

THE
SAIVA SIDDHANTA AS A
PHILOSOPHY OF PRACTICAL
KNOWLEDGE

BY
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With a sympathetic Note

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PRINTED AT THE T. M. PRESS,
PALLAVARAM,
MAY, 1940

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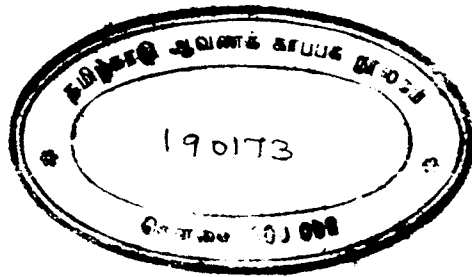
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Inscribed to the memory of
my late lamented friend
Mr. C. Arianayakam,
Lawyer at Matale, Ceylon, &
Patron of Tamil learning,
by the Author



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7—8—1923

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I know nothing of Saiva Siddhanta beyond what I have learnt from Swami Vedachalam, but if it means, as he says, opposition to Vedantist Pantheism with its doctrines that all is one and all is illusion, it has my heartiest sympathy. For I have long thought monism as harmful socially as it is scientifically groundless, and the widespread acceptance it has won in India seems to be a clue to much of the political history of the country. If the peoples of India can be persuaded that the truth of speculations also must be tested by their bearing upon life, the progress of India will be much accelerated.

I have also been much struck by the account Swami Vedachalam gives of the relation between body and mind as conceived by S. Meikandan. For if it is correct it shows that he also anticipated William James in formulating the 'transmission' theory which supplies so elegant and irrefragable an answer to materialism.

(Signed) F. C. S. Schiller.

only metaphysical ground for asserting the immortality of the individual. And this metaphysical ground we have secured by the preference given to Pluralism over Monism.”*

Now, as regards the third principle the dark and impure *Anavam*, what the Saiva Siddhanta states is, in the words of Dr. F. C. S. Schiller, this: “Evil was potentially existent in the world” and “the world was created in order to remedy this pre-existent and pre-cosmic defect.”† If all had been eternally perfect like God, creation is unnecessary, and it may even be said to be mischievous, like the mischievous play of some wild boys, who take pleasure in throwing stones on innocent animals and even on grown-up persons. But such does not seem to be the case, since all souls have defects and imperfections ingrained in them in various grades and degrees which, with the help of created things and substances, they strive and struggle to get rid of. This supreme purpose of creation cannot in the least be understood, unless you recognize in the individual minds the potential existence of the evil principle called *Anavam* in the Saiva Siddhanta. Of this evil principle Prof. Henry Drummond the great scientist and theologian writes:

“There is a natural principle in man lowering him, deadening him, pulling him down by inches to the mere

* *Riddles of the Sphinx*. 2nd edition. p. 403. † *Ibid.* p. 434.

animal plane, blinding reason, searing conscience, paralyzing will.”*

So far as my knowledge of various religions and various systems of philosophy is concerned, I venture to say that I have not come across any religion or any system of philosophy in which this root-cause of creation, this pre-existent principle of evil has been recognized and explicitly mentioned as in the system of Saiva Siddhanta. Of course, there is a hint of it in the first chapter of the Book of Genesis of the Old Testament as has been so penetratingly pointed out by Dr. F. C. S. Schiller, but it has unfortunately escaped the notice of almost all commentators on the book.

Now, let us turn to the fourth category: the two kinds of deeds called the good and the bad. Every living thing from amoeba upwards is endowed with intelligence and this enables them all to respond to impressions proceeding from surrounding objects and perform certain functions either in opposition to, or in accordance with, these impressions. In answering thus to outward calls the lower organisms learn to repeat what seemed at first favourable to the maintenance of their own life and afterwards to the maintenance of the life of their own offspring. The first act of every living being meets with great resistance offered both by animate and inanimate objects, that is, by its own body and by the things external to it. All the products of matter do not yield themselves readily to the will of an intelligent

* *Natural Law in the Spiritual World*, cheap ed., p. 29.

being, unless it exercises its own intelligence constantly and devises newer and newer means to bend them to its will. In this way it learns that not one act but many acts, of which every succeeding one is more intelligently performed than the preceding one, are necessary for achieving the conquest over matter.

It is such repeated actions of living beings that have come to be collectively called *Karma* or *Vinai* in Saivism; or in the language of psychology *habit*. As we observe the infinite grades of lives, and the infinite degrees of intelligence, we are led to believe that no man, who gains an insight into the nature and evolution of individual souls, can at a bound conclude that the life of a soul can become perfect in a single birth, when even the duration of which varies infinitely from a moment to an age.

Further, the actions of living beings acquire moral value only after they ascend to human life in the scale of their existence. Therefore it seems most unreasonable to assert that the lower lives will become extinct after they have passed through a single existence and before they have reached higher levels at which their actions acquire moral value. Even after reaching the human level, individual souls do differ so widely among themselves in the degrees of intelligence that, here too, perfection is not attainable by all in a single birth. And so, before attaining to the highest level of perfection, it is but reasonable to hold with the Saiva Siddhanta that all souls must accumulate habits after habits only by passing through myriads of bodily existences in this world and in others

that are distant from our own, as has been so wisely put by Dr. James Ward: "At any rate 'metempsychosis' in some form seems an unavoidable corollary of thoroughgoing pampsychism, so long as we look broadly at the facts of life as a whole."*

And come we now finally to the fifth and the sixth category, the pure and the impure Mayai. Modern science has discovered that the world of our experience is ultimately resolvable into protons and electrons. The impure Mayai is the direct material cause of the universe, while the pure: the protons and electrons, constitutes only indirectly so. The reason for this twofold classification of Mayai is this: The souls buried, as it were, in coarse and foul impurities require equally coarse things to be cleansed of their impurities; whereas the highly developed souls rising above the dirt and filth require only the help of finer substances to raise them still higher. For we see plainly before our eyes the mental faculties of different individual souls developing in different degrees and in different directions without any limit being set to them. In proportion to the mental development of souls, matter which serves as its vehicle also becomes rarefied in different degrees. In the words of Dr. Schiller, "The spiritualization of Matter is displayed also in its relations to spiritual beings. As in the course of evolution these become more harmonized with the Divine will, Matter the expression of that will, becomes more and more harmonized with the desires of

* *The Realm of Ends*, p. 213.

spiritual beings."* That the doctrine of Maya as held by Saivism is coming to be understood as being in entire harmony with the discoveries of modern science, must be clear to all who make a comparative study of the two.

To all those who seek after an exact knowledge of these six eternal verities, it must be very gratifying to note as above that the recent developments of western philosophy and physical science go every inch to prove the truth and value of all the fundamental doctrines that are peculiar only to Saiva Siddhanta but not to any other religion or philosophy ancient or modern.

HISTORICAL SKETCH OF SAIVA SIDDHANTA

But the religion and philosophy of Saiva Siddhanta, as has been pointed out by Dr. G. U. Pope, are "peculiarly South-Indian" and the Tamils who are the pre-Aryan inhabitants of India, are alone the sole and strict adherents of this system from times immemorial. This historic fact being a very momentous one, we have to devote our serious attention to it and elucidate it in as brief a manner as possible. For it has become a pleasing custom even among Tamil Scholars of non-Aryan descent to derive every thing excellent in pure Tamil literature from Sanscrit or to ascribe its origin to the thought of some legendary Aryan sage or other. From my twentieth year, that is, nearly forty two years ago when I was for some time an editor of the Tamil edition of that very

* *Riddles of the Sphinx*, p. 298.

deep insight he declares: "To keep strictly within the information supplied by the Rig Veda itself—Vasishta was the bard of the Tritsu, the leading and purest Aryan tribe, and Visvamitra was the bard of the Bharatas, their great enemies and one of the most powerful native tribes. He at one time had been with the Tritsu, and for whatever cause he left them—not improbably personal revenge—he played a conspicuous part in the confederacy which attempted to check the Aryan advance and increasing power. * * * At a later period the followers of Vashistha and his descendants represent the narrowly orthodox Brahminic school, with its petty punctiliousness in the matter of forms, rites, observances, its intolerance of everything un-Aryan, its rigid separatism. * * * The followers of Visvamitra and his descendants, on the other hand, represented the school of liberalism and progress, of conciliation and amalgamation. * * * But it must also have been owing to this their policy of conciliation that many of their beliefs and practices of the once loathed aborigines gradually crept into the Aryan worship, and gained a footing there, paving the way for the mixed forms of Hinduism in the future."*

Now who these Dasyus were, and who the Bharatas that had been so contemptuously spoken of and called the black-skinned by the Rig Vedic Aryas has been also pointed out by Ragozin in the following passage:

* *Ibid.*, pp. 318—320.

"Of the Dravidian race, tribes are scattered through the central Vindhya region, while its bulk has, from pre-Aryan times to this day, covered the entire three-sided table-land sweepingly named Dekhan. In moral characteristics they, from the first, strongly contrasted with the Kolarians. They too live in village communities, but under a rule which leans more to the monarchic type, and, in all their ways, they show more public spirit. Equally good traders and farmers, they are patient, laborious, steadfast, and loyal. * * * In several of those passages in which the priestly poets exhaust their ingenuity inventing abusive epithets for their Dasyu foes, they call them with scathing contempt, Sisna-devas, literally: 'whose God is Sisna or Sesh'."* And in a still more remarkable passage which follows, he dwells on the racial affinity existing between the Dravidians and the Shumiro-Accads: "The connection between the Dravidians of Northern and Western India and the first Babylonian Empire,—the Babylonia of the Shumira-Accads, before the advent of the Semites—becomes less surprising when we realize that there was between them something more than chance relations, that they were in fact of the same race or stock—that which is broadly designated as Turanian. Philology points that way, for the Dravidian languages are agglutinative; craniology will not disprove the affinity, for a glance at the Gondh types on illustration No. 23, and the turbaned head of Tell-Loh (Accadian Sirgulla about 4000 B.C.) will show

* *Ibid.* pp. 292, 293.

the likeness in features and shape. But even more convincing is the common sacred symbol—the Serpent, the emblem of the worship of Earth, with its mystery, its wealth and its forces. The Accadian supreme god Ea was worshipped at his holiest shrine at Eridhu under the form of a serpent, and as Eridhu was the centre from which the first Chaldean civilization started and spread, so the serpent-symbol was accepted as that of the race and its religion”.*

From these extracts taken from the work of an able and impartial historian of ancient India whose historical studies, though they are based not upon Tamil literature but upon the literatures and archaeology of the Aryans, the Eranians, the Shumiro-Accads, the Babylonians and others of the ancient west, yet we get glimpses of the following facts pertaining to the history of the ancient Tamils in relation with the Aryas:

1 The Tamils, the only civilized section of the people generally called the Dravidians, possessing as they do, a vast and rich literature produced from 3500 B. C. up to our own times, must have been the early inhabitants of the whole of India, before the Aryas entered its north western part. They had in ancient times commercial relations with the people of the west, and it was the trading classes of the Tamils who settled permanently in the thriving centres of the west that, as time went on, came to be called the Babylonians, the Sumerians, the Accadians and so on.

* *Ibid*, pp. 308, 309.

2 The Aryas who entered India found the Tamils to be rich, intelligent and powerful and live in strongly fortified towns and castles that they dreaded to meet them openly on battlefield, but sought the aid of their dead heroes such as Indra, Varuna and others by means of prayer and sacrifice, for the protection of their own race and the destruction of the Tamils whom they contemptuously called the black skinned Dasyus. The Aryas, for their safety, put so great a faith in the efficacy of bloody sacrifices and drinking bouts that they became extremely punctilious in the observance and performance of rites and ceremonies pertaining to them. The faith in the rituals took so strong a hold of their mind that it led them to look upon the riteless Tamils with bitter hatred and derision. The hymns to Indra in which they give vent to their malignant feelings against the Tamils are not a few in number, and they all plainly show how narrow their views were and how intolerant they became of everything un-Aryan.

3 The Tamils, on the other hand, held not only liberal views about the Aryas, their customs and manners, but even earnestly wished to conciliate them to their own high moral and religious principles, and, if possible, to unite them with their own people. The culture of the Tamils was wide and their sympathies went beyond the circle of their own people.

4 The Aryas had no religion, if by religion we mean the belief in one Almighty God of the universe and the loving communion which man longs to have

with God as a person and parent. Having been in dire want of even the bare necessities of life, the Aryas struggled hard to obtain a suitable dwelling place as well as food and clothing. Being also poor in the number of their fighting men and money, they sought to gain their end by appealing to their dead heroes such as Indra, Varuna, Mitra and others whom they exalted each in turn to the highest place of God. Consequently they could think of no God who is greater than them, and who, besides being single, invisible and intangible, is personal, kind and merciful also.

5 The Tamils, on the other hand, having settled in life long before the advent of the Aryas and having also reached the highest level of civilisation which was contemporaneous with that of the Egyptians and the Sumerians, had ample scope to reflect upon the wonderful nature of this immense material universe and the inner spiritual world and set down their thoughts in works of imperishable value. They did not stop with the investigation of mere material phenomena but dived deep into it and discovered at its bottom the existence of a spiritual principle which is single and all-powerful and which has been the efficient cause of all creation. They conceived God not as wholly invisible but somewhat visible in light, particularly in the light of the Sun, the Moon, and the Fire, so that in later ages they came to use a material symbol resembling the form of the burning flame and paid their worship to it with mere leaves and flowers with no other rites or ceremonies.

Unable to grasp the meaning of this symbol of God which was called the "Sivalinga" in later times, the Aryas, like most of the present day orientalists, called it "Sisna devah" or phallus. The Tamils not only attached little value to rituals but even looked upon with loathing the bloody sacrifices of the Aryas and the numberless rites and ceremonies which they went on multiplying with the selfish intent of squeezing out money from the people by striking awe into their mind.

As regards the first point: the pre-Aryan occupation of the whole of India by the Dravidians, pre-eminently above all others by the Tamils, that was pointed out by Dr. Caldwell as early as the year 1856 as follows: "Every form and root which the Brahui possesses in common with the Dravidian tongues may be regarded as many centuries older still. The Brahuic analogies enable us to ascend to a period anterior to the arrival in India of the Aryans which cannot safely be placed later than 1600 B.C."* And that of all the Dravidian languages Tamil alone was the earliest cultivated has also been clearly shown by the same veteran scholar in his admirable work on the Dravidian languages. "The Shen Tamil," he says, "which is the language of the poetry and of the ancient inscriptions, and which not only contains all the refinements which the Tamil has received, but also exhibits to a great extent the primitive condition of the language, differs more from the colloquial Tamil than the poetical dialect of any other Dravidian idiom differs

**Comparative Grammar of the Dravidian Languages* p. 69.

from its ordinary dialect. * * * As the words and forms of the Shen Tamil cannot have been invented by the poets, but must at some period have been in actual use, the degree in which the colloquial Tamil has diverged from the poetical dialect, notwithstanding the slowness with which language, like everything else, changes in the east, is a proof of the high antiquity of the literary cultivation of the Tamil."* Many more facts are adduced by Dr. Caldwell to prove the high antiquity of the cultivation which the Tamil alone of all the Dravidian tongues received, but the above will suffice for our purpose in a preface like this.

Further, if one can take the trouble of comparing the time of Tamil literature with the times of some other Dravidian literatures, he would find the high antiquity of Tamil culture easily established to the exclusion of other Dravidian cultures. For it should be borne in mind that Kanarese literature sprang into being only after the 9th century A.D; Telugu literature came into being only after the 11th century A.D.; Malayalam literature only after the 14th century A.D. All other Dravidian dialects still remain uncultivated, although they are spoken in the north and south of India even unto this day. That the literatures of these three Dravidian tongues possess no original works of their own except the translations made of a few mythical Puranas and epics in Sanscrit, is a point that should be noted by all who intend to make a correct estimate of the value of

* *Ibid*, p. 54.

Tamil literature in comparison with others. For ancient Tamil literature possesses not only many works completely original such as Tholkappiam, Ahananooru, Purananooru, Kalithokai, Kurunthokai, Iyngurunooru, Narrinai, Pathitruppathu, Paripadal, Thirukkural, and others, all produced from 3500 B. C. to the beginning of the Christian era, quite independently of any Sanscrit influence but it also possesses many epics and sacred hymns of such merit that in their matter and manner they are unequalled and unexcelled even by Sanscrit classics. As all the pure Tamil works had thus been produced continuously without any break from 3500 B. C. to the 12th century A. D., this vital fact alone would be sufficient to prove the prosperous, peaceful and intellectual condition of life enjoyed by the Tamils from the very remote past. Hence it must have been the Tamilians themselves that occupied the whole of India as far as the north western frontier, when the Aryan nomads came to the Punjab and found them rich, powerful and highly civilized. As we find no trace either in ancient Tamil literature or in Sanscrit of any other Dravidian people speaking such modern Dravidian tongues as Kanarese, Telugu, Malayalam, etc., we cannot be far from being correct in concluding that at that distant period of time the only civilized people who inhabited the whole of India could be none other than the Tamils, for they were then one undivided people, one single race speaking only one single tongue the pure Tamil.

Although there must have been individual variations in their speech, and customs and manners owing to distance of places, diversity of climate and callings, just as there are, at present, differences in them between the people of Madras and the people of Ceylon, with graded differences prevailing among the other Tamil people living between the two land limits, yet the Tamil language has retained its identity for more than five thousand years, assuredly not on account of anything but the wide cultivation which it generally received at the hands of all the several classes of the Tamil people who lived all throughout India.

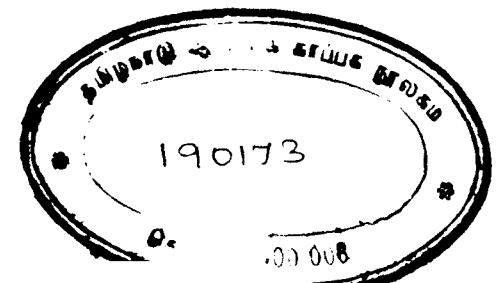
To add to this important cause, many of the ancient Tamils, like their modern descendants, seem to have been enterprising traders both on land and sea, so that their constant intercourse with all classes of the Tamil people living wide apart, had constituted another powerful factor which contributed towards keeping up Tamil wholly intact. From time to time separate companies were formed of these traders who went to east and west and settled permanently in several important centres so as to render easier the commercial intercourse of the mother country with the foreign nations. That it was the Tamil people who belonged to these trade settlements that, as time went on, came to be called the Sumerians and some other civilized nations of the west, is evident from the recent utterances of Sir John Marshall:

"It may be recalled" he says in his great work on *Mohenjo-daro and the Indus Civilization*, "that before anything whatever had been discovered of the Indus civilization, Dr. H. R. Hall proposed to locate the homeland of the Sumerians somewhere to the east of Mesopotamia and suggested that they might belong to the same ethnic type as the Dravidians of India, who though now restricted to the south of India are believed on linguistic and ethnological grounds to have once populated virtually the whole of the peninsula, including the Punjab, Sind, and Baluchistan where as is well-known the Dravidian speech is still preserved in the language of the Brahuis. Following on the discoveries at Mohenjo-daro and Harappa which revealed various points of resemblance between the material cultures of these places and of Sumer, it was natural that a fresh impetus should be given to this theory and the resemblances referred to should be interpreted as additional proof of its correctness."

Now, do not these historical facts brought to light by the indefatigable labours of European scholars prove beyond doubt that the civilized people who, long before the advent of the Aryas, occupied the whole of India and even other countries lying beyond its north western limit, were none other than the Tamils? If the Tamils had been the pre-Aryan inhabitants of India, it follows as a matter of course that their religion too must have been pre-Aryan in every respect.

Then, what sort of faith did the ancient Tamils profess? To cut the thing short, it may be promptly and

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directly replied that it was nothing but Saivism pure and simple. The term *Saiva* was coined in post-Vedic times to represent the religious cult which held *Siva* as the one almighty God of the universe. That *Siva* had been a pure Dravidian deity is the view expressed long ago by Mr. P. Wurm.* But we cannot see why to M. Barth it should seem inadmissible, while he himself detects behind it "an old aboriginal worship." And even Mr. A. B. Keith who would like to attribute every thing great and excellent in the civilisation of the Dravidians to the influence of the brahmins, is, in this respect, constrained by rigid facts to admit and describe how the brahmins came to adopt this god of the people into their religious cult; he says:

"The position of Rudra as a popular deity is sufficiently shown by the litanies to him in the Samhitas of Yajurveda, and by the whole outlook of such texts as the Aitareya, Kaushitaki, and Catapatha Brahmanas. When Prajapati committed incest with his daughter, the Aitareya tells us that the gods were wroth, and from their most dread forms produced the god Bhutapati 'lord of creatures' who represents one aspect of Rudra's activities. He pierced Prajapati and thereby acquired his dominion over all cattle. In another passage the wording of a Rigvedic verse is altered to avoid the mention of Rudra's dread name: in yet another he appears at the sacrifice in black raiment and appropriates to himself the sacrificial victim. We need not suppose that in this presentation the Brahmanas

* See M. Barth's *Religions of India*, p. 163, foot-note 2.

were creating a new figure: rather they were adapting to their system, as far as they could, a great god of the people. But the Rudra of this period can hardly be regarded as a mere development of the Rudra of the Rigveda: it seems most probable that with the Vedic Rudra is amalgamated an aboriginal god of vegetation, closely connected with pastoral life. *Vishnu cannot be said to have won any such assured place as Rudra, who is already hailed as the 'great god' par excellence, and already bears the name of Civa 'propitious' which is to be his final appellation.*"* (Italics ours)

Now, this quotation taken from the article of a pro-brahmin Professor of a Scotch University does not beat about the bush in saying what is true of the origin of Rudra worship, but openly declares the fact of its being the hereditary cult of the non-Aryan people, although the professor seems to be somewhat reluctant to call these people the Dravidians.

Still it must be noted here that Mr. Keith likes not to identify the Rudra of the Rig Veda with the Rudra of the Tamils who preferred to call him in subsequent ages by the name of *Siva*. The term *Siva* itself as the name of Rudra is not an unknown thing to the Rig Veda. In the tenth book of this Veda (92, 5), Rudra is called *Siva* in the following verse:

"*yebih Sivah Svavan evayavabhir*"

To this important point which establishes the identity of Rudra with *Siva*, some more facts taken from the Rig

* *The Cambridge History of Ancient India*, pp. 144-145.

Veda itself might be adduced to prove the sameness of the Deity represented by the two terms.

Since God manifests himself in fire Agni is called Rudra in the Rigveda: "*Tvam Agne Rudra*" (ii. 1, 6). In like manner, in the Thiruvachakam and Devara hymns, you will meet with hundreds of verses which either identify Siva with fire, light, the sun and the moon or call these his special forms. For instance, St. Manickavachakar sings: "His (Siva's) blazing form is verily the fire" "(சுடர் இன்ற கோலத் தீயெனமன்னுஞ் சிற்றம்பலவர்." St. Thirujnanasambandhar, St. Appar and St. Sundarar glorify Siva in the same strain as "பொங்கழல் உருவன்," "அவ் எரி ஈசனது உருவருக்கம்," "மெய்யே நின்றெரியும் வினக்கே யொத்த தேவர் பிரான்" respectively.

Modern science has not as yet arrived at any positive conclusion as to what constitutes the essence of light and heat. All that it could affirm about them is that the two manifest themselves as the result of two distinct vibratory motions of etheric waves. As they are imponderable, they are not substances, but are mere energies; so says the Physical science. But what originates these energies? Why should the ether vibrate in two different ways instead of one? Does the ether possess so much intelligence as to produce two distinct vibrations with a set purpose? These are questions on which science maintains complete silence.

But the ancient Saiva religion holds that light itself is God, that light is inseparable from heat though in some substances from which light emanates heat may be latent.

that where both light and heat appear together the fire too becomes visible, and that as no known process of reasoning can prove fire to be a material substance the fire constitutes the manifestation of God brought about by himself out of grace for illuminating both the outer and the inner eyes of the finite souls. Only when you can imagine what the world would be without light and heat to minister unto the wants and existence of the living beings, can you truly and fully comprehend the divine character, nature and significance of fire and its being the manifestation of God. When you go deeper into the matter, you will find it quite meaningless to speak of fire as being of two kinds physical and spiritual, for there are no two kinds of fire but one only which is divine through and through.

Perhaps, this way of looking at fire might be deemed strange, nay, even ludicrous by some, the sensitiveness of whose mental vision has become deadened by long and close familiarity with this divine principle. Still a little serious thought bestowed on this great and vital subject will suffice to bring home to one's mind the fact of God being by his extreme grace easily accessible to all in the form of fire. That is why the fire itself has been called Rudra in the Rig Veda and all the Saiva saints have been led to identify him with the fire and the sun. And the colour of the two things being either red or gold, Rudra too has been said in the Rig Veda to be ruddy (i. 114) and to shine like gold (i. 43). The Saiva saints too describe Siva as having a form glowing red (சிவன் எனும் காமர்

தனக்கேயுடைய செம்மேனி எம்மான்) or shining like gold (பொன்னுர் மேனியன்). The root-meaning of the two terms: Rudra and Siva, in Tamil is 'to be ruddy.' Without mutilating and twisting the shape of these two terms, you can quite easily derive the one from the root *uru* (உரு) and the other from *Siva* (சிவ), both meaning in Tamil 'to be ruddy.' In spite of this patent fact, why should "the suggestion of Pischel that *rud* means to be ruddy, or as Grassmann, suggests, to shine" be regarded by Mr. A. B. Keith, "as too hypothetical to found any theory upon," or why should the connection of the term Siva (சிவ) "with the Tamil Sivan 'redman'" be deemed by him as "neither proved nor plausible,"* I am at a loss to understand. Such assertions of his cannot be accounted for, except on the supposition that he must have been either totally ignorant of Tamil language and literature or that he is, as is evident, strongly prejudiced against the Tamils and their high antique culture. Whatever might be his view about the Tamils and their civilisation, one thing is clear, sure, and certain from what he has said about Rudra that he was not the god of the brahmins, but he was adapted or rather adopted, by them from "a great god of the people." Whether the Rig Vedic Aryans were identical with the brahmins of the later ages or not, concerns us not to inquire in a preface like this, although evidence for their identification could not be obtained from the first nine books of the Rig Veda. All that we can say about the

* *The Religion and Philosophy of the Veda and Upanishads*, Vol. I, pp. 143 & 146.

origin of the Rudra or Siva worship is that the cult was as entirely foreign to the ancient Indo-Aryans as it was to the other Aryan tribes who had spread all throughout Europe.

If, on the contrary, the Rudra cult really belonged in ancient times not to the Tamils but to the Aryas only, then it must have prevailed either among all, or at least, among some classes of the Aryan people who migrated to Europe and settled there in its various centres. For the oldest Aryan gods that are glorified in the earliest hymns of the Rig Veda, are found to have been worshipped among the Greeks, the Romans, the Celts, the Slavs, the Lithuanians, the Teutons, etc., who formed the several sections of the early Aryan tribe. For instance, the god *Dyaus Pitar* was worshipped by the Greeks and the Romans, as well as by the Rig Vedic Aryans. In the same way, the worship of Parjanya, Bhaga, Mitra, Vala, Atri, Varuna, Indra and other Rig Vedic Aryan gods is found widely dispersed among the Latins, the Slavonians, the Lithuanians, the Iranians, the Kosseens, the Phrygians, the Lydians, the Greeks and other Aryan people of Europe. But neither the worship of Rudra, nor his name, note it, could be met with even in a single Aryan clan in the west.* Does not this significant fact conclusively prove that the whole Aryan tribe, before any of its kinsmen entered India, knew nothing about Rudra, knew him not even by name?

* *Rig-Vedic Culture*, by Mr. A. C. Das, pp. 56-96.

Moreover, a clay-tablet discovered in 1907 by Hugo Winckler in Boghazkoi in Asia Minor, contains an inscription which mentions, among others, the names of the Aryan deities such as Indra, Varuna, and the Nasatyas, and the date of which is ascertained to be 1400 B.C.* From this vital archaeological evidence, is it not obvious that, as far back as 1400 B. C., the Aryan people who settled in Asia Minor had been addressing their prayers, just as their kinsmen who migrated to Northern India did, only to Indra, Varuna, and the Nasatyas, but not to Rudra whom they evidently did not know, as, at the time, they were roving about outside of India.

To add one more vital proof to those already mentioned, we may point out how the Aryans who came into India took quite a wrong view of the Sivalinga the emblem of Rudra which they found devoutly worshipped everywhere, and spoke contemptuously of it as "Sisna devah" (Rig Veda, VII,21 and X,99) or the phallus, and reviled its worshippers as Dasas. The fact, that, from time immemorial, the Tamils alone have been the devoted worshippers of Sivalinga, is testified to by the large number of magnificent Siva temples that stand out in all their architectural glory, not only in north India but also in the south where the descendants of the ancient Tamils dwell in such teeming millions at the present day. This too establishes the important fact that the early Aryans besides being quite strangers to the Rudra cult, had been at first even bitter enemies to the Tamils who were the real originators

* *The Cambridge History of India, Vol. I, p. 72.*

and staunch believers of this great and very ancient form of divine worship. But, as days went on, the Aryan immigrants settled down peacefully in India, and began to move closely with the Tamils and learn the high significance and value of the one great god Rudra and came gradually to adopt it and made it as if it had been their own. Eighty years ago Thomas Buckle took notice of this great religious fact and set it down in his brilliant "History of Civilisation" his keen historic insight directing him into its true origin. "The worship of Siva," he says, "is more general than any other; and as to its antiquity, there is reason to believe that it was borrowed by the Brahmins from the original Indians."* This opinion of an able and great historian is corroborated by the statement recently made by another Englishman who was a Professor of Economics in the University of Madras in the very heart of the Tamil country and who made a careful study of its language, religion and caste and expressed his views about them unreservedly and unequivocally in a valuable treatise on Indian culture—I allude to Dr. Gilbert Slater who says on this important religious matter as follows.

"The caste system, the sanctity of the Brahman, the worship of Kali, of Siva and Vishnu, of Parvati the consort, and Subrahmaniam and Ganesa, the sons of Siva, and of Krishna, the last incarnation of Vishnu, these things are not mere alien and unimportant accretions to an Indian culture of Aryan and Vedic origin, they are of

* "*History of Civilisation*" edited by J. M. Robertson and published by Routledge, p. 80.

the innermost essence of Indian culture. *If Kali and Siva and Vishnu are not Vedic deities, and certainly they are not, they can hardly be Aryan, and there seems no other possible alternative than to suppose they are Dravidian.*"* (Italics are mine) And in another place he says: "Vishnu and Siva demand no blood sacrifices."†

Is not this statement of a momentous historical and religious fact made by an Englishman who remained in the capital town of the Tamil country and eagerly studied on the spot the language, the history, the social conditions, and the religious principles of the Tamil people, more notable than the biased assertions made by men like Mr. Keith and Mr. A. C. Das, who, it seems, knew next to nothing of Tamil language and literature, and who, most probably gleaned all their stray informations about them from unreliable sources mainly from untrustworthy accounts of Sanscrit books? Having proved so far the fact of the Rudra-cult being the exclusive property of the Tamilians, I now pass on to consider the point whether the Rudra of the Rig Veda was different from or identical with, the Rudra or Siva of the Tamils' Saiva religion.

With admirable labour and patience Dr. John Muir has brought together in the fourth volume of his very valuable "Original Sanscrit Texts" all the original passages that relate to Rudra or Siva in the Vedas, the Brahmanas, the Upanishads, the Itihisas and the Puranas, that, for a careful study of the Rudra-cult, we cannot

* *The Dravidian Element in Indian Culture*, by Gilbert Slater, M. A., D. Sc., p. 50. † *Ibid*, p. 110.

find a better book than this to recommend to all earnest inquirers of this great subject. To our present purpose the passages collected by him from the Rig Veda alone are of extreme importance. And we cannot sum up all that are told in them of Rudra better than in the words of M. Barth who gives a succinct summary of them as follows:

"From their father, Rudra, they inherit the knowledge of remedies. *This last whose name probably meant the 'reddish one,' before it was interpreted to mean 'The Howler'* is, like his sons, a god of storm. In the Hymns, which certainly do not tell us everything here any more than elsewhere, he has nothing of that gloomy aspect under which we find him become so famous afterwards. Although he is armed with the thunderbolt, and is the author of sudden deaths, he is represented as pre-eminently helpful and beneficent. He is the handsomest of the gods, with his fair locks. Like Soma, the most excellent remedies are at his disposal, and his special office is that of protector of flocks."*

In the same way as he is represented in the Rig Veda (i. 43) as possessing healing remedies, Siva is called 'Vaidyanatha' and two famous temples are dedicated to him one in Northern India at Baidyanath and another in Southern India at Vaidisvarankoil. As regards his names Rudra and Siva being pure Tamil words, I have already quoted verses taken from the hymns of the great Saiva Saints who existed from the third century A. D. to the

* *A. Barth's The Religions of India*, p. 14.

ninth. Just as he is spoken of in the Rig Veda (i. 85) as being most bounteous and beneficent, as possessing a brilliant form and the spirally braided hair, as being the protector of two-footed and four-footed creatures, so is he repeatedly invoked in the ancient classical Tamil poems, especially in the Paripadal and in the hymns of the Saiva Saints, as the most unstinted bestower of boons and the God of the most gracious benevolence, and is invariably called 'Sadaiyan,' that is, one who has the braided hair, and 'Pasupathi' or the Lord of all creatures whether two-footed or four-footed. These epithets which are no less frequently applied to Rudra or Siva both in Sanscrit and Tamil literatures are familiarly known even to the illiterate Tamilians of the present day who repair in millions to the Siva temples which exist in thousands all over India from Benares to Ramesvaram.

And of the many protective deeds that are ascribed to Rudra or Siva in both the literatures, two are distinctly referred to in the Rig Veda: one is the burning of the three cities (vi. 16) and the other the drinking of poison (x. 136). These are the two great and gracious acts which Siva is said to have performed for the sake of protecting the gods from the persecutions wrought against them by the Asuras. Now, in most of the Tamil poems of ancient and later times where Lord Siva is invoked and praised, one cannot but be struck by the frequency with which the two great deeds of his are mentioned by the poets as indicating his unbounded mercy and grace shown to beings

suffering helpless, whoever such beings are, whether Aryan or Tamilian, who seek his help by devotion and penance.

Do not these traits in the portrayal of Rudra in the Rig Veda and of Siva in the ancient and later poems in Tamil clearly indicate the identity of the Rudra of the former Aryan work with the Siva of both the ancient and later works in Tamil? To these facts one more might be added as showing in a still clearer light the oneness of the apparently two gods,

In the quiescent and meditative mood in which he sat to instruct the four sages the method of merging the individual self-consciousness in the universal consciousness of God, Rudra is represented in the Rig Veda (x. 136) as the Muni or the silent being who wears on his head long, and beautiful braided locks, just like the Siva yogis, seen all over India from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin, do even at the present day. In this attitude Siva is known by the name of Dakshinamoorthi the great yogi and you will find the image of Dakshinamoorthi set up in every Siva temple all over India. The god of yoga is not any of the Aryan deities such as Indra, Mitra, and Varuna, but is Isvara as has been emphasized by Patanjali in his 'Yoga Sutras.' M. Barth rightly observes: "He (Siva) is also *par excellence* the god of asceticism and austerities. He is the chief of the yogins."* The term 'Isvara' applied by Patanjali to Rudra, has already appeared in a slightly altered form in the Rig Veda (ii. 33) as the name of Lord Rudra. There the word occurs as 'Isana,'

* " *The Religions of India*, p. 165.

and in the later Vedas as 'Isa' and 'Isvara.' For a detailed treatment of this point and the Tamilian origin of yoga, the reader is referred to my article "Who the Originators of yoga?"

With the mixture of the Aryan priests and the Tamilian yogis, the Brahmanic literature too came to be mixed with the Ascetic poetry of the Tamils. Prof. M. Winternitz in the course of his critical studies of Sanscrit literature came to be struck so much by this marked difference and admixture of the two streams of thought that he greatly interested himself in making their distinctive character clear in one of his learned and instructive lectures collectively called "Some problems of Indian Literature." The following extracts from the lecture on "Ascetic Literature in Ancient India" are given as proving my conclusion independently arrived at by a careful study of both Sanscrit and Tamil literature. Prof. Winternitz observes:

"There was in ancient India an ascetic literature different in its character and in its teaching entirely from the Brahmanic literature."

"And it will be found that the ideas and ideals of this ascetic poetry are originally connected with Samkhya and Yoga as well as with Buddhism and Jainism while whenever they appear mixed up with orthodox Brahmanism in Brahmanical literature they appear as something foreign."

"The ethics of the legendary poetry and still more of the Brahmanical gnomic poetry is entirely a priestly code of morals. It requires knowledge of the Veda, sacrifice, and honouring of the Brahmans, who are even placed

above the gods. It strictly adheres to the system of castes. By 'charity' these Brahmanical legends and maxims invariably mean liberality towards the Brahmanas, ample gifts to the priests. Self-sacrifice means absolute devotion towards the priests. That king is praised and glorified who presents thousands of cows to the Brahmanas, that king is actually raised into heaven, who is entirely obedient to the priest and humbles himself completely before the Brahmana."

"Quite different is the ethical ideal of the ascetic poetry. Its legends are not based on the mythology of the Veda, but rather on folk-lore of popular tales and ballads. The heroes of this legendary poetry are not the half-divine Rishis, but the World-renouncing yogins and ascetics."

"This ascetic morality culminates in Ahimsa, abstaining from hurting any being, and in Maitri, love of all that lives. It demands complete renunciation of this world, and it disregards caste. Not priests are the poets of these legends and maxims and the teachers of this morality, but sages of all castes and ranks."

"This ascetic morality however is only part of the whole ascetic view of life which is based on the belief in transmigration and *karman*."

Here, for fear of tiring the patience of the reader I stop giving further extracts from the very interesting lecture of Prof. Winternitz. While admiring the penetration of mind which led Mr. Winternitz to detect the presence of an ascetic poetry in the ancient Sanscrit literature and discriminate it from the brahminic poetry which

was lying side by side with it, we regret he has not shown who the originators of the ascetic poetry were, if, as he stressed the point, the brahmins could not have been so. If Mr. Winternitz had possessed the slightest acquaintance with some of the ancient Tamil classics such as the *Thirukkural* and the *Purananooru* which were produced at the beginning and long before the beginning of the Christian era, he might have easily discovered that it was the Tamil Saints and Sages who had been the real founders of the ascetic poetry. In proof of what I have said about the origin of the ascetic poetry, let me quote here the English translation of a verse in the *Purananooru* collection, which I inserted in my English work on "The Ancient and Modern Tamil Poets" and which contains the gist of the ascetic poetry.

"All places are ours, all are our kith and kin
 Good and evil come, not caused by others;
 Pain and relief are brought likewise, not by others;
 Dying is not new; nor living gave us joy;
 Misery we hated not. As in the flood,
 Caused by clouds that poured in torrents
 On a mountain top with lightning flash,
 A raft goes in the direction of the stream,
 So the swarm of lives move onward
 In the way of destiny. This we have discerned
 From the teachings of sages strong in wisdom.
 So we admire not the great; nor scoff at the churl."

This Tamil verse was composed by the poet Kanian Poongundran who existed most probably in the pre-

Buddhistic. The poets whose poems form the collection of *Purananooru* existed from 3000 B. C. to the first century A. D. But our poet Poongundran and some others of his time and preceding his time do not seem to have lived at the time when either the Aryan or the Buddhist influence had come into operation in Southern India. It was Asoka who first sent Buddhist missionaries to the south to preach the moral teachings of the Buddha; but the Tamil people had already been in possession of such comprehensive moral and religious principles as not only included within their range the moral maxims of Buddhism but even went beyond them in inculcating the worship of one Almighty God of the universe and the principle of non-killing and abstinence from flesh-eating to its very highest limit. In the poems of Poongundran and some others of his type are found the very pith and marrow of the great ethical and religious teachings of the ancient Tamil saints and sages the special features of which cannot be traced to any Aryan or Buddhist ethical codes and religious texts. The poet Poongundran, therefore, seems to my mind to belong to a period when neither the Aryan nor the Buddhist mode of thought came to exercise any influence on the minds of the Tamil thinkers in the south.

Further I have shown elsewhere,* that the Buddhist ethical religion itself was a development of one important phase of the Tamilian faith, that is, of the religion of love and mercy—love and mercy which must be shown not only

* Refer to my Tamil work on "The Life and Times of St. Manickavachakar."

to human beings but also to the very lowest of the animal kingdom. In proof of this let me quote a few verses from the Sacred Kural of St. Thiruvalluvar who lived in the latter half of the first century B. C.

"All letters have A as their first cause,
So also does the whole world owns but one
God as its first cause"

"Those who have gained the feet of Lord
will cross the ocean of births,
While others cannot cross it in any wise."

"The first of virtuous deeds is not to kill,
The next to it is not to lie."

"Instead of offering a thousand sacrifices
with clarified butter,

It is good not to kill a living being
and eat the flesh thereof."

"If there be love and charity in one's household,
That forms the virtue and fruit of it."

"All living beings are equal from the very nature
of their birth,

While distinction springs from variety of callings."

"Those who renounce all attain to heaven;

Others get into the snare lured by mistaken mind."

While poems of this ascetic character abound in the old classical Tamil literature, very scarcely do we meet in it with those which mention with approval any of the brahmanic doctrines. The social, moral, and religious principles which the ancient Tamil poems inculcate are so comprehensive in their character, and so broad in their outlook

that they embrace within their fold all the true and high principles that are common to all people irrespective of caste, creed and country.

And it must be borne in mind that all the great teachings, enshrined in the ascetic poetry written either in Sanscrit or in Tamil centre round the figure of the great Yogi and almighty God of the world Lord Rudra or Siva.

More still the significant fact must be impressed on your mind that the Lord Rudra as depicted in a few hymns of the Rig Veda is not in any way different from, but is quite identical with, the Lord Siva of both the ancient and modern forms of Saiva religion. And the very paucity of the hymns—for there are only five entire hymns, addressed to Rudra in the whole of the Rig Veda which contains 1017 hymns in all of which 250 are devoted to the praise of Indra, itself testifies to the Tamilian origin of the Rudra-cult. And it is only in the hymns to Indra that the Aryas pray as much for their being discriminated from their foes the non-Aryas whom they call the Dasas or Dasyus as for the wholesale destruction of the latter; whereas in the hymns addressed to Rudra no such bitter racial hatred nor any Aryan malignity make their detestable appearance. Further, it is only in the hymns to Indra that the horrible sacrifices attended with the cruel and inhuman slaughter of animals and the drinking revelry of the Aryas are referred to, whereas in the hymns to Rudra neither such bloody sacrifices nor drinking bouts are even remotely alluded to. Do not these two different types of hymns make it quite clear that Indra was

the favourite god of the Aryas, while Rudra was the special god of the Tamils? As pointed out by Dr. Slater, Siva makes no demands for any kind of bloody sacrifices, like Indra and other Aryan deities do.

Now, in corroboration of what has been said so far, evidence of still greater and more permanent value has forthcome from the recent excavations carried on at Harappa and Mohenjo-daro in the Punjab, where the once highly civilized states of the Tamilians existed before the advent of the Aryan nomads, but which are now unearthed only in a ruined condition. Among the objects that have been discovered, there is a stone image, the posture and the peculiar half-shut eyes of which have been thought by one authority to represent the attitude of the *yogi* in contemplation.* Similarly are discovered some stone and pottery seal-amulets on which was found stamped "a nude deity, with horns and three faces, seated on a stool with his heels pressed closely together in what is, evidently, a religious attitude."† With respect to this figure Dr. Mackay says: "Sir John Marshall has identified this figure as the Indian god Shiva, in his aspect of Pasupathi, or Lord of Beasts. The fact that the god is shown on the seal-amulet with three faces, and perhaps even a fourth on the side turned away, gives strong support to Sir John's theory, for *Shiva was, and is, pictured in India with as many as five faces. It has always been suspected that he was one of the oldest Indian gods, and that his worship dated*

* See *The Indus Civilization* by Dr. Ernest Mackay, p. 66.

† *Ibid*, p. 70.

from the prehistoric period, a supposition which is justified by this interpretation of the figure on this seal-amulet."*

And as regards the pre-historic antiquity of the Saiva religion Sir John Marshall himself has written:

"Among the many revelations that Mohenjo-daro and Harappa have had in store for us, none perhaps is more remarkable than this discovery that *Saivism has a history going back to the Chalco-lithic age or perhaps even further still and that it thus takes its place as the most ancient living faith in the world.*"†

From this impartial utterance of an eminent archaeologist the fact that Saivism had been the religion of the pre-Aryan Tamils who occupied the whole of India 5000 years ago must become quite clear and well established.

Now, the following treatise is based on the contents of the paper read as the presidential address in the annual gathering of "The Madras Presidency College Philosophical Association" which took place on the 15th of November, 1922. And again at the request of the Secretary of "The Universal Religious Conference," it was read at its third day session on the 31st of March, 1923. It was but the earnest desire of the organisers of both the conventions to familiarize themselves and the educated public at large with the principles of the Saiva Siddhanta, the great South

* *Ibid*, p. 70, 71.

† *Mohenjo-daro and the Indus Civilization*, Vol. 1.

Indian system of thought, in a succinct yet clear form, that occasioned the writing of this short treatise.

A little after the time that called it forth, some of the points briefly touched in that paper seemed to me to require a somewhat enlarged treatment for a clear comprehension of this unique but neglected system of Tamilian philosophy and this has now been attempted and done to a reasonable extent in the following expansion of the above work.

Still, I cannot pretend to have given in it a full exposition of all the fundamental principles of the Saiva Siddhanta. To do so would require a large volume in itself. And for embodying the results of my critical and comparative study of almost all the systems of philosophy both eastern and western, carried on in relation to the Saiva Siddhanta, I have a great mind to write a book of much more useful and comprehensive kind; but I do not know whether I would be spared by Providence to undertake the task and be enabled by it to accomplish the great work which I have ever in my view.

Still, within its limited scope, it is my belief, the present work has done its best not only to give a clear exposition of some of the fundamental and most important principles of the Saiva Siddhanta, but to show also the close resemblance they bear to modern European and American thought as developed by John Stuart Mill, James Martineau, William James, F. C. S. Schiller, James Ward, Bergson, Eucken, Henry Drummond, James Sully and others.

But many who read the history of both the ancient and modern philosophical systems of the east and the west, are little acquainted with the Saiva Siddhanta and they even think that the Vedanta as interpreted by San-karacharya is the only philosophy which has reached the high watermark of the Indian, or rather, Hindu thought. Unfortunately this misunderstanding is due not a little to the stark ignorance in which are kept the oriental scholars in respect of the Saiva Siddhanta and Tamil literature. The fact must be borne in mind that in Tamil alone exist systematic and authoritative works on the Saiva Siddhanta; whereas in Sanscrit either in the Vedic or in the post-Vedic period not even a single systematic work on this philosophy could be met with, even though its principal tenets are found scattered with much that is rubbish, in the Upanishads and in the Samkhya, the Yoga, the Nyaya, the Vaisesika and the Vedanta works.

For this grievous ignorance of Tamil literature and the Saiva Siddhanta, it is the early contact of the western scholars with the brahmins that is responsible; for the brahmins almost without an exception detest the Tamil people, their language, religion and philosophy and do not like to show the value of the knowledge of Tamil and Tamilian thought to a mighty foreigner, but take every precaution to represent with all their eagerness Sanscrit to be the only divine language treasuring the genuine thoughts of the Saints and Sages of India who pondered over the ultimate problems of life and life's existence and arrived at their correct solutions.

The more the influence of the brahmins who are usually of a pushing nature, increased with the Europeans, the more the study of Sanscrit and Sanscrit literature rose into prominence, and the more the study of Tamil and pure Tamil classics came to be thrown into oblivion. And as the pluralistic philosophy of the Tamils stands diametrically opposed to the pantheistic system of the brahmins, in the same way as the strictly monotheistic religion of the Tamils shows itself to be in marked contrast with the latter's polytheistic creed, the aversion of the brhmins for the Tamils grew more and more intense in proportion to the degree in which the excellence of the Tamilian thought came to be secretly recognized by the brahmins. So they totally denied, just as they do even at this scientific age, that there was anything valuable to know outside the pale of Sanscrit. Consequently the knowledge of Tamil and Tamil classics had to lie concealed, or rather unrecognized, for centuries, even from the searching eye of the European intellect, until a few learned and very painstaking Christian missionaries such as Dr. Caldwell and Dr. G. U. Pope ventured to turn their serious attention to Tamil classics and devote their whole life-time to a deep study and correct representation of their nature and contents. In spite of all their labours, the Tamilian thought cannot be said to have received still the attention it deserves from the European and American thinkers.

It is my humble ambition to present to the English knowing people the main principles of the Saiva Siddhanta in as succinct a form as possible, that has prompted

me to attempt the writing of this short treatise in English. Those who possess no knowledge of this philosophy and its original source may marvel at its remarkable resemblance to modern thought and may even doubt whether what I have treated here really belongs to the Saiva Siddhanta. To such I would recommend the study of the fine and faithful English translation of the *Thiruvāṛṇṇipāyan*, a brief but authoritative work in Tamil on this system of philosophy, inserted by Dr G. U. Pope in the introduction to his scholarly English rendering of the *Thiruvachakam*, the sacred lyrical poem of St. Manickavachakar.

In concluding this preface, I beg to acknowledge my deep indebtedness to Dr. F. C. S. Schiller of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, who, at my request, took trouble, in the midst of his College work and arduous philosophic labours, with his usual kindness to authors, to go through this treatise in manuscript and not only made in it many valuable suggestions and corrections but also furnished a sympathetic note to this unpretentious work on the Saiva Siddhanta.

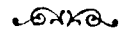
After Dr. Schiller returned the manuscript, I set myself to the task of enlarging certain points here and there and getting the prepared portions printed in my Press.

But this work I could not carry on continuously, since it was interrupted every now and then by my incessant labour in Tamil. Moreover, I consider my Tamil work to be more important than the work I intend to do

in English. For my Tamil brethren are mostly illiterate and even the very few who are literate are unenlightened and unprogressive socially, morally, intellectually and religiously. Therefore I had to apply myself most strenuously for more than forty years to the hard labour of bringing enlightenment to my countrymen in almost all the most useful and important branches of knowledge by lectures and by the production of Tamil works which have amounted to more than forty up till now. It is this continuous lecturing and writing work in Tamil that has delayed the publication of this short English treatise for nearly eighteen years. I pay my humble homage to the sacred feet of the almighty God, for having enabled me to bring this out after so long a period of time.

Pallavaram, }
29th April, 1940)

Vedachalam.



mains supreme, and that the others are subordinate. In this latter case God is not necessarily responsible for the existence of evil; he would only be responsible if it were not finally overcome. But on the monistic or pantheistic view, evil, everything else, must have its foundation in God; and the difficulty is to see how this can possibly be the case if God be absolutely good. This difficulty faces us in every form of philosophy in which the world appears as one flawless unit of fact. Such a unit is an *Individual*, and in it the worst parts must be as essential as the best, must be as necessary to make the individual what he is; since if any part whatever in an individual were to vanish or alter, it would no longer be *that* individual at all. The philosophy of absolute idealism, so vigorously represented both in Scotland and America to-day, has to struggle with this difficulty, quite as much as scholastic theism struggled in its time; and although it be premature to say that there is no speculative issue whatever from the puzzle, it is perfectly fair to say that there is no clear or easy issue, and that the only *obvious* escape from paradox here is to cut loose from the monistic assumption altogether, and to allow the world to have existed from its origin in pluralistic form, as an aggregate or collection of higher and lower things and principles, rather than an absolutely unitary fact. For then evil would not need to be essential; it might be and may always have been, and independent portion that had no rational or absolute right to live with the rest, and which we might conceivably hope to get rid of at last." (*The Varieties pp. 131, 132.*)

As a nugget of pure gold contains nothing but particles of pure gold, so do these memorable words of Prof. William James contain only solid and substantial thoughts which furnish the true key to the solution of the most intricate and mysterious problems of life and life's existence on this material plane. How this profound thinker came to apply the same principles of criticism to the momentous and ultimate questions of Philosophy and Religion as had been done by our St. Meikandan some six centuries ago, is a great wonder to me. I need hardly say that all those who have an earnest desire to acquire a correct knowledge of human life and its destiny, would be greatly profited by making a comparative study of both Meikandan's and William James's works.

ENGLISH WORK
BY
SWAMI VEDACHALAM
PALLAVARAM

Ancient and Modern Tamil Poets

This work makes a comparative study of the Tamilian and Aryan culture and shows the superiority of the former to the latter.

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Comparison of the cultural stages attained by the English, the Tamils, the Aryans, the Telugus, the Malayalees and the Canarese—Some of the ancient and matchless Tamil works—High antiquity of the Tamilian Civilisation and Prof. Max Muller and Prof. Rapson on it—Dr. Slater on the advanced civilisation of the Dravidians—Mr. Abinas chandra Das while admitting the high antiquity of the Dravidian civilisation attempts without proof to attribute it to Aryan influence—Dr. H. R. Hall and Ragozin on the pre-Aryan civilisation of the Dravidians—The Panis referred to in the Rig Veda were the Tamil merchants—The Tamil merchants carried on trade with the west in 4000 B. C.—The Aryans and the Babylonians borrowed the Tamil word 'Mana.'—The Tamils discovered cultivation—The Sumerians, the Chaldaeans, the Phoenicians were all Tamils—Agriculture brought in its wake all the elements of civilisation, trade, schools, arts, temples, philosophy, religion, etc.—Tamil the only ancient language that still lives—Pure Tamil and Tamil poets in olden times: The Sacred Kural of St. Thiruvalluvar.