merely a relation or union but a resulting experience of the relation."<sup>72</sup>

69. This is in agreement with the New Testament teaching on freedom specially as found in St. Paul, for whom true freedom consists in belonging to God Cf. 1 Cor. 7:22; Gal. 5:1; Rom. 6:12-14.

70. *UNV.* 6. 4-8.

71. *TVP.* 54: Ūṅṅuyir taṅ uṅarvōṅṅu oṅṅam taram.

72. K. Sivaraman, *op. cit.*, p. 412.

The *advaitic* union here refers to the union at the level of operations and not at the level of being. "The Supreme Lord, who is the Final End and Beatitude of the soul, is not an abstract unity, but is possessed of *iccha*, *jñāna*, and *kriya sakti*, the power of willing, knowing, and acting. The soul in its ultimate union (*niṣṭha*), far from being passive and inactive shares in those acts of the Lord. The union itself is characterised by knowledge, love, and action."<sup>73</sup> Umapati Sivacarya calls this union 'a blissful slumber'.<sup>74</sup> Ontologically the self remains the same though a tremendous transformation takes place in it because of the intimate union with the Lord.<sup>75</sup> This is precisely the meaning of *advaitic* union in *Saiva Siddhanta*.

### Conclusion

*Saiva Siddhanta* thus lays much stress on religious experience based on mutual cooperation of man (human) and God (Divine). The embodied self (man) which undertakes the spiritual journey, advances from the condition of bondage to freedom. The journey is marked by the knowledge of the world (*pasa-jnana*) and of the self (*pasujnana*). However, it is not one-way traffic. The liberative action of God is present throughout. The *jnana* in its various levels opens and illumines the mind of the self to understand everything and itself in proper perspective. At its highest level this *jnana* becomes the grace of revelation and illumination, called *anugraha-sakti* (*arulsakti*). This effects a total purification of the self and leads to a 'faultless gain'—the blissful union with God. It is within this perspective of spiritual journey that the *Siddhanta* ethics draws significance and relevance.

Like any other Indian philosophical system *Saiva Siddhanta* is a religion of knowledge (*jnana*) in the sense that knowledge of God (*Patijnana*) "is integral intuition of the truth of existence at its source which entails freedom of the self from the thraldom of bondage."<sup>76</sup> However, it does not present this *jnana* as a reality altogether distinct from Divine grace and love. Hence it may be said that *Saiva Siddhanta* is a religion of grace (*arul*) and love (*anpu*).

73. Valiaveetil, *op. cit.*, p. 128; Cf. *TVP*. 91.

74. *TVP*. 91: Uḷḷattul iṇpoḍuṅka tūṅkuvar.

75. Valiaveetil. *op. cit.*, pp 122-23.

76. K. Sivaraman. *op. cit.*, p. 371.

# THE SPIRITUAL JOURNEY OF THE SELF CAN BE SCHEMATISED IN THE FOLLOWING WAY

