

DR. A. Radhakrishnan

TIRUJÑĀNA SAMBANDHAR

Philosophy and Religion



P.S. Somasundaram

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To

the memory of my revered teacher
Dr. T. P. MEENAKSHISUNDARAN

AN INTRODUCTION

The Tamil Śaiva Siddhānta tradition, distinctively, acknowledges the superiority of saintly over theoretic life acclaiming child-saints and saint-seers in the roles of Founder of faiths, Initiator of a lineage of preceptors and Inaugurator of sacred institutions. The saint combining true insight into the nature of what is with love for humanity is alone the exemplar of sanctity and its archetype can be none less than God Himself.

The depiction of the motif of God as the originator of teaching traditions is a commonplace of Hindu mythology, folklore and iconography. One such image, and of special relevance for the Śaiva Hindu tradition, is of the 'southern faced form'. Tamil devotional writings are replete with references to 'boy under the banyan tree' instructing older men well-versed in the lore of the Veda into its mystery ('*maṛai*') "showing by His sheer presence as fullness beyond the reach of the word, beyond all the Vedas, the true nature of what is as it is, and saying it through the eloquent mode of non-saying." (*Tiruvilaiyāṭal Purāṇam*, 13). Another such image is of the ever youthful God. Murugan, the Tamil God *par excellence*, whose mode of instruction is through a 'gesture' of silence, with 'one arm bent chestwise and another showing with the garland' (*Tirumurukāṟṟuppaṭai*, lines 112, 113). He is also the 'son' as iconography depicts it, whom God the Father deigns to have as the preceptor instructing into his ears the mystic meaning of *prāṇava* — the Alpha and the Omega of the Veda, of which even the God of Creation was unaware.

The very posture of teaching, indeed, is indicative of knowing what is true on the one hand and of love and a concern that knows no condition save only that of a readiness to receive. It is the component of love that motivates sharing, transmission or communication be it through words spoken and/or songs sung

musically or even through a music of silence. The 'teacher' always incarnates an aspect of God Himself. His bi-modality represented in lyrics and Purāṇic lore as the eternal feminine, the creative logos by which all created order is as it is, and is also destined for the goal of 'de-creation' at the appropriate time through a due ripening of love and knowledge. (The true Guru, says Abhinavagupta, is Śakti.)

2.1. The word saint or saintly (derived from the Latin *sanctus* representing the Greek *hagios* and the Hebrew *gadosh*) specially when applied as adjective to persons and, by transference, to their sayings suggests — as commentators interpreting the Tamil expression 'tiru' as importing loveliness and as desirable for the discernful demonstrate, the union of the two elements essential to man's highest end, viz., love and understanding. The sage, saint and musical poet whose name is a favourite household term as well as, perhaps, the dearest to the Śaiva Siddhānta tradition is known by a title, interpretively rendered 'the saint who became one through association with sacred Gnosis'. *Nāṇacampanthar* is a proper and a descriptive name, the adjectival equivalent of the saintly or sacred applied alike to gnosis and to the person and the name was acquired significantly after the saint was "breast-fed" into wisdom or gnosis by Mother divine.

The picturesque description of the event of 'breast-feeding' given by the Hagiologist deserves attention: "Mother divine, (none other than a representation of the active mode by which Divinity makes itself infinitely accessible to the needy), moved by the cry of the child, feeds him with the milk from her breast 'blending it with Gnosis in a bowl of gold'." Two ideas seem suggested by this unique fusion of symbolism and literal meaning. The originating source of saving knowledge remains intrinsically transcendent even in the very act of descending to the level of the recipient: There is no literal breast-feeding except obliquely through, as it were, a golden feeding bottle. (The virgin Mother is of breasts unsuckled by the creature.) Secondly, the description of the 'sweet ambrosia' of milk as blended with gnosis suggests that wisdom whether it be as pertaining to learning or of the kind that transcends all learning and is realised immediately as non-dual Awareness, originates from and in fact partakes of the very being of Mother divine as eyes partake of the rays of the sun.

2.1.1. The description given of the coming to be of the state of gnosis on the part of the blessed child-saint runs thus:

Godly wisdom that generates the sanctity of a spontaneous contemplation of the feet of God (symbolic of His knowledge and will), a wisdom whose rise on the side marks a total eradication of birth (and mortality), a wisdom that is peerless as coincident with all learned art and a wisdom about Truth itself so rare of comprehension all this did Campanthar, the prince of the 'austerity' (of devotion) did then attain.

Exegetes debate whether the enumeration here is of the different dimensions of one self-identical gnosis or whether the reference is to two kinds of gnosis complementary and yet distinct as illumination of mind through texts and study is distinct from intuitive realisation. The latter element which serves to distinguish a saint from the merely wise, nevertheless comes with a claim also to encompass learned wisdom in such wise as the mind is not able to unravel. The point is in whichever way taken a three year old child becomes the saint through the blessing of sacred gnosis and his singing, of the rapturous songs of Tēvāram, 'litanies of prayer' in praise of God, then and during the short period of the remaining thirteen years of his earthly life, bespeaking musical inspiration, power of invention, artistic taste, poetical fervour as well as a manifest richness of realisation fully justify his description by the name of 'one whose utterances are of a mouth never without the drip of milk, never quite weaned from breast-milk'.

2.1.2. Campanthar's poetical effusions, not strictly composed in the manner of human literary compositions, have all the authority and the sanctity of the Vedic revelation, in his own estimation as well as in that of the tradition. "In my speaking, His speech hath verily come to expression" is the recurrent refrain of one of his decades (*Tiru Ilambaiyamkōṭṭū*). God's language, celebrated by the generality of Hindu theological thinking as the 'anonymous' source of gnosis, makes itself heard typically in and, indeed, as human language. Campanthar's hymns are the occasions of miracles literally as well as in the metaphorical sense. They are illustrative of the mystical significance of true prayer: It is a mode of experience in which God is experienced, not as a psychic phenomenon (the customary sense of religious experience) but as a response in which the word comes to expression.

"When one is rid of a sense of I 'do' and also thereby of the very sense of I, then and only then the deed thus disowned becomes His deed. He verily discloses himself thereby" comments a later text apparently explaining the meaning of miracles like bringing the dead back to life, etc., attributed to Campanthar and others. The disciple of the author of the aforementioned text elucidates it more relevantly by reference to what is at stake here, viz., the mode or instrumentality of speaking, which brings to pass such miraculous occurrences: They are quite unlike 'our modes', says he with cryptness (*Tirukkalīṟuppadīyār*, 12). The intentionality and, therefore, also the speaking must become in response, 'oned', so that it can be said that it is I and yet not I but He that really acts or speaks. The response or reception is also, preeminently, part of 'revelation'.

2. 1. 3. There is no systematic expression in Śaiva Siddhānta of acknowledging a twofold scriptural tradition and of two religious languages, Sanskrit and Tamil as in Śrīvaiṣṇavism. But one may say that there is a more unequivocal according of precedence as intrinsically more urgent to personal revelation through direct experience, and consequently therefore, also to Tamil, as the medium of sacredness, the locution in Tamil itself *per se* coming to be viewed as the revealed word. Śaiva Siddhānta in the form in which it is formulated in the *Civañāṇapōtham* of Meykaṇḍār and his spiritual lineage is chiefly inspired by this type of revelation. It is in the light of the evidence of the Tēvāram genre of revelation, the Tamil Śaiva Siddhānta tradition seeks to coordinate Veda itself, of the Veda and the Āgama and of the divergent accounts of the knowledge sections of the Āgamas themselves.

Recognition of this type of revelation, therefore, is the presupposition in the Śaiva Siddhāntin's estimation, underlying the Vedas and the Śaivāgamas. The latter are impersonal and timeless embodiments of intuitions but avowedly as mediated by word. But personal revelation is intuitive experience 'blended synthetically with word', as it describes itself. *Śruti* is what is heard but *anubhava* is direct insight. The latter is a kind of seeing. The Veda and the Āgama are knowledge but at one remove. Strictly, they are not knowledge but the method of knowledge. They initiate knowledge but personal revelation is knowledge itself. *sivasya samavelā yā taktir jñānātmikā amalā, saiva jñānam iti proktam*

śābdam tadanumāpakam (*Paṇḍikā Āgama*, 1,7). Personal revelation as historically understood *à la* Campanthar and other saints, is a demonstration that bestowal of revelation is received only in the context of *mokṣa* and also, conversely, that *mokṣa* occurs only within the context of a correlation of revelation. The dawn of saving knowledge which alone is the means for *mokṣa* (*'jñānān muktiḥ'*) is itself in principle co-incident with the advent of *mokṣa*. The words of Campanthar, otherwise, cannot be viewed as revelatory.

2.1.4. It is evident that in the instance of Campanthar we are dealing with a child endowed with musical, interpretative and creative gifts and, more, with all learning worldly and spiritual, grammar, prosody, and poetics across the board of Tamil and Sanskrit alike, and with the entire gamut of sacred literature in these languages. And these endowments show themselves in so finished a manner so early in life — in fact almost in infancy and before even learning to read or write, makes the case all the more exceptional. Western scholarship studies the phenomena of infant prodigies subjecting them to investigation and comparing the different personalities, e.g., of Mozart, Haydn, Schubert, Chopin and others, having regard to their capacities, their development, etc., and with the object of assessing the importance of many events in the complicated course of development of the artist. But seldom does it confront a similar case in the sphere of spiritual achievement, of an infant prodigy exemplifying a life of spirit. Even if Campanthar's 'compositions' are taken as mere works of art — some of his 'decades', paradoxically, those contextual to the miracles of recalling back to life the deceased or the dead (according to the Hagiologist's account) are also apparently love poems, pure and simple; like in the case of the *Tirukkōvaiyār*, they are, one cannot fail to note, tender, powerful, placid, passionate and joyful. This alone can distinguish him from most 'infant prodigies' for these in their first creative phase at any rate are, as it has been observed, almost always monotonous in their portrayal of emotion lacking in richness and variety.

Moreover, the fact that musical talent should appear at such an early age prompts scholars to surmise that musical invention stands in less close relation to experience and practice than creative activity in the other arts, and above all in science. Music is nourished from within and external experience lends very little to

it, for neither its form nor its substance stands in any close relation to the sensual world or the objects of sensual experience. This independence explains why creative musical talent is not in close connection with the other mental faculties. It is like in the case of a genius for mathematics who feeds upon an entirely independent and peculiar source. Anyone who is acquainted with Campanthar's poems even as mere musical compositions, will need no proof of the manner in which he differs from this estimation of infant prodigies. The talent for composition shows itself in infancy along with the power of interpretation from the very inception of the poet's career of singing. Creative abilities, utterances of creative gift in relation to the seen world and the so-called unseen one, clothing them alike in vividest sensuous imagery, are *co-incidentally* manifest along with artistically technical capabilities which are thought to have closest relation to emotional and instinctive life and less related to intellectual development in the proper sense. From the point of view of evolutionary thinking, it surely must be looked upon as an exception, where in the case of a child we see musical thoughts already taking form and becoming musical units of high order, at a time when his creative powers ought still to be subservient to his bodily and mental evolution.

For the self-interpretation of the tradition itself which views it as a 'religious fact' — all revelations are religious facts for the religions concerned, this presents no serious problem. There is such a thing as the maturity or aging of the souls of men which does not have to synchronise with the maturity in terms of chronological age in any one life-span. Old head on young shoulders and grey-haired old men who are irresponsible and impetuous are commonplace phenomena. The gift of understanding without learning, of being blessed while still in pre-natal state are conceived not simply as possibilities but as realities of religious life. "Even when I had not been formed visibly in the womb He entered my frame and stayed in heart, shaped my ideation and entered my flesh making my soul His own with mercy," sings Māṇikka-vācakar.

2.2. About Campanthar himself it will not suffice to refer to the doctrine of re-incarnation and the fact that the doctrine, if nothing else, at least in mythic terms, represents, viz., the inde-

pendent variability of the aging of soul and the aging of the body counted in years. For the problem to be explained in his case is how he could come by wisdom in his very infancy with no preparation or previous history leading to it. Various are the 'theological' explanations that are given, all admittedly of a non-rational nature, though intelligible as expressions of a numinous sense and explaining numinous occurrences.

The view that comes closest to the perspective of faith in its characteristic Śaiva Hindu form is the one which looks upon the saintly not simply as the image of ideal life but as 'supernatural'. Campanthar was 'chosen' before he was born. (The author of a recently published translation of the *Periyapurāṇam* propounds the thesis cojently taking his cue from Sri Ramakrishna's admission of the category of men belonging to *Īśvara Koṭi* coming into the midst of the humans.) Already a perfected soul, Campanthar was made to descend into the condition of human natality to sanctify the human condition itself steering it to its destined goal. "You made me, me who never would taste the waters of Lethe, through a ploy of obfuscation ('*maiyaḷ seytu*') to take birth on this earth," thus sings the saint himself in a mood of hesitantly accepting his being chosen for the mission.

A more exuberant interpretation is that Campanthar was the Tamil God Murugan himself, his 'incarnation', as it were, sent in response to a prayer for a 'son' of Murugan's stature of wisdom and charisma to provide the much needed face-lift for the Vedic way of life. The latter (not the same as Vedic orthodoxy) was valued against an imminent threat of erosion, as the condition which alone could render possible and rationalise a cult of devotion to God and the Godly. The event of 'breast-feeding' of Campanthar by Mother divine finds its echo in the account of the birth of Murugan as narrated in the *Kanda Purāṇam* and likewise Campanthar's visit of the various shrines of South India and recitals of improvisations for the benefit of the hearing of God the Father present in the sanctum recalls Murugan's posture of 'instructing the Father' to which reference was made. (This view was as old as the medieval Tamil poets Oṭṭakkūttar and St. Aruṇagiri, and had its vigorous defendants in the beginning of this century like Alalasundaram Pillai, Somasundaranayakar and Chokkalingam Chettiar.)

At the other end of the spectrum stands the conservative view which contemplates the phenomenon of Campanthar as involving no special election from above, but is only a case of spiritual ascent open as a cumulative result of performance in many births of 'austerity'. By this term is meant not austere acts performed for securing some goals but acts consecrated unequivocally to the service of God as ends in themselves. Śiva-dharma though performed with no thought of 'fruits', is, nevertheless, fruitful of the imperishable result of 'gnosis' (*Civaññāṇapōtham* 8.1. In the Commentary on this reference, the great Civaññāṇayogin refers to the case of Campanthar). His advent into gnosis apparently without preparations of a pursuit of *caryā*, etc., should lead one to the presumption that Campanthar was already a 'mature' (not perfected) soul already accomplished in the paths of *caryā*, etc., and was ripe for gnosis as he was born.

Campanthar's opening verse includes the line:

He ('ivan', literally, he that is close by) is our mighty lord, who hath made the famous shrine of Brahmāpuram his dwelling, who bestowed grace in response to worship and prayer rendered in former days.

One can take the saint as possibly referring to his past lives even though the lines do not spell out who it was that rendered worship and prayer in former days, either the saint or Brahmā the creator God, in answer to whose supplication (according to the *Sthala Purāṇa* account) God chose to make Brahmāpuram His abode. The expression 'bestowed grace', theologically speaking, could only mean 'unveiling', i.e., gnosis, and therefore, in all likelihood, autobiographical referring to the event of breast-feeding.

All these explanations appear plausible through support from the words of the saint himself. The issue that they all grapple with seems to be whether a saint is born or made. The more muted account which looks for a doctrinal warrant for its justification concludes that a saint is definitionally 'made' essentially through the 'descent' of divine grace whether in continuation of the happenings in the even tenor of one's life, in one's present birth or in apparent discontinuity with it. Grace's Descent, admittedly, is discontinuous, theologically speaking, with its

antecedents, though in a manner of speaking, it is described as the terminus or arrival point of a spiritual journey. The other explanations look for a more adequate account, even if the letter of the doctrine, strictly fails to provide a warrant for the a-typical nature of the saint under consideration. What is a-typical about Campanthar is that his saintly utterances are not merely a species of sacred literature but normative as revelation. It is on the basis of its acknowledgement that the tradition becomes formed and later, re-creates the doctrine from its Śaivāgma foundations into an existentially oriented Śaiva Siddhānta.

3. The dating of Campanthar rests on the contemporaneity of Mahendra Varma Pallava of the early seventh century A. D., and Tirunāvukkarasar, the other Śaiva saint whose interactions with both the Pallava king and Campanthar are integral to the episodes narrated by Sēkkiḷār (11th century A. D.) in his hagiological account of the sixtythree Śaiva saints. The historical findings of the late Professor Sundaram Pillai stand relatively unassailed as veritable milestones in the history of Tamil literature (the author's title of his essay). On independent grounds also one can say the Tēvāram hymns must have been quite in vogue several centuries before the period of the Chola king Parāntaka of the early tenth century, who made endowments for Tēvāram recitation in temples. Sundaram Pillai himself rests his case on Śaṅkara's reference to *Drāviḍasiṣu* in his *Saundarya Laharī* and takes Śaṅkara's date, not implausibly, as the late 7th century.

Campanthar's poems are compiled in three books of the Śaiva canonical writings, '*Tirumuṟai*', which are twelve in number. Campanthar's 'history' fills the second section of the Great Legendary Hagiology (*Periyapurāṇam*), the twelfth Book, representing in terms of finality and all-encompassing character, like the Upaniṣads in relation to the Veda, the 'end' of the Śaiva canon. Campanthar's account is given in 1256 quatrains or 5000 lines of exquisite poetry often woven with the very utterances of the saint under study. Sēkkiḷār exegetes, not infrequently, their meaning with rare insight thus providing guidelines of interpretation of and for a continuous tradition. In the total collection of Tēvāram hymns 'composed' by the three Apostle saints (*mūvar*) of the tradition, 384 'decades' (*paṭikam*) are ascribed to

Campanthar consisting of eleven quatrains each (4158 verses in all), the eleventh 'insignia verse' containing, *inter alia*, the poet's self reference not by first person pronoun but in third-person nominative often couched in significant descriptive terms. The latter are singled out in the narration of the *Periyapurāṇam* and named as 'the holy epilogue of benediction', (*tirukkaṭaikkāppu*) a term that extended to name the entire corpus of Campanthar's poems.

4.1. The monograph under the title *Tirujñānasambandhar — Philosophy and Religion* herein presented to the English reading public researches into these and related source-materials with a view to 'identify the philosophical and religious thought of the saint'. The investigation is mainly of the nature of a 'critical and constructive study' of the literary source-material but always with the eye on the thought-content. Devotional religious literature can be approached historically and sociologically as is often done in the West, but it can also be approached in relation to its more immediate setting, viz., its own linguistic and literary tradition. The monograph's approach to the subject is more in terms of the second, the Tamil literary convention kept alive by its interaction with a general cultural climate. The author cannot be congratulated more, both for what he has chosen not to do and what he addresses. The subject-matter after all is '*Tamiḷñāṇacampanthar*', Campanthar's description of himself and his mission in some three hundred places. Śaṅkara's description of Campanthar as '*Drāviḍa-sīṣu*' could also bear the meaning of a child that describes itself as 'drāviḍa' i.e., Tamil. The author's approach is more frankly 'philosophical' than in either of these terms bringing it into relation with Śaiva Siddhānta and with the general setting of Vedānta.

4.2. Even though the monograph is eminently readable, it may be useful to highlight some of the very excellent insights of the author. Readers will find, as the writer of this 'Introduction' did, illumination on many matters if they are already engaged in the study of Campanthar. What is being touched on here are a few of these findings and the reader should consult the relevant portions in the body of the work.

The opening chapter etches out the literary landscape with an admirable sense of colour and shade highlighting (to continue the metaphor) the relative adequacy of the *Periyapurāṇam* as a more

reliable historical reconstruction of the traditional account, and the relative lateness of the coinage of 'Tēvāram' with its different nuances of meaning to identify the hymns of the saints. The account ends with a crisp delineation of the 'lay-out and infrastructure' of the 'patikams' of the saint and their classification under *paṇ* groups. The chapter on the life of the saint in relation to his teachings makes a systematic and skilful use of the *Periyapurāṇam* account seeking attestation for them as fully as possible from internal evidence from the words of the saint. The task undertaken could equally be described as one of an imaginative reconstruction of the thinking of the author of the *Periyapurāṇam*. The great events spanning the brief but eventful life of the saint beginning from the milk of wisdom episode, the curative (healing) miracles, obtaining of gold coins, causing closing of the gates of the temple again after being opened (interpreting in this context the last line of the verses of the Vāymūr *patikam* to imply a possible reference to Appar who was a witness to the miracle), the life and historic activities of the saint in Madurai setting involving disputation with the Jainas, the episode of the gradual resurrection of Pūmpāvai at Tirumayilai and finally, the incident of Nallūr Perumaṇam wherein the saint with his bride and the entire party of those assembled for his marriage walks into and disappears in the effulgence of the light that appeared in their midst (signifying the co-incidence of *bhoga* and *mokṣa*) — are systematically analysed with surprising fulness and demonstrating a rare combination of sensitivity and talent.

The chapter on the 'Philosophy of Sambandhar' purports to lay bare 'all that the saint has said in his hymns about important philosophical problems and formulate his philosophy in its own light.' This is done expressly 'against any temptation or tendency to confine him to any particular school of thought or metaphysical theory though there may be reasons for doing so.' The implicit argument seems to be: If the saint's hymns are, in the saint's own interpretation of himself, nothing but 'Tamil with the glow of the Veda' ('*maṇai ilaṅgu tamil*!') they must be just as open for interpretations by a number of schools of thought and in principle always elude them as is the case with the Veda (Upaniṣads) in

relation to the interpretations of Vedānta. This, however, does not preclude the historical fact that Śaiva Siddhānta of the later Meykaṇḍa tradition drew 'substantial inspiration and substance from Sambandhar'. The point that is made throughout the monograph and defended with what seems like an ideological fervour is that Campanthar's 'universal outlook' evolves out of 'his basic philosophy — a philosophy of God-love'.

The sections on nature, self or soul and the Lord are written with an almost unbelievable thoroughness in terms of extent and even of quality in exploring the entire gamut of Campanthar's hymns unravelling many of the tangled and obscure expressions that defy interpretation. The general tenor of presentation of the arguments and accounts purporting to render things intelligible is praiseworthy. It is of course possible to differ from some of the interpretations that are proposed. (In his *patikam* on Tūṅkāṇaimāṭam, 1-59-3, Campanthar refers to 'this life of dying and living' as *tōṛṛam*, from which is sought to be concluded that the saint was subscribing to the Advaita concept of *mithyā*, when in truth, one may argue, he is arguing against it. The saint indeed refers to the world-weary ascetic whose mood is aptly verbalised as '*sānālum vāṭṇālum tōṛṛam ivai*', but addressing them with concern for their striving in vain through a life of *tapas* — *salippāya vāḷḷkai āmāṟu aṟiyātu alamantu nīr ayanntum*, he cheers them with the good news — *kuṟaivillai*, and exhorts them to tread the readily open way of worship and devotion.) But in fairness to the author, it must be admitted that he is not dogmatic; he says in the context of the above verse, 'It deserves further pursuit and investigation.'

The chapter on Religion contains excellent analysis of Campanthar's language of mythology and a comprehensive approach to myth as expressed not merely in poetry but also in arts, sculptures and iconographic figures enshrined in temples. 'Temple-worship becomes the very essence of religion, while temples turned to be the centres of socio-economic cultural life of the masses.' The section on temple-worship, its role and significance is brief but brilliant. The fifth chapter captioned as 'Social Outlook of

Sambandhar', refers, among other things, to the centrality of music and Campanthar's contribution in that field. The treatment is both technical and precise and is rendered profound by the author's advertance to Aṭiyārkkunallār's commentary on the Araṅkēṟṟukkātai of the *Silappadikāram*. The section that follows likewise deals competently with Campanthar's innovations in the field of Tamil literary form, metre, etc. In a series of articles that appeared long ago (*Siddhānta Dīpikā*, Vols. II and III, 1898-1900), T. Virabadra Mudaliar wrote under the caption 'Lord Sambanda and an Unknown Tamilian Prosody' distinguishing as many as one hundred metrical varieties in Campanthar's poetry, correlating some of them with the principles assumed in ancient Canarese and Telugu poetry of a pre-Sanskritic stratum. The author is to be congratulated for consulting and incorporating them in his study.

4.3. The task that is involved in grappling with Campanthar's poetry is of stupendous proportions and calls for extraordinary equipment and language skill. The difficulty is compounded ten-fold when one writes in English. The present work is the first book of its kind, a full-sized account of Campanthar in English based on an in-depth study of the hymns themselves as well as of the *Periyapurāṇam*. When the book in its original form as a Ph.D. dissertation came to the attention of the writer, he felt that it was an excellent piece of writing and complimented the author for the adequacy and thoroughness and technical skill with which he could write a pioneer work at least as far as it concerned the English knowing world. He recommended in the strongest terms, its publication. And that at least after six years it could be in print and that he could add his own voice to it is honour and joy for him.

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FOREWORD

Though philosophy and religion can be distinguished from each other, they can never be separated. This is as much true with regard to Western philosophy as it is with regard to Indian philosophy. Scholars like Karl Jaspers hold the view that the Bible and the Biblical religion have provided the foundation for Western philosophy. It means that philosophy as a cognitive enterprise influences religion and is also influenced by it. In the Indian tradition, philosophy and religion have been inseparable partners rendering mutual help — philosophy supporting religion and religion inspiring philosophy. Together they have contributed to the unity of theory and practice, which has been one of the salient features of Indian philosophy.

The *Vedas* and the *Āgamas* are not only religious texts, but also philosophical treatises. They have been a source of inspiration to saints and sages, theologians, philosophers, and mystics. The ritual and knowledge sections of the *Vedas*, the *tantra*, *mantra*, and *upadeśa* portions of the *Āgamas* — all these purport to teach that God-realization/liberation is the highest value and that the pursuit of other values should be subservient to, and pave the way for, the highest value. Tirujñāṇasambandhar, the mystic-saint of the 7th century A.D. who has been hailed as the foremost among the hymnologists of South Indian Śaivism, expounded and upheld the philosophy and religion of the *Vedas* and the *Āgamas*. He was able to spread most effectively the central teaching of the *Vedas* and the *Āgamas* by making use of the vernacular — the Tamil language which, according to Tirujñāṇasambandhar, is not only steeped in the *Vedas*, but is also supporting them.

The *bhakti* cult was dominant in South India for nearly seven centuries from the 7th century A.D. due to the work of the Nāyaṇmārs and the Ālvārs; afterwards it spread to the north. The contribution of Tirujñāṇasambandhar to the spread of *bhakti* among the people is very significant inasmuch as his hymns which constitute the first three books of the Śaivite canonical literature collectively called *Tirumuṟai* have served as the model for others. It must be borne in mind that the practice of *bhakti* as advocated by Tirujñāṇasambandhar and others has a philosophico-religious basis. In the hymns of Tirujñāṇasambandhar one could discern a complete philosophy and religion justifying the importance of *bhakti* as the means to liberation. Through a systematic study, analysis and interpretation of the available hymns of Tirujñāṇasambandhar, Dr. P.S. Somasundaram has expounded with clarity and cogency the philosophy and religion of Tirujñāṇasambandhar highlighting the non-sectarian outlook and universal appeal of his message which promises for all "happiness and prosperity in this very earth for eternity."

Of the six chapters in this book, the first two provide the background to the study of Tirujñāṇasambandhar, while the last one is the conclusion. The content of the religious experience of Tirujñāṇasambandhar includes God, man and nature. The nature of God and soul, the relation between God and man, the spiritual journey of the soul, the manifestation of God in nature and the importance of nature in the mundane and religious life of the people — all these issues the author discusses in great detail in the course of the elucidation of the philosophy of Tirujñāṇasambandhar. Since religious experience by its very nature is explosive, the mystic-saint has an urge to communicate to others what is really inexpressible. What cannot be said, as Wittgenstein said, can only be shown. One of the effective ways of showing what cannot be said or described is through music and dance. In the course of the discussion of the social outlook of Sambandhar, Dr. Somasundaram emphasizes the place of music in the hymns of Sambandhar and shows how Sambandhar made use of music as the medium for spreading God-love. It is interesting to note that,

apart from *caryā*, *kriyā*, *yoga* and *jñāna* which are the well-known modes of practising *bhakti*, Tirujñānasambandhar also laid stress on other paths such as *pāṭal neṛi* (the path of music) and *āṭal neṛi* (the path of dance). The comprehensive analysis of the scheme of spiritual discipline which Dr. Somasundaram gives under the title "Sambandhar's path" deserves careful consideration.

The phenomenologists of religion point out that religious experience is also conveyed through myth. It may be noted that myth has two characteristics. First of all, it is narrative providing answers to questions about the nature and functions of God, and so on. Secondly, it refers to the "primordial events" which will provide the link between the past and the present, which will show the "rootedness" of the present in the past. It is recognized that myth is a unique way of apprehending reality. In the chapter on "The Religion of Sambandhar" Dr. Somasundaram explains with insight and vision the myths of the heroic exploits of Śiva and the role of mythology in the hymns of Sambandhar.

Though a mystic by birth may be associated with a particular religion and region, what he or she seeks to convey for the purpose of sharing his or her experience to others is not restricted to the religion or region the mystic belongs to. Though birth at a particular place and time is not an accident, it does not in any way limit the universality of the message of a mystic. The hymns of Tirujñānasambandhar may be interpreted from different philosophical standpoints. They can be understood and interpreted both from theistic and trans-theistic standpoints. Dr. Somasundaram is quite right when he says that the philosophy of Sambandhar should not be confined to any one particular system since his hymns, when properly interpreted, would support more philosophical positions than one. Citing the case of the *mahāvākya* which has been interpreted differently by the different schools of thought, Dr. Somasundaram argues that the "Great Word" (*peruvārttai*) uttered by the God-child, the embodiment of wisdom, admits of different interpretations by the Siddhāntin and the Vedāntin. Like the Siddhāntin, the Vedāntin may find his

philosophy embedded in the hymns of Tirujñāṇasambandhar. And others too. This will show that a mystic-saint like Tirujñāṇasambandhar has no frontiers of place, time and religion.

Here is a book which is worthy of study and contemplation by scholars and laymen interested in the philosophical and phenomenological study of one of the great hymnologists of the most ancient religion of the world.

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PREFACE

Tirujñānasambandhar holds a unique place among the poet-saints of Tamil Nadu. He is a great poet of all times. He started singing at a tender age, and before his adulthood, he revolutionised and illumined the fields of poetry and music, which he verily democratised by carrying them to each and every village and town of the Tamil land. Through his songs and music, Sambandhar sought, and succeeded in finding, the unitive experience binding himself with nature and God. He loved this earth with all its fields and groves, rivers and mountains, birds and animals, plants and trees, men and women, and identified the underlying Principle that integrates them all. He loved and worshipped that unitive Principle in the name and form of Śiva. To know Him is to love Him; to love Him is to love all those which are grounded in Him. This, in brief, is the essence of his songs.

Sambandhar is not a system builder, nor a philosopher in an ordinary sense. Yet, philosophical and religious concepts are embedded in his poetry. The aim of this work is to identify and bring to focus the basic conceptual frame-work of his thought.

My revered and much lamented teacher, Professor T.P. Meenakshisundaran, advised me to approach the subject with an open mind and devotion. To the best of my ability, and with whatever resources available to me, I have striven to abide by his advice. At this moment, my heart melts in gratitude for all that he had done to me.

This book is based on my research carried out for the award of the Ph. D. degree by the University of Madras in 1981. I thank

the Vice-Chancellor and other authorities of the University for according permission to publish my research thesis in the book form.

Dr. K. Sivaraman, Professor, Department of Religious studies, McMaster University, Hamilton, Canada, has enriched this work by writing a masterly Introduction. It is difficult to find a proper vehicle to convey my deep sense of indebtedness to the learned Professor.

I wish to place on record my profound gratitude to Dr. R. Balasubramanian, Director, Radhakrishnan Institute for Advanced Study in Philosophy, University of Madras, Madras, for writing a critical Foreword to this work. "The words are but broken lights" which fail to reveal my deeper sentiments.

Dr. T. N. Ganapathy, Postgraduate Professor and Head, Department of Philosophy, R.K.M. Vivekananda College, Madras, who was my guide during the research, has generously extended to me every editorial assistance and valuable suggestions during the entire process of this publication. To write a few words of thanks to him will be very inadequate.

I am indebted to Dr. V.K.S.N. Raghavan, Reader, Department of Vaishnavism, University of Madras. He has spared no pains in going through every line in the text and in the unenviable task of reading the proofs.

I sincerely thank Mr. V. Seshachalam and his good team in M/s. Avvai Achukkoodam for the excellent execution of the work. My thanks are due to Mr. Vinu who has designed the cover so nicely.

P. S. SOMASUNDARAM

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SCHEME OF TRANSLITERATION

Tamil — English

<i>Vowels</i>	<i>Consonants</i>
அ — a	க் — k, g
ஆ — ā	ங் — ṅ
இ — i	ச் — c, s
ஈ — ī	ஞ் — ñ
உ — u	ட் — t, ḍ
ஊ — ū	ண் — ṇ
எ — e	த் — t, ḍ
ஏ — ē	ந் — n
ஐ — ai	ப் — p, b
ஒ — o	ம் — m
ஔ — ō	ய் — y
ஒள — au	ர் — r
ஃ — ah	ல் — l
	வ் — v
	ழ் — ḷ
	ள் — ḷ
	ற் — ṛ
	ள் — ṅ

Sanskrit — English

श	— s'a
ष	— ṣa
क्ष	— kṣa
ऋ	— ṛ

FIRST CHAPTER

INTRODUCTION

1.1 *A general survey*

This work purports to identify the philosophical and religious thought of Saint Tirujñāṇasambandhar on the basis of his works and to make a critical and constructive study of the same.

Tirujñāṇasambandhar (or Sambandhar as he is generally referred to) was one of the hymnologists of South Indian Śaivism. Since his advent, he had been hailed as the greatest among the hymnologists. All his contemporary saints like Tirunāvukkaracar (Appar), Murugaṇār, Nīlakaṇṭhar, Cīruttoṇṭar, Maṅkaiyarkkarasi, Kulacciṛaiyār, the Pāṇḍiya king Neṭumāraṇ and a host of others held him in high esteem and reverence. His successor, Nambi Ārūrar is proud to follow in his footsteps. In his *Tiruttoṇṭattokai* he calls Sambandhar, “Our Lord” (*empirāṇ*) as a mark of respect for him and for his position of pre-eminence among the preceptors of Śaivism. The *Nārada Bhakti Sūtras* refer to one Kauṇḍinya as one of the early *Ācāryas* of bhakti cult. Sambandhar belonged to the *kaunḍinya gotra* (lineage) and he called himself *kavuniyaṇ* (a tamilised word for *kaunḍinya*). It is suggested that the *kaunḍinya* mentioned in the *Bhakti Sūtras* is Sambandhar. Cēkkiḷār in his *Tirujñāṇasambandhar Purāṇam* of the *Periyapurāṇam* (262) mentions that Sambandhar had his own *math* at Cīrkāḷi. The *birudus* of the Tirujñāṇasambandhar *math* at Madurai (as quoted by Somasundara Nāyagar in his *Siddhānta Ratnākaram - Ācāryaprabhāvam*) venerate Sambandhar as the preceptor of the world who has established the supremacy of Śaivism and planted the bull flag mast on the earth (*śrīmat viruṣabattuvaja sthāpaka śrī śaiva samaya karttiru sarvajñāna pīṭārūṭa śrī jagadguru śrī jñāṇasambandha dēśikasvāmika!*).

All these suggest that he was the chief of a school of religious thought.

That Sambandhar was a great mystic poet who had realised God is borne out by his own statements in his hymns. He considers himself as one full of wisdom which is the radiance of the Lord (*'tannoḷi mikku uyarnta tamil jñānasambandhan'*—1.108.11). He is aware that the Lord has created an illusion and caused him to be born on this earth, even though he never forgot the noble feet of the Lord (*tiruntaṭi marakkumārilaṭa ennai maiyal ceytu immaṇṇinmēl piṛakkumāru kāṭṭināy*—2.234.5). He describes himself as one who has fulfilled the will of the Lord of Kālī (*kāḷiyarkōṇ karuttārvitta...jñānasambandhan*—2.152.11). He has completely surrendered and submerged himself unto the Lord so that he has no qualities of his own (*tanniyalpillāc caṇṭṭaiyarkōṇ*—1.97.1). He also claims that the Lord of Veṅkuru (Cīrkāḷi) is his guru (master) (*vittakarākiya veṅkuruvē*—3.371.4). He mentions that the Lord has given him certain yogic powers by which he could cast away his body (*uṭampuvīṭṭu iṛakkumāru kāṭṭināy*—2.234.5). Sambandhar has stated even in the first *patikam* that he has realised God (*uṇar jñānasambandhan*) and also the method of knowing the pervasion of the Lord (*perumāṇ akalam aṇiyalākāp, paravum muṇaiyē payilum bandhan*—2.216.11). The Lord could make him snap his rebirth (*piṇṇai arukka vallār*—1.8.5). It is significant to note that Sambandhar asserts that he could dissociate himself from his mortal body (*kāyavarga asambandanē*—3.374.11).

Tradition has it that Sambandhar drank the milk of wisdom given to him by the Mother Divine at the age of three, and hence his name Jñānasambandhar. There are some internal evidences to stress this point. Nambiyāṇḍār Nambi, who had canonised the hymns, calls Sambandhar the son of God, *Piḷḷai*. This, in course of years, led others to think that Sambandhar is the incarnation of Lord Muruga. Oṭṭakkūttar (12th century A.D.) in his *Takka-yākapparaṇi* was the first perhaps, to think on these lines and this tradition continues even to this day. Somasundara Nāyagar has gone to the extent of regarding him as *ayoniḷa* (not born from womb). This is, perhaps, to show the pre-eminence of Sambandhar

among the *Śaiva Ācāryas*. Scholars hold the view that the age of Sambandhar is seventh century A.D. which is acceptable to the present writer.

Sambandhar's hymns form the main plank of this work and there are other source materials which render additional and supporting help. They are discussed below in this chapter. The second chapter deals with the life of Sambandhar both as depicted by Cēkkiḷār and as attested by the internal evidences. They have a bearing on Sambandhar's thought and teaching.

The metaphysics of Sambandhar is constructed on the basis of his concepts of nature, soul and God which are discussed in the third chapter. Sambandhar's religion is the warp and woof of his philosophy. His ideas on mythology, temple worship and the modes of worship explain the true nature of his religion which is explained in the fourth chapter. Sambandhar treats the world as a manifestation of God. His social outlook evolves out of this concept which is dealt with in the fifth chapter. The sixth chapter forms the conclusion of the work.

Sambandhar is a Śaivite in the sense that he worships God in the name and form of Śiva. But, in essence, he transcends all sectarian limitations and presents the vision of the kingdom of God where all creatures unite and enjoy the bliss of divinity that shines from within. The object of this work is to catch the glimpse of that vision and present it in the following pages.

1.2 Sources

Saint Tirujñānasambandhar is essentially a mystic poet deeply rooted in Śiva-consciousness. His direct communion with and revealing experience of, Godhead in the name and form of Śiva find full and forcible expression in his outpourings. He trusts that all his utterances are revealed by God's will.¹ Therefore, for a proper and methodical elucidation and exposition of the perspectives of his philosophy and religion, his hymns provide the solid basis and remain a rich source. They also bear ample testimony to his biographical notes and data. But one cannot be very

complacent about it, because what is extant now is only a part of the immense work of Sambandhar. To that extent it remains not so adequate as to provide a whole and comprehensive picture.

The hymns of Sambandhar, in units of ten verses together with a benedictory verse, *tirukkaṣaikkāppu*, at the end of each unit, are called the *Tiruppāṭṭu*, *Tiruppatiyam* and *Tiruppatikam*. They are compiled in the first three books of the Śaivite canonical literature which are twelve in number (*Panniru tirumuṟai*).

The hymns of Saint Appar, a close but senior contemporary of Sambandhar comprise the fourth, fifth and sixth books, *Tirumuṟais*, while the seventh one belongs to Nambi Ārūrar (Sundarar) (8th century A.D.). These seven books stand as a class and are collectively and severally called the *Tēvāram*.

Saint Māṇikkavācakar's poems, the *Tiruvācakam* and *Tirukkōvaiyār* are collected in the eighth *Tirumuṟai*. These four saints have been held in high esteem and reverence by the Śaivites of South India. They are venerated as holy and early preceptors of Śaivism.

Works of nine poets such as the *Tiruvisaippā*, etc., go to form the ninth *Tirumuṟai*. The *Tirumantiram* of Tirumūlar (5th or 6th century A.D.) — a distinguished treatise on Śaivism — is taken as the tenth *Tirumuṟai*, while the works of twelve poet-saints like Maduraippērālavāyar, Kāraikkālammaiṟār, Paṭṭiṇattuppiḷḷaiṟār, and Nambiyāṇḍār Nambi are included in the eleventh *Tirumuṟai*. Later on, Cēkkiḷār's *Tiruttonṭar Purāṇam* or the *Periyapurāṇam* (12th century A.D.) is added as the twelfth *Tirumuṟai*.

The twelve *Tirumuṟais* are regarded as the Tamil *Vedas* by the Śaivites from the earliest times. They are the devotional (*stotra*) works. There are other works, fourteen in number, which deal with Śaiva Siddhānta philosophy. The *Śivajñānabōdham* of Meykaṇṭār is the chief and principal work amongst the fourteen works which are collectively known as the *Meykaṇṭa Śāstram*. The *Śivajñānabōdham* consists of twelve *sūtras* — aphorisms, corresponding to the twelve *Tirumuṟais*. They elucidate the truths enshrined in the

latter just as the *Vedānta Sūtras* present the quintessence of the Upaniṣadic philosophy.

The first three *Tirumuṟais* of Sambandhar form the main body of material as direct and internal source of this work. There are 384 *patikams* now extant in these *Tirumuṟais* which are ascribed to Sambandhar. But Nambiyāṇḍār Nambi (9th-10th century A.D.) who originally compiled the Śaivite canonical literature, and later on, Umāpati Śivam in his *Tirumuṟai Kaṇṭa Purāṇam* affirm that 16,000 *patikams* were sung by Sambandhar. However, some scholars hold the view that this number does not denote the number of *patikams* as such, but only suggests the number of verses. Even if that is agreed upon, what is extant now is only a fourth of the total number of verses he is believed to have sung. Judging from the minute details furnished by Cēkkiḷār, the celebrated author of the *Periyapurāṇam*, and also by the author of the *Tirumuṟai Kaṇṭa Purāṇam*, we can reasonably believe that a sizable body of material had been lost over the centuries.

From Cēkkiḷār's account, we know that Sambandhar attained the Divine Enlightenment in his third year. At the age of seven, his *upanayanam* might have been celebrated. In between, there are four years. According to the present arrangement of the *Tirumuṟai*, there are about twentytwo *patikams* ascribed to him for the period. But, we have reasons to believe that he might have sung many more *patikams* than those that are now available. They must have been lost. In a number of instances Cēkkiḷār unambiguously asserts that Sambandhar has sung *patikams* on particular shrines. But they are not found in the present collection. For instance, in the case of Tiruvālantuṟai, Cēkkiḷār affirms the singing of *patikams* in honour of the Lord of the temple there. But that *patikam* is not available.

Sambandhar makes rich and complimentary references to a good number of his contemporary Śaiva saints such as Cīruttoṇṭar, Murugaṇār, Nīla Nakkar and Nīlakaṇṭappāṇar. But there is no evidence to show from the present collection that he makes clear reference to Appar, the association with whom has been so

much celebrated by Cēkkiḷār, tradition and by no less a personage than Ārūrar. How are we to account for this glaring lapse and omission? If we trust Cēkkiḷār, tradition and other views about the contemporaneity of these two saints, then we could safely conclude that either Sambandhar must have held Appar in too high an esteem to mention his name in his *patikams*, or such of those *patikams* wherein he praises him are lost along with others.³ The second view is preferable to the first.

So, all these factors influence and lead us to conclude that what we get today as Sambandhar's poems are only a part of his original contribution. This conclusion helps this author to pursue his work on careful and cautious lines, so that he is not easily inclined to brush aside as irrelevant any important matter or event, attested by tradition and contemporary literature, just because it has no direct reference in Sambandhar's hymns now extant.

As Appar is a contemporary of Sambandhar, his hymns help us in the interpretation of Sambandhar's hymns. Nambi Ārūrar follows Appar and Sambandhar both chronologically and in ideals. He affirms that he is only following in their footsteps by singing their hymns on the same lines as those of his illustrious predecessors.⁴ The author of *The Religion and Philosophy of Tēvāram*, Dorai Rangaswamy, after quoting this hymn of Sundarar, affirms, "Nambi Ārūrar's poems serve as a key to unlock the hidden treasures of *Tēvāram*." Ādi Śaṅkara in his *Saundaryalaharī* praises Sambandhar as '*Drāviḍa Śīsu*' (the divine child of Drāviḍa).

Paṭṭiṇattu Aṭikaḷ's works are included in the eleventh *Tirumurai*. Since he eulogises the Tēvāram Trio and Māṇikkavācakar, he must have lived between the ninth and tenth centuries. His *Tirukkaḷumala Mummaṇikkōvai* bears ample references to Sambandhar.

Nambiyāṇḍār Nambi is the famous compiler of the Śaivite canonical literature, the *Panniru Tirumurai*. Being a mystic and inspired poet, his works themselves are included in the eleventh

Tirumurai. His famous *Tiruttonṇar Tiruvantāti* is an interpretation and elaboration of Nambi Ārūrar's *Tiruttonṇattokai*. He worships Sambandhar not only as a great preceptor, but also as a divine incarnation. His reverence and devotion to the saint are so high, that out of his ten works, six were exclusively devoted to Sambandhar. Auvaiyār, who must have lived between the ninth and eleventh centuries,⁵ sings in praise of the Tēvāram Trio and Māṇikkavācakar. Oṭṭakkūttar, who was the immediate predecessor of Cēkkiḷār provides some material. The tradition and later works have it that Cēkkiḷār's immortal work, the *Periyapurāṇam* is based on Ārurar's *Tiruttonṇattokai* and Nambiyāṇḍār Nambi's *Tiruttonṇar Tiruvantāti*. But on serious study, one can find out that Cēkkiḷār lays greater reliance on the former than on the latter. In fact, the epic-hero of the *Periyapurāṇam* is Ārūrar. As there are eleven verses in the *Tiruttonṇattokai*, the epic also is divided into eleven *carukkams* (chapters) excluding the prologue and epilogue. In the natural scheme of the epic, it blossoms into an expansion and elaboration of the *Tiruttonṇattokai*. No doubt, Nambiyāṇḍār Nambi also elaborates the *Tiruttonṇattokai* in his *Tiruvantāti*. Ārūrar allots mostly one line to each of the *Nāyanmārs*. At times, he uses only a word or two. Only in the case of Appar, Sambandhar, Kaṇampulla Nambi, Neṭumāṇār and Kaḷarciṅkaṇ, he spares two lines. So naturally, it is very terse. Nambiyāṇḍār devotes one full verse to each *Nāyanār* and in the case of Appar, Sambandhar, Cēramāṇ Perumāḷ and Kōccenkaṭcōḷa, each is offered two verses. Ārūrar gets the lion's share, eleven verses in accordance with the mention of his own name in the *Tiruttonṇattokai*. Nambiyāṇḍār Nambi as a compiler of the *Tirumurais* has a sound knowledge of the contents, spirit and message of the *Tirumurais*, especially the *Tēvāram* hymns and the lives of the saints. He must have collected all details of the life-sketch of the saints with the support of tradition and other sources. Before the *Periyapurāṇam* was written, his works must have been so very popular that some of the words and phrases he had used in his works have found place in the contemporary and subsequent inscriptions.⁶

But, at times he seems to be either too much influenced by tradition or to have given his own interpretations which are far-

fetched. This trait makes his works less reliable in certain details. For example, Sambandhar while approaching Naṇipallī, his mother's birth place, gives a description of the local landscape, etc. Nambiyāṇḍār claims in his *Tiruvantūti* that the saint had transformed the waste land, *pālai*, into *marudam* (fertile) land.⁷ But contrary to this, he says in his *Tiruccēṇṇai Viruttam* (verse 4) that the saint has changed the *pālai* into *neytal* (coastal tract). Another instance may be cited. In almost all his six works, he credits (or discredits?) Sambandhar by saying that he has done to death eight thousand Jain monks when they were vanquished by him in the debates at Madurai. Nambiyāṇḍār, in spite of his sound knowledge of Sambandhar's mind and style, has not done justice to his master-saint by relying too much on tradition which often, especially in such circumstances, has its own overtones of religious intolerance and hatred.

Cēkkiḷār was not only a genius and a poet *par excellence*, but an administrator too. He was not easily assailed and carried away by all vagaries of tradition. Even when he took tradition seriously he employed vast resources — epigraphical, numismatic, historical and literary — to verify them whenever possible and necessary. Moreover he follows the *Tirumuṇṇai* with meticulous care and devotion and understands the soul and spirit of the hymnists. That is why he could not accept Nambi's version of transfixion of the Jains by Sambandhar, and he gives his own account which is much more convincing.

There is another evidence to show that Cēkkiḷār emphasises scientific and systematic approach in sifting facts from traditions. According to the *Tirumuṇṇai Kaṇṇa Purāṇam* (25), it is known that of the sixteen thousand *patikams* supposed to have been sung by Sambandhar, only 384 *patikams* were recovered by Nambi from the Tillai temple, and that all others were lost for ever. Even out of 384, only 383 *patikams* were available till very recently. The inscription found on the walls of the temple at Tiru-ṇaiyāy⁸ gives us Sambandhar's *patikams* for that temple and this makes up a total of 384 as given in the *Tirumuṇṇai Kaṇṇa Purāṇam*.

Cēkkiḷār clearly states that Sambandhar has worshipped and sung *patikams* at the temples of Tiruvālanturai, Tiruccenturai and other places. But they are not found in the present collection of Sambandhar's hymns. However, the inscriptions of these temples belonging to the reign of Rājarāja I⁹ and Parakēśari Varmaṇ Uttama Cōḷa¹⁰ clearly affirm that *Tiruppatikams* were sung at these temples. Cēkkiḷār also clearly emphasises the point that Sambandhar has worshipped and sung *patikams* at the Tiruttavaturai temple at the modern town of Lalgudi. This fact is attested by the inscription of this temple belonging to Rājarāja the great. But this *patikam* which was in existence during Cēkkiḷār's times is not found in the present editions of Sambandhar's *Tēvāram*. This leads us to realise that more than 384 *patikams* were in currency during Cēkkiḷār's times. From these facts it may be concluded that Cēkkiḷār's *Periyapurāṇam* is more reliable for its authenticity and authority. However, Nambiyāṇḍār's contribution could not be underestimated. Even Cēkkiḷār acknowledges his indebtedness to Nambiyāṇḍār Nambi.¹¹

After the *Periyapurāṇam* down the centuries, the *Tirumuṟai Kaṇṭa Purāṇam* of Umāpati Śivam is another important source. It gives an account of how the *Tirumuṟais*, especially the sacred hymns, were rediscovered from the temple of Tillai. The account runs as follows: A Cōḷa monarch by name Rājarāja *alias* Abhaya Kulaśēkaraṇ once chanced to hear some of the musical compositions of the hymnists and being enthralled by their music and devotion wanted to recover all the hymns. Upon hearing about Nambiyāṇḍār Nambi's divinity and devotion, he went to his town Tirunāraiyyūr and sought his help to rediscover the lost hymns. Pollāppiḷaiyār (the local deity) revealed to Nambi that the sacred hymns were kept in one of the chambers of the Tillai temple. Then they were able to recover only 384 *patikams* of Sambandhar, 307 *patikams* of Appar and 100 *patikams* of Ārūrar. The rest were eaten away by white ants. When they were stricken with grief over the loss of hymns, the voice from the Heaven told them that they need not lament over the loss because what was only needed for the age had been preserved. Thereupon the king

arranged for the classification of the hymns into seven *Tirumuṛais* according to the melody or *paṇ* with the help of Nambiyāṇḍār and a dancing woman who hailed from the descendants of Tirunilakaṇṭayālppāṇar who originally set Sambandhar's hymns to music. The *Tirumuṛai Kaṇṭa Purāṇam* also gives various details about the *paṇs* and their classification, etc. Emotions are ascribed to individual *paṇs*, though some scholars view this as mostly not suitable.¹² The *Tirumuṛai Kaṇṭa Purāṇam* gives credit to Nambiyāṇḍār Nambi for all these achievements.

The *Tiruvālavāyutaiyār Tiruviḷaiyāṭṭarṭpurāṇam* of Perumparappuliyūr Nambi (1228 A.D.) of Vēmbattūr, the *Kaṭampavanapurāṇam* of Vīmanāta Paṇṭitar, and the *Tiruviḷaiyāṭṭarṭpurāṇam* of Paraṇḷjōtiyār offer their own version of Sambandhar's life-story. There is an old anthology known as the *Śivapprakāśapperum Tiraṭṭu* which has been in existence from the 15th century.¹³ It throws some light on Sambandhar's hymns. Aruṇagirinātar of 15th century follows Nambiyāṇḍār Nambi, Oṭṭakkūttar and others in upholding the theory that Sambandhar was an incarnation of Muruga. Śivapprakāśar, Citampara Svāmikaḷ, Rāmaliṅkar, Sōmasundara Nāyagar and a host of others give Sambandhar a unique place and position amongst the *śaivasamaya ācāryas*.

1.3 The terms *Tēvāram* and *Patikam* explained

Now the term *Tēvāram* has to be explained in the light of literary and inscriptional materials available. In addition, we may also examine how the term has come into vogue. Sambandhar in none of his hymns calls them by the term *Tēvāram*. He calls them *Pāṭal*, *Mālai*, *Tamiḷ*, *Paṇuval*, *Pattu*, *Kiḷavi*, *Moli*, *Pāṭṭu*, *Urai*, *Col*, *Kalaikaḷ*, *Santam*, *Isai*, *Col Valipāṭu*, *Ceyyul*, *Vaṇṇam* and similar categories, of course, with all qualifying epithets. The other two hymnists, Tirunāvukkaracar and Nambi Ārūrar also do not employ the words *Tēvāram* and *Tirumuṛai*. In fact Ārūrar refers to Sambandhar's and Appar's hymns as *Tamiḷ* and *Naṟṟamiḷmālai*. So the usage of *Tēvāram* to denote the hymn is only a later development. But it is interesting to note that the word *patikam* is used by Sambandhar himself, in his *patikam* (3.371.12) — '*patikamatu eḷutu ilai*'.

By the eighth century, the hymns of the saints came to be known as *Tiruppatiyam*. An inscription belonging to the eighth century — in the 17th year (750 A.D.) of the reign of Nandivarman Pallavamalla *alias* Vijayanandi Vikramavarman — provides for those who recite *Tiruppatiyam*.¹⁴ Similarly there are so many inscriptions¹⁵ using the word *Tiruppatiyam*. Nambiyāṇḍār Nambi in his *Āḷutaiya Pillaiyār Tiruvantāti* (15) calls Sambandhar's hymns *Tiruppatikam*, and the method he adopts to spread Śaivism the *patikap peruvāḷi* (v.2). Cēkkiḷār also speaks of *Tiruppatikam*.¹⁶ The exact derivation of the word '*patikam*' is not clear; whether it is a corrupt form of *padyam* or *pratīka*, a preface or summary or from *pathika*, the traveller or pilgrim singing the hymns or from *Pati*, the Lord. But it is quite likely that the derivation may be from the word *pattu* (ten). It should be noted here that this practice of grouping ten verses into one unit and calling it *pattu* is a very ancient one. The verses in the *Aṅkuraṇūṟu*, a *Caṅkam* anthology, are divided into units of ten verses. Each unit of ten verses is called *pattu*.¹⁷ Probably *patiyam* or *patikam* might have been derived from *pattu*.

The term *Tirumuṟai* may be taken up for examination. *Muṟai* means according to the *Piṅkalantai* (a Tamil Glossary), *nūl* (Holy Book), *ṁḷ* (fate), *kūṟṟu* (tie up), *muṟai* (order). On many an instance it means a holy book. Any book which has been systematically written is *muṟai*. Cēkkiḷār clearly uses the word *Tirumuṟai* to denote the sacred hymns in the *Kaṇanāta Nūyanār Purāṇam* (v.3). But in inscriptions it comes into use for the first time only at the time of Kulōttuṅga III. Possibly the term acquired its present sense only after the *Tēvāram* hymns were committed to methodical writing.¹⁸ It is certain that even Cēkkiḷār does not attribute the sense of hymns to the term *Tēvāram*. Śrī Niṣaṅga Sāraṅga Dēvar (1210-1247) in his *Saṅgīta Ratnākaram* has attempted to preserve the form of certain *paṇs* that are found in the *Tēvāram* which he discusses along with *Tēvāra Vardhini*.¹⁹ Iraṭṭaippulavarkaḷ who belong to the age of Maṭināta Sampuvarāyaṇ (1321-1339 A.D.) refer to the term *Tēvāram* in their *Ēkāmpara Nātar Ulā* as, '*mūvāta pēraṇṇiṇ mūvar mutalikalum, Tēvāramceyta tirupṇāṟṟum*'. First of all the hymns of the *Tēvāram* Trio only are referred to by the

term, even though the term is not used as a noun but as a verb *Tēvāram ceyta* — performing *Tēvāram*. Here the term means that the *pāṭṭu* — the hymns of the three principal saints — were used in the performance of *Tēvāram* — personal worship. That is, the hymns of the three saints were intended for the performance of personal worship.

Here, *Tēvāram* is used in the sense of the hymns more as a form of personal worship. Śaiva Ellappa Nāvalar who was much later than Iraṭṭaiyappulavarkaḷ, perhaps for the first time, directly and precisely employed the term as the hymns of the three saints. In his *Tiruvāraṇaikkalampakam*, he states that the four saints have bestowed on us the truthful and graceful *Tēvāram* and *Tiruvācakam* to give us the benefit of redemption (*vāymaivaittu cirttirut Tēvāramum Tiruvācakamum uyvait taracceyta nālvār*). So also *Tēvāram* is used in the same sense of hymns of the three saints in a verse of Tattuvapparakāśar (the first half of 16th century) as collected in the *Tamiḷ Nāvalar Caritai*.

Before these references *Tēvāram* was used in the sense of personal worship during the age of the later Cōḷas. An inscription of the year 1015 A.D.²⁰ mentions, '*periya perumāḷukkuṭ tēvāra tēvar*'. Here *periya perumāḷ* is Rājārājā I; *tēvāra tēvar* means the Deity worshipped personally by the king. Another inscription mentions the term *Tēvāram* as *tēvārattuc cuṟṟuk kallūri*²¹ which means the place of the king's private worship. The officer who was in charge of the arrangement for the king's private and personal worship was called *tēvāranāyakam* as mentioned in an inscription of Rājēndra.²² In two other inscriptions of the eleventh century, mention has been made of the people who sing *Tiruppatiyam* in the presence of the idol of private worship, *Tēvāram*. The one from Tirukkaḷar²³ says, '*nam Tēvārattukkuṭ tiruppatiyam pāṭum periyāṇ*' and the other from Allur says, '*maṭam Tēvārattukkuṭ tiruppatiyam viṇṇappam ceyyum ambalattāḷi*'.²⁴ An inscription at Takkōlam belonging to Kulōttuṅga (1110 A.D.)²⁵ mentions that the king had performed his private worship there — *tiruvēral perumāṇait tēvāram ceytu*.

Before passing through the next stage, mention must be made of a reference in an inscription of Rāja Rāja Tēva.²⁶ The refer-

ence is to a '*tirumuṟait tēvāraccelvan maṣam*'. Here the term '*tēvār-accelvan*' means either the idol of private worship or the officer who was in charge of the *math*. Probably he bears the title '*Tirumuṟai*' to mark his knowledge of the hymns.

Now it has to be explained why and how the term *Tēvāram* has come to acquire the sense of private and personal worship. '*Tē*' in Tamil is a uniliteral word which means God. The term *Tēvāram* is split into two components as *tē* + *āram*; *āram* means a garland. *Tēvāram* means a garland of songs intended for God. This is a common derivation. But there is another derivation which is more relevant. *Vāram* means a kind of musical movement in a poem set to music.²⁷ It is always rich in diction, musical intensity and rhythm. '*Vāram pāṭutal*' — singing a *vāram* song means worshipping God by singing a song set to music. In the *Silappatikāram*, an ancient Tamil epic, there is a clear reference to it. The veteran and traditionally trained dancing damsels sing the two kinds of *vāram* and thereby worship God so that what is benevolent may flourish and all that is unworthy may be cast away. Here Aṭiyārkkunallār, its commentator, precisely means *vāram* as a devotional song (*teyvappāṭal*).²⁸ From this it can be gathered that *vāram* means a kind of musical movement in a musical composition in general and a devotional song in particular.

There is another category of musical composition. This is *Tēva pāṇi*. *Pāṇi* is generally a musical poem, while *Tēva pāṇi* is a musical poem sung in praise of God. Pērācīriyar, the noted commentator of the *Tolkāppiyam*, the earliest work on Tamil grammar now extant, particularises *Tēva pāṇi* as a musical poem addressed to God in the second person. If a song is sung in praise of God in the third person, it is then called *puṇilai vāḷttu*. Vellai Varanan, the author of the *Panniru Tirumuṟai Varalāru* finds a similarity between the *vāram* and *Tēvapāṇi* and concludes that the *Tēvāram* is so called as it is in similarity with *Tēva pāṇi* with the only difference that in the case of the *Tēvāram* it can be addressed to God both in the second and the third persons whereas in *Tēva pāṇi* it is only in the second person.²⁹ So it could be concluded

that *Tēvāram* means worshipping God by singing musical songs both in the second and the third persons. In the age of the *Coḷas*, when singing of hymns had become an established practice in the temple and in private, the term has come to mean a private and personal worship. This usage persisted down the centuries and in the age of Śivapparakācar, Svarūpānandar and Tattuvarāyar, *Tēvāram* meant individual worship or place or idol of worship. This has further evolved to mean the particular hymns of the great saints instead of meaning all devotional songs in general. It should be remembered that Sambandhar calls one of his hymns *vaḷipāṭu pattu* (1.105.11), i.e., ten songs of worship.

1.4 The lay out of the *patikams* of Sambandhar

The form and the main scheme/pattern of Sambandhar's *patikams* may be studied now. The 384 *patikams*, which are available, are compiled into first three *Tirumuṟais*. There are two methods of grouping them, either *paṇ-wise* or *talam-wise*. The latter is comparatively of recent development while the former (*paṇ-muṟai* or *paṇ-wise*) is supposed to be the one which Nambiyāṇḍār Nambi himself followed when he compiled the *Tirumuṟais* with the help of a descendant of Tirunīlakaṇṭa Yāḷppāṇar.

According to the Dharumapura Ādīnam publication, the break up of the *patikams* in Jñānasambandhar's *Tēvāram* (in three *Tirumuṟais*) is as given in the Table.

First <i>Tirumuṟai</i> (<i>Patikam</i> 1-136)	136	<i>Patikams</i>
Second <i>Tirumuṟai</i> (<i>Patikam</i> 137-258)	122	„
Third <i>Tirumuṟai</i> (<i>Patikam</i> 259-383)	125	„
	— — —	
Total	383	„
	— — —	

With this, the *Tiruvīṭaivāy patikam* is added to bring the total to 384. The total number of verses is 4158.

Table Showing the Assignment of *Paṇs* to the *Patikams*
in the Three *Tirumuṛais*

<i>Tirumuṛai</i>	<i>Patikam</i> Numbers From - To	<i>Paṇ</i> to which they are set	<i>Paṇ</i> No.	Total No. of <i>Patikams</i>
I <i>Tirumuṛai</i>	1 - 22	<i>Naṭṭapāṭai</i>	1	22
	23 - 46	<i>Takkarākam</i>	2	24
	47 - 62	<i>Paṭantakkarākam</i>	3	16
	63 - 74	<i>Takkēsi</i>	4	12
	75 - 103	<i>Kurīñci</i>	5	29
	104 - 128	<i>Viyāṭakkurīñci</i>	6	25
	129 - 136	<i>Mēgarākak Kurīñci</i> (including <i>Yālmuri</i>)	7	8
				136
II <i>Tirumuṛai</i>	137 - 175	<i>Intaḷam</i>	8	39
	176 - 189	<i>Sikāmaram</i>	9	14
	190 - 218	<i>Kāntāram</i>	10	29
	219 - 232	<i>Piyantaikkāntāram</i>	11	14
	233 - 248	<i>Naṭṭarākam</i>	12	16
	249 - 258	<i>Sevvali</i>	13	10
				122
III <i>Tirumuṛai</i>	259 - 282 } 313 & 315 }	<i>Kāntārapañcamam</i>	14	26
	283 - 299	<i>Kolli</i>	15	17
	300 only	<i>Kollikkavūṇam</i>	16	1
	301 - 312 } 314 & 375 }	<i>Kausikam</i>	17	14
	316 - 324	<i>Pañcamam</i>	18	9
	325 - 357	<i>Sātāri</i>	19	33
	358 - 374	<i>Paṭampañcuram</i>	20	17
	376 - 381	<i>Puraṇīrmai</i>	21	6
	382 - 383	<i>Antāṭikkurīñci</i>	22	2
				125
Total No. of paṇs 22. Grand Total				383

The precise *paṇ* for *Tiruvīṭaivāy patikam* is not identified.

Thus the *patikams* are classified into twentytwo *paṇ* groups — each group following the other successively. But in the case of *patikam* No. 313, even though it is set to *Kāntārapaṇcamam*, it falls between two *patikams* set to *Kausikam*. Similarly, *patikam* No. 315, though it is set to *Kāntārapaṇcamam*, is grouped between two *patikams* set to *Kausikam* and *Paṇcamam*. So also is the case with *Patikam* No. 375 which is grouped between *Paḷampaṇcuram* and *Puṇanīrmai* though it is set to *Kausikam*. Barring these three instances others are in regular groups. The other details of the *paṇs* are dealt with separately in the fifth chapter. But the present classification deviates from the system adopted by Cēkkiḷār. While he ascribes *Paḷampaṇcuram* to the *patikam* beginning with ‘*Tuṇcavaruvār*’ — (T.J.N. Pu. 1010) now it is given as *Takkarākam*.

Cēkkiḷār in his *Periyapurāṇam* which is our major and principal external source sets the *patikam* beginning with ‘*Tōṭuṭaiya ceviyan*’ at first and the *patikam* beginning with ‘*Kallūrppperumaṇam*’ at the last in the life-history of Tirujñānasambandhar. The same order is maintained in the present work.

1.4.1 *Patikams*

Each *patikam* is a unit of ten hymns with the benedictory verse at the end as the eleventh. Cēkkiḷār calls it *Tirukkaṭaikkāppu* which is a class by itself giving the details such as the name of the poet, his place, the temple and the benefits that accrue to those who sing the *patikams*. That the *patikam* proper consists of ten verses is clearly indicated by Cēkkiḷār when he comments on the *Tirukkaṭaikkāppu* of the first *patikam* itself by saying that the saint adorns the *patikam* with the *Tirukkaṭaikkāppu* after completing the *patikam* with ten verses. This sort of singing the benedictory songs are peculiar to Sambandhar and Ārurar but not to Appar (with the exception of the *Namasivāya patikam*).

Though Ārurar also sings the benedictory songs at the end of his *patikams* which Cēkkiḷār also calls by the same name, yet it is Sambandhar’s song that has become unique because its tone, style and spirit are very much authoritative; as for example,

'*āṇai namatē*' (it is my promise), '*Tirunīlakaṇṭam*', etc. (2.221.11; 1.116.1 - 10). They are looked upon as a great *kāppu* - *rakṣā* (protection) and hence the name *Tirukkaṭaikkāppu*. Sambandhar's benedictory songs, over the years, have become so very popular and influential that his *Tēvāram* itself has come to be called *Tirukkaṭaikkāppu*.

In an anthology known as the *Śivapprakāśapperum Tiraiṭṭu* (1422 A.D.)³⁰ the hymns of Sambandhar are mentioned as *Tirukkaṭaikkāppu*, while the hymns of Appar are referred to as *Tēvāram* and the hymns of Ārūrar as *Tiruppāṭṭu*. This practice persisted as late as 18th century A.D. Citamparasvāmikaḷ in his commentary on the *Avirōta Untiyār* makes the same distinction. Even common citizens seemed to be so much captivated by the authoritative and soothing tone of Sambandhar in '*āṇai namatē*' that they named themselves after the phrase as in '*āṇainamatenṛa perumāl*' (*S.I.I.* VIII No. 442).

Invariably, there are eleven verses including the *tirukkaṭaikkāppu* in each *patikam*. That is the general pattern. But there are some exceptions which only explain the rule. All *patikams* are adorned with *tirukkaṭaikkāppu* except the *patikams* 217, 352 and 382 where the benedictory verses are missing and in the case of *patikams* 53, 145 and 232 where the lines are incomplete. For *patikam* 128 — the *Tiruvelukūṇṇirukkai* — there is no clear-cut verse. The last lines are only suggestive.

The arrangement of verses and their pattern. One is easily drawn to attention by the singularly uniform pattern followed in the *patikams*. The last three verses preceding *tirukkaṭaikkāppu* in almost all the *patikams* repeat the same three themes regularly. For anyone who is familiar with Sambandhar's *patikam* they do stand not on mere convention but on a very strong conviction of the poet. In fact they stand for certain basic truths the message of which Sambandhar wants to hold out to the world with all the strength of his conviction and all the force of his power of expression.

Cēkkiḷār who has great reverence for Sambandhar and understands his spirit very sincerely is able to grasp the great message of Sambandhar enshrined in these three verses. The first one which occurs in the eighth verse of every *patikam*, is about the repentance of Rāvaṇa for his vain audacity to lift the Mount Kailāsa much to the consternation of the Mother Divine and the Lord's ready and instant grace bestowed on him. Cēkkiḷār reads here a message that if anyone on this earth committing misdeeds surrenders to the Lord (who has an eye on his forehead), His magnificent grace will bear with him (T.J.N. Pu. 77).

The second message enshrined in the ninth verse is as follows: "Without knowing the fact that Śiva bestows His grace only on those who worship Him, the conceited Viṣṇu and Brahmā, with their erring hearts and taking the forms of a dark animal (swine) and a bird (swan) fall and fail to achieve (their aim of finding the feet and crest of the Lord); but finally they attain the grace of the Lord only through worship" (T.J.N. Pu. 78). In the 10th verse Sambandhar asserts that the ways of *Camāṇar* and *Buddhar* (the Jains and Buddhists) will lead their followers only to infamy and danger, because they do not seek to escape from the bondage by realising the ways of the Lord, who is the very ultimate cause of the *Veda* (Ibid. 79). From first to last, barring a few instances, Sambandhar insists on these three messages.

Now the scheme of other verses of the *patikams* may be taken up. There are different patterns both in content and form employed in these seven (or eight or less) verses. Mythological references, the various exploits and acts of grace of the Lord Śiva, folklore, description of nature in the philosophical background, its message, portrayal of social, economical and cultural conditions, description of temples and temple worship, the benefits that accrue on their account, reference to the contemporary, historical and mythological personages, the hallowed places of Tamil, Sanskrit, the *Vedas*, and music, philosophical and religious perspectives and a host of other things are flowing through the verses as though in a pageantry, not as dumb objects, but with the accompaniment of mellifluous music.

Mythology here is not a matter of fancy; it is the creed of a living faith. All the facts of God are not conceived on the celestial soil; but they come down to play on the rich land of the Tamil musical movement. The whole of Tamil land evolves and blossoms into a *Śivaloka*. Temples are not brick and mortar. They are the very life centres which at once grant bread and clothes as well as salvation. Tamil, Sanskrit, music, dance, all arts and every tree and stone are spiritualised and immortalised. Tamil and music become the two sides of the same coin. They breathe divinity, grace, beauty and everlasting bliss. Nature seems to be a colourful theatre wherein He dances.

NOTES

A general note: The texts of the *Tēvāram* hymns that are referred to in this work are based on the *Tēvārat Tiruppatikaṅkal* (from Vol. I to VII) published by Dharumapuram Ādīnam in the years 1953, 1954, 1955, 1957, 1961, 1963 and 1964 respectively. The reference numbers of the hymns are given in a manner as to indicate the *Tirumuṟai* number, the *patikam* number and then the individual verse number, e.g., 1.4.8 = first *Tirumuṟai*, fourth *patikam* and the eighth verse.

1. 'எனதுரை தனதுரையாக' (the utterances of mine are but the manifestation of His words) - 1.76.1 — 10

2. In fact in the Tiruvāymur *patikam*, Appar makes a direct reference to Sambandhar. He alludes to the anecdotes at Tiruvilimilalai where the Lord bestowed first the inferior coins which He replaced with genuine ones after Sambandhar's appeal (5.50.5). In the subsequent stanza (5.50.6) he also makes mention, in no uncertain terms, about the closing of the temple gates at Tirumaṟaikkāṭu by the powerful spell of the Tamil verses sung by Sambandhar. Moreover, Appar clearly points out that such a person who has caused the doors of the temple to close, is standing near him. This is taken as a proof of their contemporaneity.

3. நல்லிசை ஞானசம் பந்தனும் நாவினுக்
கரையனும் பாடிய நற்றமிழ் மாலை
சொல்லிய வேசொல்லி ஏத்துகப் பானை — 7.67.5
4. Dorai Rangaswamy, M.A., *The Religion and Philosophy of Tēvāram*, Preface, Book I, Vol. I, University of Madras, Madras 1958 - p. ix
5. Somasundaram and Poovannan — *Tamiḻ Ilakkiya Varalāru*, 5th Edn., Tirumalai Stationway Stores, Madras 1978, p. 212
6. His phrase 'ஆணை நமதென்னவலான்' (*Āḷuṭaiya Piḷḷaiyār Tiruttokai, Patinōrām Tirumuṟai*, K.V. Jagannathan, Tiruppanantāḷ Edn., [Sri Vaikuntam, 1950] — line 45) finds currency in inscription, *South Indian Inscriptions (S.I.I.)* Vol. VIII, No. 42
7. *Āḷuṭaiya Piḷḷaiyār Tiruvantāti*, 17
8. Madras Epigraphical Report, 1913/147
9. *Ibid.*, 192 and 194 of 1918
10. *S.I.I.* Vol. III No. 139
11. *Tiruttonṭar Purāṇam* alias *Periyapurāṇam*, *Tirumalaicciṟappu* — 39, Tiruppanantāḷ Edn., T. M. Kumarakuruparan Pillai, Sri Vaikuntam, 1961
12. P. Soundra, *A Study of St. Tiruñānacambandar* — unpublished thesis submitted for the degree of Ph.D., Annamalai University, 1971
13. *Sentamiḻ*, Vol. I, p. 285
14. *S.I.I.* Vol. III, Part - I, No. 43
15. *Ibid.*, No. 139 and 151 A
16. *Tirunāvukkaracar Purāṇam* (T.N.A.Pu.) 70 and *Tirujñānasambandhar Purāṇam* (T.J.N.Pu.) 76
17. See also *Patirruppattu* (published by S. Rajam, Madras 1957)
18. Vellaivaranan, *Panniru Tirumuṟai Varalāru*, Annamalai University, 1972, pp. 7 and 9

19. Vipulananda Aṭikaḷ. *Yāḷ Nūḷ*, Karantai Tamil Caṅkam, 1974, p. 249.
20. *S.I.I.* Vol. II, No. 38
21. *Ibid.*, No. 20
22. 97/1931 - 32
23. *S.I.I.* Vol. VIII, No. 260
24. *Ibid.*, Vol. VIII, No. 675
25. *Annual Report on South Indian Epigraphy for 1921* — part II, para. 33
26. 158/1911
27. *Silappatikāram* — *Araṅkēṟṟukkātai* — commentary of Aṭiyārkunallār and *Arumpatavurai* for the line 67, U. V. Swaminatha Iyer, 1960, Madras, p.67
28. *Ibid.*, lines 135 - 136, p. 73
29. 'தெய்வம் சுட்டிய வாரப் பாடல் தேவாரமாயிற்று என்று சொல்லலாம்' — *Yāḷ Nūḷ*, 1974, p.213
30. *Sentamiḷ*, Vol. I, p. 285

SECOND CHAPTER

LIFE OF SAMBANDHAR IN RELATION TO HIS TEACHINGS

2.1 *A biographical sketch*

In the history of South Indian Śaivism, the life of Saint Tiru-jñānasambandhar shines as the greatest and brightest landmark. Cēkkiḷār declares that he has descended on this earth in order to transform and transmute this world of all living and non-living things into Godhead.¹ He sings the glorious life of Sambandhar in 1256 verses out of the total of 4296 verses of his *Periyapurāṇam*. Hence the saying, '*pillai pāti, purāṇam pāti*' (one half of the *purāṇam* is on *Pillai* [Sambandhar] while the other half deals with the rest of the saints). Śaṅkara praises the wisdom and poetic acumen of this *drāviḍa śiṣu*. Right from Tirunāvukkaracar down to modern poets almost all poets of the Śaivite tradition hold him in high esteem. Nambiyāṇḍār and Cēkkiḷār identify him as the son of God and the later poets worship him as Lord Muruga incarnate. The life of Sambandhar as it gleams through his own hymns and as it is depicted by others is full of God-love, wisdom, human sympathy, social uplift, love of nature, music, aesthetic vision, poetic genius and whatever that stands for divinity and sublimity.

Now his life may be taken up for study which will be based on two methods. Studying his life as narrated by external sources is the first method. The second method is to examine his life critically in the light of internal and other evidences.

Appar, Ārūrar and Nambiyāṇḍār do make references to Sambandhar. But they are scarce and fragmentary. It is only

Cēkkiḷār who deals with Sambandhar's life very comprehensively by not only narrating his life proper, but also interpreting, elaborating and commenting on the ideas enshrined in his hymns. As pointed out earlier, he is not simply carried away by all vagaries of tradition although he gives due credit to his predecessors. It has been seen that better reliance can be laid on his work than on anything else. Hence it is safer to study the life of the saint as narrated by Cēkkiḷār. However, for want of space, a summary of Cēkkiḷār's account alone is given here.

At Cīrkāḷi, in the Cōḷa country, a male child was born to Śivapāta Irudayar (father) and Bagavati (mother). Their family, for generations, was noted for their intense devotion to Lord Śiva and commitment to the cause of Śaivism. The child grew well and attained the age of three. Even at that tender age, he was absorbed in Śiva-consciousness. He very often fell into a sort of psychological depression due to pangs of separation from Lord Śiva. At times, he used to sob as though he was frightened. One day his father took him along to a tank for a bathe. He kept him on the bank and got into the tank to have a dip. While he was immersed in the water the boy cried out, 'O! Father! O! Mother!' Lord Śiva of Tōṇipuram, moved by the loving call of the boy, appeared before him along with His consort. He caused the Mother to bestow Her Milk of Wisdom on the boy in a golden cup and consoled him by wiping the tears from his eyes. The boy drank the milk of wisdom and instantly became Jñāṇasambandhar (one who has been related to the supreme wisdom or gnosis). Śivapāta Irudayar without knowing what had happened, saw some drops of milk rolling down from the boy's mouth. He grew angry with the boy and asked him who had given him the milk. Thereupon the boy pointed at the Lord of Tōṇipuram with his finger and sang a *patikam* commencing with, '*Tōṭuṭaiya ceviyan*' in which he had declared, 'the Lord that has done this unto me is He.' Though the father did not see God, yet he understood what had happened. Being overwhelmed with an inexplicable joy, he took his son to the temple and thence home, when people thronged to see the boy of wonder. On the following morning Sambandhar

went to worship the Lord at Tirukkōlakkā near Cīrkāḷi. There, the Lord granted him golden cymbals with the 'Five Letters' (*namaṣivāya*) inscribed on them. During his stay at Cīrkāḷi Sambandhar used to worship the Lord of Tōṇipuram and occasionally visited the surrounding sacred places like Mahēndrapaḷḷi, Karukāvūr, Tirumullaivāyil, etc., where he sang many *patikams* on the Lord.

Sambandhar's fame and glory spread all over the country. Nīlakaṇṭhar of the *perumpāṇ* (musician) community and a great musical genius called on Sambandhar with his wife, Mataṅka-cūlāmaṇi. Sambandhar took the *pāṇ* couple to the temple and on the latter's request, allowed them to be with him for ever setting his *patikams* to *paṇs* on the *yāl* (lute). Then he visited Tillai (Cidambaram). One day the Tillai Brahmins appeared before Sambandhar as the retinue of Śiva (*Śivagaṇas*). He showed that vision to Nīlakaṇṭhar. From Tillai he visited many sacred places like Erukttampuliyūr, Tirumutukunṇam, Tūṅkāṇaimāṭam of Peṇṇākaṭam and Arattuṇai. At Arattuṇai Śiva appeared in the dream of the local people and exhorted them to present a palanquin umbrella and other insignia decorated with pearls to Sambandhar who was approaching them. They accordingly presented them to him who accepted them as an act of God's grace. Sambandhar after visiting places like Tirunelveṇṇai, Paḷuvūr, Visayamaṅkai, Tiruvaikāvūr, Tiruppuṇampayam, Tiruccēyṇālūr, Tiruppaṇantāl, Pandaṇainallūr, Ōmamāmpuliyūr, Vāḷkoḷiputtur, Kaṭampūr, Nāraiyyūr, Karuppariyālūr, etc., returned to Cīrkāḷi, where he was accorded a warm and tumultuous welcome. Cēkkiḷār at this juncture mentions two important events; one is that when Sambandhar returned from the temple he was received by men and women and that his own mother (*inṇatāyar*) paid obeisance to him (*iṇraiñci ētta*). Another event is that Sambandhar entered a *math* (*maṭattup pukkār*) instead of his parent's home. These are important because they explain the position of a preceptor (*ācārya*) which he held. As he reached the age of seven by now, his *upanayanam* (the ceremony of investiture of the sacred thread) was celebrated. The famous *Pañcākṣarat tiruppatikam* was composed at this juncture.

Tirunāvukkaracar on hearing about the divine boy came to Cīrkālī and met him. The two saints spent many days together singing and praying to God. Then Appar took leave of him and continued his pilgrimage. It was during this period that Sambandhar made many innovations in Tamil prosody and musical forms.

Sambandhar commenced his second pilgrimage accompanied by his father and the *pāṇi* couple. After visiting Kaṇṇārkōyil, Puḷḷirukkuvēḷūr, Niṇṇiyūr, Nīṭūr, Puṅkūr, Maṇṇippālikkarai and other holy places, he reached Tiruvaiyāru from where he visited the surrounding places. He continued his pilgrimage in the western direction. At Pāccilāccirāmam he cured the princess of an affliction called *muyalakan* (a sort of epilepsy). In the *Koṅku* country he also cured the devotees of a fever caused by cold by singing the *Tirunīlakaṇṭap patikam*. After visiting many holy places singing *patikams* on the Lord he approached Paṭṭiccaram. As he was suffering from the hot sun the Lord directed *Śivagaṇas* to provide him with *pandal* decorated with pearls. Then he reached Tiruvāvaṭuturai. At the request of his aged father he appealed to the Lord for gold to perform the Vedic rites. A bag of thousand gold coins was placed on the altar by the grace of God. At Dharumapuram, the birth-place of Nīlakaṇṭhar, Sambandhar demonstrated the divinity of his *patikams* by singing one which could not be played on the *yāl* by the Pāṇar.

Then after visiting Naḷḷāru, he reached Cāttamaṅkai where he met his friend and follower, Nīlanakkar. At his request, Nīlanakkar gave shelter to the *pāṇi* couple who were untouchables at the sacrificial hall.² At the request of Cīṟuttonṭar he visited Tiruccēṅkāṭṭaṅkuṭi and sang *patikams* on Gaṇapatiṭturam. At Tirumarukal he resurrected a dead young man bitten by a snake on his way and got him married to a damsel. Then he visited Pukalur where his friend and follower Murugaṇār received him. Appar also came and joined them. Sambandhar visited many surrounding places of importance like Ārūr, Valivalam, etc. Then he and Appar together continued their pilgrimage singing *patikams* at many places. They met Kuṅkiliyakkalaya Nāyaṇār at Kaṭavūr.

The visit to Tiruvīlimiḷalai is very important. It was here where Sambandhar and Appar mitigated the sufferings of the people affected by famine, by feeding them with food bought out of the gold obtained from the Lord of Tiruvīlimiḷalai.

At Tirumaraikkāṭu the temple gates remained closed fast and no one could open them. Appar sang a *patikam* and the gates opened of their own accord while Sambandhar caused the closure of the doors by singing his *patikam*. At Tiruvāymūr Sambandhar saw the Lord in a dancing pose. He showed it to Appar also. While at Maraikkāṭu, the messengers came from the Pāṇḍiyan queen, Maṅkaiyarkkarasi and the prime minister, Kulacciṛaiyār. They sought the help of Sambandhar to dispel the evil hold of the Jains over the king and the country and to reestablish the supremacy of Saivism in the Pāṇḍiyan country. Sambandhar took leave of Appar and after visiting a number of holy places on the way, reached Madurai (Ālavāy) where he was accorded an affectionate welcome by Kulacciṛaiyār and the queen. The Jain ascetics living in the surrounding places like the Ānaimāmalai dreamt inauspicious dreams. Being terribly afraid and agitated, they complained to the king about the visit of Sambandhar. They somehow got the consent of the king to drive him away by creating fire out of their *mantric* power. But they actually set fire to the abode of Sambandhar in the night. However, by the grace of God the fire was put out.

He saw through the evil design of the Jains and held that the king was to blame. So he, singing a *patikam*, directed the fire to get hold of the king in the form of a fever. The king fell ill. The Jains used all their powers and talents to cure him, but in vain. The queen and the minister brought in Sambandhar who had prayed to the Lord of Ālavāy and obtained His permission to face the ordeals, thrown by the Jains. It was agreed that whosoever cured the king, his religion will be embraced by the king as the true religion. The Jains failed miserably in their attempts. Sambandhar cured the king of his illness by applying the holy ash on his person and singing the famous *Tirunīṟṟuṟ-patikam*. Then the Jains drew Sambandhar to other forms of

disputation. Both the parties would inscribe the principle of their respective religions on palm leaves. They should be thrown into the fire. Those whose palm leaf was not burnt by the fire were the winners. Sambandhar agreeing to this, picked up a palm leaf wherein his *patikam* on Nallāru was written and chanting another *patikam* put the leaf into the fire. The leaf was not burnt away, but remained ever green. But the leaf of the Jains was burnt to ashes. However, they would not easily give in. They insisted on another attempt. But this time, Kulacciraiyār got up and suggested that the vanquished in the dispute must be brought to hold some accountability. In a fit of rage, and by a slip of their tongues, the Jains declared that the vanquished, of their own accord, would get themselves impaled in the stake.

According to the third ordeal, the palm leaves bearing the religious principles of the two disputants must be put into the floods of the river Vaigai. It was decided that the victors were those whose palm leaf swam against the current of the floods. This time, the Jains took the initiative and put their palm leaf into the floods which washed away the leaf into the sea. But the palm leaf of Sambandhar bearing his *Tiruppāsuram* swam against the current and by the spell of another *patikam* reached the bank at a place called Ēṭakam. The Jains, all of them, mounted on the stake. Sambandhar left the matter to be dealt with by the king according to the dictates of his jurisprudence. He offered the sacred holy ash to the king who embraced Śaivism and became an ardent follower of Sambandhar along with his queen and the minister. After visiting the holy places of the Pāṇḍiya country he returned to Cīrkāli.

His third and lengthy pilgrimage took him upto Kāḷatti (Kālahasti) in the north from where he sang *patikams* on Kētāram, Kailāyam, Paruppatam, etc. — the holy places of the northern country. On his return, he visited the *Kapālīccaram* at Mayilāppūr. Here, Pūmpāvai, daughter of one Śivanēsaṇ, a great devotee of Sambandhar, died of snake-bite. Her father kept her mortal remains in a pot and awaited the visit of Sambandhar. The latter, on hearing this, sang his *Pūmpāvaiṭṭu* and brought her back to

life. According to Cēkkiḷār, Sambandhar had reached his sixteenth year (marriageable age). He gently declined the hand of Pūmpāvai offered by her father regarding her as his own daughter. Then, after visiting a number of places and singing *patikams*, he returned to Cīrkālī. His parents and relatives compelled him to marry the daughter of Nambāṇḍār Nambi of Nallurpperumaṇam. Sambandhar at first did not agree to it. They pleaded with him that he should get married to uphold the Vedic tradition. Then the marriage was arranged and celebrated at Nallūrpperumaṇam.

But Sambandhar's spirit which was ripe enough to unite with the Lord could not be in the fetters of wedlock. He sang his *patikam* commencing with '*kallūrpperumaṇam vēṇṭā*' in which he expressed his intense longing to unite with the Lord. When he went to the temple to circumambulate, the Lord there appeared as a column of fire giving an opening in the middle. Sambandhar exhorted the entire marriage party including his parents, parents-in-law, Nilanakkār, Nilakaṇṭar and Murugaṇār together with their consorts to enter into the glow of light to reach the feet of the Lord. At this juncture he sang the *pañcākṣara patikam* beginning with '*kātalāki*' — (3.307). Sambandhar with his bride was the last to enter. Perhaps, he desired to wait unto the last.

2.2 *An analysis of the life of Sambandhar*

The name of the Saint is Tirujñānasambandhar. But it has to be examined whether this name is his real (proper) name. According to Cēkkiḷār, this name is an acquired one after drinking the milk of wisdom given to him by the Mother Divine.³

It is of interest to note that even when Cēkkiḷār gives an account of the various ceremonial functions including the *nāmakaraṇam* (naming the child), nowhere he mentions the real and proper name of the child. In the cases of other *Nāyanmārs*, Cēkkiḷār gives their names as follows: Tirunāvukkaracar as Maruḷ Nikkiyār;⁴ Kaṇṇappar as Tiṇṇaṇ;⁵ Ārūrar as Nambi Ārūrar;⁶ Kāraikkāl Ammaiyaṛ as Puṇitavatiyaṛ;⁷ Cīruttoṇṭar as Parañcōti;⁸ Kāḷaripparivaṛ as Perumākkōtaiyaṛ.⁹ But in the case of Jñānasambandhar, Cēkkiḷār chooses to call the child not by his proper

name but by the name of the town, viz., *Pukalippillaiyār* (the child of Pukali), *Cirapurattuc-ciruvār* (the young boy of Cirapuram), *Pillaiyār* (the child), etc. Even Nambiyāṇḍār Nambi gives the name of the saint as '*piramāḇpuranakara maṇṇan*', '*caṇṇaiyār nāṭan*', '*kavunīyār tīṇan*,' etc. No proper name is given by him.

Būt Sambandhar calls himself *Jñāṇasambandhar*, '*Bandhan*', '*Kaḷumala māṇakar talaivaṇ*', '*Kavuṇi*', '*Cirapura nakar irai*', '*Kāliyar maṇṇan*', '*Kaḷumalavūraṇ*', '*Ponṇi nāṭan*', '*Pukali vāntan*', '*Cirapurakkōṇ*', '*Pukalinakar maṇṇan*', '*Kavuṇiyar kulapati*', '*Kāliyarkōṇ*', '*Kālikkavuṇiyan*', '*Kāli ūraṇ*' and so on. He does not call himself *Pillai* anywhere in his hymns now extant. This suggests that his real name was not *Pillai*.

All these names point out that they are derived either from the episode of milk of wisdom, or from the names of the town *Cīrkāḷi* and from the name of the sub-caste. They do not appear to suggest his real name at all. Nor is there any positive and clear reference to his real name. His real name might have been obliterated because of the popularity of the name *Jñāṇasambandhar* which had come to acquire an element of divinity on account of its association with the milk of wisdom. As has been pointed out earlier, *Cēkkiḷār* has not mentioned his real name as he has done in the case of others like *Appar*, *Ārūrar*, etc. His omission of the saint's real name is not just a matter of chance or slip. So it could be contended that the name '*Jñāṇasambandhar*' is only a derivative name. Sambandhar himself uses this name in his first *patikam* in the derivative sense, possibly due to the awareness of the fact of his enlightenment. That Sambandhar was a native of *Cīrkāḷi* is borne out by innumerable references in his *patikams* as has been cited before.

As for the names of his father and mother *Cēkkiḷār* gives *Śivapāta Irudayar* and *Bagavatiyār*¹⁰ respectively. But nowhere in his hymns Sambandhar gives the names of his parents even though it is not unusual for the saints to give the names of their parents, as for example, *Ārūrar* calls himself the son of *Caṭaiyaṇ* (*caṭaiyaṇ tan kātalan*) and son of *Caṭaiyaṇ* and *Isai Jñāṇi*

(*caṭaiyan isai jñāni ciṟuvan*).¹¹ However, Sambandhar makes reference to his being mounted on his father's shoulders when he was going on his pilgrimage to Naṇipaḷḷi (*attan piyalmeḷ iruntu*) [2.220.11]. He also refers to his father as *tātaiyār* (3.282.2).

That Sambandhar belonged to *Kauṇḍinya gōtram* is amply testified by his own references such as *kavuṇiyan jñānasambandhan*, *kavuṇi*, *kavuṇiyar perumān*, *kavuṇiyar kulapati*, *kavuṇiyan*, etc. The Brahmins of this *Kauṇḍinya* clan were one of the early settlers in Tamilnadu who were steeped in their Vedic learning and culture. They were also zealous followers of Śaivism. In this connection attention must be drawn to the Tamil *Puṇanānūru* poem of the *Gaṅkam* period in which the poet Āvūr Mūlaṅkiḷār eulogises the great valour demonstrated by one Kavuniyan Viṇṇantāyan's ancestors in conquering the opponents of Śiva and the Vedic lore.¹² According to the colophon of this *Puṇam* poem, Kavuniyan Viṇṇantāyan was a *pārppān* (a 'Seer', hence a brahmin) of Pūñcāṟṟūr in the Cōḷa country and a *kavuṇiyan* (of *kaunḍinya gōtram*). The early commentator of the *Puṇanānūru* who was anterior to Aṭiyārkunallār (12th century A.D.),¹³ comments on the 'opponents' of Śiva as people belonging to the extraneous religions like Buddhism,¹⁴ etc. This explains that the brahmins of the *kaunḍinya* sect were not only followers of Vedic Śaivism but also were its ardent and staunch upholders. One member of this clan, a *kaunḍinya* (Hun-T' ien) even reached the Indo-Chinese peninsula in the early centuries of A.D. and founded the kingdom of Funan and the first *Kauṇḍinya* dynasty.¹⁵ S. Singaravelu writes:

Filloizat is of the opinion that though the *kaunḍinya gotra* (or sect) was of north Indian origin, the members of the sect or clan had played an important role in upholding Śaivism in South India. It is also significant that the Kauṇḍinyan of the Cōḷa country and the Kauṇḍinyan of the Funan Kingdom were both keenly interested in safeguarding Śaivism at about the same historical period and also that they both claimed descent from the same ancestry.¹⁶

Cēkkiḷār's account that Śivapāta Irudayar performed intense worship for begetting a child to uphold the Vedic lore and

Śaivism against the onslaught of Jains' overriding influence fits in very well with the traits of people belonging to the Kaunḍinya gōtra.

According to Cēkkiḷār the first and foremost incident of significance in the life of Sambandhar is the milk of wisdom episode. It is most likely that Sambandhar alludes to this incident in his Tirukkaḷumalam *patikam*, in verse No. 2. According to Cēkkiḷār, Sambandhar sings this *patikam* at Madurai when his father calls on him from Cīrkāḷi. On seeing his father he was reminded of the great act of grace of his divine Parents. One could easily feel his reminiscent mood and outburst of feelings in this *patikam*:

“When my father was angry with me, saying that the food (milk) in the flower-like golden cup is not worth, He (the Lord came and) mastered me; He wears the ear-ring suitably in His ear. Does the great One dwell at the prosperous city of Kaḷumalam together with her (His consort) who is youthfully innocent?” (3.282.2).¹⁷

In the above passage one could possibly find the allusion. That he was just a child at the time of the event is also very much evident from this allusion. There is likely to be another reference in the first *patikam* itself provided the interpretation is acceptable. It occurs in the first two lines of the eleventh verse of the first *patikam* (1.1.11) which may be presently examined. At the outset, it should be remembered that this *patikam* is in the form of the outpourings of a lady-love captivated by the charms of the Lord and that Sambandhar is said to have attained his enlightenment on the banks of the sacred tank. With this background the interpretation may be easily understood in contra-distinction to the ordinary meaning of the verse which is as follows:

“The Lord who is capable of showing (to us the) ways of salvation is pleased to dwell at Piramāpuram where the sprawling tank with blossoming lotuses, of the sage (Brahmā) who is well versed in the scripture, is situated.”

It could also be interpreted on the following lines:

“The Lord (who is) the sage well versed in the scripture (*maṛai valla muṇi*) and capable of showing ways to attain salvation has exposed the secret of my love affair (*alar mēya*) on the banks of the extensive tank.” The term ‘*muṇi*’ (the sage) refers to Śiva and not to Brahmā. The meaning here is that the Lord has enslaved him on the banks of the tank. To describe Lord Śiva as a sage well versed in the *Vedas* is not unusual to Sambandhar; ‘*pāṭal maṛai vallāṇ*’ (One who is well versed in the musical *Veda*) (1.46.3), ‘*vētaṅkaḷ vēṟu vēṟu terittavan*’ (one who has expounded different *Vedas*) (1.113.11), ‘*maṛai pāṭum parama yōgi*’ (a supreme Yogi who sings the *Vedas*) (1.119.3), ‘*vētam virittu ōtuvār*’ (one who could elaborate the *Vedas*) (3.288.4) are a few examples which may be cited in support of the above contention that the term *muṇi* (sage) refers to Śiva. The interpretation of the word ‘*alar*’ in the sense of public exposure of love affairs, especially in this context, fits in very well.

Sambandhar refers in the *patikam* to his enlightenment on the banks of the tank at Piramāpuram. Nambi Ārurar vouches for the truth of this great incident in his Tirunaṇipalḷi *patikam* (7.97.9). He says that the Lord has graciously granted enlightenment to the great Jñānasambandhar the other day, at the blemishless Kāḷi (*ūṇamil kāḷi tannuḷ uyar jñānasambandhark kanṟu jñānam aruḷ purintāṇ*).

The second important event in Sambandhar’s life is his obtaining the golden cymbals at Tirukkōlakkā. As per Cēkkiḷār’s version, Sambandhar obtains the cymbal as soon as he has sung the first verse and that he completes the *patikam* with *tirukkāṭaik-kāppu* keeping time with the cymbals. But there is no reference to it in the *patikam* at all, either implicit or explicit. However, Nambi Ārurar who is (chronologically) very close to Sambandhar, affirms that the cymbals were presented to him in the presence of the people of the world (*jñānasambandharukku ulakavar mun tūlam intavan* — 7.62.8).

The third important event was that which occurred at Pāccilāccirāmam. At the request of the Maḷava king he cured the princess who was afflicted with an ailment called *muyalakan*. The *patikam* concerned appears to be in the form of a foster mother's words pleading whether it is proper for the Lord to cause misery to the girl. There is a tendency to feel that the whole tradition of this story had evolved out of this theme. But Sambandhar has so many songs of love theme to his credit, and except the Tirumarukal *patikam* all others are not associated with any tradition. But in the case of the *patikams* on Pāccilāccirāmam and Tirumarukal alone, the stories had evolved. And they are supported by no less personages than Nambiyāṇḍār, Cēkkiḷār, Uyyavanta Tēvar of the *Tirukkalīṟruppaṭiyār* and so on. Even the words employed in the two *patikams* such as '*mayal ceyvatō ivar māṇṇpē*' (1.44.1), (Is it His greatness that He allures or confuses her?) and '*takumō iva! uḷmelivē*' (2.154.11) (Does her suffering bring credit to you?) are suggestive enough. So there is nothing to gain in suspecting the bonafides and authenticity of the traditions, especially in these two cases.

At Tirucceṅkuṇṇūr Sambandhar cured the local people and devotees when they were laid up with severe fever, by invoking the name of the Lord *Tirunīlakanṭam*. The tone and contents of the *patikam* of Tirucceṅkuṇṇūr are quite in agreement with this tradition.

The next important event occurs at Tiruvāvaṭuturai. Śivapāta Irudayar wanted to go back to Cīrkāḷi to perform the *yāga* (sacrifice) for which he required money from Sambandhar. But where could Sambandhar go for money? He went to the temple and sang a *patikam* beginning with '*iḷarīṇum taḷarīṇum*'. In the appending two lines of each verse (*Nālaṭimēlvaiṇṇu*) he says, "O! Araṇ of Āvaṭuturai, if you do not give me anything (money) is it your kind grace? Is it how you master me?" (3.262.1-10). In the *tirukkaṭaikkāṇṇu* he calls his *patikam* '*vilaiyuṭai aruntamiḷ mālai*' — a garland of Tamil verses which has fetched him a price. Possibly he means here that he has obtained the gold from the Lord after singing this *patikam*. Apart from Nambiyāṇḍār Nambi and

Cēkkiḷār, even Tirunāvukkaracar makes a clear reference to this great incident in his *patikam* (4.56.1) as '*kaḷumala ūrarkku aimpon, āyiram koṭuppār pōlum āvaṭutuṟai aranē*' (Is it that the Lord of Āvaṭutuṟai would give a thousand gold (coins) to the man of Kaḷumalam?).

Sambandhar sang a *patikam* at Dharumapuram to which the *paṇ*, *yāḷmuri* is ascribed. According to the *Arumṇatavurai* of the *Silappatikāram*, *muri* is a kind of metre in which the same line in a musical composition undergoes a sudden twist both in word arrangement and musical notation.¹⁸ Possibly, this *paṇ* could not be played on *yāḷ*. Hence the name *yāḷmuri*. That it is a kind of *paṇ* has been made clear by Nambiyāṇḍār Nambi when he enumerates the type of *patikams* sung by Sambandhar.¹⁹ From these points it could be gathered that *yāḷmuri* is a type of *paṇ* which could not be easily played on *yāḷ*. Obviously this might have given rise to the tradition that this *paṇ* when sung by Sambandhar has provoked the *pāṇar* to break his *yāḷ* and other related details. But the tradition supported by Nambiyāṇḍār and Cēkkiḷār is unassailable.

Apart from Cēkkiḷār, Nambiyāṇḍār Nambi in his *Āḷuṭaiya-piḷḷaiyār Tiruvantāti* (verse 71) mentions that Sambandhar was very friendly with Nilanakkar and Muruganāyaṇār (*nīlanakkark-kum pukalūr murugarkkum tōḷaṇai*). Sambandhar's *patikams* on Tiruccāttamaṅkai (3.316.2,11) and Pukalūr (2.228.3,5) attest to the same. Nambiyāṇḍār also mentions his warm friendship with Ciṟuttonṭar in the *Āḷuṭaiya-piḷḷaiyār Tiruvulāmālai* (73-74). Cēkkiḷār gives a full account of it and it has been confirmed by Sambandhar's *patikams* on Tiruccenkāṭṭaṅkuṭi (3.321.1-9; 1.61.10).

Another important event took place at Viḷimiḷalai. The gold coin that Sambandhar obtained daily from the Lord was an old one (*paḷaṅkācu*) (5.50.7) which was rusty (*kaṟaikol kācu*) (1.92.2), not perhaps very much in currency. That was why the shopkeepers demanded a discount (*vaṭṭam*) and hence the delay in feeding the poor. That Sambandhar appealed to the Lord again for get-

ting the genuine coins so that the feeding could be made in time has been borne out by Sambandhar's *Tiruvirukkukkuṟaḷ* (1.91.1,2) in which he requests the Lord, "Blemishless Lord of Miḷalai! grant me the (good) coins so as to get rid of the rusty coins" (*vāci tiravē kācu nalkuvīr māsiṇ miḷalaiyīr*). When the feeding at the proper time was affected it must have caused a sense of uneasiness in his mind. That is why he says '*ēsal illaiyē*' (If he gets good coins then there is no room for ill-talk), '*caṅkai tavirmiṇē*' (Remove the doubt in the minds of the people), '*karakaitavirmiṇē*' (Remove the evil) (1.92.8). As pointed out earlier, Appar vouches for this incident in his *Vāymūr patikam* (5.50.7) — '*pāṭippēṟṟa paricil paḷaṅkāsu, vāṭi vāṭṭam tīrppar*' (He used to remove the fading (of Sambandhar's mind) which was due to his getting the old coins as his prize from the Lord).

Nambi Ārūrar also alludes to this event in his *Tiruvīṭimiḷalai patikam* (7.88.8) — '*vīṭimiḷalai iruntu nīr tamīḷōṣu isai kēṭkum iccayāl kācu nittam nalkiṇīr*' (Dwelling at Viṭimiḷalai you granted coin daily on account of the desire of listening to Tamil with music). An eventful incident occurred at Maṟaikkāṭu. According to Cēkkiḷār, Sambandhar closed the gates of the temple already opened by Appar at the latter's request. The first verse of the *patikam* on Tirumaṟaikkāṭu (2.173.1) gives a clue to this incident as follows: "O the hero of Maṟaikkāṭu which is encompassed by the honey-yielding groves and wherein the fourfold *Vedas* sing your glory and worship you, please answer this question of mine as I intend to have the doors closed" (*katavam tirukkāppukkoḷ! un karut-tālē*).

As mentioned earlier, it has been corroborated by Appar in his *Tiruvāymur patikam* (5.50.8) where he mentions that he (Sambandhar) had closed the doors by singing his chaste Tamil song with all its powerful spell (*centamiḷ uṟaippuppāṭi aṭaippittār*). Nambiyāṇḍār Nambi also mentions this incident in his *Āḷuṭaiya-piḷḷaiyār Tiruvantāti* (91) as '*aṭaittatu māmaṟaikkāṭartāṅkōyīr-kata-viṇai*' (the doors that he closed are of the temple of Maṟaikkāṭar).

As per Cēkkiḷār's account, Appar on the night of this incident was exhorted by the Lord of Tiruvāymūr who appeared

in his dream to follow him to that place. When he followed Him, He suddenly disappeared on the way which annoyed Appar very much. Sambandhar on hearing about Appar's departure followed him to Tiruvāymur. On the way he met Appar. The Lord of Vāymūr appeared before his eyes in His dancing pose. Sambandhar not only saw this great vision but also showed it to Appar (TNA. Pu. 281).

That the Lord of Vāymur appeared in the mind of Appar and exhorted him to follow Him, that He disappeared in the midway much to the remorse of Appar and that Appar made a reference to Sambandhar as standing yonder to him are the facts affirmed by Appar in his Vāymūr *patikam* (5.50).

In the Vāymur *patikam* (2.247) of Sambandhar there is a perplexing expression occurring in the last line of every verse but the *tirukkaṣaikkāppu*. '*Ivarāṇīr*' is that expression. There are two interpretations. According to the first one, the phrase can be split as *ivar* + *ā!* + *nīr*. It is said that *ivar* (him) denotes Appar, '*ā!*' means 'to enslave', while '*nīr*' is *nīrmai* — of disposition. Thus the whole expression may be taken to mean this: "He who is of the disposition of enslaving 'him'." In the second interpretation the expression is split into *ivar* + *āṇīr*. It is said that '*āṇīr*' is the contracted form of *kāṇīr* (look). It is believed that Sambandhar is asking Appar to see the dance of the Lord. If this view is accepted then it could be contended as Sambandhar's reference to Appar and therefore an allusion to the incident.

The life of Sambandhar in its Madurai setting throws a great deal of light on the personality and philosophy of the saint and, therefore, is worthy of consideration.

According to Cēkkiḷār, when Sambandhar and Appar were camping at Tirumaṣaikkāṭu, messengers from the Pāṇḍiyan queen and the prime minister came requesting him to visit Madurai in order to set things right there. When he readily offered to go, Appar dissuaded him not to go there as the planetary conditions were not favourable to him. But Sambandhar insisted on his

departure saying that all planets would be good to the servants of God. The *patikam* commencing with '*vēyuru tōḷi paṅkan*' (2.221.1) quoted by Cēkkiḷār to explain this context, conveys the meaning.

That Sambandhar was already posted with information about Maṅkaiyarkkarasi and Kulaccirai and their supreme devotion could be easily discerned from the *patikam* beginning with '*maṅkaiyarkkarasi*' which he sings as he approaches Madurai exclaiming, "Is this that which is Ālavāy (another name to Madurai)" (*ālavāy āvatum ituvē* — 3.378.1). It perhaps gives the clue that Sambandhar visits Madurai at the request of the queen. The main mission of his visit to Madurai was to quell the malignant influence of the Jain monks on the king and the society by vanquishing them at the disputation and to uphold the supremacy of Śiva and the Vedic order. Before he sets out for Madurai he declares his supreme confidence in the efficacy of the holy ash which would stand him in good stead in his proposed confrontation with the *jains* and *buddhists* (*puttaroṭamaṇai vātil aṭivikkum aṇṇal tirunīru cemmaiṭiṭamē* — 2.221.10). Again at Madurai Sambandhar stresses this point. He prays to the Lord of Ālavāy to indicate His grace and consent and to permit him to vanquish, in the disputation, the baseless *amaṇar* and *tērar* who were loafing about scorning the Vedic sacrifice (*vēda vēḷviyai nintanai ceytuḷ ātamilli amaṇoṭu tērarai vātil vēḷḷaḷikkattiruvuḷḷamē* — 3.366.1). He also seeks His grace to combat and conquer in the disputation the *amaṇar* who do not intentionally perform the sacrifice (*vēḷḷu vēḷvi ceyyā kaiyarai oḷḷi vātu ceyyattiruvuḷḷamē* — 3.305.1). He also sincerely expresses his desire, "O! the Primordial Principle who dwell in the southern Ālavāy, let your glory alone flourish on the earth" (*nālam nin pukaḷē mika vēṇṭum teḷ ālavāyil uraiyum em ātiyē* — 3.366. 1-10).

Cēkkiḷār narrates that on the first night of Sambandhar's stay at Madurai the *amaṇar*, with the consent of the king, set fire to his abode. This was attested by Sambandhar himself in his *patikam* (3.309) beginning with '*ceyyaṇē*'. In all the ten verses of this *patikam* he mentions '*amaṇar koḷuvuṇ cuṭar*' (the fire set by the Jain ascetics). He feels that the king is to blame and directs the

fire to get hold of him: "Let the fire set by the *amaṇar* get hold of the Pāṇḍiyan mildly" (*amaṇar koḷuvuṇ cuṭar paiyavē cenru pāṇḍi-yarkku ākavē* — 3.309.1). This he repeats in the ten verses of the *patikam* and he refers to this in the *tirukkaṭai* also — *veppam tēnṇavan mēl uṛa* — to make the heat get hold of the southern king.

The fire did catch hold of the king and consequently he suffered from a high fever. Sambandhar describes this as the evil disease which caught hold over the person of the southern king (*tēnṇan uṭalurra tippiniyāyina* — 2.202.11). In the same verse we find a reference to the act of his curing the king by applying the holy ash over his body. According to Sambandhar, the *amaṇars* and others were simply struck with wonder at this sight (*kunṭi-kaikkaiyarkalōṭu cākkīyar kūṭṭamun kūṭak kaṇṭikaippipattu nīru* — 2.202.10). He also mentions in another *patikam* — the *Ālavāy Tiruvīyamakam* (3.373.6) — that the Lord had saved the sacred and auspicious ornament (*maṅkala aṇi*) of the queen of the southern king (*tēnṇavan tēvikku aṇiyaiyē mella nalkiya*) — meaning thereby that the Lord has saved the king's life when illness was inflicted upon him.

We learn from his *patikam* (3.297) that the *amaṇar* (perhaps in large numbers)²⁰ hailing from many places right from the Āṇai-māmalai²¹ confronted him in the disputation, that he was shouted at by them in a deplorable slang of *pākatam* (Prakrit), that they disrespected the (native) poets and that all of these misdeeds were committed in the presence of the king (*tēnṇavan*). He also gives a list of the names of the *amaṇars* in two groups, *cēṇa* group and *nanti* group. Candu Cēṇan, Intu Cēṇan, Taruma Cēṇan, Kantu Cēṇan, Kaṇaka Cēṇan in the *Cēṇa* group, and Kaṇaka Nanti, Puṭpa Nanti, Pavaṇa Nanti, Kumaṇamācunaka Nanti, Kuṇaka Nanti and Tivaṇa Nanti and other Nantis (*anakam nantiyar*) in the *nanti* group. Nambi Ārūrar also mentions these groups (*namaṇa-nantiyum karuma vīraṇum taruma cēṇaṇum* — 7.33.9).

The next ordeal of disputation was that the disputants must prove their respective truth through fire (*aṇal vātam*). The palm

leaf on which Sambandhar's *patikam* on Naḷḷāṟu beginning with 'pōkamārta' was written, was put into the fire, but it remained not only unburnt but ever green too. When the leaf was put into the fire, Sambandhar sang a *patikam* commencing with 'taḷiri/a vaḷaroli' (3.345.1). This *patikam* throws light on three important points: (i) that the leaf put into the fire was the one containing *patikam* commencing with *pōkamārta*; (ii) that the leaf was put into the fire before the king; and (iii) that the leaf was not affected by the fire. "Because the name of the Lord of Naḷḷāṟu is associated with the tender, radiant and cool bosom of the daughter of the Mountain who bestows her elegant beauty on the things of the world, even if we put this (leaf) into the fire it will not be damaged." This is the *general* meaning of each verse of the *patikam*. The *tirukkaṭaikkāppu* says that the leaf was put into the fire before the king (*koṟṟavan etiriṭai*).

Coming to the third disputation on the floods (*puṇal vātam*), Sambandhar's *patikams* bear sufficient testimony to the event that the leaf bearing his *Tiruppāsuram* commencing with 'vāḷka antāṇar' swam against the floods. In the eleventh verse of the *Tiruppāsuram* he says that right in front of those (the Jains), who have failed to realise the truth, in spite of the opportunity given to them by Lord Śiva, who had constituted the Tamil Academy (*caṅkam*) at Madurai, the palm leaf, without any support, darts against the clear water current (3.312.11). He also confirms this statement in another *patikam* on Kaḷumalam. There he says that He had caused the leaves on which the *patikam* was written to swim against the river before the royal court of the king of Madurai (*maturai manṇavaiyetirē patikama teḷutilai yavaiyetirē, varunatiyiṭai micai, varukaraṇē* — 3.371.12).

When Sambandhar sang another *patikam*, the leaf (*ēṭu*) was said to have halted at a place known as Tiruvēṭakam. In the *patikam* beginning with 'vaṇṇiyum mattamum' there is a reference to it, 'ēṭu cenṟu aṇaitaru ēṭakam' (ēṭakam where the *ēṭu* — palm leaf — reached ashore — 3.290.11).

That the *amaṇars* were completely vanquished in all the disputations has been asserted by Sambandhar in many instances,

e.g., that you have ruined the *tērars* and *amaṇars* (*tēramaṇ citaivu ceytīrē* — 3.353.10), that you have destroyed the *buddhars* along with the *amaṇars* (*puttarotu amaṇ aḷittīrē* — 3.356.10), that you have frowned upon the *amaṇar* and *tērar* (*kaṭṭamaṇ tērairaikkāyntīrē* — 3.357.10). That the Lord had graciously helped Sambandhar in his encounter with the *amaṇar* and that He was clever to expose the evil designs of the *amaṇar* have been explicitly expressed by Sambandhar in his *Tiruvīyamakam* of Tiruvīlimiḷalai (3.374.10).

According to Cēkkiḷār, all the *amaṇars*, eight thousand in number (TJN. Pu. 855), after getting vanquished at the ordeals, faced execution by the king on their own earlier commitment and terms. Nambiyāṇḍār and a host of others except Cēkkiḷār credit Sambandhar with the responsibility of putting the *amaṇars* in the stakes. But there is no reference at all in Sambandhar's hymns now extant. The whole issue has been extensively dealt with in the fifth chapter (5.6).

On his return from the *Pāṇḍināḍu*, Sambandhar desired to reach Koḷḷampūtūr which was on the other side of a river. It was in full spate and nobody was available to ferry the boat across the river. But Sambandhar and others boarded the boat and he sang a *patikam* beginning with '*koṭṭamē kamaḷum*'. Thereupon, by the grace of God the boat floated self-propelled and crossed the river to reach Koḷḷampūtūr. In this *patikam* on Koḷḷampūtūr (3.264) he mentions in each verse '*cella vuntuka*' (propel yourself to move on); and in the sixth verse he clearly states '*ōṭam vantu aṇai tarum koḷḷampūtūr*' (Koḷḷampūtūr where the boat comes to reach the shore).

In the Pūmpāvai episode, Cēkkiḷār narrates the interesting story. Pūmpāvai was the young daughter of Śivanēsar, a merchant of Mayilāppūr. He dedicated her in the name of Jñāna-sambandhar even as a very young girl. She died of snake-bite and her ashes and bones were kept in a pot as a holy trust to be handed over to Sambandhar. When the latter visited Mayilāppūr he asked Śivanēsar to bring and keep the pot in front of the temple. Sambandhar in the presence of all including the *amaṇar*

and buddhar sang a *patikam* beginning with '*maṭṭiṭṭa punnaiyan kāṇal maṭamayilai*' (2.183.1 - 10). Each verse in the *patikam* ends with '*pōtiyō pūmpāvāy?*' (Do you go away Pumpāvai?). Sambandhar calls it '*jñāṇasambandhar nalam pukaṇṭa pattu*' (The ten songs in which Jñāṇasambandhar has praised the physical beauty of Pūmpāvai). According to Cēkkiḷār, as Sambandhar went on singing, for each verse each part of Pūmpāvai developed and when he concluded the whole *patikam* the girl came out of the pot completely resurrected. So the expression '*nalam pukaṇṭa pattu*' has got some significance in this light.

The great event at Nallūrpperumaṇam according to Cēkkiḷār and Nambiyāṇḍār marks the last but not the least phase of the life of Sambandhar. From his hymns we learn that Sambandhar was well aware of his spiritual maturity and his deep longing to unite with the Lord. He was all sympathy and merciful towards all beings including those who differed from him, but his very being had been in constant pursuit of God. He had attained detachment from all earthly profits. He says that he had given up attachment to all that would give (earthly) profits and pleasures (*paḷavum paṇan ullāṇa paṇṇum oḷintōm* — 1.31.6).

The family bondage with wife, children and relatives is to him nothing but a sea of ignorance. Even in the past (probably he refers to his previous births) he could not lead a life of that sort. Being tempered by the agony of suffering, he had (at last) found out His name and his mind was in lasting love (with Him) (*peṇṭir makkaḷ curṇam ennum pētaipperuṇkaṭalai, viṇṭu paṇṭē vāḷa māṭṭēṇ vēṭarai nōy naliyakkaṇṭu kaṇṭē uṇṇaṇ nāmam kātalikkiṇṇa-tuḷḷam* — 1.50.3). God Śaṅkara alone is his mother as well as father (*tāyum niyē tantai niyē caṅkaraṇē* — v 7). He questions the Lord what is it that undermines Him if He releases him from the bondage of the body (*piṇiṇṇaṭum uṭampu viṭṭu iṇakkumāṇu kāṭṭi-nāyṅku iḷukku kiṇṇatennaiyē* — 2.234.5).

These are a few of the many references which will give us an idea of Sambandhar's spiritual maturity and his soul's longing to unite with God. That is why he at first protests, according to

Cēkkiḷār, to get into wedlock and finally agrees to the proposal in order to uphold the Vedic traditions and injunctions.

His *patikam* on Nallūrpperumaṇam (3.383) is very crucial for many reasons. In the first line itself he shows his mind in unmistakable terms. '*kṇallūrṇ perumanam vēṇṇā*' — that I do not want this marriage ritual of placing the foot of the bride on the mortar stone. He feels that he has reached a stage wherein all worldly relationships and formalities that separate him from his Lord are worthless. Hence he questions the Lord whether all his feelings expressed in his songs on sacred places right from Kaḷumalam are not truthful enough. Are they all falsehood and pretensions? (*kaḷumalam paḷlūrpperumaṇam pāṇṇu meyyāyttila?*).

He idealises even *bhoga* into *yoga* and visualises his Lord's preminence in that aspect saying that the Lord while enjoying the fruits of life, at once performs the *yoga* as well (*bōgattān yōgattaiyē purintāṇē*).

He is getting increasingly impatient to commingle with the Lord. He cries out, 'O! you who have entered and remained at Perumaṇam! you graciously grant us the way out (for salvation)' (*perumaṇam pukkiruntīr emaiṇṇōkkaṇṇiṇē*).

Cēkkiḷār says that on his request there arises a column of lustrous light with an opening in the middle. Sambandhar asks those who have come to attend his wedding to enter the glow to gain salvation here and now. In the verse ten, he invites all those who are perplexed and confused by listening to the (words of) ignorance uttered by *amaṇars* and *cākkiyars*, to worship the feet of the Lord of the *Vedas* who is pleased to dwell at Nallūrpperumaṇam. He also assures them that the salvation could be easily attained thereby (*vammiṇ...vīṇṇu elitāmē*).

In the heights of his heavenly soaring mood there is no wonder that he does not refer to the person whom he is married to and other particulars; nor does Cēkkiḷār or Nambiyāṇḍār mention her name. But we learn from inscriptions that her name was *Cokkiyār*. Her name is also mentioned as *Tōttira pūraṇi*.²²

Before concluding this chapter, the span of Sambandhar's life may be examined. That Jñānasambandhar attained enlightenment at a tender age (three years according to Cēkkiḷār,²³ '*kuñci kūṭāpparuvattu*'—at the age in which the locks of hair are too short to be tied into a tuft—Nambiyāṇḍār)²⁴ has been borne out by his own words (3.282.2). After his *upanayanam* at the age of seven, he undertakes his second tour in which his encounter with *amaṇar*, takes place at Madurai. At this time also he was quite a boy. When a large number of *amaṇars* confronted the young saint, Maṅkai-yarkkaraciyaṛ felt a bit diffident, for he was too young to face the robust *amaṇars* in their full strength. Sensing her natural anxiety, Sambandhar allayed her fears saying, "Lady of deer like eyes! the great queen of Vaḷuti (the Pāṇḍiya)! listen to me! Do not be overcome with pity thinking that I am only a *bālan* (a boy) with milky mouth" (3 297.1).

This is an infallible proof for us to conclude that he was quite a boy at that time. Considering the long distance he has covered in his second pilgrimage and his long sojourn at places like Viḷi-miḷalai, etc., he should have spent at least four years after he undertook this trip soon after his *upanayanam* (at the age of seven). So his age could be approximately eleven years when he was at Madurai. Afterwards he returned to Cīrkāḷi, stayed there for a sufficient length of time and undertook his third pilgrimage upto Kāḷatti in the north. While coming back he visited Tiruvorriyūr and Mayilai. Cēkkiḷār states here that he has attained the age of sixteen (*puṇṇiyappatiṇṇāṇṇu*).²⁵ Only a few months could have elapsed when his marriage was arranged. Nambiyāṇḍār also affirms that Sambandhar attained the feet of his divine Father when his relatives arranged his wedding at Perumaṇam.²⁶

According to Tamil tradition, the age of sixteen is the marriageable age for a male.²⁷ May be, because of this that Cēkkiḷār fixes his age at sixteen. There is no account of his life after the incident at Nallurpperumaṇam. So it could be concluded that Jñānasambandhar must have attained his *mukti* while he was quite a young saint.

NOTES

1. 'தாவில்சரா சரங்களெலாம், சிவம்பெருக்கும்
பிள்ளையார்

திரு அவதா ரஞ்செய்தார்'

Tirujñānasambandhar Purāṇam, 26

2. *Periyapurāṇam*, *Tirunīlanakka Nāyanār Purāṇam*, 30
3. *Tirujñānasambandhar Purāṇam*, 69
4. *Tirunāvukkaracar Purāṇam*, 18
5. *Kaṇṇappa Nāyanār Purāṇam*, 17
6. *Taḷuttāḷkoṇḍa Purāṇam*, 4
7. *Kāraikkāl Ammaiṇār Purāṇam*, 2
8. *Ciruttoṇṭar Purāṇam*, 2
9. *Kaḷariṇṇarivār Purāṇam*, 5
10. *Tirujñānasambandhar Purāṇam*, 15, 16
11. 7.58.11, 7. 16. 11
12. U. V. Swaminatha Iyer (ed.) *Purāṇāṇḍu*, III Edn; (Madras : 1935), 166, lines 1-9
13. *Ibid.*, *mukavurai*, p. xii
14. *Ibid.*, p. 324
15. S. Singaravelu, "Some aspects of South Indian Cultural Contacts with Thailand : Historical Background" — *Proceedings of the First International Conference Seminar of Tamil Studies*, 1966, Vol. I, p. 27
16. *Ibid.*, p. 27
17. போதையார் பொற்கிண்ணத் தடிசில் பொல் லாதெனத்
தாதையார் முனிவுறத் தான்எனை யாண்டவன்
காதையார் குழையினன் கழுமல வளநகர்ப்
பேதையா ளவனொடும் பெருந்தகை யிருந்ததே
— 3.282.2
18. 'எடுத்த இயலும் இசையும் தம்மின்
முடித்துப் பாடுதல் முரியெனப் படுமே'

Silappatikāram with commentary by Aṭiyārkunallār and *arumpatavurai*, p. 208

19. “ ... ஆக்கரிய யாழ்முரி சக்கரமாற் றீரடி முக்காலும் ”
— *Āḷuṭaiya Piḷḷaiyār Tiruvulāmālai, kaṇṇi*, 84

20. *Tirujñāṇasambandhar Purāṇam*, 758

21. Nambiyāṇḍār mentions *eṇ perum kuṇṇam* (eight lofty hills)
Āḷuṭaiya Piḷḷaiyār Tirukkalampakam, line 133

22. *Cirappuppeyar Akarāti*, Tirunelveli South Indian Tamil
Caṅkam, Ltd., (Madras) 1970, p. 378

23. *Tirujñāṇasambandhar Purāṇam*, 54

24. *Āḷuṭaiya Piḷḷaiyār Tiruccenpai viruttam*, 22

25. *Tirujñāṇasambandhar Purāṇam*, 1109

26. *Āḷuṭaiya Piḷḷaiyār Tiruttokai*, lines 61-65

27. Cf. *Silappatikāram*, *maṇikāḷa vāḷttu*, line 34 — Aṭiyārku-
nallār's commentary, p. 39

THIRD CHAPTER

THE PHILOSOPHY OF SAMBANDHAR

3.1 *The main philosophical problems*

Tirujñānasambandhar is primarily a saint-poet who has realised Godhead and experienced Bliss. Being a poet *par excellence* steeped in a high degree of music-sense, his experience of the blissful Beauty surges forth through the channels of the language of poetry and music charged with the finest sense of love but tempered with the highest state of enlightenment. Even though he is not a system-builder, one can discern philosophy gleaned through his hymns as the fragrance effuses from flowers.

The endeavour of the present writer is to weave his philosophy from out of his hymns. In doing so, great caution is applied against any temptation or tendency to confine him to any particular school of thought or metaphysical theory, though there may be reasons for doing so.

From the earliest times, his hymns have been esteemed as the *Tamil Veda*.¹ Many a time Cēkkiār calls them '*eḷutu māmaṛai*' (the great written *Vedas*, as contrasted to the *Vedas* which are unwritten). Nambiyāṇḍār also praises him as one who has expounded the Vedic rites and the Āgamic rules of many Vedic scholars and the whole of the Vedic injunctions (*paṇ maṛaiyōr ceytolilum parama sivāgama vitiyum nānmaṛaiyiṇ viti muḷutum oḷivinaṇi navinṇanaiyē*).² Sambandhar also styles his hymns as '*maṛaiyilaṅku Tamil*' (Tamil glowing with Vedic truth (1.61.11), '*maṛaimali Tamil*' (Tamil steeped in the *Vedas* (1.124.11), '*maṛai vaḷarum Tamil*' (Tamil wherein the *Vedas* flourish—2.203.11), '*Tamiḷkkilavi*' (Tamil Veda — *kilavi* = Veda — 3.337.17)

Just as the *Upaniṣads* are the basis for the *Vedānta* and are capable of interpretations by a number of schools of thought, Sambandhar's hymns are the basis for not only Śaiva Siddhānta but also for other systems drawing on them for their elucidation. V.A. Devasenapathi says, "They are pure gold. Even as different ornaments can be made from gold, different patterns of thought may be fashioned out of their (*the hymnists*) songs."³ So it is proposed here to lay bare all that he has said in his hymns about important philosophical problems and try to formulate his philosophy in its own light.

According to Sambandhar the world exists. The world — the universe — is nature. But the universe does not exhaust nature. Nature is wider and wider and yet consists of the minutest things. It is the macrocosm as well as the microcosm.

There is a subject — a soul — which is aware of and experiences this world, nature. But nature as well as soul cannot act on their own. There is a common basis which is the supreme Intelligence and supreme Power. In Sambandhar's thought, nature, soul and the supreme Intelligence or God are the fundamental principles which are to be studied as philosophical problems.

3.2 Nature

Nature is *prakṛti* or *māyā* or *māyai* or *pāśam*. As this is being experienced, there is one thing which experiences it. That which experiences an object is the subject or soul or *ātman* or *uyir*. There is no experience without subject-object relationship. Nature is also called matter or world by Westerners. But it is more than matter. It includes mind and the individualising ego — *ahaṅkāra*. Soul or *ātman* is pure intelligence or knowledge which is above matter. Both matter and soul are dependent on *Paramātman*, the supreme Soul.

Philosophies differ from one another in interpreting the relationship between nature, soul and God. But all mystics of the world experience the bliss of God through nature. For them, nature is not opposed to God, but is the very form of God.

When Āṇṭāl, the great Vaiṣṇavite Saint-Poetess went to the garden to pluck flowers for the Lord, she saw the beautiful radiance of His person glittering on the petals of flowers. She exclaims, 'karuviḷai oṇ malarkāḷ kāyā malarkāḷ tirumāl uru oḷi kāṭṭukinṇīr' (O! radiant flowers of *karuviḷai* and *kāyā* — *memecylon tinctorium* — you reveal the lustre of the person of Tirumāl). She lovingly treats the flowers like *mullai* (jasmine) as her lady-friends (*mullaippirāṭṭi*, *kōvai maṇāṭṭi*).⁵ The Tamil genius is already adapted to hold nature as a colourful part of existence. In the *Caṅkam* classic, *Narriṇai* (172), a *punnai* plant is endeared as daughter and sister by a mother and daughter respectively. Nature plays a very important role in the human love-drama in the Tamil classics.

The ancient Tamils had experienced mystical delight because of their association with nature. God is not only Lover *par excellence* but He is infinite Beauty. Nature is the reflection of His divine beauty. It is the great Beauty unwrought by any (human) hand (*kai punaintu iyaṇṇākkavin peru vaṇappu*).⁶ God dwells in every point of space, which emits lustre of beauty. The *Tirumuru-kāṇṇruppaṭai*, an ancient classic of the *Caṅkam* age, enumerates the abodes of Muruga (the god of beauty according to the Tamils) as forests (*kāṭu*), grove (*kā*), the islet of river of natural beauty (*kaviṇ-perun turutti*), river (*āru*), ponds (*kuḷam*), numerous hamlets (*vēṇṇal vaippu*), the junction of four ways (*catukkam*), the junction of two ways (*canti*), the village common place (*maṇṇam*), the village common place where a shady tree stands (*potiyil*) and the place where the stem in which the divinity is enshrined stands (*kantuṭai nilai*).⁷

Every ancient temple of Tamil Nadu has its own distinguished tree as its *sthala vṛkṣam*. These trees suggest that they were the original places of worship, in close association with which the temples sprang up subsequently. Some temples are named after the trees, e.g., Pātirippuliyūr, Paiñīli, Iṭaimarutu, Kuṇṇālam, Maru-kal, etc. Many temples bear the names of natural objects as their suffixes. For example, Ālaṅkāṭu, Vēṇkāṭu, Veṇkāṭu, Maṇaikkāṭu, (*kāṭu* = forest); Kōlakkā, Kōṭikā, Āṇaikkā (*kā* = grove); Turutti, Pūnturutti (turutti = river islet); Aiyāru, Naḷlāru, Kōṭṭāru,

(*āru* = river); Āvaṭuturai, Pēṇuperunturai, Cōṇṇutturai, Kuraṇ-kātuturai, Mayilātuturai (*turai* = a ford), etc.

Nature, thus, plays a very important role in the mundane and religious life of the people. So there is no wonder that the hymnists, especially Sambandhar, who is steeped in the Tamil tradition and calls himself '*tamiḥ jñānasambandhan*' and '*tamiḥ virukan*' (an exponent of Tamil), follow this age-long tradition of treating nature as an integral part of human existence and as the most enchanting medium through which the highest ideal of man-God experience is realised here and now. However, nature mysticism should not be confounded with pantheism. It is the cosmic consciousness which is due to the experience of the cosmos in its entirety, and not as an arithmetical totality of all objects of the cosmos.

Sambandhar is a great nature mystic. His hymns abound in the description of nature — its cities, towns, mountains, etc. Temples are the life centres of religion. For him the temples are not merely the isolated places of worship. They organically include the entire backdrop of nature with all its living and non-living objects — towns, rivers, ponds, the mountains, plants, animals, birds, stars, the moon, the sun, the hubbub of human existence with all its religious and mundane activities, and so on. One is struck with wonder at the extraordinary importance that Sambandhar attaches to the description of nature in his hymns. He intuits divinity and love from every object that is associated with temples. Worship of temple is worship of God. Worship of temple consists of experiencing the thrill of nature which is but the manifestation of God, who manifests Himself for the evolution of souls. To him, worshipping the very place where the temple of the Lord is situated is as good as worshipping the Lord. That is why he exhorts the people to “worship Tūṅkāṇaimāṭam” (*tūṅkāṇaimāṭam toḷuminkāl* — 1.59.1-10); “to constantly utter the great names of the places of the One who wears the crescent” (*ṭīṭarāyṭṭīṭarai cūṭitan pēritamē* — 2.175.1); and so on.

Whenever he visits a holy place, it is nature which greets him first reminding him of the immanence of the Lord. To cite a few

examples: "Karukāvūr is a holy place which emits the fragrance of sweet-smelling jasmine and wherein dwells my Father whose complexion is like that of the glowing fire" (*kanta mauval kamaḷum karukāvūr entaivaṇṇam eriyum eri vaṇṇamē* — 3.304.7).

"O! yonder is Itaimarutu. There the bees after visiting the fields enter and gather at the great and sweet-smelling grove humming delightful music. The Lord after having His bathe becomes handsome and dwells there" (1.32.5).

When one reads Sambandhar's description of nature, the objects of nature do not appear as simple objects but do appeal to one's finest sensitivity as true and living expressions of the immanence of God, His love and beauty. We can understand how far Sambandhar's mind has been absorbed in nature, how far he has been lost in the rapture and ecstasy of nature's beauty and love, and how much he has been sincere in giving expressions to this sense of thrill and mystic experience. In short, nature's drama is being re-enacted in his hymns. To illustrate the above points some descriptions in his hymns are paraphrased.

"Love is the basis of all existence" (*aṇṇiṇ vaḷiyatu uyir nilai*) — so says Tiruvaḷḷuvar.⁸ In other words, God who is the basis of all living and non-living things, is love. The best manifestation of love is the love between two souls, male and female, both human and otherwise. Sambandhar's mystic mind experiences the rapture of love in the natural phenomena. At Peruntuṟai he perceives love when a male swan dances with and embraces a female one (*aṇṇam kanniṇṇpēṭaiyōṭṭāṭi aṇṇavu peruntuṟaiyārē* — 1.42.1).

Another great act of love is portrayed in the hymn on Kaṟkuṭimāmalai. In this instance, at Kaṟkuṭimāmalai, a dark he-elephant which is intoxicated with love takes the tender bamboo-shoots in a sweep and feeds the she-elephant in her mouth which stands in close embrace, being (equally) intoxicated with love (*maruṇkaḷiyār piṭivāyil vāḷ vetiriṇ muḷai vārik karuṇkaḷi yāṇai koṭṭuk-kum kaṟkuṭimāmalaiyārē* — 1.43.4).

The occasional occurrence of small difference of opinion between lovers (*pulavi* or *ūṭal* in Tamil) is a blessing in disguise

which only enkindles the fire of love between them: '*ūṭal kāmattiṭṭiṭṭu inṭam*' — according to the *Kuraḷ*.

Sambandhar captures this spirit of love in his hymn on Girāppaḷḷi. Here a red faced female monkey picks a quarrel with her lover and in that mood, wants to give up her life by jumping from the bamboo branch. At the same time, her loving heart does not permit her to leave behind her young one uncared for. So she carries her baby in her hand and climbs up the hill to carry out her desire.⁹ Love bursts out while the lovers experience the agony and pangs of separation. At Aṇṇāmalai, a he-elephant with a long trunk finds his spouse missing. He runs about and shouts in search of her but all in vain. At last he is upset and falls asleep on the hill slopes.¹⁰

Mother's love is compared to God's love. Sambandhar observes such a love existing amongst parrots in Kētāram. The mother parrot is moved very much on hearing her hungry young ones prattling and excited in their nests. Even though the mother does not want to leave the young ones alone, yet she flies out and fetches the spikes of *ēnel* corn with which she feeds the young ones.¹¹

God is Love as well as Beauty. He is Bhuvanasundara. He is *Cokka* (the enchanter, 3.297.11). He is the beautiful *Īsa* (*aḷakāya īsan* — 1.32.5). Sambandhar has the unique vision of His cosmic beauty pervading every object of nature. A great artist and mystic poet, he could not only behold that Beauty but interpret it through his poetry as well. According to Plotinus, art or poetry which is not mere imitation but creative imagination, passes beyond the shadow and intuitively the real or prime or divine beauty, what the German philosopher, Schelling calls the "artistic intuition of cosmic beauty."¹² That is why wherever Sambandhar sings of God, he, side by side, glorifies nature and its beauty; for nature and beauty have God as their basis and essence. The vision of God in the form of natural beauty fills him with thrill of joy and of arrested attention. Sambandhar's hymns are replete with such descriptions of nature and its beauty.

At Kāḷi (Cīrkāḷi) arecanut palm trees undergo miraculous metamorphosis. They first bear the spikes of arecanuts which appear like pearls. They, in course of time, turn thick-green in colour like the emerald gems and after sometime, become ripe with red, like corals. Sambandhar is amazed to behold this sight and sings, 'eṇṇār muttamīṇru marakatampōrkāyṭtu kaṇṇār kamuku pavaḷam paḷukkum kalik kāḷi' (1.102.4).

It is customary to present gold to the artists, dancers and singers in the royal courts. At Puṇṇam (Cīrkāḷi), the *punnai* tree assumes the role of a benefactor while the humming bees and peacocks play the flutists and dancers respectively. Nature is personified as a beautiful damsel with her radiant smile. The pearls (that are scattered there) show the glowing smile; the lotus appears as the face; the *kayal* (fish) which jumps into water glitter like the eyes while the lustrous corals show the mouth (lips).¹³

Nature has its humour too. In the bushy outskirts of Tiruveṅkāṭu, the flower of the leaning *tāḷai* (*pandanus oderatissima*) unfolds itself, and its shade falls on the sandy soil. The *keṇṭai* fish in the adjoining pond mistakes this shade for a crane and being afraid of the crane-like shade runs for life and hides itself behind the lotus flower. The lustrous pearls that are lashed ashore become bright as though they were laughing at the ignorance of the fish.¹⁴

A great musical genius. Sambandhar's reference to music in nature is not only abundant but soul-stirring. The bees, the parrots, the mynah, the koel are the usual singers.¹⁵

God, as the very essence of love, pervades all the living beings that are in love. God, as Bhuvanasundara, manifests Himself in the natural phenomena as things of beauty and thereby becoming a joy for ever and for all. But that does not suggest pantheism. All things are not God, but all things are *in* God. All the objects of nature are not objects of worship as ultimate Reality. They are at the most the means — or symbols through which God could be intuited. Sambandhar visualises nature itself as worshipping the Lord.

An amazing and moving illustration is given in his *patikam* on Kōṭṭāru. A mighty elephant while grazing at a hill-slope thinks of the Lord. Being moved with a sudden passion to worship Him with flowers and water, it runs about to collect them. It encounters a cloud on the hill and shakes it fast so as to get water for the holy bath of the Lord. With the articles so collected, the elephant performs its worship.¹⁶

Sambandhar cites another incident at Valitāyam. The female monkey together with her spouse (*kaṭuvan*) comes to the temple at Vālitāyam (at Pāḍi near Madras) and prostrates before the Lord (*manti vantū kaṭuvannōṭu vaṇaṅkum valitāyam* — 1.3.5).

A he-elephant and a she-elephant with short mane descend from the hill to worship the Lord of Kuṟumpalā (Kuṟṟālam). On their way, they pluck the fragrant cool flowers of the *vēṅkai* (*pterocarpus bilobus*) tree, carry them on their heads and come together to worship the Lord.¹⁷

There are many references in the *Caṅkam* classics to stress this aspect. In the *Akanāṇūru*, the poet remarks that when Rāma had a discussion on the *Vedas* under the banyan tree, the birds that were sitting over the tree, remained spell bound (*veḷpōr irāman arumaṇaikkavitta palvīḷālam* — 70). In the *Puṟaṇāṇūru*, the elephants are described as helping the ascetics in their performance of *vēḷvi* (sacrifice).

Sambandhar's devotion to the *Vedas* and Vedic rites is well known. He depicts a scene in his hymn on Tiruvīḷimīlalai, to uphold his cherished ideal, wherein nature itself performs the Vedic rites. In a marriage ritual, according to the Vedic lore, the parched rice is to be put into the sacred fire. At Vīḷimīlalai, a similar marriage ritual is being performed by nature. There is a pond with gemlike water in it. The conchs and the similar species flourish in that pond. The lotus flowers there appear like the glowing fire. The *punnai* trees that stand on the banks of the pond pour down their white flowers over the lotus as if the white parched rice is put into fire. Thus a marriage ritual is performed at Vīḷimīlalai.¹⁸

Cēkkiḷār who is well aware of Sambandhar's strong commitment to Vedic fire-cult, is perhaps influenced by this depiction of Sambandhar. He describes the Vedic atmosphere prevailing at Cīrkāḷi thus: "In the sweeping fire of the red lotus flowers that are (blossoming) in the expansive field of cultivation, the ghee of the honey that bursts forth from the fruits of the mango trees that stand on the field bunds, incessantly drops down along the edge of the leaves. Thus even the trees there (at Cīrkāḷi) perform the Vedic sacrifice (*ākuti vēṭṭal*)."¹⁹

Sambandhar describes the parrots and mynahs as being well versed in the *Vedas*. At Viḷimiḷalai the parrots living in the grove with the abundant bamboo bushes listen to the chorus recited by the erudite (Vedic) scholars of world repute on many days and utter the very meaning of the *Vedas*.²⁰ Veṅkāṭu is a place where the parrots learn to utter the words by listening to the Vedic recital (*vētattoliyāl kiḷi coṟ payilum veṅkāṭē* — 2.197.5).

At Koccaivayam (Cīrkāḷi), the mynahs dwelling in houses climb up the domes and recite the beneficial *maṟai* (*Vedas*). (*kūtamēṟi vaḷar pūvai nalla maṟaiyōtu koccaivayamē* — 2.219.3).

Another quite interesting account is given in the hymn on Kāḷi. Here a set of discerning parrots settle the dispute or doubt arising out of the wrong recital of the ever luminous *maṟai* by the members of the group (of Vedic reciters).²¹

The picture that Sambandhar draws in his hymns about the variety of natural objects is immense, and yet minute in details. A number of birds, animals, plants, rivers, mountains, etc., play their role in this universal drama. An attempt is made here to give a sample list (*vide* the table) of various objects of nature, living and non-living, as mentioned in the hymns so as to indicate the immense and intimate knowledge of Sambandhar on nature.

Table Showing the List of Names of Birds, Animals, etc.

I. Birds.

1.	<i>annam</i>	(swan)	1.11.9; 1.42.8; 3.321.2, 6; 3.332.1; 3.384.4
2.	<i>anril</i>	(a love bird)	2.186.1; 3.321.2, 7
3.	<i>āntai</i>	(owl)	1.16.5; 1.44.5
4.	<i>cātakam</i>	(sky-lark)	1.66.2
5.	<i>cēval</i>	(cock)	1.112.7
6.	<i>kalu</i>	(vulture)	1.103.1, 11; 1.131.9; 3.362.10
7.	<i>kapōtam</i>	(dove)	1.60.5
8.	<i>karuṭan</i>	(eagle)	2.255.6
9.	<i>kiḷi, kiḷḷai</i>	(parrot)	1.11.10; 2.197.5; 3.377.8; 1.132.1; 2.250.4
10.	<i>kokku</i>	(crane)	1.36.3
11.	<i>kūkai</i>	(a wild owl)	3.315.10
12.	<i>kuruku</i>	(a heron)	1.60.2; 2.184.4; 3.321.5, 6, 7, 9
13.	<i>kuyil</i>	(cuckoo)	1.14.2; 1.60.8; 1.67.5; 1.130.7; 3.317.3
14.	<i>mayil, maññai</i>	(peacock)	1.14.2; 1.67.5; 1.78.1; 1.97.2; 1.132.4; 2.174.9; 2.224.9; 2.250.1; 3.317.3; 1.11.10; 2.207.4; 2.219.3; 3.332.1
15.	<i>nārai</i>	(cormorant)	1.60.4; 2.196.6; 2.220.1 3.321.3-8
16.	<i>paruntu</i>	(hawk or kite)	1.60.3
17.	<i>pūvai</i>	(mynah)	2.219.3; 3.321.9
18.	<i>tārā</i>	(a duck)	2.178.2; 3.321.8
19.	<i>vāraṇam</i>	(cock/hen)	1.60.3

II. Bees.

1.	<i>aḷi</i>	(a kind of bee)	1.60.1; 1.34.5
2.	<i>āri</i>	(„)	2.199.4
3.	<i>aṟupatam</i>	(„)	1.75.3
4.	<i>curumpu</i>	(„)	2.237.6; 3.308.1
5.	<i>kaḷutu</i>	(„)	2.166.11

- | | | | |
|----|--------------|-------|------------------------|
| 6. | <i>tēṇ</i> | („) | 1.11.10; 1.130.4 |
| 7. | <i>tumpi</i> | („) | 1.98.4; 3.308.1 |
| 8. | <i>vaṇṭu</i> | („) | 1.23.7; 1.43.9; 1.64.9 |

III. Fish, etc.

- | | | | |
|-----|--------------------|------------|--------------------------|
| 1. | <i>āral</i> | | 2.220.1; 2.237.6 |
| 2. | <i>cēl</i> | | 2.174.9; 2.189.5 |
| 3. | <i>cuṟā</i> | | 1.60.2; 3.321.5 |
| 4. | <i>kanakamūkku</i> | | 3.293.8 |
| 5. | <i>kayal</i> | | 1.42.9; 1.132.3; 2.189.5 |
| 6. | <i>keḷiṟu</i> | | 3.328.9 |
| 7. | <i>keṇṭai</i> | | 2.184.4; 2.250.1 |
| 8. | <i>makaram</i> | | 3.293.2 |
| 9. | <i>mīṇ</i> | | 1.130.4 |
| 10. | <i>vālai</i> | | 1.78.2; 3.336.1 |
| 11. | <i>varāl</i> | | 3.264.9; 3.293.8 |
| 12. | <i>āmai</i> | (tortoise) | 1.1.2 |
| 13. | <i>pulli</i> | (crab) | 2.162.1 |
| 14. | <i>tērai</i> | (toad) | 2.215.6 |

IV. Animals.

- | | | | |
|-----|---|-------------|--|
| 1. | <i>ari, maṭaṇkal</i> | (lion) | 2.221.6; 3.337.4; 1.63.1 |
| 2. | <i>āṭu</i> | (goat) | 2.236.6 |
| 3. | <i>āli</i> (a lion-like animal
with trunk) | | 1.14.10 |
| 4. | <i>āṇ, pasu</i> | (cow) | 2.156.4; 1.22.5; 1.80.2 |
| 5. | <i>erutu, ēṟu</i> | (bull) | 1.79.1; 2.216.5; 2.140.9; 1.98.1;
1.117.7 |
| 6. | <i>eli</i> | (rat) | 3.297.5 |
| 7. | <i>ēṇam</i> | (boar) | 3.327.1 |
| 8. | <i>keḷal, paṇṇi</i> | (pig) | 3.337.4; 1.7.9 |
| 9. | <i>kutirai</i> | (horse) | 2.250.4 |
| 10. | <i>nari</i> | (fox) | 3.277.1; 3.359.1 |
| 11. | <i>nāvi</i> | (civet cat) | 3.284.3 |
| 12. | <i>puli, uḷuvai</i> | (tiger) | 1.68.1; 1.68.4 |

13.	<i>māṇai</i> , <i>uḷai</i>	(deer)	1.130.4	2.150.1
	<i>piṇṇai</i>	(a female deer)	1.45.8	
	<i>kalai</i>	(a male deer)	„	
	<i>maṇi</i>	(a deer calf)	„	
14.	<i>āṇai</i> , <i>veḷam</i>	(elephant)	1.43.4;	3.311.1 3.273.4
	<i>kari</i> , <i>kaḷiṇu</i>	(he - elephant)	1.3.6;	2.181.7; 2.208.4 1.68.2;
			2.208.7	
	<i>piṇi</i>	(she - elephant)	1.43.4	
15.	<i>muyal</i>	(rabbit)	1.12.9	
16.	<i>kaṭuvāṇi</i> , <i>ūkam</i>		1.98.2	
		(male monkey)	2.220.6	
	<i>manti</i>	(female monkey)	1.78.2	
	<i>kuraṇku</i>	(monkey)	2.170.8	
17.	<i>kaṇṇu</i>	(calf)	1.71.10	
18.	<i>veruku</i>	(wild cat)	2.226.5	
19.	<i>mēti</i>	(buffalo)	2.220.1	
	<i>erumai</i>	(„)	1.78.10	

V. Plants

1.	<i>akil</i>	(<i>aquila</i> - a fragrant wood used for perfuming the hair)	1.78.8	
2.	<i>āl</i>	(banyan tree)	2.149.6	
3.	<i>āram</i>	(sandal wood tree)	2.220.6	
4.	<i>cūti</i>	(nutmeg tree)	3.294.1	
5.	<i>cerunti</i>	(<i>ochra squarrosa</i>)	1.56.6;	2.174.9; 2.237.9
6.	<i>cūrai</i>	(a thorny creeper)	2.220.1	
7.	<i>curapūṇai</i>	(<i>calophyllum longifolium</i>)	2.169.1;	3.275.1
8.	<i>ilavam</i>	(silk - cotton tree)	3.347.2	
9.	<i>īkai</i>	(a creeper)	2.220.1	
10.	<i>kaḷḷi</i>	(a genus of plants embracing many species, <i>euphorbiatirccai</i>)	2.220.1	
11.	<i>kamuku</i>	(betel nut tree)	2.189.3;	2.194.1
12.	<i>kārai</i>	(<i>weberatetrandra</i>)	2.220.1	
13.	<i>kōṇkam</i>	(<i>bombax gassypinam</i>)	3.349.1	

14. *koṇṇai* (cassia) 2.169.1; 3.294.3
15. *kuravam* (a fragrant
flowery tree) 3.349.1
16. *kūkai* (a thorny creeper) 2.220.1
17. *kūvilam* (vilvam tree) 2.142.1; 2.143.1; 2.148.2
18. *kuruntu* (a tree of
fragrant flowers) 3.278.5
19. *mā* (mango tree) 2.224.6
20. *marutu* (*terminalia alata*) 3.294.9
21. *mūnikil* (bamboo) 3.294.3
- kalai* („) 1.98.2
- vēy* („) 2.246.2; 2.255.7
- vēri* („) 1.132.1
22. *ñāḷal* or *pulinakakkoṇṇai* 2.169.1; 2.173.3; 2.237.9
(a cassia tree)
23. *ōmai* (a kind of tree that
grows in dry land) 2.169.1; 3.294.3; 3.349.1
24. *palā* (jack tree) 2.207.2
25. *paṇai* (palmyra tree) 1.54.11
26. *pātiri* (*bignonia chelonides*) 3.349.1
27. *piṇṇi* (asoka tree) 2.148.10; 2.184.10; 3.265.10
28. *pōti* (pipal tree) „ „ „
29. *punṇai* (*calophyllum*
inophyllum) 2.173.3; 2.237.9; 3.341.1
30. *tāḷai* (*pandonas*
ordeatissima) 2.184.4
- kōḷal* („) 3.272.4
31. *teṇku* (coconut tree) 2.237.7
32. *vanni* (*prosopis spicigera*) 2.143.1; 2.241.7; 2.245.6
33. *vāḷai* (plantain tree) 2.194.1
34. *vēṇkai* (*petrocarpus bilosus*) 2.251.1; 3.349.1

VI. Flowers

1. *alli* (the lily-white-
nymphaca rubra) 2.200.9
2. *āmpal* (the red lily) 2.180.3
3. *kamalam* (lotus) 1.60.1

4. *kañcam* (lotus) 3.295.11
5. *kāntal* (*gloriosasuperba*) 2.256.1
6. *kāvi* (the blue lily) 2.206.12 ; 3.284.3
7. *kuvaḷai* (the water-lily-
pontederia) 1.129.1
8. *kumutam* (a kind of red
water-lily) 1.129.1 ; 2.219.9
9. *kumil* (*gemelina tomentosa*) 1.73.8
10. *kuṭacam* (the mountain
jasmine) 3.347.1
11. *kurukkatti* (*goestnera race-
mosa*) 2.173.3
12. *kūviḷam* (vilvam flower,
gataeva religiosa) 2.142.1
13. *konṇai* (cassia) 3.313.1
14. *koṭuṭimullai* (a kind of
jasmine) 2.200.8
15. *koṭal* (a white species of
gloriosa flower) 2.174.10 ; 2.180.11
16. *kōkanatam* (a kind of lotus) 1.132.3
17. *calacam* („) 1.132.6
18. *ceṇṇpakam* (*Michelia*-
hampaca) 1.99.3
19. *taḷavam* (a wild jasmine) 2.160.4
20. *tāmarai* (lotus) 1.42.9
21. *tāḷai* (*pandanas*
oderatissima) 2.184.4
22. *ṇankayam* (lotus) 2.186.7
23. *ṇiracam* 2.201.8
24. *mattam* (*datura fastuosa*) 2.179.1 ; 3.290.1
25. *mallikai* (jasmine) 3.317.1
26. *mātavi* (a kind of
kurukkatti) 2.168.6
27. *mullai* (a kind of
jasmine) 2.200.9
28. *mauval* (a kind of
jasmine) 3.317.1

29. *nīlam* (a blue flower) 1.42.9
 30. *neytal* (a coastal water flower) 1.129.1
 31. *vakuḷam* (*mimusops*) 2.224.10
 32. *veṇ tūmarai* (white lotus) 1.11.9

VII. Hills and Mountains

1. *āṇaimalai* 2.217.1
 2. *aṇṇāmalai* 1.69.1 - 11
 3. *cirāppaḷḷi* 1.98.1 - 11
 4. *imayam* 3.316.7
 5. *indiranīlapparuppatam* 2.163.2
 6. *īṅkōymalai* 1.70.1 - 11
 7. *kāḷattimalai* 3.327.1
 8. *kaḷukkunṇam* 1.103.1 - 11
 9. *kētāram* 2.260.1
 10. *koṭṭunṇam* 1.14.1 - 11
 11. *kayilai* 3.326.1
 12. *mantāram* 3.307.6
 13. *mayēntiram* 3.367.1 - 11
 14. *mutukunṇam* 1.12.1 - 11
 15. *paraṅkunṇam* 1.100.1 - 11
 16. *paruppatam* 1.118.1 - 11
 17. *tirukōṇamalai* 3.381.1 - 6, 8 - 11

VIII. Rivers

1. *arisil* 1.42.5; 2.199.1
 2. *curanati* (the divine river) 1.20.2
 i.e., the Ganges)
 kaṇikai (the Ganges) 1.57.4; 2.204.7
 3. *kāviri* 1.16.2; 2.255.3
 ponni 2.168.4
 4. *keṭīlam* 3.335.11
 5. *kōḷḷāru* 3.347.2
 6. *kuṭaittalai* 3.337.5
 7. *maṇimuttāru* 1.131.6

8. <i>maṇṇinati</i>	1.101.2
9. <i>nivā</i>	2.226.1
10. <i>pālāvi</i> (a river in Sri Lanka)	2.243.10
11. <i>pāli</i> (<i>pālāru</i>)	1.55.6
12. <i>pampai</i>	2.186.2
13. <i>peṇṇāru</i>	2.236.7
14. <i>poṇmukali</i>	3.294.5
15. <i>vaikai</i>	1.88.11

The list shown in the Table is an enumeration of the names of natural objects. They do not appear like this in Sambandhar's hymns. There, they are pictured as the very integral parts of a main organic whole. They are the veritable forms of God, not as God Himself but as the varied forms of His infinitude. They only help us to measure and then to indicate the immeasurable immensity of God.

God's form as nature is conceived both as microcosmic and macrocosmic. He is the finest of the finest and the largest of the largest — '*nuṇṇiyaṇ mikapperiyaṇ*' (1.61.6). He is the *aṇḍa* as well as the *piṇḍa*. He is the *antaryāmin*. He dwells in our mind (*maṇattuḷāṇ* — 1.61.6). He is the life of this life (*uyirkku uyirāy aṇkaṇkē niṇṇāṇ* — 1.132.4). He is the shine of the shine (*cōṭiyuṭ cōṭiyaṇ* — 2.142.7).

3.2.1 *Aṣṭamūrttam*

Sambandhar conceives the macrocosmic aspect of God as *aṣṭamūrttam* (the eightfold form). The earth, water, fire, air, ether, moon, sun and soul (the performer - *iyamāṇār*) are the cosmic forms of the Lord (*maṇṇoṣu nīr aṇal kēloṭāṅkāyam mati, iravi eṇṇil varum iyamāṇāṇ ām pērāḷaṇ* — 2.184.3). He is the '*aṣṭamūrtti*' (2.253.8); '*aṣṭamūrttiyaṇ*' (3.309.4); '*eṣṭām tirumūrtti*' (2.175.3); '*eṣṭaicinta mūrtti*' (3.310.2); '*eṣṭar*' (2.143.3).

God is also conceived as *pañcamūrtti* (fivefold form). He fills in all the five elements (*aṇcu pūtamum ārtta tuṭaiyatē* — 3.372.5). Śiva is one who pervades the ether, air, fire, water and earth

(*puvam vali kaṇal puṇal puvi maruviya śivan* — 1.21.1). God is also spoken of as individual elements. He is the ether, the earth (*viṇṇāṇē ... maṇṇāṇē* — 2.151.3). He is the triple fire (*muttiyāṇavaṇ* — 1.11.5). He dwells in the wind (*kāṇṇularāvar* — 3.379.1). This concept of *aṣṭamūrttam* has been there in vogue from very early times as a cardinal principle of early Śaivism. The great Tamil epic, the *Maṇimēkalai*, holds it as the quintessence of Śaivism.²²

God is spoken of as 'time' also. The sun and the moon in the *aṣṭamūrtta* concept themselves represent time while the rest stand for space and soul. He has become time (*kālamāy* — 1.132.5). He has created the fleeting time and all other *tattvas* (*kaḷi kālamellām paṣaitta* — 3.314.10). He has become the great ages and time (*ūḷiyum ... kālamāki* — 3.365.7). He is one who has become time, the sun and fire, (*kālamum ṇāyirum tiyu māyavar* — 3.279.7). He has also become the *nāḷikai* (unit of time) (*nāḷikaiyum ... āki* — 3.365.7). "You remain constant making the three times to appear" (*mūṇṇu kālamum tōṇṇaninṇanai* — 1.128.1.41).

In the *patikam* on Tiruppiramāpuram (3.314.10) Sambandhar's expression '*kaḷikālamellām paṣaitta*' means that the Lord has created the passing time as well as all the *tattvas*. On many instances Sambandhar affirms that God has taken the form of *tattvas*. He who prevails becoming the five elements beginning with the earth, the five senses, the five lands, the four *antaḥkaraṇas*, the resultant forms born out of the combination of these entities (such as the *tanmātras*) and the formless state ... dwells in the temple at Kaḷumalam.²³ He has become the time and the three *guṇas* (*kālamāy kaṇaṅkaḷ mūṇṇāy* — 1.135.5).

He is Araṇ who stands beyond the comprehension of those who have acquired the knowledge "that one plus one plus one and four plus five and six plus seven, that is the twentyfive *tattvas*, alone are the reality" (*onṇonrōṣonṇum oru nāṇ kōṭaintum iru mūṇrōtēlumuṭaṇāy, anṇinṇōṣenṇum aṇṇāṇavarkkum aṇṇāmai ninṇa araṇ* — 2.224.4).

The Lord who dwells at Tirunāraiyyūr becomes Māyavan, Cēyavan, Veḷḷiyavan (the *akōram*, *vāmadēvam* and *sattiyōjātam*

faces of Sadāśivamūrtti who has other two faces also, *i.e.*, *tarapurutam* and *iśānam*) (*māyavan cēyavan velliyavan viṭaṇ cērum maimiṭarṇan āyavanāki* — 3.360.3).

The Lord is also described as '*tattuvam*', *e.g.*, '*tattuwan*' (1.107.8); '*tattuwanār*' (1.130.5); '*paratattuwan*' (1.132.5). Those who praise the Lord are the heads of the *tattuva-jñāna* (*tattuva-jñānattalai-yārē* — 1.102.1).

As pointed out earlier, the universe does not exhaust nature. Nature lies not only in what we perceive outside our mind and thought, but it includes the mind or thought as well. Hence, Sambandhar speaks of God as dwelling in our mind (*manattulān* — 1.61.6). He is one who is pleased to stay in the inner mind (*uḷnirru makiḷntavan* — 1.37.2). "He is one who enters my mind and makes me think (of Him)" (*neṇcam pukunteṇnai ninaivippārum* — 1.45.1). He prevails as (our) five senses ... the four *antaḥkaraṇas* (*pulaṇaintāy ... karaṇanāṅkāy ... nirṇān* — 1.129.7).

From the foregoing points it could be safely concluded: (i) that Jñānasambandhar holds the world or nature as not only not untrue but conceives it as the veritable form of God characterised by His love and beauty, and (ii) that nature itself worships God, suggesting thereby that God transcends nature.

3.2.2 Transcendence

God pervades every object both animate and inanimate in the world revealing Himself through nature as a form of His love and beauty — and that is one aspect. But that is not the only aspect. God's transcendence is highlighted in several hymns. "He who has become the sojourn of the people in the sky (the celestials) and who has become the sun of several rays, the moon, earth, the dashing water, fire and air and also the ancient ether, the master (the soul), the Goddess, numerous lives, Māl, *Ayan* and the *Vedas* and the entirety of all these things and who yet remains quite other than all these things is pleased to dwell at *Mutukunram*." "He is the substance to express which the word cannot be found; He is the light which stands beyond all lights (*correriyāpporul cōtikkappāl ninṇa cōti* — 3.267.10).

3.2.3 *The philosophy of creation*

According to early Śaivism, as depicted in the *Maṇimēkalai*, Lord Śiva assumes the eight forms, binds the souls with their respective bodies (*sthiti*), puts up (*śṛṣṭi*) the form of arts, plays the game of creation (*lilā*), destroys all (*saṁhāra*) and gets rid of all misery from the souls (*anugraha*) by granting repose and rest (obscuration) to all souls (*tirobhāva*). Yet He is one who has nothing as different from Himself.²⁵ This passage clearly attributes the fivefold functions (*pañcakṛtyas*, i.e., *śṛṣṭi*, *sthiti*, *saṁhāra*, *tirobhāva* and *anugraha*) to Lord Śiva and also affirms that He is the only One without a second.

Even prior to the *Maṇimēkalai*, in the *Caṅkam* classics, there are innumerable references to the creation of the elements, etc. For example, the *Maturaikkāñci*, one of the *Ten Idylls* (*Pattupṭṭāṭṭu*) mentions that the great One who wields the arm of axe and who has created water, earth, fire, air and ether together is the chief (of all other gods such as Māyōṇ and Muruga).²⁶

Bhāratam-pāṭiya Peruntēvaṇār, the celebrated poet who has sung invocatory songs to the *Caṅkam* anthologies makes copious references to the act of creation. In the invocatory song to the *Akanāṇṇuṟu*, he remarks that the world rests under the shade (protection) of the immortal or spotless feet of the great compassionate One (Śiva) with sapphire-like throat who revels on the *yāl* (lute) (*yāl keḷu maṇimītaṟṟu antaṇaṇ tāvil tāl niḷal tavirntaṇṟāl ulakē*).²⁷

All these points are cited here to highlight the philosophical ideas of Śaivite origin regarding creation, etc., that were in vogue during the early centuries of the Christian era in Tamil Nadu. It is only too relevant here to quote what C. V. Narayana Ayyar has said about this matter.

All that can, therefore, be said about the history of South Indian Śaivism in the earliest period of South Indian History is that in the early centuries of the Christian Era, the Puranas were known to the Tamils and that Śaivism as known to the northerners was also known to the people of the South.²⁸

Apart from Vedic concepts, *Śaiva āgamas* played a dominant role in shaping the metaphysical ideas of the South. K. Sivaraman writes:

The rise of Meykanda Śāstra in the 13th and the 14th centuries owes its main inspiration to the canonical literature but its emergence as a philosophical theology and scriptural evaluation must be understood against a foreground and background. The background was the tradition of the Śaivāgama which was kept alive through the vogue of Upāgama and its commentaries and also of independent manuals recapturing the philosophical contents of the knowledge-section of the major *āgamas*.²⁹

Jñānasambandhar speaks of *Āgama* also, e.g., '*araṇ ākamam*' (*Āgama* of *Araṇ* — 3.337.6), '*ākama celvan*' (3.315.10), '*ākamattōṣu mantiraṅkal*' (3.297.2), '*mantirattāṇ tantirattāṇ*' (1.61.3), (*tantiram* = *Āgamam*). He might be regarded as having known the Āgamic metaphysical ideas. According to the *Āgamas*, from *śivatattva* down to earth, thirtysix *tattvas* come into being from the *māyā* by Śiva's will and they also, by His will, converge one by one into their ultimate cause, i.e., *māyā* which in its turn is pervaded by Śiva. Even the *Taittiriya Upaniṣad* affirms: "From where do all the lives emerge, having emerged by what do they endure, and being separated, where do they all get absorbed, desire that — That is Brahman."³⁰

For Jñānasambandhar both the *Vedas* and the *Āgamas* are revealed scriptures; He (Śiva) has graciously bestowed the *aṅgas* and the rare *maṛai* — *Vedas* (*aṅkamoṣu arumaṛai aruḷ purintāṇ* — 1.109.2). God has expounded the rare and great *Vedas* (*arumāmaṛai tāṇ virittāṇ* — 1.104.1). He is one who has revealed many *Vedas* (*vētaṅkal vēṇu vēṇu terittavaṇ* — 1.113.1). He is the *Veda* *Vedānta* (*vēta vētūntaṇ* — 3.293.4). He is one who has yielded the benevolent substance repeatedly uttered by the *Vedānta* (*vētāntam paṇṇu naṇporuḷ payantavar* — 2.238.1). It has already been pointed out that Sambandhar speaks of Śiva as *ākama celvan* — (3.315.10).

This background makes it easier to understand what Sambandhar says about the creation of the world, etc. In his *Tiruc-*

cirapuram *patikam* he refers to the creation, preservation and annihilation of the world, both animate and inanimate. The first stanza, in which Śiva is said to assume the role of Brahmā, says: "Śiva is pleased to be seated on the (lotus) flower with the intention of performing the act of creating the ether, air, fire, water, earth, the arts, the spoken *Vedas*, the three *guṇas*, the path they choose, the celestials who flourish in their strength and other lives...."³¹

The second stanza speaks of preservation of the world by Śiva who assumes the role of Hari. "The supreme Principle assumes the form of Ari (Hari) who rests in a strange slumber in the midst of the ocean rippled with waves, with the keen intention of stabilising (preserving) all the worlds (and lives) such as men who tread on the path of the *Vedas* on the earth where the mountains rise up and also the stabler celestials ..."³²

The third stanza speaks of destruction. "The supreme Principle assumes the primeval form with the intention of entirely annihilating all the lives of the races of men, the host of celestials and others who flourish in the worlds such as the earth which is encircled by the flawless seas."³³

That Śiva is the supreme Principle and that the *trimūrttis* are but his creation are stressed in scores of instances. To cite a few: He is the *mūrtti* who after becoming the three gods (Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Rudra) and the two gods (Brahmā and Viṣṇu) remains as the prime One (*mūvarumāki iruvarumāki mutalvaṇumāy ninṇa mūrtti*).³⁴ Śiva through his *citsakti*, becomes not only the Trinity but the entire creation consisting of the celestials, men and all the inanimate objects. "He is the first One who becomes the Trinity — the one (seated on) the fragrant (lotus) flower (Brahmā), the red-eyed Māl and Īśa and the *devas*, *asuras*, *cittars*, and whose tongues are associated with the flourishing *Vedas*, the commingling earth, ether, fire, air, and water."³⁵

It is interesting to mention here a text of the *Kaivalyopaniṣad*: "He is Brahmā, He is Rudra, He is Indra, He is Akṣara, He is

Paramasvarāt, He is only Viṣṇu, He is Prāṇa, He is Kāla, Agni, Candra." To quote another passage from the *Atharvasiropaniṣad*: "Who is Bhagavān Rudra, who is Brahmā, who is Bhuvasvarā, to Him (my) salutation! Salutation! Who is Viṣṇu Maheśvara (to Him my salutation)." ³⁶

Even Viṣṇu and Brahmā are Śiva's creations. They have only their mortal bodies. At the time of the total annihilation (*mahāsamhāra*) they are all like others reduced to ashes. Śiva wears their ashes over His body when He dances. "He who roams about with His beautiful person bearing the burden of the bodies of the two (gods — Brahmā and Viṣṇu) when the large earth gets lost into water which gets into fire, that, in turn, is absorbed into water which gets into fire, that, in turn, is absorbed into air which is also lost in ether, wherein the whole thing is lost." ³⁷

These ideas echo the sense of the scriptures which are as follows: "At *mahāpralaya* there was neither *asat* nor *sat*. That alone was then. From That Parāśakti known as *kāma* came into being." ³⁸ "When there was darkness with neither day nor night, neither *sat* nor *asat*, then Śiva alone was there. Parāśakti known as *prajñā*, the imperishable principle, appeared." ³⁹

3.2.4 Purpose of creation

Creation consists of the formless principle taking forms through its energy *citśakti* out of its consideration and pity for the souls that are tossed aside in the ocean of *karma*. Even that sufferance is meant for the redemption and purification of the souls. Sambandhar states: "He is the Lord who snaps the (very chain of) birth (and death) of those who are capable of living (a god-conscious life) by transforming the consciousness that is forgetful of the Lord. He makes the love, wealth of bliss, super-consciousness and freedom easier for them and presents *mukti* as well as bondage after creating misery and happiness (to them)." ⁴⁰

Sambandhar also affirms that it is the Lord who causes death and birth (of souls) and also has revealed the great way for the deathless salvation (*kēṭum piṇaviyūm ākkinārum kēṭilā viṭumāneri*

vilampinār — 1.45.2). "He is the luminous One who has no birth or death for Himself but One that causes the births and deaths of the souls."⁴¹

Śiva performs all these things as a magician (*māyamavaṇ*), without any effort on his part. He does not get affected by change (*māṇili* — 1.114.2). The whole process of creation, preservation and annihilation is a play to Him.⁴² But it should be remembered that mere sporting spirit is not the cause of creation or purpose of it. The idea that it is all a play to Him means that He does everything without strain of effort.⁴³ The real purpose of creation is God's compassion towards souls which are caught in the misery of *saṁsāra* and for their ultimate redemption. Sambandhar stresses this point in the most unambiguous terms. He says that Śiva comes to help the souls with the damsel (*śakti*) as his part, for reasons of His grace and compassion towards souls (*maṅkai oru pākamāka aruḷ kāraṇaṅkaḷ varuvāṇ* — 2.223.3). The meaning here is that Śiva unites with His Śakti for reasons of grace and compassion towards the souls so that they are allowed to pass through various phases of creation, etc., only, in the end, to attain freedom from bondage and impurity.

In the *Tiruppāsuram* also Sambandhar vouches for God's grace being the purpose of creation of the world: "People say that He (Śiva) dances, that He has kicked the invincible *kūṟṟu* (Yama) and that He will sing the *Vedas*. Is it for His own glory? Or is it for removing the demerit (*pāpam*) and to break the (chain of) deaths and births (of the souls)? If you hear about all these things, for those who could ponder over this, what other reason is there to establish but His grace and compassion (towards the suffering souls)?" — (3.312.6).

So with these references it could be concluded that the reason and purpose that Sambandhar deduces to the act of creation of the world is Śiva's *aruḷ* (grace and compassion) towards the souls which is meant for their salvation and purification.

3.3 Soul

3.3.1 The nature of soul

The world exists and exists as a known object to a knowing subject. That subject is the soul — the *ātman* — the *paśu* — the *uyir*. There is no description of the nature of soul found in Sambandhar's hymns in a technical sense. For, Sambandhar is not a theoretical speculator or a formulator of any theory. He is a mystic singer steeped in Śiva-(God)-consciousness. He deeply trusts that he has his being, bliss, action and utterances in God and God in every thing inspires him to experience *Godhead*.

However, in the course of his singing, many references to soul are given. He speaks of the soul's embodied state, its state of ignorance (of God), its struggle and progress towards spiritual perfection, its pangs of separation, hope and despair, its attainment of everlasting bliss and so on and so forth. Sometimes Sambandhar speaks for himself, and on other occasions he sings on behalf of all. Many a time he addresses himself to his fellow souls either in the form of questions regarding the varied aspects and acts of Śiva with an appeal to them to enlighten himself on such matters, or in the form of commandments. His songs on bridal mysticism are but a living record of his spirit's God-love, of his deep anguish over the separation and of intense longing to unite with Him.

Even though Sambandhar is not projecting himself as a system-builder yet the philosophical or metaphysical terminology is not unknown to him and he makes his own contribution in this regard too.

Tirujñānasambandhar is a Śaivite in the sense that he worships God in the name and form of Śiva (*sivan em irai* - Śiva is my Lord — 1.11.5). In fact he even calls Śiva *śaivar*.⁴⁴ What he upholds is Vedic Śaivism. He also speaks of the *Āgamas*. To Sambandhar Śiva is the Principle of *Vedas* (*vētamutalvan* — 1.46.7) as well as '*ākama celvan*' (3.315.10). It is Śiva who has revealed the *Vedas*, *aṅgas* as well as *āgamas* (*tokuttavan aru maṛai aṅgam ākamam*

— 3.281.6). From this, one can safely say that he has accepted the views expressed both by the *Vedas* and *Āgamas*.

According to Vedic and Āgamic lore the soul (*ātman*) is beginningless (*anādi*) — uncreated. Its true nature is pure existence, pure consciousness and pure bliss (*sat*, *cit* and *ānanda*). But from the very beginning, soul is shrouded in *pāśa* which consists of *āṇava*, *karma* and *māyā*, the three *malas* (impurities). They too are beginningless (*anādi*). So, all these three entities, *pati* (God), *paśu* (soul) and *pāśa* (the three *malas*) are *anādi*. The *Tirumantiram* which is anterior to Sambandhar holds this view: *paśu* and *pāśa* are as beginningless as *pati* (*patiyiṇaiṇṇōl paśu pāśam anādi* — 10.159).

Āṇava-mala clings to the soul from eternity and obscures the soul from its true nature of *sat*, *cit* and *ānanda*. That is why it is called *mūla-mala* or *paḷa-mala*. It darkens the soul and hence it is *iruḷ-mala* (dark *mala*). The soul attaches itself to the *āṇava*. This act of attachment is also beginningless. This is the *mūlavinaṇai* (the primordial act). So according to Śaiva philosophy, *karma* (*viṇai*) is also *anādi*. This *karma* gives rise to other *karmas*. They in turn, being causes, become consequences. To reap the consequences, the soul gets into subtle and gross bodies provided by *māyā* and enjoys the fruits of its own actions. In the embodied state the soul further acquires *karmas* — *ōgāmi* — with the result it is caught in the cycle of births and deaths. God's grace causes the soul to go through the whole rigour of this cycle so that it gains experience and, out of the experience, is born the knowledge of its own nature. That again helps the soul to realise its relation to God and seek its salvation. Almost all systems of Indian philosophy hold the doctrine of salvation. And Śaivism aims at the universal realisation of this ideal, that is, that all souls must unite with and in God (Śiva).

The souls are many — (*palluyir* — 2.238.7). Sambandhar quotes a traditional belief that Śiva has created eightyfour lakhs of species of lives and remains as the inner life of all of them (*uraicērum eṇṇṇattu nāṇku nūṇāyiramām yōṇipētam nīṇai cēraṇṇṇaiṇṇai*).

avarin uyirkkuyirāy aṅkaṅkēniṇṇāṇ — 1.132.4). This only indicates the immense plurality of souls. Here it should be remembered that creation means the embodiment of souls and this embodiment is caused by *pāsa* and the soul's initial attachment to it. Sambandhar calls it '*pāsa valvinai*', — (2.161.9). It is also called '*tolvinai*' (primordial *karma*)⁴⁵, '*munti niṇṇa vinai*' (1.27.1) (that stands first and foremost), '*tonṭaṇai ceytolil*' (3.282.3) (the action that binds the soul from the beginning), '*munaiya mutal vinai*' (3.342.6) (the first and primary action), etc. This *mala* is a degrading darkness which darkens the soul and obscures its true nature. It does not allow the soul to unite with the Lord. Hence it is called *ūnattu iru!* (1.38.3).

This is the beginning of the cycle of births and deaths which extends like a limitless ocean. Sambandhar describes the cycle of birth and death as the ocean of birth (and death) that binds or afflicts the souls (*piṇipatu kaṭal piṇavikal* — 1.19.2) and the body as one which binds or afflicts the soul (*piṇikolyākkai*). The life is one which consists of birth and death that entrench the soul into affliction (*ūṇrum piṇipiravi kēṭenṇivai uṭaittāya vāṭṭkkai* — 1.59.4). Even while living, the body does not remain permanent. "It falls short of many faculties; the ear does not help you to hear; the eye becomes blind; the beautiful coral-like complexion diminishes in its grace; wrinkles cover the skin; grey hair sets in."⁴⁶

If the mind realises the suffering and impermanence of the body then it should not be caught up in this bondage. The soul has taken this embodiment only to get rid of itself from the agony (of separation from the Lord and of obscuration of its own true spirit), and not merely for securing pleasures like the paradise by performing good acts (*paṣu puṇya*) that are beneficial to fellow beings. Sambandhar warns his mind not to have double desires; one to be free from agony and the other to seek pleasures (*tuniyuru tuyar tirat tōṇṇiyōr nalvinaiyāl iniyuru payanātal iraṇṭura maṇam vaiyyēl*)⁴⁷ He addresses the soul as '*ērkeḷu maṣa neṇcē*'; '*ērkeḷu*' means being full of beauty. The soul being free from the clutches of *pāsa* and dwelling in unison with Śiva is beautiful. But in its embodied state it is foolish (*maṣam*). Hence '*ērkeḷu maṣa neṇcam*'.

Sambandhar's entire *patikam* on Tiruvārūr (2.215) is replete with references to the nebulous, worthless and transitory nature of the embodied existence of the soul. He describes the horror of death. "The *prāṇa-vāyu* (*pavaṇam*) is struggling to ebb out of the body. The tongue is dehydrated and could not rise to articulate. The relatives dip the cotton in milk and pour the drops into the mouth of the dying man who drinks it with struggle" — (2.215.1). "Fathers and mothers (of many a birth) had already left (died); others also will go; *Kūrṭattāṇ* (the Lord of Death) who is watching with a spear to pierce will snatch us away."⁴⁸ The body which is made up of flesh, intestines, skin, nerves and bones is not capable of remaining permanent (3). The diseases afflict (the body) every day (4). So whatever that befall the birth are malignant (*piṇaviyāl varuvanakēṭṭula* — 5). The soul which is finitised in the body made up of sins and diseases (without realising its true nature of *sat-cit-ānanda*) wants to enjoy the worldly pleasures like a bee which desires to taste the honey while being caught up in the mouth of a toad which again is entangled in the mouth of a snake."⁴⁹

In the previous section, it has been explained in detail that Sambandhar holds nature as but the manifestation of God. It is He who has brought forth the world and various *tattvas* out of *māyā*. He is one who has brought into being (or become) the several lives that are bound by the body (*uṭalvarai innuyir vāḷkkaiyāya oruvan* — 3.363.1). He who holds Umā as his part dwells within the body made of flesh (*ūnamarum uṭal ullirunta umai paṅkan* — 3.270.4). When such is the case why does he depreciate this embodied life? It is, because the soul identifies itself with the body made of flesh and bones without realising its true nature. It is not as though that the world is unreal; but there is something which is beyond space and time. At this juncture it would be very appropriate to quote Mircea Eliade:

From the time of the Upanisads India rejects the world as it is and devaluates life as it reveals itself to the eyes of the sage; ephemeral, painful, illusory. Such a conception leads to neither nihilism nor to pessimism. This

world is rejected, this life depreciated, because it is known that *something else* exists, beyond becoming, beyond temporality, beyond suffering. In religious terms, it could almost be said that India rejects the *profane* cosmos and *profane* life, because it thirsts for a sacred world and a sacred mode of being.⁵⁰

In the light of the above remarks of Mircea Eliade, one could understand why Sambandhar deprecates the profane life. But the life, that is — this embodiment — is meant for the enlightenment of the soul. The soul instead of identifying itself, with the physical body and *antaḥkaraṇas*, and thereby finitising itself, should strive to use the *karaṇas* for its own spiritual progress. Sambandhar directs the *karaṇas* to spiritualise their actions. He says: "O mind! in order to constantly contemplate (upon Him) you think (of Him) (*uṇṇi nitam maṇamē ninaiyāy* — 2.144.7). The ears that do not hear (the glory of) the Lord of Āmāttūr are but unhearing (deaf) ears" (*āmāttūr ammāṇaikkē! ācceviellām kē! āccevikaḷē* — 2.180.8). "Is it a worthy life if it does not worship the feet (of the Lord of Āmāttūr)?" (*āmāttūr ammāṇ... kaḷal paravā vāḷkkaiyum vāḷkkaiyē* — 2.180.9). "O tongue! sing (the glory of) Āvūr Pacupati iccaram" (*āvūr pacupati iccaram pāṭu nāvē* — 1.8.1-10). "O good mind! think (of Him); let the ear hear His glorious name; let the tongue glorify (His grace); then one could beget the good fortune."⁵¹

Sambandhar makes his view clear about two things, *i.e.*, (i) that the body and the world are meant for the soul's spiritual progress only, and (ii) that when they are not properly utilised, then the embodied life of the souls is deluded in misery and darkness. Such a life is described variedly as the vanishing life (*poruṅkiṇṇa vāḷkkai* — 2.235.1), life steeped in miseries (*allalmikka vāḷkkai* — 2), life steeped in sorrow (*tukkam mikka vāḷkkai* — 3), life that has lost its value (*ēṇaḷinta vāḷkkai* — 7), etc.

3.3.2 The fourfold path of spiritual progress

The ultimate goal of *ātman* is God-realisation. The *Āgamas* chalk out a fourfold path to attain spiritual progress and to realise the goal. They are the *caryā*, *kriyā*, *yoga* and *jñāna*.

Giving a general meaning, *caryā* is service or physical worship; *kriyā* is *bhāvanā* or mental worship along with physical activity; *yoga* is contemplation; and *jñāna* is realisation. It is important to note that in every one of these four, there are four further stages making in all, sixteen — *caryā* in *caryā*, *kriyā* in *caryā*, *yoga* in *caryā* and *jñāna* in *caryā*; *caryā* in *kriyā*, *kriyā* in *kriyā*, *yoga* in *kriyā* and *jñāna* in *kriyā*; *caryā* in *yoga*, *kriyā* in *yoga*, *yoga* in *yoga* and *jñāna* in *yoga*; *caryā* in *jñāna*, *kriyā* in *jñāna*, *yoga* in *jñāna* and *jñāna* in *jñāna*. This means that till one reaches the last stage all these will occur in mixed forms. Any one of these is identified on account of its predominance. These steps may be compared to the rising rungs of a ladder. Their significance is well brought out by the effects they produce: *caryā* leads to *sālokya* (the state of dwelling together), *kriyā* to *sāmīpya* (the state of nearness), *yoga* to *sārūpya* (the state of identity in form), and *jñāna* to *sāyujya* (intimate union). At the state of *sālokya*, the *sādhaka* (the man who strives for his spiritual advancement) thinks of God by entering within His realm through his physical service. He is like a devoted servant moving about freely in his master's house. This is, therefore, called *dāśya-mārga* — the path of service. Yet his sphere lies only in the circumference.

Then he slowly tries to move towards the centre — near unto God — *sāmīpya*. Here he is supposed to be engaged in the *satputra-mārga* — the path of a noble son. He acquires greater freedom and in addition to physical service, mental activity is also called in. Imagination or *bhāvanā* plays an important part here. He worships God in many forms. The world and its objects are spiritualised in this *bhāvanā*. He is no longer identifying himself with matter — his body. He is becoming conscious of his true nature of spirit.

In the third state — *sārūpya* or *yoga* — the spiritualisation is intensified by contemplation through self-control, service and love, a life of *yama*, *niyama* (control of senses and purification of mind), and other *aṅgas* of *Yoga*. Now the *ātman*, *puruṣa*, sheds its hold on *prakṛti*.

In the final *jñāna-mārga*, the *ātman* reaches the innermost centre and attains the divine communion — *sāyujya*. It is the blossoming of *bhakti* in all its depth.

3.3.3 *Sambandhar's path*

A detailed study of Sambandhar's mode of attaining spiritual progress is to be attempted in the next chapter (on religion); yet some of the basic and underlying principles are discussed here. As has been repeatedly pointed out, Sambandhar subscribes to the Āgamic principles and practices also, regarding various spiritual exercises which one has to perform in order to effect purgation of impurities and attainment of perfection. He employs two modes of illustrating the various methods of worship, the descriptive and the prescriptive. By the one, he describes what others do; by the second, he prescribes what one must do.

Under the first category, we find all types of worship which can very well conform to the description of one or other of the *caryā*, *kriyā*, *yoga* and *jñāna*. In fact, in one instance, he actually mentions '*cariyait toḷil*' (3.339.7). There are full stanzas which describe the methods of worship under *caryā* (1.116.2), *kriyā* (1.21.4), *yoga* (1.21.5) and *jñāna* (1.21.6). He seems to call these worships '*neri*' — as in '*neṇṇiyāl toḷuvār*' (1.31.9), '*neṇṇiyē pala pattarkaḷ kaitoḷutēṭṭa*' (1.32.10), and also as '*nūlināl*' — as in '*nūlināl paṇintēṭṭiṭa*' (1.57.6) and '*nūlināl maṇamālai koṇarntu*' (1.61.5) — as, well as '*muṇaiyināl*' as in '*muṇaiyināl vaṇaṇki*' (2.146.4).

We also find Sambandhar mentioning some methods which he describes as Vedic. "The *antaṇar* (brahmins) who chant with their tongues the *Aṅgas* and the *Vedas* daily worship the feet (of the Lord)" (*aṅgamum vētamum ōṭunāvar antaṇar nāḷum aṭi parava* — 1.6.12). The brahmins of the four *Vedas* whose tongues are used to chant the *Vedas* and who never fail to perform the sacrifice, worship the Lord (*nāmaru kēḷviyar vēḷviyōvā nāṇmaraiyōr vaḷipāṭu ceyya* — 1.6.4).

To crown all these, he stresses three other paths, *i.e.*, the path of music (*paṭal neri*), the path of dance (*āṭal neri*) and the path

of worshipping the servants of God who wear the guise of the Lord (*vēṭa neṭi*). God is the very sum and substance of poetry and music (*iyal isaipporuḷkaḷāki*). Sambandhar says that Śiva who could not be known to others, dwells in his heart as a beautiful light, as Śiva is the very essence of poetry and music (*enṟum ariyāṇ ayalavarkku iyalisaipporuḷkaḷāki enatuḷ naṟum oḷiyan*—3.371.1). He claims that his mind does not become conscious of anything else except the merit of the Lord of Ninṟiyur who is capable of knowing all sweet sounds of the drum, conch and other instruments that produce the melody.⁵²

“God, my father, will always bestow His grace on those who sing” (*pāṭuvṛkku arulum entai*—1.53.4), “He remains on the path of music (*pāṭal neṭi ninṟāṇ*), ‘on the path of dance,’ (*āṭal neṭi ninṟāṇ* — 2.180.5), “He remains as a supreme Light while His devotees (*aṭiyār*) who verily sing (His praise) along with their families worship His feet,” says Sambandhar (*gitattai mikappāṭum aṭiyārkaḷ kuṭiyāḷkap, pātattait toḷa niṟa parañcōti*—2.179.5). ‘*niruttar gītar*’ — (1.52.6) — (dancer and singer) — this phrase has become synonymous with the devotees (*aṭiyār*). “He is like Pearl that will bestow His grace on the true devotees who dance and sing” (*pāṭi āṭum meypattarkaṭ karuḷ ceyyum muttiṇai* — 2.245.9).

The *vēṭaneṭi* is significant in the sense that it leads to the cult of *aṭiyārs* — that is, the worship of those who have gone mad after the love of Śiva (*pittulāviya pātarkaḷ* — 2.241.6). In fact Śiva Himself is mad after those who are mad after Himself (*pittar pittan* — 2.234.10). He is the servant of those who serve Him (*toṇṭar toṇṭar* — 2.240.10). Even the *jīvanmukta* seeks to be associated with and worship the characteristic marks (*vēṭam*) of the great souls who are completely set free from all delusions and imperfections.⁵³

Generally *jīvanmuktas* are completely set free from the triple *malas* and they enjoy the everlasting bliss of the true *jñāna*. Yet as long as they lead an embodied life the *prārabdha-viṇai* (*karma*) clings to their body which may produce desires and dislikes in their minds that, in turn, will lead them to *saṁsāra* again. Their association

with and worship of the enlightened souls, and their worship of temples will ward them off from the evil influences of *prārabdhavinai*.⁵⁴ Therefore *vēṭanerī* is a very important landmark in the spiritual progress of the soul. As Sambandhar says, Śiva remains on the path of *vēṭam* (*vēṭanerī ninṇāṇ*). '*Vēṭanerī*' has a unique appeal to Sambandhar. This can be seen in his great appreciation for Kulacciṇaiyār. The latter used to bow down in humility whenever he saw the *aṭiyārs* coming either alone or in groups (*kaṇaṅkalāy varinnum tamiyarāy varinnum aṭiyavar taṅkalaik kaṇṭāl, guṇaṅkoṭu paṇiyum kulacciṇai* — 3. 378.4).

Māṇikkavācakar, in his *Tiruvempāvai*, appeals to the Lord to let his bosom not to embrace the shoulders of those who are not the lovers of Śiva (*eṇ koṅkai ninaṅparallār tōl cēraṅka*).⁵⁵ He also affirms that he will bow down before the feet of Śiva's *aṭiyārs* and that he will always be with them (*unnaṭiyār tālpaṇivōm, āṅkavarkkē pāṅkāvōm*).⁵⁶ We find a similar assertion in Sambandhar's hymn: "We do not have any relation (or support) other than those who smear the sacred ash over their chests" (*cāmpal akalattār cārpallār cārpilamē* — 2.180.3).

We have seen the descriptive methods of worship as depicted by Sambandhar. Now the prescriptive methods of worship may be examined.

In the prescriptive method of worship, two types could be observed. First, in many of his hymns, Sambandhar appeals to or commands his fellowmen to go and worship the Lord at a temple, e.g., '*tūṅkāṇaimāṭam toḷumīṅkalē*'.⁵⁷ He also exhorts: "See and worship the form of Kapāli" (*kaṇṭu toḷumīṅ kapāli vēṭamē* — 1.27.10), and, "let us strew the fragrant smelling flowers and unite with the feet of One who has the widespread matted hair" (*viraiṅkamaḷ māmalartūvi viriṇṇaiyāṇ aṭi cērvōm* — 1.40.2). "Let us bathe the Lord with milk and ghee and bow down at His feet" (*pālōṭu neyyāṭi pātam paṇivōmē* — 2.182.9). Sometimes Sambandhar addresses to his own mind. "My mind! cherish the feet of the Lord Veṅṇaipperumāṇ (of Cikkal) as your asylum or destiny" (*veṅṇaiṇṇipirāṇaṭi...kaṇṭiraittu maṇamē matiyyāy kati yāṅkavē* — 2.144.6). "Think of Him steadfastly" (*uṇṇu ninṇaiyāy* — 2.144.8).

The second type of the prescriptive method lies in his asking the devotees to sing his *patikams*. The *tirukkaṭaikkāppu* verses which are generally numbered as the eleventh verse, give a new lead which Nambiyāṇḍār Nambi rightly calls "the great path of the *patikams*" (*patikaṭṭeruvaḷi*).⁵⁸ In each *tirukkaṭaikkāppu* verse, Sambandhar, apart from giving an account of himself and a description of the place of the Lord who dwells there, also assures us, in no uncertain terms, of the great benefits that accrue to the *sādhakas*. He affirms that the very singing of the *patikam* itself is a penance (*tavam*) (*pūṣal coliyāḷat tavamāmē*).⁵⁹

Those who adorn themselves with Tamil (*patikam*) are the people who have performed penance (*tamiḷ tarippōr tavañceytōre* — 2.209.12). He also claims that he has sung the *patikam* to an audience comprising of people who remain steadfast in the true penance, so that when they sing it, the false penance and blemish will vanish and they will become men of Truth (*meyttavattu niṇṇōr kaḷukkurai ceytu...naviṇṇēlu mālaikaḷ, poyttavamṇōri nīnka iṇṇicai pōṇṇi ceyyum...meyminṇāntarē* — 3.295.10). He goes further to say, that even to worship the feet of those who are well versed in the Tamil of Sambandhar, is a penance (*sambandhaṇa tamiḷvallaṇar aḷipṇūtal tavamē* — 1.10.11). He further grants that those who are well versed in the garland of Tamil (songs) will have the bliss of union with Śiva and *śivayoga* as their own (*tamiḷ mālaikaḷvalār...aṇupōkamoḷu yōgam avaratē* — 3.338.11). If one chants (the *patikam*) it is a boon (*moḷintakkāl maṇṇatu varamāmē* — 2.244.11).

Sambandhar goes from place to place, from temple to temple. He might not have met the same type of people everywhere. Their spiritual attainments could not have been of the same standard. There is bound to be different levels and standards. Therefore, it would be interesting to investigate whether Sambandhar sings his *patikams* suitably in accordance with the levels of spiritual attainments of the people he meets. It has just now been seen in the *patikam* (295) that he has addressed it to an audience of true penance (*meyttavattu niṇṇōrkaḷukku urai ceytu*). Probably each *patikam* may, in a way, reflect the mental and spiritual state of the

audience and this investigation needs careful study for which there is no scope or space in this work.

There are about a score and more of categories of benefits that Sambandhar assures to the people who sing his hymns. They are classified as follows:

1. *avalam* (misfortune) and *allal* (suffering, distress) will be removed or cut asunder: *allal tīrum, avalam aṭaiyāvē* — 1.26.11; *aṭum nīṭu avalam* — 1.134.11; *avalam aṭaiyāvē* — 3.362.11; 3.268.11

2. There will not be any *kēṭu* (loss) — *ilai kēṭē* — 1.35.11

3. *tuyar* (sorrow will be removed): *tuyar keṭutal elitāmē* — 1.40.11 (the disappearance of sorrow will be easy); *cintaiyil tuyarāya tīrvarē* (they will get rid of sorrow from their mind) — 2.164.11; 2.252.11, 3.340.11

4. They will erase the *tunṇam* (suffering): *tunṇam tuṭaiṇṇārē* — 1.105.11 (they will wipe out suffering)

5. They will be free from *kuṇṇam* (mistake or misgiving): *kuṇṇaṅkal kuṇṇāvē* — 2.239.11; *kuṇṇam aṇṇārkaḷē* — 3.286.11; *kuṇṇam aṇṇōrē* — 3.384.1

6. They will be free from *piṇi* (disease): *vārā piṇikaḷ* — 1.68.11; *piṇiyīlar tāmē* — 1.78.11; *uṇṇōy kaḷaiṇṇārē* — 1.104.11; *maruvā piṇitānē* — 3.363.11

7. It will remove *kavalai* (worry): *kavalai kaḷaiṇṇārē* — 1.70.11; *kavalai kaḷiṇṇārē* — 1.72.11

8. *pāvam* (sin) will be blown off (*paṇaiyum*) — 2.235.11; *paṇaiyum pāvamē* — 1.29.11; 1.39.11, 2.148.11, 3.266.11

9. *iṭar* (obstacles - hindrances) will be removed. The *karmas* are the hindrances for the spiritual progress of the soul. So here *iṭar* refers to *karmās*:⁶⁰ *iṭar pāvam aṭaiyāvē* (the obstacles and sins will never approach) 1.12.11 and also see 1.97.11; 2.177.11, 3.297.11, 3.371.11

10. *taṭumārṇṇam* (dilemma or vacillation) and *ceṭikaḷ* (evil qualities) will be removed: *taṭumārṇṇararupparē* (they will break off their dilemma) — 1.88.11; *taṭumārṇṇam vañcamilar* (they do not have dilemma and evil design) — 3.339.11

11. *karmas* — *vinai* will be discredited or depreciated or blown off: *paraṭiyum vinai tūṭē* (the *karma* will be blown off) — 1.17.11; *vinai pōy oṇki vāḷvūzrē* (having got rid of the *karma* the devotees will grow in stature) — 1.23.11; *cāraḱilā vinaitānē* (*karma* will not befall) — 1.44.11; *vinaiyilarē* (they are without *karma*) — 1.46.11; *vinai vīṭē* (*karma* will vanish) — 1.54.11; also see 1.55.11; 1.77.11, 1.95.11, 1.107.11, 2. 160.11, 2.161.11, 2.167.11, 2.216.11; *tivinaikaḷ pōyakala nalvinaiḱaḷ taḷarāvāṇṇē* (when once the evil *karmas* disappear the virtuous *karma* will not be slackened) — 2.207.11; *vinai māyumē* — 2.212.11; *vinai keṭutal āṇai namatē* — 2.220.11; *tuyar vāṭiyāmaiyaḷ vinai māyumē* (because evil *karmas* are eschewed even the good ones will not come to bind the soul, and in due course will lose their hold — that is how they die (*māyum*) — 2.257.11; 3.260.11, 3.263.11

12. *paḷi* (disrepute) will vanish (here *paḷi* means the disrepute that the soul is under bondage):⁹¹ they are without disrepute and sin — *paḷiyōṭṭu pāvamilarē* — (the disrepute will go) — 1.39.11; *paḷi pōmē* — 1.101.11; 1.102.11, 2.169.11, 3.305.11

13. *guṇam* — virtues will be acquired: *guṇamāmē* — 1.57.11; *takkōr tāmē* — 2.210.12; 2.234.11, 3.321.11, 3.338.11

14. They will acquire *pukaḷ* (fame or glory): *kuṇaivinaṇṇi* (without any defect) *niṇai* (perfect) *pukaḷē* — 1.18.11; *paḷiyil pukaḷāṇrē* (blemishless glory) — 1.81.11; *pukaḷōṭṭum pēriṇṇam pukutumanṇē* — 1.119.11; 1.120.11, 2.154.11, 3.329.11

15. *mati* (intellect), *viti* (destiny) and *jñānam* (wisdom) will be gained: *matiyuṭaiyavar vitiyuṭaiyavarkaḷē* — 1.19.11; *uru jñānam uṇṭām* — 2.156.11

16. It will bring *iṇṇam* (bliss): *iṇṇamāmē* (there will be bliss) — 1.111.11; 2.199.11, 3.279.11

17. It will grant *celvam* (wealth): *celvamām ivaiceppavē* (when one recites these hymns wealth will accrue) — 1.135.11; *tiṭilāc-celvarē* — (they are wealthy without evil) — 3.309.11

18. They are *nallavar* (good souls): *nallavartāmē* (they are good souls) — 1.30.11; 2.202.11, 3.370.11

19. *nanneri* (right path) — will be obtained: *nalamalku cintaiyar āki* (becoming men of virtuous thought) ; *nanneri eytuvar tāmē* (they will gain access to the right path) — 2.205.11; *tūneri peṇuvārkaḷē* — (they will get into righteous path) — 2.214.11; 2.230.11, 2.247.11, 3.291.11

20. They will reach *vāṇ* — the abode of the celestials: *vāṇattu inīṭay irupparē* (they will rest in *vāṇ* in happiness) — 1.24.11; *viṇṇōr ulakattil viṭṭirirupparē* (they will be seated in the world of the celestials) — 1.32.11; 1.34.11, 2.142.12, 3.326.11

Thus having got rid of *avalam*, *allal*, *kēṭu*, *tuyar*, *tunṇam*, *kuṇṇam*, *piṇi*, *kavalai*, *pāvam*, *iṭar*, *taṭumārṇam*, *viṇai* and *paḷi* on the one hand, the soul acquires *guṇam*, *pukaḷ*, *matī*, *viti*, *jñāṇam*, *iṇṇam*, *celvam*, *nalam*, *nanneri* on the other hand, and is fit to reach the abode of the celestials — *vāṇ*.

Sambandhar describes such souls as: *pākkīyavāḷarē* (blessed with fortune — 3.366.11); *pattarākuvarē* (will become pious people — 3.369.11); they will become the members of the fraternity of noble souls (*uyarntōr cuṇṇamumāki* — 3.381.11); they would break all bondage and grow in stature by the side of Śiva (*banda maṇuttu oṇkuvar pāṇmaiṇiṇālē* — 2.172.11); they are capable of snapping all bondages and *pāsas* (*banda pāsam aṇukkavallārkaḷē* — 3.307.11).

21. *malam* — In the *tirukkaṭai* *aiṅkāṇṇu* of the Tiruppiramā-puram *patikam* (3.325.12), Sambandhar affirms that his *patikam* will wash away the *mala* which degrades and pulls down the soul in such a way as to annihilate it (*mala*) completely (*iḷuku malam aḷiyum vakai kaḷuvum urai*). When once the *viṇai* and *malam* are removed, the cycle of births and deaths is broken. Thus a singer of the hymn will be free from it.

22. *piṛappu*: (birth): *piṛappataṛuttuk kavalaikaḷivārē* — (they will annul the birth and remove the worry) — 1.72.11; *aṛum piṛapputtānē* (the birth will be terminated) — 1.134.11; *illaiyām maṛu piṛappē* — (there is no rebirth) — 2.179.11; 3.308.11

23. They will attain *vīṭupēṛu* (liberation): *elitām piṛavāvakai vīṭē* (it is easy to obtain birthless salvation) — 1.31.11; *vāṇṇitai vīṭēlitāmē* (it is easy to obtain the heaven and salvation) — 1.33.11; *uyar vītē* — 1.136.11; 2.213.11, 3.317.11

24. They will get close to the feet of Śiva — *Śivanaṭi naṇṇuvar tāmē* — 1.41.11; *aṭicērvārkaḷē* (they will reach the feet of the Lord) — 1.87.11; 2.144.11, 3.361.11

25. They will reach *Śivaloka*: *Śivalōkam cērvārē* — 1.60.11; 3.276.11, 3.361.11; *paralōkattiruppārē* (they will be at the most exalted world) — 1.106.10; 2.219.11, 3.371.11

26. They will attain *Śivagati* (the final bliss): *Śivagatiyaip-
peṛuvārē* — 1.9.11; *cērvār śivagatiyē* (they will reach *śivagati*) — 1.15.11; *śivagati cērvārē* — 1.66.11; 2.241.11, 3.275.11

27. They will unite with *īsaṇ*: *eytuvārkaḷ īsaṇaiyē* (they will obtain the Lord) — 1.62.11; *kōṇoṭum kūtuvārē* (they will unite with the king (Śiva)) — 1.116.11; *eṇṇuvārkaḷ cintaiyāvar tēvarē* (the Lord will be one with the inner mind of those who meditate upon Him) — 3.310.11

28. Identity and integration with *īsa*: *Īsaṇōṭē manṇi irup-
parē* — (they will exist together with *īsa* — eternally) — 1.50.11; *irunilattil īsaṇ eṇum iyalpinārē* (in this large world they hold such qualities as to be called *īsa*) — 1.132.11; *īṛaivanōṭu uṛaivārē* (they will co-exist with *īṛaivan*, or they will exist in *īṛaivan*) — 2.240.11

29. They will obtain *aruḷ* (grace): *tuyar pōki, aruḷ peṛum tanmai mikkōrē* (*tuyar* — worry of *karma* having gone, they are steeped in a position as to receive the *aruḷ* — grace of the Lord Śiva) — 1.100.11; *tiruvaḷar cemmaiyākiaruḷ pēṛu mikkatuḷatu* (there is a great scope for obtaining *aruḷ* as the *tiruvāruḷ* — the divine Grace is getting ripe for its action) — 2.222.11; *aruḷ cērvārē* —

3.269.11; *neñciruḷum nīṇki aruḷ perṟu vaḷarvarē* (by obtaining *aruḷ* they will grow, with the darkness having disappeared from their mind) — 3.339.11.

One point may be made clear. The data furnished above are given in the order of sequence just for the convenience of classification. It does not at all suggest that Sambandhar has sung them in the same order. Yet this classification serves to give a clue to the possibility that Sambandhar is singing to different people of different levels of spiritual attainment and perfection, having in the mind the idea of *adhikāri bheda*. Thus, we find how Sambandhar's *patikapperuvaḷi* leads the souls step by step to different levels of spiritual progress and attainment.

The *āṭalneri*, *pāṭal nerī*, *vēṭa nerī*, *patikapperuvaḷi* and other modes of worship are all but the means by which the soul learns to liberate itself from its delusion of false identification with *prakṛti*. When once it is realised, the soul lies grounded in God. These means are called *sādhana* while the people who practise them are *sādhakas*. Their achievement — their realisation of the ideal is *siddhi*. The *siddhas* are the realised souls. We find frequent reference in Sambandhar's hymns to *bhaktas* and *siddhas* (*pattar, cittar*).⁶² Worship involves a worshipper and an object of worship. So, naturally there is a dualism in any *sādhana*. But this dualism at this stage of *sādhana* is only a good means to reach the final non-dual knowledge and experience. Similar to the dictum — "from known to the unknown" — dualism, with concentrated attention of the mind, leads to oneness of experience.

Tāyumanāvar, one of the famous mystic-poets of Tamil-nadu says that the inexplicable dualism is the known path of attaining monistic knowledge (*ōtariya tuvitamē attuvita jñānattai unṭupaṇum jñāṇamākum*).⁶³ Through the *sādhana* the soul comes to realise that it is no longer mind and body; on the other hand its mind is lost in the meditation on Śiva and becomes one with Śiva. It is called *śivohambhāvanā*, wherein the distinction between the *sādhaka* and Śiva disappears and Śiva alone is there as experience of absolute bliss. Sambandhar gives a number of instances such

as this one: '*kaḷḷa neṇca vaṇcakak karuttaiviṭṭu aruttiyōṭu, uḷḷam onṛi uḷkuvar uḷaituḷāṇ*' (2.237.6). '*Kallaneṇcu*' means the mind that steals the soul of its divinity; *vaṇcakakkaruttu* is the deluding notion that the soul is mind and body. When both of them are discarded, the mind is lost in love (*arutti*) and Śiva alone exists within. The self is absorbed yielding place to bliss and love.

He begs of his mind to keep meditating on the divine feet of the Lord if it really desires to get its deliverance.⁶⁴ The mind and body are there; but the mind is united with Śiva and there is only one consciousness which melts in the warmth of love — such souls are *urukkumaṣiyār* (1.88.8). They do not have any desire; even the *svarga* and its pleasures are no matter to them — '*suvarakkaṇkaḷ poruḷalavē*' — (2.177.7).

If the desires do not die out, then there cannot be any realisation (*telivu*). The moving sun, moon and other gods seek Śiva with the aim of obtaining certain pleasures; so they do not attain any realisation (*iyaṇkukinṛa iravi tiṅkaḷ maṇṇum naṇṇēvarellām, payaṇkaḷālē paṇṇi ninpāl cittam telikinṛilar* — 1.50.2).

However, even the perfect soul is sometimes deluded and tempted by desires. The only escape and remedy on such occasions is the grace of God. The cold wisdom alone cannot keep the perfect soul out of woods. God's grace must descend to save the soul. No less a soul than Sambandhar himself regrets that he is tempted or deluded and begs of the Lord of Valivalam to save him (*mayāṇku kinṛēṇ vantu nalkāy valivalam mēyavanē* — 1.50.2).

He again cries: "O Lord! dwelling in Valivalam! even when I sleep and eat, I praise your greatness; yet I am afraid that there is still some dark design in me, that is, my consciousness is yet to be completely centred on you — in spite of the fact that I think of you everyday."⁶⁵ "O Lord! that dwell in Valivalam! You are the mother, you are the father, Śaṅkara! I am your servant (*aṣiyēn*). You are sought after by the perfect souls who have realised *śivajñāna*. My mind too is intending to love you. Yet the five persons (the five sensory organs) who are entrenched

in this created body do not allow me to unite with you. I am afraid this is a *māyam*⁶⁶ — delusion." Further in this *patikam*, he appeals to the Lord to come and save him so that the *karmas* and other misfortunes do not tease him who everyday chants and sings His praise (*ōtinā!um unṇai ēttum ennai viṇai avalam vāṭiyāmē vantu nalkāy valivalam mēyavanē* 1.50.9).

The soul, on account of its *karma*, acts in two ways. One is evil act which is injurious to its fellow beings. That is *tivinaṭi*. Another act is benevolent and virtuous or righteous act. This is *nalvinai*. This is also called *paśu-puṇya*. When *paśu-puṇya* is further purified from egotism, it leads to *śiva-puṇya*. Here the soul completely surrenders and submits to the will of God by chanting and singing in praise of the Lord. Sambandhar congratulates his own mind and asks in wonder, "What is the *puṇya* that you have done, my mind? For, as a consequence of the *nalvinai* that you have done over your past births, you now worship the dweller of Valaṅcuḷi by repeatedly uttering, praising and singing (His glory) to the best satisfaction of your mouth (tongue)."⁶⁷

In Sambandhar's view, *śiva-puṇya*, performed in complete self surrender and resignation and also in limitless love will lead to *jñāna*. Sambandhar asserts that *aṭiyārs* do not know any knowledge other than the service done to the feet of the Lord who has mastered them (*āṇṭakaḷal toḷilallatu aṭiyār avar aṭivē* — 1.18.4). He again says that he does not know any other knowledge except to know how to worship the feet of Śiva (*aṭitoḷum aṭivalatu aṭivu aṭiyamē* — 1.19.7).

3.3.4 Souls unbound

It has been held that *jñāna* — Gnosis — is the best among the means to reach the feet of God. *Jñāna* as such is of three kinds, i.e., *pāśa-jñāna*, *paśu-jñāna* and *pati-jñāna*. The knowledge we have with the aid of sensory organs and *antaḥkaraṇas* like *manas* which are products of *māyā*, is *pāśa-jñāna*. *Paśu-jñāna* is the knowledge of the soul which is different from products of *māyā*. This is preliminary to *pati-jñāna* where the soul's intelligence is informed by Śiva's intelligence. Yet *paśu-jñāna* cannot bring about release

because the discrimination of the soul from internal organs is obtained through *kalā*, *vidyā*, etc. Beyond this there is a stage, i.e., *pati-jñāna*.⁶⁵ In this stage, the soul discards all products of *pāśa* like *kalās* and *āṇava*. Lord's *parāśakti* sets in here. The soul's intelligence, now made efficient by the removal of *mala* and by the presence of the Lord's intelligence, is able to find itself and everything.

Sambandhar makes numerous references to the realised souls. They are the people who have conquered the five senses; they know the sum and substance of all the six doctrines of Śaiva religion. They have completely got rid of the cruel anger by means of music which consists of seven notes (*añcupulan venṇu aṇu vakaip poruḷ terintu eḷu isaikkiḷaviyāḷ veñcinam oḷittavarkaḷ* — 3.336.10). They are the great ones who have acquired vast knowledge by learning and listening to the sallies of wise men (*karṇal kēṭṭal uṭaiyār periyār* — 1.1.2). They have discarded their desires for whatever that are unreal. Their five senses are controlled and held in *dhāraṇā*. But that itself will not result in release, if that is not followed up with enlightenment. They have attained the knowledge of the highest truth (*āṇinār poyyakattu aiṇarveyti meytēṇinār* — 3.293.6). They are the ones who have removed all their attachments (*aṇṇavar*).⁶⁶ They have ruthlessly broken all worldly relationships and attachments and associated themselves with all virtues that are free from blemishes (*cuṇṇamōḷu paṇṇavai tuyakkaṇa aruttuk kuṇṇamil kuṇṇaṇkaḷōḷu kūṇum aṇiyārkaḷ* — 2.167.1). They (the realised souls) are above merits and demerits; for they have not only discarded the ways of *adharma* but also have gone above the normal ethical codes. Both are fetters to them. Thus they have attained the *iruvinaiyoppu*, a state of mind and attitude where good and evil are treated as the same and doing one's duty with a sense of detachment to the results by surrendering to the will of God. On that account they have become worthy of receiving the grace of God.⁷⁰

With the onset of *iruvinaiyoppu* the past *karmas* (*munnai vinai*) are got rid of. The saints know themselves as well as everything with the help of Śiva's intelligence and pursue their penance

(*munūai vinai pōy vakaiyiṇān muḷutuṇarntu muyalkiṇṇa munivar* — 3.329.4).

Kāma, *kṛōdha*, *moha*, *mada*, *lobha* and *mātsurya* are the six enemies to the soul's spiritual progress. They should be completely eschewed. Then only the five senses could be controlled. Even then one could not attain release if one does all these things mechanically. *Kāma*, *kṛōdha*, etc., could not be conquered negatively by passive efforts. Even if one does so, it would not be a lasting success. Love alone, love of God alone could sustain the gain. So the realised souls first harbour the deepest love in their innermost self which helps them to conquer *kāma*, etc., positively. Thereupon, *jñāna* dawns and they are one with Śiva.⁷¹ The mind of the *muktas* is no longer engrossed in the matters of *prakṛti*. In fact they have transmuted their mind to a different (God-) consciousness (*vēṇupaṭṭa cintaiyar* — 3.311.2). They do not even require language, even though they have mastered the great books of the 'Threefold Tamil'. They could fall into silence. Such "silence is more eloquent." The *muktas* of Vēṇupuram are of such a type (*mūkam aṇivār kalai muttamiḷ nūl mikam aṇivār vēṇupuramē* — 2.153.10). Sometimes they are spoken of as *cittars*. They have attained the eightfold *siddhis* like *aṇimā*, etc. (*irunānkin māti citar* — 1.66.10).

Whatever the *muktas* do and whatever they suffer from, their consciousness is deeply rooted in tranquility and such acts little affect their God-consciousness. Sometimes they appear to behave strangely. They need not necessarily conform to social and moral moorings. They may smear the sacred ashes all over their bodies; they may roam about from place to place having drunk the nectar which they get from the groves of the villages; they may shout (like insane men). Even if they do all these things, only the degenerated people will mock at them — (others will only respect them).⁷²

But it should be noted that it is also interpreted differently. The expression "even if they do", suggests only a negative sense — that is, they would never commit such acts. However, even if they

sometimes do certain acts which are not in strict conformity with social laws, etc., they do not make it as a rule. On the other hand, they always conform themselves to social laws at least for the sake of upholding them for the welfare of the common man. We find the saints of Kētāram who have clear God-consciousness (*tērucintai uṭaiyavarka!*), doing external acts such as bathing before dawn, smearing the sacred ash, eating the food placed on the bare floor, etc. (2.250.3,6). They have fallen into the beaten track of organised worship (*ciṭṭappapaṭṭār* — 3.383.6). They always speak to people with sweet and beneficial words; they also act according to the injunctions of the *Vedas*; they are the followers (of great ones) even though their consciousness is grounded in the central theme of the *sthūla pañcākṣara* or what forms the central theme of the *Vedas*.⁷³

They learn the *Vedas* and many good arts so meticulously as to get all their imperfections completely removed. They also tread the path (shown by the *Veda*, etc.) as to be praised by all the worlds. They strive to perform hard penance as to make their organs (both internal and sensory) cast away their evil influences over them. Śiva wills that such souls should reach His feet. They will obtain *jñāna* and *sāyujya*.⁷⁴ They are those who do not die, who do not take rebirth, who are steeped in penance and who are saints who never become old '*cāvātavar piṇavātavar tavamē mikavuṭaiyār mūvūta paṇ muṇivar*' — (1.12.6).

Renunciation is the very set up of their mind (*tuṇaviyeṇum uḷḷam uṭaiyavarka!* — 3.331.7). They know the truth of all epochs (*ṇṇi ṇṇi uṇarvārka!* — 2.250.5). They control the breath in the body and light up the lamp of bright and sparkling *jñāna*. Thereby they open up the beneficial doors of divinity and devotion that are (as sweet as) nectar.⁷⁵

It is interesting to note that in one verse Sambandhar holds the insignia of Śiva as common to Himself and to certain types of souls. The deer, radiant axe, *kaṭṭaṅkam* (*yoga-daṇḍam*), rosary of *rudrākṣa*, the *kuṇṭalam* (ear-ring), the crescent that adorns the head, the lengthy garland of bones, the trident, the *ḍamaruka*

(drum) and the *Gaṅgā* are common to Śiva and His servants, on whom He bestows *sārūpya*.⁷⁶

3.3.5 *The state of realised souls in mukti (liberation)*

What is the state of a soul which is released from the bondage? The *Śivajñānabōdham* in its tenth *sūtra* (aphorism) suggests that the soul which is unbound becomes one with God experientially, as He himself becomes one with the soul, and remains under His direction and command '*avanē tānē yākiya anneri yēka nāki iraiṇi nīrka*.'⁷⁷ By becoming one with God (*ēkanāki nīṇal*) the soul sheds even its *vāsanā-mala* (the dormant effect of the *mala*) on the consequent of which the distinction among the knower, known object and knowledge disappears. There is only a unitary experience, for, to know God is to be God. God's grace is personified as His feet. The realised soul is absorbed by God's grace which is called *vaya jñānam*. Such souls (*vaya jñānam vallār*) remain firm at the feet of God which is His grace and acquire the supreme knowledge (*uyar-jñānam*) and meditate upon it (2.154.11). Attainment of God's grace (feet) is itself *jñāna* and the souls remain firm in it by worshipping Him (... *uyar pātamē, jñānamāka niṇru ēttavallār*).⁷⁸ Those who grow under the shades of the feet of the Lord of Cāykkāṭu, indeed grow highest in their spirituality (*cāykkāṭṭiāṇ tāṇiṇārkiḷ ṍṍṍkinār ṍṍṍkinār* — 2.177.5).

Even as the realised souls become one with God, they are always conscious of their unforgettable servitude (*maṇappilā aṭi-maikkaṇ maraṁ vaiṇṇār* — 3.322.7). What is meant here is that by becoming one with God, the souls, released from the bondage, throw themselves at His feet in all oneness of consciousness so that their *icchā*, *jñāna* and *kriyā* are acted upon by God's will and grace.

Sambandhar exhorts the *sādhakas* to follow their relationship with Śiva which He in turn, holds by intimately uniting Himself with the *toṇṇar* (servants of God) '*toṇṇoṭu kūṭit tulaintu niṇṇa toṇṇar-pait toṇṇarōmē*' — (3.364.6). We find in Sambandhar's hymns many references to souls as shown so far. He speaks of plurality of souls. The souls when they are in embodied state wrongly

identify themselves with body and mind which are but products of *māyā*. Such a life is loathsome and impermanent to him. He speaks of spiritualising mind and body through worship of Śiva. He describes and prescribes various types of worship and methods of spiritual progress of the soul. Through *caryā*, *kriyā*, *yoga* and *jñāna*, the soul obtains God's grace and thereby comes to know of its own spirit and finally to be one with God. At this state of release, the soul unites with and in Śiva and enjoys the bliss of *śivabhoga* by performing *tonṭu* (service).

3.4 God

This section deals with the ultimate goal *viz.*, realisation of Godhead as revealed in Sambandhar's hymns. An attempt is made to highlight and examine the proofs that Sambandhar offers for the existence of God. God is love but that does not restrict our enquiry to be made on emotional grounds only. His *cit* aspect is examined, and His position as the supreme custodian of moral and ethical principles is studied. However, God as love and beauty could not be experienced by cold reasoning. He could be more easily experienced as a lover. So bridal mysticism evolves itself as a vital means to help one in experiencing the divine Bliss. Sambandhar has many poems on bridal mysticism to his credit, and they are studied briefly. The doctrine of grace is very significant from the Śaiva point of view. Sambandhar's hymns are full of references to it. His description of the final goal is discussed as the non-dual experience of the Absolute. But no attempt could be made to brand him as the follower of any particular school of philosophy. It has been shown that his hymns are a source of inspiration to more than one school or system as he is found to represent a harmony of all religious and philosophical principles.

3.4.1 A critique of knowledge

Referring to the importance of epistemology, Hiriyanṇa says:

In fact the several systems which develop now do not set about investigating their proper subject until they have given us what may be described as a critique of knowledge and considered how we come by truth. In other words, Indian philosophy becomes self-conscious

at this state, and logic emerges as an explicit branch of it.⁷⁹

Devasenapathi cites the following verse as quoted by Śivāgrayogin, to highlight the importance of logic.

*‘Irākamaṛiyār icaippayan tāmariyār
tarātaramariyār saṅkāriyam aṇiyār
ōrār aḷavai orupayanum tāmariyār
ārāyntu aḷavai aṇintu kolirē’⁸⁰*

The main burden of this verse is that just as those who do not know the *rāgas* (musical tunes) do not understand the effect of music, so also those who do not critically think of logic (*aḷavai*) do not know any effect (of the book) either, and hence one has to examine and learn logic.

Aruṇanti Śivācārya, the famous author of the *Śivajñāna Siddhiyār*, says in his prefatory verse that the Lord’s lotus feet could not be described either by the scriptures, Ayaṇ (Brahmā), Māl, thought, word or by the flawless logic.⁸¹ But at the same time, he affirms that being illumined by God’s grace one could know Him by means of scripture and logic (*aruḷiṇāl ākamattē aṇiyalām aḷaviṇālum teruḷalām*).⁸²

3.4.2 Sambandhar’s experience of God

Of the three means of valid knowledge — *pratyakṣa*, *anumāna* and *śabda*, it is said that through sensory perception one cannot experience the existence of God, soul or the bonds.⁸³ But the tradition has it that Sambandhar had not only seen God but also shown Him to others. Cēkkiḷār cites two instances in which Sambandhar is said to have seen God and shown Him to others. The first instance occurred when Sambandhar was blessed with the milk of wisdom. When Śivapāta Irudayar asked Sambandhar who had given him the milk, he pointed at the Lord of Tōṇipuram with his finger and described Him in his first *patikam* with all the details of His insignia, saying, “He is the Lord who has done this unto me”.⁸⁴ Here Cēkkiḷār says that though the father could not see the Lord as the son did, yet the former understood the

message.⁸⁵ The second instance which Cēkkiḷār cites is when Sambandhar saw and showed the dancing pose of the Lord at Tiruvāymūr to Appar. Here Cēkkiḷār unambiguously states that Sambandhar was blessed with the direct vision of God which he had shown to Nāvukkaracar so that he too could see Him (*aracum kāṇak kāṭṭutalum*).⁸⁶ These two instances are believed to have shown to the world that Sambandhar was blessed with competence to perceive with sensory perception what lies beyond the ken of such perception and also to make others perceive the same.⁸⁷ Nambi Ārūrar praises the Lord of Tirukkōlakkā for having presented the golden cymbals to Sambandhar in front of the people of the world.⁸⁸

But to the best of our knowledge Sambandhar has not made any single reference in his hymns now extant that he has seen God with his eyes, in the anthropomorphic form. But, because he uses the mythological language in order to explain the inexplicable, he often describes Śiva as having the form usually attributed to Him. However, Sambandhar claims that Śiva who is free from *malas* has come unto him in the form of a great luminosity in the states of wakefulness, dream and thought (remembrance).⁸⁹ Even here this 'oḷi' might have been used in a metaphorical sense meaning the Śiva-consciousness of Sambandhar.

Anyhow, one thing is clear from Sambandhar's hymns, viz. that God's grace (*aruḷ*) works. There is ample internal evidence to stress that he has demonstrated the Truth of God's grace on a number of occasions. They are not mere miracles. To him they are all Śiva's acts of infinite mercy, compassion — *aruḷ*. He has obtained the good gold coins by requesting the Lord of Vīḷimiḷalai, '*vāci tīravē kāsu nalkuvīr*' — (1.92.1). He was able to close the doors of Maṇaiḱkaṭu through God's grace (*katavam tirukkāppuk koḷḷum karuttālē* — 1.173.1). He caused the burning fever to get hold of the Pāṇḍiya (*appaṇ alavāy āti aruḷiṇāl veppam tennaṇ mēluṇa* — 3.309.11). He also cures the king (*tēṇṇit tenṇa uḷaluṇṇa tīppīṇiāyina tīra* — 2.202.11). The Lord presents a bag of gold at Tiruvāvaṭuṭurai. The boat was propelled by God's grace at Koḷlampūtūr (*cella untuka* — 3.264.1-10),

(*ōḷam vantaṇaiyum kollampūtūr* — 3.264.6). He has put the palm-leaf bearing his *patikam* beginning with '*pōkamārtta pūṇmulaiyā!*' into fire. That leaf remains evergreen without being destroyed by fire.⁹⁰

To crown all these, Sambandhar himself cites an instance to establish the truth of Śiva, possibly through *pratyakṣa anumāna*. When the palm-leaf bearing his *patikam* beginning with, '*vāḷka antaṇar*' was left in the flowing floods of the river Vaigai, it is said to have swam against the current. That *patikam* is considered to be the quintessence of Sambandhar's philosophy. He declares, "If we look at the way in which the palm-leaf, which has been put in the river against the challenge of those who do not realise God, darts against the current without any support, it is self-evident that the Lord who upholds the flag of the bull is the supreme Being indeed."⁹¹ Sambandhar contents that it is Śiva who causes the leaf, bearing his *patikam* to swim against the floods of the river before the assembly of the king of Madurai.⁹² This was how Sambandhar established the existence of Śiva's grace.

Cēkkiḷār understands Sambandhar's mind very well. So his interpretation has a tremendous value. According to him, Sambandhar wants to demonstrate this truth; that is, to know God is to love God (*jñāṇam īsanpāl anpu*).⁹³ All other means of testing the validity of knowledge of God could reach only upto a point. Beyond that, they fall; Śiva will never sever His inseparability from the bhaktas who render their loving devotion by humbly singing His praise with their noble tongues. But He will scarcely be obtained by any experimental verification of those who do not have minds to think of Him.⁹⁴ Śiva remains explicit to those who have realised Him, like fat globules in milk; but He is implicit to those who see Him, like the fire in firewood (*tērantavar tēṭuvār tēṭacceytē cērantavan*).⁹⁵ Śiva could be sought by those who constantly meditate upon His feet, that is those who hold the Śiva-consciousness for ever desiring to obtain His union (... *kaḷal cērvār naṇṇu niṇaintu nāṭaṇku uriyar* — 1.68.5).

Throughout his hymns Sambandhar asserts one point; that is, Śiva could not be known to those who exert themselves to know

Him through their *pāśa* and *paśu-jñāna* — out of egotism. The entire burden of the episode of Viṣṇu and Brahmā failing to reach Śiva through their egotistic efforts reveals this truth. Sambandhar, as noticed earlier, devotes the ninth stanza in each of his *patikam*, barring a few exceptions, highlighting this point only. But at the same time he avers that He could be known to those who seek to know Him, by experiencing Him, (*neṭiyāṇ pīramāṇ nēṭikkāṇār nīnaiṭṭār maṇattār* — 1.71.9). Sambandhar chides such of those people who hold logical debates over the existence of God, and exhorts them to give up that futile effort, and seek Him by worshipping at Maḷapāṭi.⁹⁶

Nor could Śiva be known through mere reading of scripture (*ōti yārum aṇivārilai* — 2.142.7). For, even knowledge obtained through scriptures will lead only to *pāśa-jñāna*.⁹⁷ The very fruit of scriptural knowledge should be the experience of God.⁹⁸ Without God-experience the knowledge acquired through scripture is futile. Those who recite the scripture and also experience God will come to know of Him. That is why Sambandhar who declares, '*ōti yārum aṇivārilai*' also says, '*ōti naṅku uṇarvārkkku uṇarvuṭai oruvar*' — (1.41.6). This means that Śiva comes within the range of experience of those who learn the spirit of the scripture by experiencing it.

3.4.3 *Tiruppāsuram*⁹⁹

Jñānasambandhar's *Tiruppāsuram* (3.312) beginning with '*vāḷka antaṇar*' is widely esteemed among Śaivites as the very quintessence of his philosophy. Cēkkiḷār comments upon this *patikam* in twenty-two stanzas. He praises it as the truthful *pāsuram* (*meypṭāsuram*) and also acknowledges its wide range of philosophical import which he admits that he could not comprehend perfectly and wholly (... *meypṭāsurattaik kuṇiyēria ellai aṇintu kumpiṭṭēṇ allēṇ*).¹⁰⁰ It is to be remembered that the *pāsuram* was sung on the banks of the river Vaigai before the king of Madurai. Sambandhar was the sacred preceptor; the Pāṇḍiya was the disciple. What he taught him in the *pāsuram* was the great truthful *jñāna*.¹⁰¹ Aruḷnanti Śivācārya describes this *pāsuram* as '*mejñānam*' pronounced

as to be heard by the Pāṇḍiya of the royal court (*manṛa pāṇḍiyan kēṭṭak kilakku meṇṇānam*).¹⁰²

There are twelve verses in the *pāsuram*. It is claimed that they form the very basis of the twelve aphorisms of the *Śivajñāna-bōdham*. For want of space a brief study alone is attempted here.

The first verse in all its aspects is the invocatory as well as the benedictory verse of the *pāsuram*. The broad sense of the verse is as follows: "Long live the *antaṇar* (seekers of Truth), the celestials and the species of cows; let the cool rain-water pour down; let the king too grow; let the evil sink; let all souls meditate upon the name of Araṇ; and also let the creatures of the world get rid of their misery." The seekers, celestials and cows are engaged in the task of performing the sacrifices which are meant for the universal well being and happiness. Hence they are blessed first. The rain is the result of the sacrifices and is useful in the performance of *arcana* (worship) to the Lord as well as to the material prosperity of the people and creatures. The king is there to protect and uphold these good causes. All that oppose these good causes are the evils that should not become predominant over the good; they should lie low, though not fully wiped out. If all the creatures (souls) must save themselves, they should meditate on the name of God (Araṇ). Because He is Hara — the destroyer — the Mahāsaṃhāra murti in whom all the products of *māyā* converge, and stay, and from whom they re-emerge. So He is the Beginning and End, the *ādi* as well as the *antam*. In other words, He is the Absolute. The misery that afflicts the souls of the world is the dark *mala*. When that is got rid of, the souls will experience the infinite bliss. Here in this verse Sambandhar makes it clear that Śiva (Araṇ) is the absolute Principle; that the souls are many in their finite existence at least; that they are afflicted by the *tuyar* (*mala*) and that it could be got rid of by the souls, by meditating on the name of the Lord.

The second verse deals with the *lakṣaṇas* of the *Ādi* (Śiva). The substance of it runs as follows: "He is very hard to be per-

ceived; He holds the fire on the palm; He is pleased to ride on the bull; He has a blue throat; He is a dweller of the burning ground; and yet, He is very great. Is there any one who knows all His greatness?"

Śiva cannot be known by *pāśa* and *pāśu* - *jñānas* (*ciriyavar cintai ceyya ariyavan* — 1.113.9). But He will allow Himself to be known to people who perceive Him by the *pati-jñāna* and intense love (with all these signs such as holding the fire in His palm, riding on the bull, etc.). The former is His *svarūpa* state and the latter is the *taṭastha* state. The metaphysical implication may be brought out. If the Absolute could be known by logic or epistemological enquiry then it becomes an object like the world which is ephemeral — an *asat*. If it could not be known at all by any means, then it is reduced to a non-entity like the hare's horn. But Śivā is the *sat* which on the one hand could not be known like an object of the world of perception, and on the other, He could be known by such of those who, being illumined by His grace, are able to perceive Him with all the intensity of their love.¹⁰³ That is why Sambandhar does not remark that Śivā is unknowable (*kāṭci ariyar*) but says that He is hard to be known (*ariya kāṭchiyar*). For those who are illumined by God's grace, Śiva appears with all His marks (*aṭaiyāḷaiṅkal*). Cēkkiḷār describes them as '*uṇmaiṇṇam periya nal aṭaiyāḷaiṅkal*.'¹⁰⁴ For, they stand for certain truth. The fire and the cremation ground denote that Śivā is the Mahāsāmhāra mūrti. The bull stands for the realised soul. The blue throat speaks of His infinite grace and compassion. But it may raise a doubt that Śiva who holds cosmic and absolute forms (*svarūpa*) is described here like holding the fire, dwelling on the cremation ground, riding on the bull, etc. Then, will it not deflate His Supremacy (*paratva*)? The answer is that He, out of His grace, and compassion towards the souls, manifests Himself in these forms in order to redeem the souls.¹⁰⁵ Yet Śiva could not be conceived within the limited form. He envelops the entire cosmos and expands beyond. Therefore, is there anyone who knows all His traits? (*uraiarum uruviṇṇār uṇarvarum vakaiyiṇṇār* — 1.122.5). In the *patikam* on Pallavanīccaram also, Sambandhar puts the same question in every verse. "Who knows His trait?" (*ivar taṇ-*

mai aṛivār yār — 3.370.1-10). He also says that He is One whose eminence the celestials and the men of the world could not measure.¹⁰⁶

The meaning of the third verse is : "He smears the burnt ash (over His body) as a perfume; He has no father, no mother; He absolves those who rise contemplating upon Him alone, of their *karmas* (*vinai*). He is our father; of what kind is He?"

When all the *tattvas* converge and get withdrawn at the time of the great deluge, the *mahāsamhāra kāla*, they are all reduced to ashes — the irreducible minimum. They do not have even a locus to exist. Śiva smears these over His person. It means that at the end, He alone is and all others hold Him as their very basis. This idea is given in the first line. This asserts that Śiva is the ultimate and absolute Principle. All *tattvas* converge in Him, stay in Him and re-emerge from Him. It is Śiva who gives birth to all. Beyond and before Him there is no other entity. So He is described as fatherless and motherless. Those who realise that He alone is the first and ultimate Principle and that He is the only Light that lights all other lights, will be blessed by His grace that will absolve them of their *malas* which are responsible for their twin action (*iruvinaṭ*). It is beyond the scope and capacity of any language to describe Him as what sort of entity He is, for the language can only describe matter.

The fourth verse is paraphrased, as follows: "If anyone inquires into Śiva's ways of grace bestowed on His servants and about His excellence, they are limitless; so let there not be any inquiry into that question. Those who realise this truth by dwelling at His feet will get rid of the *malas* and their *vāsanās* that bind them and the consequent *karmas*."

The Vaiṣṇavites consider the souls as the *śeṣa* and God as the *śeṣin*. The Śaivites also subscribe to this view. The souls are the *āl* (servant) and the Lord is the *āṇṭāṇ* (master). This relationship is eternal.¹⁰⁷ God's ways of bestowing His grace on the souls are limitless and beginningless. Sambandhar, in another instance,

calls it '*tonṭoṭu kūṭit tutainṭu ninṇa toṭarpu*.'¹⁰⁸ No one could analyse and examine His ways of grace, and tell others what exactly they are; because such an attempt is motivated by ego (*taṇbōdham*). If the soul casts away this ego and seeks His feet in utter self-surrender, then the *malas* and their *vāsanās* that bind the souls as well as the resultant *karmas* will not attach themselves to the souls. They (souls) will experience the bliss of His grace and *jñāna*.

Reasoning (logic) is good. If any scriptural or perceptual knowledge is appealing to reasoning, then it becomes all the more convincing. The universe consists of parts. So it is an effect. It cannot be without its causal agent. Therefore the universe points to its cause, i.e., God. Like that, the body by itself is not conscious. We infer that there must be some intelligent consciousness to pervade and direct it. There can be no effect without a cause. So the universe which is an effect, suggests a cause — *māyā*. All these reasonings may make one understand the existence of God, soul and *pāśa*. But will that be enough? Certainly not. It will not lead one to the experience of God. Knowledge is realised only in the experience of it.

Sambandhar therefore exhorts the people (*sādhukkal*) that they should not press too much to verify the reality and nature of Śiva through the means of *hetus* (inference) and comparisons. God is peerless and therefore incomparable. The logic of inference and comparison, so, does not take one far in God-realisation. God could be known as the phenomenal light which illumines the outer world. If the perfect souls get absorbed in intense love of God, then He will dawn as an inner light in the interior core of the souls. He remains there as self-luminous illumining the souls. This is the purport of the first two lines of the fifth verse.

The *mala* is the great source of sorrow (*mātukkam*). It obscures the true identity of the soul and its oneness with Śiva. It, indeed, throws the soul into the vortex of births and deaths. Once the *mala* is removed, the soul realises its own true nature, that it is inseparable from the Lord as His own; and the soul experiences *śivabhoga* as it is revealed to it by God's grace and will. Sambandhar appeals to those who strive to remove the *mala* to cherish the

love for that great self-luminous Lord who is the Beginning of all. They should constantly hold Him in *śivayoga* and experience the bliss of His inseparability. This is *śivo'ham - bhāvanā* (*maṇam paṇṇi vāṭtal*). This will help the soul to remove the '*mātukkam*'. Sambandhar beckons to the good and loving souls (*sādhukkal*) who have attuned themselves to surrender all their action, knowledge and volition to those of Śiva.

It is generally observed that the first five verses form one group, because it is claimed, they are based on conclusions arrived at by the *Vedas* and *Sivajñāna*. In the next five verses, the truths established by the *Mahāpurāṇas* are given.¹⁰⁹

It is said that Śiva dances; that He has kicked the God of death to death and that He sings the *Vedas*. The dance denotes His fivefold functions, *viz.* creation, preservation, destruction, obscuration and *arul* (grace). It is well known how Śiva kicks Yama to death in order to save His *bhakta*, Mārkaṇṭeya. It means that those who surrender to Him with all the depth and intensity of love will be saved from the finitising principle of time as Śiva is the *kāla kāla*. As He is the custodian of moral laws and order, He has sung the *Vedas* so that the *jīvas* could follow them to lead a life of virtue and righteousness. It is often debated whether Śiva does all these acts for the enhancement of His own fame and prestige, or out of grace and compassion towards the souls that are tossed aside by *malas* and their evolutes. Sambandhar asserts that Śiva's infinite grace is the sole reason for all His acts.

In the seventh verse, the story of Caṇṭīśa is given. Caṇṭīśa cut his father's leg when the latter tried to kick the milk-pot while Caṇṭīśa was pouring the milk on the Linga. That was not taken as a sin because not that he respected his father less but he loved Śiva more and because he could not tolerate anybody, even his father, insulting Śiva. He was duly rewarded by the Lord by allowing Him to reach His feet. This story, Sambandhar and others heard from the wise people (*aṇṇiṇ colak kēṭṭum aṇṇē*).

In the eighth verse, Sambandhar describes Śiva as '*vēta mutalvan*' and '*bhūta mutalvan*'. The *Vedas*, according to Sambandhar,

point only to Śiva as the supreme Lord. He is also the beginning (and end) of all the *bhūtas*. There are eighteen *Purāṇas* that sing the primacy, supremacy and overlordship of Śiva. Sambandhar exhorts the God-hungry souls to study the *Purāṇas* so that they could be saved from the evils of births and deaths by following the ethical standards set in the *Purāṇas*. Here Sambandhar accepts the *śabda-pramāṇa* for the knowledge of Śiva's pre-eminence.

In the ninth and tenth verses, Sambandhar narrates how Viṣṇu obtained the wheel that killed Jalandhara and about Śiva's great act of drinking the *ālahāla* venom. The eleventh verse which has been discussed earlier (chapter 2. Sec. 2) demonstrates to the world that God's grace can make the palm leaf float against the current and that Śiva is the supreme Principle (*perumāṇi*).

From the foregoing study, the following conclusions may be drawn: Śiva is the ultimate and absolute Principle. He could be known by perception, *anumāna*, *upamāna*, *śabda-pramāṇas*, etc., provided they are illumined by His grace. No one could know, that is, no one could experience Him by egotistic endeavour. For those who seek Him with all the warmth of self-effacing love, He will shine as a self-luminous light in their inner-most chambers of hearts. That is how He is best known and experienced.

3.4.4 *The light of light*

'Śiva is Love or Love is Śiva', as Tirumūlar declares (*aṇṇē Sivam*).¹¹⁰ Love is essentially emotional. But love of Śiva is not raw emotion. It is tempered with the highest knowledge. In converse, it could be also said that knowledge is love (*jñāṇam iṣaṇpāl aṇṇē*). Love and knowledge are not merely complementary to each other, they are combined into one whole integrated entity. This is a realisation born out of clarity, conviction and unshakable faith free from all doubts and erroneous vision. This aspect of consciousness is described as '*tēṟiya cintai*' (2.222.9) — a resolved consciousness; '*tēru cintai*' (2.250.6). Such a consciousness is also considered as the right one (*neṟikoḷ cintai* — 2.229.7) and the beautiful or benevolent one (*naḷamkoḷ cintai* — 2.230.11).

The noble souls whose consciousness is fortified by Śiva-consciousness as described as 'ēmaṁaṇattār' (1.86.8). The 'maṇam' (mind or consciousness) is illumined by the light of Śiva-consciousness (*dīpa-maṇattār* — 1.86.8). They have never-failing, never-shrinking mind (*curuṅkā maṇattavar* — 1.57.7). Their minds are spiritualised by God's pervasiveness (*tēvār cīntai antaṇālar* — 1.72.5). Though many more quotations could be cited here, what have been given are enough to show that *bhakti*, according to Sambandhar, is not emotion but is an unfailing, clear and luminous knowledge.

Sambandhar glorifies this *cit* aspect of the Lord. Śiva is the Lord who stands as the veritable essence of the highest knowledge (*jñāyat tīraṭṭy nīra perumāṇ* — 1.69.3). He is *jñāna* itself (*jñāna* — 3.278.2). He is the very principle of *jñāna* (*jñāna muṭalvan* — 3.329.6). He has one thousand great names to denote His *jñānam* (*jñā abpērāyiram pēriṇāṇ*).¹¹¹ He performs the yoga (*yōgattaiyē purintāṇē* — 3.383.7). He is the quintessence of the *Vedas* (*maṛaiyavan; Sāma vēta* — 1.50.2). Śiva's *cit* aspect is highlighted in terms of luminosity. He is the supreme Light (*parañcōti* — 2.179.5). He is the luminous light (*tayaṅku cōti*).¹¹²

His immanent and transcendent aspects are brought forth as follows: "He is the culmination of all lights, i.e., He is beyond the light as well as He is the light within light" (*cōtiyantam āyinaṭṭy cōtiyuṭṭōr cōti* — 3.310.7). That He is beyond the scope and content of word (language), and that He stands as a light beyond the physical light are stressed as, '*correriyāpporuṭ cōtikku appāl nīra cōti*' — (3.267.10).

Śiva, being knowledge Himself, guides and helps the soul through His *aruṭ* to know Him. He is the very thought in the thinking of those who tread on the right path and that of the celestials; He bestows the knowledge of knowing (Him) on those who endeavour to know Him through proper ways.¹¹³

3.4.5 Moral grandeur of Śiva

Sambandhar experiences Śiva as the very embodiment and custodian of moral norms and virtues. Among the fivefold func-

tions of Śiva, creation, preservation and annihilation are there. All the created things will be annihilated ultimately. That is, all that emerge from God will converge in Him. In the meanwhile' it may be asked, where is the necessity for preservation? Some things come to stay for a while when others stay for long. This difference occurs as a result of their *karmas*. *Karma* is an order (*niyati*) by which the results of the twofold actions (*iruvinaṭi*) go and affect the doer only¹¹⁴ *Karma* which is insentient or unintelligent will not bring about this out of its own accord. God alone who is omniscient could do this, for others intelligence is limited and imperfect. So God is the preserver of the worlds. He, like a mother, says Sambandhar, performs the preservation of the world (*tāyākiya ulakaṇ kaḷai nilai pēru ceytalaivaṇ* — 1.15.3).

He upholds the cause of *dharma* — *aṛam*. The souls that are obscured by their *malas* do not know the right path. So Śiva Himself becomes the Master and shows the path to the earthly people and celestials (... *viṇṇavarkku maṇṇavarkku neṛikāṭṭum vikirtanāki* 1.130.6). He pronounces Śiva-*dharma* on the basis of the universal *aṛam* to His servants who possess the acumen to worship Him so that the evil *karma* and disease do not overtake them.¹¹⁵

He also pronounces the *aṛam*, *poruḷ*, *iṇṇam* and *vīṭu* (*aṛam poruḷ iṇṇam vīṭu moḷinta vāyaṇ* — 1.53.6). He reveals the path of release (*vīṭumā neṛi vilampinār* — 1.45.2). Nobody could know that He is of this form or that complexion, but He has taken the forms of all nuances of justice.¹¹⁶

Even though Śiva upholds justice, *aṛam* or order for the sake of the preservation of the world, yet He is above all merits and demerits. This view has been brought forth by Sambandhar in a significant expression. He describes Śiva of Ālavāy as "Thou art the demerit; Thou art all merits" (*kuṛṇam nī kuṇaṇkaḷ nī* — 3.310.3). How could He possess this pair of opposites? This only means that both merits and demerits are dealt with by Him for the sake of the world-order and that He is above all of them. That is why His servants (*aṭiyārs*) bow down to Him saying that He is both merit and demerit (*kuṛṇam iṇmai uṇmai nīyenru uṇṇaṭi-*

yār paṇivar — 1.51.7). He is a great One who is at once eminence as well as littleness (*perumaiyōṣu ciṟumaiyumām pērālan* — 2.184.3).

3.4.6 Bridal mysticism

To think of God as *jñāna* or supreme light generally instils in the soul a sense of awe and respectability, and consequently, introduces a distance between the soul and God. But God as Love, Bliss and Beauty sweetens the soul like Himself (... *tammaip pōlat-tammaiyārkkum inpalippavar* — 2.238.2).

Siva is God who becomes the nectar and ambrosia (*tēnumāy amutumāy teivamum tēnāy* — 1.76.5). He is as sweet as honey (*tēnottiniyān* — 1.38.3). That is why the mystics in general and Ālvārs and Nāyanmārs in particular, speak the language of love between the lover and the beloved (*nāyaka-nāyaki bhāva*). This is artistic mysticism. It uses this metaphor of love. But to call it erotic is erroneous. There is nothing carnal or degrading about this love, though there is the use of the language of sex. It is spiritualised love and this is found to be the best way of expressing the inexplicable. In spiritual union, the Lord comes down from His almightiness to the human level of lowliness, and longs for the joyous embrace of the union. God as the supreme Being is feared; as Father is respected; as Master is honoured and served; but as a Lover He is loved and endeared. As a Lover He becomes very intimate to the soul, for love is not an affair to be respected or honoured but to be enjoyed and is an end in itself. The soul as a lady-love commingles with the Lover and such a union is enticing and transporting which is not morbid or mad. The soul is inwardly embraced by the Lover and tastes the savour of heavenly sweetness. It also feels the presence of the Lover in its interior, (*en uḷamē pukunta atanāl* — 2.221.1 — 10) and (*cintaiyē pukuntān* — 3.303.1.). God equally seeks the love of the beloved souls. He steals their hearts (*uḷḷaṇṇikavar kaḷvan* — 1.1.1), and enters in their dreams and teases them (*kaḷvar kaṇavil tuyar ceytu* — 2.247.9). In such a divine influx of union, all self-feeling is transformed and divinised.

The view that God is the Bride-groom and the devout soul is the bride is an allegorical expression of the intimacy between soul and God in the language of love and marriage. According to Catholic theology, as interpreted by Watkin, sex has spiritual meaning in spiritual marriage. The male element is operative, active and directive while the female is responsive and receptive. The two are complementary.¹¹⁷ The idea of spiritual marriage in the West was first developed by St. Bernard and later by John Ruysbrock, St. John of the Cross, St. Teresa and others.¹¹⁸ But even Plotinus speaks of the divine union as the real marriage of which the marriage of the earthly lovers is a copy.

According to the Hindu concept, *kāma* is desire. If it is a mere sensuous desire it is *viṣaya kāma*. But the mystics speak of the *bhagavat-kāma*. Nāyaṇmārs and Āḷvārs express this *bhagavat-kāma* only. That *kāma* is meant for Kaṣṇaṇ (*kaṣṇanukkē āmatu kāmam*)¹¹⁹ is the Vaiṣṇavite concept. She becoming mad after Him (*avanukkē picciyātal*) is the Śaivite expression. According to the Hindu scriptures even the *viṣaya-kama* is the reflection of the *ātma-kāma*.

Saint Yājñavalkya imparts to his wife Maitreyī the meaning of *ātma-kāma*: “Verily not for the sake of husband, my dear, is the husband loved, but he is loved for the sake of the self (which, in its true nature, is one with the Supreme Self).”¹²⁰

God as beauty captivates and enraptures the minds of the souls. Sambandhar speaks of Śiva as ‘*aḷakan*’ (3.333.1) ‘*aḷakar*’ (3.361.10) (the beautiful), ‘*antamilaḷakan*’ (of limitless beauty — 3.289.6) in a number of hymns. Śiva is also spoken of as the One who bears the complexion resubbling the evening sky (*anti vaṇṇaṇ* — 1.66.11).

God as Love abhors loneliness. He hankers after the union with soul. This truth is borne out by the *Bṛahadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* as follows :

He (Brahma) was not at all happy. Therefore a person (even to-day) is not happy when alone. He desired a

mate. He became the size of a man and wife in close embrace. He divided this body into two. From that (division) arose husband (pati) and wife (patni).¹²¹

The cosmic drama is thus the fruit of God's self dividing itself into a loving pair. See Sambandhar's *Tiruvēlukūṟṟirukkai*: "You have become (the primordial) form and out of your own power (*śakti*) divided yourself into two forms" (*ōruruṇṇai māṇṇāṅkāratu īriyalpāy*);¹²² *māṇṇ* = *śakti*; *āṅkāram* = energy or power. This *ardhanārī* form (half male and half female) captivates the soul of Sambandhar. Even in the very first song he adores the feminine part of Śiva—the ear on which He wears a lady's ear-ring (*tōṭṭaiya ceviyaṇ* — 1.1.1). He distinctly remembers the priceless grace that this feminine aspect of Śiva-Śakti or Umā has done unto him. He gratefully praises the Mother as One who has taken him as Her own in the past (*āti emai āṭṭaiya arivai* — 3.333.10).

Out of the total 4158 verses (including the *Tiruvēlukūṟṟirukkai*) now extant, we find references to Umā in as many as 887 verses. They occur in 323 *patikams*. These references are not casual but form part of the vital perspective of Sambandhar's philosophy clothed in the language of superb artistic poetry set to mellifluous music. From the above reference, some important and significant aspects of Umā could be discussed.

3.4.6.1 *The loving pair*

The most striking and appealing aspect of Umā is Her love for the Lord. She is One who does not separate Herself from love (*anpiṟ piriyāṭavaḷ*—1.32.6). She who has large, dark and flowery eyes, loves Him like the heavenly nectar (*karumtaṭa malark kaṇṇi kātal ceyyum maruntavaṇ*—1.114.1). The Lord also does not part company with her, whom He always holds as His part (*māṭavaḷai orupākam piriyāṭa perumānār*—3.322.8). It is not as though He remains with Her passively. He enjoys and is pleased with Her company (*malaiyāṇ makaḷoṭu makiṇṭāṇ*—1.34.6). She is His sweet love (*kāṭali*—1.59.8) and He is the husband of the daughter of the Mountain Lord (*malaiyāṇ makaḷ kaṇavaṇ*—1.16.2). Sambandhar revels in the happiness of the Lord which He gets in Her

company and asserts that their happiness is a wonder and inexpressible (*aṛputam cepparitāl*—3.358.1).

Umā participates in all His functions. The Absolute unites with Śakti as the consequence of which the elements come into being.¹²³ Here Sambandhar portrays Śiva performing all acts such as drinking the venom, kicking the God of death, holding the Ganges in his matted hair, etc., along with Umā. He dances with His innocent consort who has the beautiful forehead and belted breasts (*vāruṇu meṇṇumalai naṇṇutal ēlaiyōṣu āṭuvar*—1.136.4). Umā also sings the chorus and keeps time when the Lord dances (*umai pātāt tālam iṭa*—2.247.1); (*nēriṭai pāṭa*—2.186.3). It is not just in mirth and revelry that Śiva is with Umā. Even when He is engaged in the pursuit of knowledge (*jñāna*) Umā is with Him. "Our supreme Lord pronounces the *Vedas* under the banyan tree together with the damsel of the crescent-like forehead" (*maṇṇutal maṇkaiyōṣu vaṭapāliruntu maṇaiyōtum eṇkal paraman*—2.221.4). He discourses on the *Vedas* along with His worshipful consort during non-*pūjā* hours—(*vantiyōṣu pūcaiallāp pōṭṭin maṇaipēci*—1.66.11). Even when He goes abegging from door to door asking for alms He takes the damsel along with Him (*aiyam iṭum enṇu maṭa maṇkaiyōtakan tiriyaṁ*—3.336.6).

Śiva holds the forms of *dharma* (3. 329.4) and Sambandhar rightly calls Umā *Pēraṭattāl* (the great lady of *dharma*—3.282.10). Even the sacred ash is but the veritable form of Śakti which Śiva besmears over His person. Hence Sambandhar describes the ash as '*parāvaṇam āvatu nīṇu*' (The ash is the form of Goddess of power—2.202.8). In the whole world even the most ideal lovers may have one soul but two bodies, man and woman. But in the case of Śiva and Umā, they even unite in one and the same body (*ōruṭampullē umaiyorupākam uṭaṇāki*—1.100.3). Sambandhar sings hundreds of lines to glorify this aspect of Śiva-Śakti as *ardha-nārīśvara*. He describes this unique form as the twin aspect of the form of Beauty (*iṇeṭṭiṇkōlam*—3.316.9). He sees the blending of two shades (green and red) into a unitary phenomenon (*niṇṇam paṇumai cemmaiyōṣu icaintunatu nīrmai*—2.166.1). Sambandhar exclaims in wonder whether it is possible to express the state of

the feminine aspect of the Lord (*cōtiyāy maṅkai pākam nilaitān collal āvatonṟē*—3.316.6) and whether it is possible to ponder over the state of Śiva holding Umā as His part (*Umaiyaī ōr pākam vaitta nilaitān unṇalāvatonṟē*—v. 7). Yet Sambandhar holds out the clue. He asserts that the Lord comes with the damsel as His part only for reasons of compassion and grace.

From the above study, it could be observed that Sambandhar visualises Śiva as the great Lover. This aspect of Śiva enchants and ravishes his soul. Like all great mystics Sambandhar is anxious to enjoy the bliss of the union with this great Lover. He becomes His lady-Love. The Vaiṣṇavite commentators interpret the poetry of sentiments of love (*akappāttus*) and bring out their poignancy by describing the Āḷvārs as ladies in love; e.g., Parakāla Nāyaki (Tirumaṅkai Āḷvār), Parāṅkuśa Nāyaki (Nammāḷvār), Kulasēkhara Nāyaki (Kulasēkhara Āḷvār), etc. Here Sambandhar also becomes Jñāṇasambandha Nāyaki.

Mystic experience may be gained by the way of *yoga* or *bhoga* (ascetic introversion or hedonistic extroversion). But the way of *bhoga* (aesthetic way) is more appealing to the mystic who follows the method of *bhagavat-kāma*. According to Sambandhar Śiva is a great *Yogi* (*parama Yōgi*—1.119.3) as well as *bhogi* (*bōgamumāy inṇamumāy*—2.205.5). Even when He is in *bhoga* He performs only the *yoga* (*bōgattāṇ yōgattaiyē purintāṇē*—3.383.7).

3.4.6.2 The play of love

The rapture of love becomes ripe in the process of the play of love alternating between union and separation. The bliss of union is *saṁśleṣa* and the sorrow of separation is *viśleṣa*. God plays hide and seek with the beloved soul. In this world, the joy of uniting with God is momentary and it becomes permanent and secure only in the world beyond. In the alternation between *saṁśleṣa* and *viśleṣa* the soul is freed from sensuality and ego-centric state and longs for the dawn of the unitive consciousness. There is light on the path occasionally but it is only a stepping stone and not a stopping place. It is by wise introversion in the the state of *viśleṣa* that the soul — the bride — distinguishes

between what is momentary and what is eternal, and renounces its egocentric feeling of 'I' and 'mine'. In that state of self-surrender and resignation, the anguish of separation makes the lady-love fall into depression and despair. The Lord also suffers from loneliness and separation. So there is spontaneous rapture of the union between the soul and God. But it does not last long because the soul's self-feeling is not completely destroyed. Once again there is withdrawal followed by a sense of gloom, and this time the bride — soul — presses the Lord actively and finally there is the onset of divine union which is full of everlasting joy and bliss. "The symbolic language employed by the mystics in terms of spiritual marriage is free from morbidity and erotomania. What is *bhagavat-kāma* is transempirical and it is described analogically as *viṣaya-kāma*, but the resemblance between them is like that between the dog and dogstar."¹²⁴

3.4.6.3 *Sambandhar's songs on bridal mysticism*

Among the Nāyanmārs and Āḷvārs, it is Sambandhar who is in all probability the pioneer poet who has sung this type of poetry. Of course, Appar who is his contemporary, also sang bridal mystic songs and that too superbly. These are poetry of love sentiments (*akappāṭṭu*). Amongst Sambandhar's hymns, thirteen *patikams* are clearly recognised as *akappāṭṭus*. The *patikams* on Pāccilāccirāmam (1.44) and Tirumarukal (2.154) could be also interpreted as *akappāṭṭu* though tradition has it that they have been sung on two important occasions. The sixth and seventh verses of the *patikam* (2.247) are also *akappāṭṭus*. The Vaiṣṇavite texts, especially Nammāḷvār's *Tiruvāymoḷi* have elaborate commentaries by eminent commentators. But unfortunately, there is no such commentary available for the *Tēvāram* of all the three saints, and much less to their *akappāṭṭus*. The Vaiṣṇavite commentators throw much light on the implication of *akappāṭṭus*. In the absence of similar Śaivite commentaries on the *Tēvāram* they help us to understand the underlying principle and general sense of the *akappāṭṭus* of Sambandhar also, even though it is difficult to deal with all *akappāṭṭus* here in detail, owing to the limitation of space.

It has been pointed out that in *visleṣa*—separation—the soul suffers from agony, gloom and despair. According to the *Carikam* tradition, this love mood is called *neytal*. The *Īṭu* (36,000-paḍi), a commentary on Nammālvār's *Tiruvāymoḷi* explains the union and separation. According to it, union is to perceive God through *jñāna* as seeing Him with one's own eyes. But the soul longs to see God with its outward eyes also. As it is unable to do so, it is disappointed and experiences the sense of gloom and despondency in its mind. This is separation. The *Īṭu* raises the question why the Lord who is omniscient and all-powerful allows this dual state in the soul's experience. It offers an explanation that God does so because He desires to sustain the soul's experience of the bliss of the union and to enkindle the soul's desire to experience God more and more.

Then why is the soul sorrowful? It is because its love for the Lord grows so intensively that it could not experience God as much as it longs to experience Him.¹²⁵

Yājñavalkya, explaining the greatest truth about the *ātman* to Maitreyī in the *Bṛahadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*¹²⁶ speaks of the *ātman* as that which is to be heard, that which is to be contemplated on, and that which is to be seen. This passage is quoted now only to stress that the *kāma* expressed in the *akappāṭṭu* is only the *baghavat-kāma*.¹²⁷ Nammālvār asserts that he will not forget Him, that he will cry for Him, embrace Him and love Him by worshipping (...*aṭippōtu ayaṣṣipilaṇ alaṣṣuvan taḷuvuvan vaṇaṅkuvan amarntē*).¹²⁸ Nañjiyar explains this as the Alvār's experience of the Lord while enjoying Him with his mind, speech and body. The *Īṭu* says that Nañjiyar's explanation is more suitable to the *akappāṭṭu*.¹²⁹

According to the *Īṭu*, the poet sings in two aspects; one is *tāmāna taṇmai*; that is the poet sings his experience of God as a poet himself. *Jñāna* is the basis of this aspect. The other aspect is *pirāṭṭiyāna taṇmai*. Here the poet pours down his experience of God by putting himself in the state of a lady-love. Love or *prema* is the basis of this state. That is why the *Ācārya*

Hṛdayam says that in the path of *jñāna*, there is the speech of the poet as himself; and that in love, there is the speech of the poet as the lady-love (*jñānatil tanpēccu, prēmattil penpēccu*).

The lady-love apostrophises the birds, bees, clouds, etc., to go to the Lord and express her state of anguish. The *Ītu* justifies it by quoting from literary tradition. The description of these birds is said to have an esoteric meaning. In the light of the interpretation given by the *Ītu*, one can understand the significance of the birds referred to in Sambandhar's hymns. The birds are considered to be the *ācārya* or the master who brings about the union of the Lord with the soul. In fact there is a tradition in Sambandhar's hymns wherein he addresses the co-saints to enlighten him on the significance of Śiva's various acts and qualities — (3.296.1 - 11).

The description of these birds does bear an esoteric meaning. In the light of the interpretation advanced by the *Ītu*, one can explain the significance of the birds referred to in Sambandhar's hymns as well. The birds are taken to be the *guru* or the master, who helps to establish the union of the Lord with the soul. The white crane signifies the *guru's* blotless purity and true knowledge. The parrot repeats only what it has learnt without any interpolations — the *āptavacana* without introducing one's own whimsical fancies. The swan which separates the milk from the water represents the *guru* separating the grain from the husk of knowledge. The *pūvai* (mynah) reminds us of the sweet speech of the master. The *veṇṇārai*, a white cormorant, wanders all around in search of proper food for its lover and young ones. That speaks of the contemplation, love and the kind regards and attention for the students which the teacher bestows on. These white cranes are said to sit on the top of trees in the groves with rich foliage. But they do not care to enjoy the shade but intent upon keeping a watch on and waiting for the proper food. This reminds us of the *guru*, keeping always a watch even on the surrounding, for the benefit of the student without caring for his own comforts. The *kuruku*, heron — an aquatic bird — perched on the sandy dunes reminds us of the same

characteristic features of the *guru*. The humming honey-bees gathering little drops of honey for the bees in the honey-comb reminds us of the untiring study and meditation of the *guru* for the benefit of the student. The bee does not feed on anything else but the honey; so does the master on the loving grace of the Lord and nothing else. The *kuyil*, cuckoo, famous for its melodious voice, reminds us of the sweet utterances of the master. *Cakravāka* birds forming loving pairs are complementary to each other bearing no separation. This only suggests the indispensability of the soul unto the Lord and himself.¹³⁰

The commentary also asserts that the masculine qualities of the saint will not subvert his feminine behaviour, because all men want to become females in His presence as He is *puruṣottama* the best of men.¹³¹ With this interpretation given by the *Īṭu*, Sambandhar's *akappāṭṭus* may be studied. Some important aspects of his hymns are dealt with. The love-play consists in union and separation of the lovers. In union the hearts of the lovers, especially the heart of the lady-love is enraptured and ravished by the enchanting beauty and faculties of the lover. In Sambandhar's *akappāṭṭus* a few trends are noticeable.

In certain hymns the lady-love speaks of her ecstasy which she finds in the embrace or company of her Lord. Even in the first *patikam* she (the saint) says that the Lord is a thief who has stolen her heart (*en uḷḷaiṅkavar kaḷvaṇ*—1.1.1). In another verse she says that the Lord enters her mind, pervades her consciousness, tongue and head and enchants her by dancing before her at the dusk and dawn.¹³² Once He comes to her begging for alms with the glow of a fire and captivates her heart (*tivaṇṇar cilpalikkenru ottapaṭi vanten nalaṅkoṭta oruvar*—3.358.3). In most of the instances *saṁśleṣa* and *viśleṣa* occur in one and the same verse. The *saṁśleṣa*—the communion of the Lord with the soul-love—is generally given in retrospect as flashbacks, so that the poignancy and intensity of the agony of separation are well brought out as they occur in the following instances.

“He comes abegging for alms with the dry skull as a begging bowl (and ravishes my heart by His enchanting beauty). But

He slips away like a thief stealing my mind" (*vaṛṇalōṭu kalanāḥ palitērn̄tu enatu! laṇkavar kaḷvaṇ*,—1.1.2).

"Once He came riding on the great bull, wearing the pure *konṇai* (cassia) flowers which were swarmed by the winged-bees and chanted and danced to the Vedic songs. Then the Lord came and slowly entered my home (or mind). With the result, He had taken away my beauty and grace."¹³³

"(In another instance) He came like a humble man asking for the alms and entered my home. But He was the thief who had taken away my mental clarity and modesty."¹³⁴ "He is a great enchanter. He will speak with all the felicity of Tamil; play the lute (*yāl*) for keeping time and sing the song to the accompaniment of the drums like *muḷavam* and *montai* (that is how I have been ravished by Him). Now He has gone taking away my beauty and sweet disposition leaving to me the pale hue of a *kumil* (*gmelina tomentosa*) flower."¹³⁵

The agony of separation (*evvanōy*—1.73.4) is often characterised and marked by certain symptoms such as losing the physical beauty and grace—(1.56.6-10), the bangles slipping down from the fore-arms due to emaciation (*vaḷai cōral*—1.1.3), loss of sleep (*kaṇṭuyil vauval*—1.63.2) and the complexion of the body turning pale like gold (*ponṇiṇamākkīṇāṇ*—1.56.5).

The agony is so unbearable that the lady-love sometimes addresses the Lord chastising Him for His cruel behaviour. "O! You have stealthily carried away my great splendour (*mānalam vauvutiyē*—1.63.1); my sleep (*kaṇṭuyil*—1.63.2); and my thin clothes" (*pāykalai*—1.63.3).

She is aware that the Lord of Tiruvārūr has gained entry into her consciousness. Probably He has left her after a while. She is now tormented by a doubt whether the Lord who has left her possibly owing to some shortcomings in her, will accept her without minding them.¹³⁶

According to the Tamil tradition, a damsel seldom speaks her mind to Her Lord. But in the white heat of passion (her

śivakāma) and burning agony of separation, a lady-love, in one instance, exhorts the Lord to speak out His mind to her as the bull of passion grazes her physical grace, and asks Him to come on His own bull to drive away the grazing bull (passion) (*ceppumin erutu mēyumē cērvumak kerutu mēyumē* — 3.374.7). She goes one step further and asks Him to meet Her in the night so that she could survive this suffering (*nān uytarkku iravu cantiyē* — 3.374.4). All these verses could be identified as some of the genres of the *akappāṭṭus* of *caṅkam* tradition; such as the speech of the lady-love addressed to her lady friend (e.g., 1.1; 2.242.6,7; 3.358; 3.362), those of hers addressed to the Lord (e.g., 1.63; 3.374), the speech of the foster-mother or of the lady's friend (2.150; 2.154).

3.4.6.4 *Apostrophes to birds, etc.*

In two *patikams* (1.60 and 3.321) Sambandhar as a lady-love speaks to the bees and birds, and pleads with them to go to the Lord as messengers and express her state of affairs. This sort of poetic convention is not unknown in the literary traditions of both the East and the West.¹³⁷ In the *Tolkāppiyam*, we find such a convention.¹³⁸ In the age of the *Prabandhas*, *Dūtu* (a kind of poem in which lovers pass messages) has become an established literary genre. It has been already noticed that according to the *Īṭu* the different kinds of birds occurring in these verses would typify the various qualities of an *ācārya* — messenger.

S. Michael Irudayam goes one step further and affirms that the phenomena stand not only for the *ācārya* but even serve as reminders of the Lord.¹³⁹ *Alī arasu* (the royal bee), *kuruku*, *nārai* (birds of the heron family), *kuyil*, *puṟā* (dove), *aṇṇam* (swan), *aṇṇil* (a love-bird), *kōḷi* (hen or cock), *pūvai* (mynah), *kiḷi* (parrot), etc., are the birds that are addressed to by the lady-love. Apart from their esoteric meaning one could easily understand from these verses that the feeling of despair and desolation is so powerful that the love-sick maiden has no hesitation and time to think whether the birds can be the messengers of her love. Perhaps one gets great relief by the very act of giving expression to the pent up feelings.

3.4.6.5 *Bhikṣāṭana*

God is the Lover. The souls are the ladies in secret love with Him. They are prepared to cast away all their earthly relationship and run mad after Him. God equally loves the souls. His love for the souls is so great that He goes abegging for the love of souls from house to house.

The story of *ṛṣipatnīs* and *Bhikṣāṭana* like that of the *Gopī* and *Kṛṣṇa* bespeaks of only this truth. It also points out that *ṛṣis* of *Dārukāvana* who are egocentric are brought to realise the truth. Ultimately they also turn to Him and participate in His great dance of bliss. *Jñāṇasambandhar*, both in his *akappāṭṭus* as well as other verses, refers to this aspect of *Bhikṣāṭana* in as many as 350 instances. Even in the *akappāṭṭus*, out of the fourteen, eleven *pāṭṭus* are about the *Bhikṣāṭana*. M.A. Dorai Rangaswamy claims that the *Bhikṣāṭana* form has been found to be the motif of *Ārūrar's* poetry.¹⁴⁰ *Ārūrar* asserts that he only follows in the footsteps of *Sambandhar* and *Nāvukkaracar*. Taking this into consideration and *Sambandhar's* innumerable references to *Bhikṣāṭana* it could be noticed that *Bhikṣāṭana* form is the motif of *Sambandhar's* poetry also. Dorai Rangaswamy equates what P. N. Srinivasachari says forcefully and beautifully about *Bṛndāvana* and *Kṛṣṇa-līlā* to the *Dārukāvana* and *Śivatāṇḍava* and quotes from the latter's passage only changing the proper names.

To the philosopher, the world is *māyā* or the riddle of thought; but to the *bhakta* it is *Śivamāyā* or crammed with *Śiva* love; *Dārukāvana* is not merely the headquarters of cosmic Beauty and bliss but is the 'eternal now' in spaceless space in which what is beyond shines as indwelling love in the heart of every *jīva* (May we add in the *Daharākāśa* of the heart?).¹⁴¹ ...The *līlā* of *Brahman*, the God-head, as the cosmic dance as *Trimūrti* is the play of the Static '*Sat*' in the dynamic many which only the mystics as *Ṛṣis*, *Ṛṣipatnīs* or the other seers can realize. *Ananda Tāṇḍava* of the Beggar God (may we add, inspired by the love of all souls represented as *Śivakāmti*) reveals the all pervasive divine love ...All the dynamic movements in the starry heavens above and the supra-mental attractions of lovers with all the romance of poetry and music below reveal the cosmic *līlā* of love of the eternal in the tempo-

ral process. In *Ānandatāṇḍava*, *Śrī Natarāja*, the *erstwhile Bhikṣāṭana*, the centre alone is everywhere and the circumference nowhere. The sceptic and the cynic have a stony heart and are not moved by the mystic *Bhikṣāṭana*-form and His *Dance* in which *Brahmarasa* or Love itself is the play, the Hero and the actors as the two sided and many-sided Love, (where we may add, the Tragedy of the fallen souls of *Ṛṣis* is converted into this comedy of their Love).¹⁴²

It is revealing to note that according to Sambandhar, *Dārukāvana* is not a particular place where *Bhikṣāṭana* goes abegging for the souls. It is the entire world surrounded by the sea representing the whole space-time continuum that the Lord goes with a begging bowl for the love of souls. He has a desire to enjoy the alms received in every world (*ulakaṅka! tōṣum piccainukar iccainyar*).¹⁴³ Not merely the consorts of the saints of *Dārukāvana* are ravished by His enchanting beauty, even the evil forces such as the snake, elephant, tiger, etc., that are hurled at Him are converted into His sacred ornaments and apparel. He purifies everyone and everything and fills them with everlasting bliss.

In this happy and bewitching role of *Bhikṣāṭana*, the Lord descends to the level of the souls seeking their love as alms. The *ṛṣipatnīs* go mad after Him. He receives all their (three) possessions — the body, wealth and soul (*māūrūm koṇṭāṇ* — 2.148.5). The turbulent and conceited *ṛṣis* are converted. All the evil forces set against Him turn out to be His ornaments. That is the message of His begging.

3.4.7 *The philosophy of Sambandhar — an analysis*

So far we have covered Sambandhar's viewpoints on nature, soul and God. Now, it is to be examined whether they could form the basis of or conform to, any particular system, or whether they provide scope for interpretation in more ways than one.

Nature together with the soul is Śiva's form, His *aṣṭamūrttam*. Śiva creates or becomes the world and soul. The verb usually employed by Sambandhar is 'āy' or 'āki'. It is capable of giving more than one sense. In the first sense, it means that Śiva mani-

feasts Himself in nature and soul as their very soul — the innermost Principle — the *antaryāmin*.¹⁴⁴ Another sense is that Śiva not only becomes or creates the entirety of nature and soul but He is altogether different from them as well (*muṣṣumāki vēṣumānān* — 1.53.2). Sambandhar uses another significant term '*uṭaṇāy*,' to denote the togetherness of Śiva and soul, or Śiva and matter, or Śiva, soul and matter. Thus Śiva is not only immanent and transcendent but also remains together with nature and soul as their directing force from within. The second verse of Tiruvīḷimīlalai *patikam* (1.11.2) is significant in this respect.

It is said that Tiruvīḷimīlalai is the place of His who becomes one in the beginning and end, two as female and male, three as *guṇas*, four as the *Vedas*, five as elements, six as tastes, seven as musical notes, eight as the directions, and yet turns different (from all these things) while, at the same time, remaining together with them all. The expression, '*tāṇāy, vēṣāy, uṭaṇānān*' may be taken to explain the relation between Śiva and soul and the world, as identity, as difference as well as identity-in-difference. This is claimed as a Śaiva Siddhānta standpoint. The pre-Meykaṇṭār Siddhānta work, the *Tirukkalīṟruppaṭiyār* (86) almost repeats the above words of Sambandhar. Meykaṇṭār himself states the same in the second *sūtra* of his *Śivajñānabōdham* (*avaiyē tāṇē ākiya*). The *Śivajñāna Siddhiyār* also uses the phrase as '*ulakelāmāki vēṣāy uṭaṇumāy*' in the second *sūtra*. God identifies Himself with the soul by becoming one with it in its experience of communion like the soul identifying itself with the body. Yet He is different from the soul in essence like the sun and the eye. The sun shows the objects to the eye and yet is different from the eye. Śiva's *Śakti* pervades all. Through His *Śakti* He pervades the soul, and directs it through His *Śakti* from within, like the soul directing the eye by becoming one with it in seeing the objects.

It is said that from the point of view of *Pariṇāma-vāda*, it is identity-in-difference, and identity from the point of view of *Satkārya-vāda*. As Śiva is the efficient cause and as He brings about the effects from the cause through Ananta and Śrikaṇṭa there is identity in the communion, difference in essence and togetherness

on account of His being the directing energy.¹⁴⁵ According to Śaiva Siddhānta, identity, difference and identity-in-difference—all these three are true of God's relationship with souls and that is what is meant by Advaita to it.¹⁴⁶ Advaita here means non-difference experience. Sambandar many a time refers to this experience, as for example, he says, "He is One who makes those who experience Him as Himself (*cērvār tāmē tānākac ceyumavan* — 1.126.7). The *Śivajñānabōdham* almost repeats this phrase as *cārntaṭiyār tāntānākac ceytu*.¹⁴⁷ Ārūrar speaks of the identity in his expression, *nāṇ āya paraṇ* — (7. 38. 4). There is a similar expression in Sambandhar's verse too, i.e., *eṇ āṇavan* — (1.16.6).

Paṭi, *paśu* and *pāśa* are the three eternal entities, according to Śaiva Siddhānta. He makes clear mention of these three entities by the same terms. "The Lord of *paśu* (soul) who comes (riding) on the Lord of the cow" (*pasu patiyatan misaivaru Pasupati*).¹⁴⁸ *Pāśa* consists of *āṇava*, *karma*, and *māyā*. *Karma* is *viṇai*. The soul is all-pervasive. The *āṇava-mala* clings to the eternal soul from the beginning and belittles it as an *aṇu* (an ultimate particle). Hence it is called *āṇava*. It darkens the soul from the beginning; hence its name *iruḷ-mala* and *mūla-mala*.

The concept of *āṇava-mala* is one of the cardinal principles of the Śaiva Siddhānta doctrine. It is argued that Sambandhar makes only general reference to the *mala* but does not mention *āṇava* in particular. It is viewed that to that extent Siddhānta lacks the authority of Sambandhar regarding the *āṇava-mala*.¹⁴⁹ But there is a counter argument in favour of the Siddhānta stand. Even though Sambandhar does not mention the name *āṇava*, yet he indicates it by other names and by implication. That he accepts more than one *mala* is borne out by his mention of *mala* in plural, i.e., '*malanāya tirtteytum*' — (1.119.6); '*munivarkaḷ tama malam*' (1.22.4); (the word '*tama*' indicates the plurality of *mala*). But, again even there the plurality need not necessarily stipulate the number of *malas* as three. However, there is another verse in which Sambandhar not only suggests the three *malas* but explains their nature also. It occurs in the *Mutukunṇam patikam* (1.12.3):

“Śiva is the chief Lord who will gracefully dispel the afflictions caused by *paśutva* and *pāśa* (*karma*) which come into being without originating from anything; as well as *māyā*, the luminous binder.”

*‘vilaiyātātōr paricilvaru paśupāsa vēdanai oṇ
taḷaiyāyina taviravvaruḷ talaivan’* — (1.12.3)

The two lines may be split into four parts:

(1) *vilaiyātātōr paricilvaru paśu (vēdanai)* — *paśu vēdanai* (*āṇava-mala*) afflicts the soul (*paśu*) from the beginning without originating from a point; that means the *āṇava-mala* is beginningless and that it afflicts the soul beginninglessly.

(2) (*vilaiyātātōr paricil varu*) *pāsa vēdanai*: *pāsa vēdanai* is the *karma* which affects the soul at the instance of the *āṇava-mala* beginninglessly.

(3) *oṇṭalai* — *māyā* is the bond, an impurity; but it helps the soul to acquire partial knowledge so that the soul acquires the sense of discrimination. Hence it is called *oṇṭalai* (the luminous binder).

(4) *taviravvaruḷ talaivan*: The chief Lord — (Śiva) will cast His grace and dispel all the three *malas*. Sambandhar not only enumerates the *malas* with their nature and function but also assures that the Lord will dispel all of them by His grace. Appar also sings: *‘iḷippariya paśu pāsaḥ piṇṇappai nikkum eṇṇ tuṇaiyē’* — You are my guard who will remove the *paśutva* (*āṇava*), *pāśa* (*vinai*), and *piṇṇappu* (the product of *māyā* — 6.40.7).

Āṇava-mala is the primordial *mala* which is responsible for and bottom of, all miseries of the soul. Hence it is called *mūla-mala*. Sambandhar calls it *mūlam* in one instance.¹⁵⁰ He says that the Lord who dwells on the mouth (tongue) of those who besmear the sacred ash that has nullified the effect of the *mūlam* is pleased to hold Mutukunṇu (as His residence) (*mūlamuṇṭa nīṇṇar vāyāṇ mēyatu mutukunṇē* — 1.53.9).

In the Tiruvaṇṇāmalai *patikam* (1.69.3.) Sambandhar possibly refers to *āṇava-mala* which he calls *‘uṇṇattiṇal’* (a cluster of ele-

ments that finitise the soul). This idea is further strengthened by his concluding statement that it (*ūṇattira!*) is perhaps a real entity (*uṇmaipporu! pōlum*). Here the word 'pōlum', is explained away by some grammarians as '*oppil pōli*' — a sort of refrain. But according to Devasenapathi, 'pōlum' is a mild and suggestive way of expression; a felt certainty so as to evoke a similar response.¹⁵¹ He takes the text as '*ūṇattiru!*' (the belittling darkness that affects the soul) instead of '*ūṇattira!*' as found in the text referred to in this work. He interprets the expression '*atuvum uṇmaipporu! pōlum*' as 'it would seem that the darkness too is a real entity.'¹⁵² His interpretation may be found true if a similar expression in the second verse of the same *patikam* is studied. "The Lord of the celestials confines the venom in His throat. It would seem that the venom too is a good thing" (... *vāṇōr perumānār, nañcaik kaṇṭattaṭakkum, atuvum naṇmaipporu! pōlum*). It is a certainty and certitude for Sambandhar that even the evils will become good when operated upon by God's grace. Here the meaning for the word 'pōlum' is explicit. It clearly stands for certainty but is mildly and suggestively expressed. So it could be taken that 'pōlum' in '*uṇmaip poru! pōlum*' stands for certainty. According to Śaiva Siddhānta *āṇava* is beginningless (*anādi*) and therefore a real entity.

It has been shown that the Śaiva Siddhānta texts right from the *Tirukkalīṟuppaṭiyār* not only draw their metaphysical concepts from Sambandhar but also quote his words faithfully. The *Tiruvaruṭṭayan* is one of the fourteen Śaiva Siddhānta philosophical texts. Umāpati Śivācāriyār, its author, has divided this work into ten chapters entitled as *patimutu nilai, uyiravai nilai, iruṇmala nilai, arulatu nilai, aruluṟu nilai, aṟiyuneṟi, uyirviṭakkam, inṭuru nilai, aṇceḷuttaru! nilai* and *āṇaintōr taṇmai*. There is one anthology of *Tēvāram* hymns consisting of nintynine verses. It is entitled the *Tēvāra Aruḷmuṟai Tiraṭṭu*. Its compilership is attributed to one Umāpati Śivam who is generally identified with the author of the *Tiruvaruṭṭayan*. Even if the doubt about this identification is accepted, it clearly indicates one thing, that is, the *Tiruvaruṭṭayan* is the quintessence of the *Tēvāram* of Sambandhar, Appar and Ārūrar. The twelve *Tirumuṟai* texts are found to form the basis for the enunciation of Śaiva Siddhānta philosophy.¹⁵³ The mate-

rial furnished so far is enough to demonstrate that Śaiva Siddhānta draws substantial inspiration and substance from Sambandhar.

In one verse (1.22.7) Sambandhar describes how the five elements converge into one another, in the following order: earth into water, both into fire, all the three into air and finally all the four into ether (*ākāśa*). But according to Śaiva Siddhānta theory, the elements converge into their respective *tanmātras* only. The description of Sambandhar may be taken to correspond to the general Upaniṣadic or Vedāntic theory. Śivajñānamunivar in his *Māpāṭiyam* (pp. 222-224) refers to this and puts up a powerful and forceful plea that the inner-most idea of Sambandhar is only to suggest the Siddhāntic viewpoint. Anyhow, Sambandhar is here claimed to allow his description to be interpreted beyond the pale of the Siddhāntic standpoint on this question.

There is another anthology of the *Tēvāram* hymns consisting of twentyfive *patikams*. The tradition has it that the Sage Agastya recommended these particular hymns to one Śivālaya munivar for the attainment of *mukti*. Hence its title, the *Agattiyar Tēvārat-tiraṭṭu*. This story looks highly incredible, for Agastya is a mythological figure whereas the *Tēvāram* hymns are of comparatively later period. It appears, someone who had compiled the hymns in the book might have ascribed the authorship to the ancient saint so as to sanctify the work by the name of Agastya. The twenty-five *patikams* of *Tēvāram* (out of which Sambandhar's are ten), are classified under eight themes, *viz.*, *guru uru* (the grace of the Lord in the form of the Master), *veṇṇīṭṭu* (the white sacred ash), *aṅcu eḷuttu* (the five sacred letters), *kōyil* (temples), *araṇ uru* (the image of *ara*), *tiru aṭi* (the holy feet), *arccana* (the worship), and *tonṭu* (service). These themes are common to Śaivites of all sects including the Siddhāntins. This only shows how the *Tēvāram* hymns in general and those of Sambandhar in particular are looked upon by Śaivites as the sacred books that could help them attain salvation.

The authorship of the *Saundaryalaharī* in Sanskrit is generally attributed to Ādi Śaṅkara. But it is disputed in some quarters.

However, one thing must be accepted by all, that is, that the author of this work should be at least belonging to the lineage of Śaṅkara. In this work, in verse 75, the author praises one child of Drāviḍa region (*drāviḍa śiṣu*) as follows:

“O! Daughter of the Mountain, I consider the milk flowing from your breasts to be the ocean of nectar originating from your heart and that it flows like a current of learning, for drinking it is so kindly given by you, this child of Drāviḍa region has become an author of works, which attract the minds of reputed poets.”¹⁵⁴ This translator identifies this child with Śaṅkara himself. But judging from the tone and spirit of this work, it is highly unlikely that Śaṅkara praises himself in so many words. On the other hand, anyone who is familiar with the story of Sambandhar will readily identify the child as Sambandhar.¹⁵⁵ If this identification is accepted, one could easily understand the place of honour and admiration that Sambandhar enjoyed at the hands of the greatest Advaitin.

There had been a tendency to interpret even the *Caṅkam* works and the *Tolkāppiyam* in terms of Advaita. Nacciṇārkiṇiyar, (not earlier than the fourteenth century,) reads a reference to the Gītācārya in the *Malaipaṭukaṣām*. He interprets phrases like ‘*oru niyāki*’¹⁵⁶ and ‘*nalkumati*’¹⁵⁷ as referring to the unitive *advaitic* experience. The path leading to that is there described as *pulampirintuṟaital*.¹⁵⁸ A great Advaitin, Tattuvarāyar, at the end of the fourteenth or the beginning of the fifteenth century, compiled an anthology of poems collected from many religious and philosophical works in Tamil. It is called the *Peruntiraiṭṭu*. The names of more than one hundred works are mentioned in this anthology and some of them are admittedly *advaitic*. According to T.P. Meenakshisundaran, Tattuvarāyar and other Advaitins interpreted the *Nāyaṇmārs* and *Ālvārs* from the point of view of Advaita.¹⁵⁹ But, even though he admits that this interpretation was not accepted by Śaivites and Vaiṣṇavites,¹⁶⁰ yet one could see that the Advaitins could draw from *Nāyaṇmārs* especially from the *Tēvāram* hymnists. In fact, there is a tradition which holds that Vidyāraṇya wrote an Advaita commentary on the *Śivajñāna*

bōdham of Meykaṇṭār. But unfortunately this work is not extant now. But Vadivel Chettiar has written in this century an Advaitic commentary on the *Śivajñānabodham*. This trend continues; A.R. Malaiyappa Sastri in his article, 'Nālvar molīyil advaitam' explains some of the *Tēvāram* and the *Tiruvācakam* hymns in the light of the Advaitic principles.¹⁶¹ That the one supreme Being appears as many is the basic Advaitic stand. The author quotes Sambandhar's hymn from his *Mutukunṇam paṭikam* (1.53.1) beginning with '*dēvarāyum*' and interprets the meaning of the verb '*āy*' as 'to appear'. He contends that Śiva appears as many and also explains the meaning of the word '*mutaloruvan*' as the first cause — *upādāna-kāraṇa*. He also interprets the next verse of the same *paṭikam* beginning with '*paṇṇumāki*' and explains that the words '*muṇṇumāki vēṇumāṇāṇ*' mean that Śiva who in His *saguṇa* aspect becomes the entirety of the world and soul, is in reality, *nirguṇa Brahman* as denoted by the word '*vēṇumāṇāṇ*'. It is argued that the words of Sambandhar, '*kuṇṇam nī guṇaṅkaḷ nī*' only stress the *nirguṇa* state of Śiva. Like this, according to the author of that article, Sambandhar's oft-quoted words '*cērvār tāmē tāṇākac ceyyumavan*' and Appar's words '*tāṇum yāṇum ākinra taṇmaiyan*' explain the non-difference between *Brahman* and the *jīvas*. Appar's *Tiruvorriyur tiruttāṇṭakam* beginning with '*maṇṇallai viṇṇallai malaiyallai kaḷalallai*' (Thou art not the earth, nor the sky, nor the mountain, nor the sea ..), it is said, maintains the Advaitic stand.

It is interesting to note that Sambandhar in his *paṭikam* on *Tūṅkāṇaimāṭam* (1.59.3) refers to the futile life which consists of death and rebirth, as '*tōṇṇam*'. This word may mean "appearance" or "impermanence". If the former view is accepted, then will it mean a myth or illusion? It deserves further pursuit and investigation. What has been attempted hitherto is only to show that Sambandhar's hymns provide scope and latitude for a wide spectrum of metaphysical concepts as claimed by more than one school of thought whether Siddhānta or Advaita. In fact Siddhānta itself is claimed to be an enriched aspect of Advaita. Tāyumaṇavar glorifies Meykaṇṭār as one who has realised the truth of Advaita — as '*attuvida meykaṇṭār*'.

But it could be shown how Sambandhar himself contributes in no small measure, to harmonise various conflicting viewpoints into a unitive experience. It has been already pointed out that Sambandhar holds Śiva as the supreme Being, e.g., '*Sivan em iṭai*'; '*para tattuvan*' — '*uttaman*' (1.132.5); '*nirāmayan*' (free from disease); '*parāparan*' (the most supreme as well as the most humble); '*purātanan*' (the most ancient); '*parāvu Sivan*' (the most worshipful Śiva); '*rāka*' (the most beloved — 3.325.6); '*kēṭili*' (the deathless; — 1.77.3) '*māṭili*' (the immutable — 1.114.2). Sambandhar has an unshakable faith in Śiva's grace. He trusts that Śiva will come down and grant His grace to any soul wherever and as whatever it is born.¹⁶² "He who brings death and rebirth (to the souls) also expounds the great path which helps the soul to attain deathless salvation" (*kēṭum piṇaviyūm ākkiṇārum kēṭilā, vīṭumā neṭi viḷam-piṇār* — 1.45.2).

It has been a pan-Indian tradition to classify and group the religions and philosophical systems (*camayam* in Tamil) into units of six arranged in accordance with different levels of spiritual attainment of the people. Śiva Himself, out of His grace, becomes the very systems and finally blesses the souls with His grace to attain the supreme Wisdom (*munnāmiru mūṇṇu camayaṅkaḷ avaiyākiṭ, piṇṇai aruḷ ceyta piṇaiyāḷan* — 2.165.2). It is He who has formulated and classified the systems (*camayaṅkaḷai vakuttavan* — 3.337.3).

Sambandhar describes a unique scene at Gōkaraṇam. The *aṭiyārs* (the servants of God), professing and practising all the six systems of religion or philosophy come and willingly worship His feet and chant His *Āgamas*, and while doing so, an ecstasy which is different from the wordly feeling, besets their minds and they lose themselves in a trance.¹⁶³

Sambandhar also asserts that He is the sole Lord or Chief of all the six systems of philosophy and religions (*ottāṇu camayaṅkaṭ-koru talaivan* — 1.131.1). Now it has to be explained what Sambandhar means by '*aṇu camayam*', the six systems. Does the word '*aṇu*', 'six', stands for many or any particular set of six systems? The foot-note for the *patikam* (1.131.1) in the Dharumapuram

edn., identifies this as the inner most systems of Śaiva fold (*akaccamayam*). The *Saṅkarpanirākaraṇam* of Umāpati Śivam gives the names of the *akaccamayam* as: i. Aikyavātam; ii. Pāṣāṇavātam; iii. Saṅkarān tavātam; iv. Īśvara avikāra vātam; v. Nimitta kāraṇa pariṇāma vātam and vi. Śaiva vātam. As Bedavātam and Śiva-samavātam are similar to Pāṣāṇavātam they are also included.

But Pāśupatam, Māvratam, Kāpālam, Vāmanam, Vairavam and Aikyavāta Śaivam are classified as *akappuṇaccamayam*. Even though they accept the *Vedas* and the *Śaivāgamas* in general, in particular instances, either they differ from them or look forward to some other authority also besides the *Vedas* and the *Āgamas*. For example, the Pāśupatas give greater relevance to their particular authority, the *Pāśupatam*, enunciated by Nakulīśa. But Sambandhar mentions and appreciates that the Pāśupatas, along with Śaivas worship the Lord Śiva at Caṇpainagar (Cīrkālī) (*saivar pāsupatarkaḷ vaṇaṅkum caṇpainagarārē* — 1.66.4). At Tirunaṇā, near the modern Bhavani dam-site, “*viratikaḷ* chant and praise the good name (of Śiva) by many means” (*nāṇḍavitattāl viratikaḷ nan nāmamē yēttivāḷtta* — 2.208.7). Does the word ‘*viratikaḷ*’ here point to the ‘*māviratikaḷ*’ of the *akappuṇaccamayam*? Even if not, it may mean ascetics of all Śaiva sects.

Sambandhar calls Śiva *saivan*, *kāpāli* and *pāsupatan*. As pointed out above, the Pāśupata sect has been mentioned. But even though Sambandhar describes Śiva as a *kāpāli* and *pāsupata*, yet the Kāpālika or Kāḷāmuka as distinct sects are not mentioned in the hymns now extant. However, Sambandhar had visited Kapāḷiccaram, a temple believed to be of Kāpālikas at Mayilāp-pūr. According to the *Mattavilāsa-prahasanam* of Mahendra Varma I, who was believed to be a contemporary of Appar who, in turn, was an elder contemporary of Sambandhar, the Kāpālikas and Pāśupatas were living in large numbers at Kāñcīpuram. Ēkāmparanāta temple was believed to be crowded with Kāpālika ascetics. Sambandhar and other hymnists have sung there. Sambandhar has also sung at Nākaikkārōṇam and Kuṭantaikkārōṇam temples. *Kārōṇam* is the tamilised form of Kāyārōṇam, the birth place of Nakulīśa, the founder of Pāśupata sect. Accor-

ding to Cēkkiḷar when Sambandhar visited Kāḷatti (Kāḷahasti) he was warmly received by ascetics of all Śaiva sects such as 'caṭaittīrumuṇivar kaṇḷakkaiyar paḷvēṭaccaivar'.¹⁶⁴

It is interesting to note that Sambandhar holds the view that even Buddhism and Jainism are God's making. He puts this idea as He shoots out a question to the servants of Śiva imploring them to tell him why the Lord has brought into being the *camaṇ* (Jainism and *sākkīyam* (Buddhism) which do not embrace Him (*toṇṭarakaḷ collir ... iṣaṇ, aṇaiṇil camaṇ sākkīyam ākkīyavārē?* — 2.172.10). Sambandhar recognises that there are many virtues in them inspite of the fact that they often speak ill of Śiva. He believes Śiva even takes all their abuses as words of justice.¹⁶⁵

In the same verse Sambandhar praises Śiva as, '*sātīgīta varttamāṇar*'. Varttamāṇar is the name of Mahāvīra. T.P. Meenakshisundaran tends to believe that Sambandhar here means that Śiva Himself is Varttamāṇar who enunciated Jainism.¹⁶⁶ Sambandhar stresses emphatically that the Buddhists and Jains are none else than the Lord of Ālaṅkāṭu.¹⁶⁷

The foregoing references clearly show that Sambandhar accepted and appreciated all Śaiva sects, as all of them cherished and upheld the supremacy of Śiva. In fact, he asks those who tell that the Chief (Śiva) of Cīrāppaḷi is not the Chief, whether the blue (flowers) will change into white.¹⁶⁸ But one important point should not be lost sight of. That is, Sambandhar was well aware that there were religions that did not accept Śiva as the supreme Being. Therefore he remarks that Śiva is One who is not known to many religions that do not realise Him by exploring the proper means to experience Him (*āyātana camayampala aṇiyātavan* — 1.11.5).

There are clear instances in which Sambandhar vehemently dismisses the views of certain *darśanas*. In the *patikam* on Ten Tirumullaivāyil (2.224.4), he asserts that Araṇ (Lord Śiva) stands beyond the comprehension of those who have been conditioned by the knowledge that there are only twentyfive *tattvas* (twentyfour

plus one *puruṣa*). Probably he refers here to the Sāṅkhya system which holds that there are twentyfour *tattvas* and one knowing *puruṣa* beyond which there is no other entity or reality.¹⁶⁹ The twentyfour *tattvas* are only *ātma tattvas* and the twentyfifth is only the *ātman*. Śiva is beyond all these and hence He could not be known to the Sāṅkhyas. Appar also holds similar view. He says the Lord who is seated at Ārūr, is beyond the five five (twentyfive), (*aiyañcīn appuṛattāṇum ārūr amarnta ammāṇē* — 4.4.10).

Similarly, we find that Sambandhar was aware of many doctrines pertaining to the Jains, Buddhists, Ājīvakas, etc. Sometimes he also criticises them. He mentions the *kṣaṇikavāda* (the doctrine of momentariness) of the Bauddhas and criticises it as false.¹⁷⁰ The Jains believed that only the males, not females, will attain salvation. Sambandhar who believes in the salvation of all souls hits at this belief of the Jains (1.72.10). The Jains as well as the Vaiśbhāṣikas of the Buddhists hold a theory that this world is the outcome of the combination of the primordial atoms. Sambandhar calls them '*ārambar*' — those who believe in the *ārambha-vāda*, and exhorts the people not to pay heed to their words (1.10.10). Similarly, we find reference to the *syād-vāda* of the Jains. "They are the people who say, that a thing is and is not and thus confuse and terrorise others" (3.297.3). Mostly Sambandhar criticises the Tēras of *Thēra-vāda* in Buddhism. Ājīvakas deny the *guṇas*. Sambandhar refers to them as those without *guṇas* - '*guṇamilikal*'¹⁷¹ and '*acciyaṇṇēykal*'.¹⁷² He also refers to the doctrine that the efforts, of their own accord, will bear fruit (*muyanṇa paṭum* — 3.335.10) without the aid of a *kartā*. He means here the Buddhists and Jains only.

NOTES

1. *Tirujñānasambandhar Purāṇam* (T.J.N. Pu.), 358,375
2. *Āḷuṭaiya Pillaiyār* (A.P.) *Tirukkalamṇakam*, 1
3. V. A. Devasenapathy, "Invitation to Śaiva Siddhānta", *Perspectives of Theism and Absolutism in Indian Philosophy*, Department of Philosophy, R. K. M. Vivekananda College, Madras, 1978, p.24

4. K. Venkatasamy Reddiyar (ed.), *Nācciyār Tirumōḷi*, (IX. 3), *Nālāyira-divyap-prabandham*, Tiruvenkadattan Tirumanram, Madras, 1981
5. *Ibid.*, X. 3-4
6. U. V. Swaminatha Iyer (ed.), *Tirumurukāṛṛuppaṭai*, *Pattuppāṭṭu*, Madras, 1950, l. 17
7. *Ibid.*, ll. 223-226
8. *Tirukkural*, 80
9. கைம்மகவேந்திக் கடுவனொடுடிக் கழைபாய்வான்
செம்முகமந்தி கருவரையேறுஞ் சிராப்பள்ளி — 1.98.2
10. பிழைத்தபிடியைக் காணாதோடிப் பெருங்கைமத
வேழம்
அழைத்துத்திரிந்தங் குறங்குஞ்சார லண்ணாமலை
யாரே — 1.69.4
11. பிள்ளைதுள்ளிக் கிள்ளைபயில்வ கேட்டுப் பிரியாது
போய்க்
கிள்ளையேனற் கதிர்கொணர்ந்து வாய்ப்பெய்யும்
கேதாரமே — 2.250.4
12. W. R. Inge, *Christian Mysticism*, 1899, p.95
13. கொழுந்தரளம் நகைகாட்டக் கோகநதம் முகங்
காட்டக் குதித்துநீர்மேல்
விழுந்தகயல் விழிகாட்ட விற்பவளம் வாய்காட்டும்
மிழலையாமே — 1.132.3
14. விடமுண்ட மிடற்றண்ணல் வெண்காட்டின் றண்
புறவின்
மடல்விண்ட முடத்தாழை மலர்நிழலைக் குருகென்று
தடமண்டு துறைக்கெண்டை தாமரையின் பூமறையக்
கடல்விண்ட கதிர்முத்த நகைகாட்டுங் காட்சியதே
— 2.184.4
15. 1.14.2; also see 1.16.5, 1.60.1, 1.132.4, 2.197.1, 2.207.4, 2.236.2, 2.250.2
16. நின்றுமேய்ந்து நினைந்துமாகரி நீரொடும்மலர்
வேண்டிவான்மழை
குன்றி னேர்ந்துகுத்திப் பணிசெய்யும் கோட்டாறு
— 2.188.2

17. பூந்த ணறுவேங்கைக் கொத்திறுத்து மத்தகத்திற்
பொலியவேந்திக்
கூந்தற் பிடியுங்களிறு முடன் வணங்கும் குறும்பலாவே
— 2.207.8.

And also see 1.12.1, 2.200.2, 2.208.6, 2.254.9, 3.284.1

18. தகவுடைநீர் மணித்தலத்துச் சங்குளவர்க் கந்திகழச்
சலசத்தீயுள்
மிகவுடைய புங்கமலர்ப் பொரியட்ட மணஞ்செய்யும்
மிழலையாமே — 1.132.6

19. T. J. N. Pu., 7

20. பாரிசையும் பண்டிதர்கள் பன்னாளும் பயின்றோதும்
ஓசைகேட்டு
வேரிமலி பொழிற்கிள்ளை வேதங்கள் பொருள்
சொல்லும் மிழலையாமே — 1.132.1

21. பெரிதிலங்கும்மறை கிளைஞரோதப் பிழைகேட்டலாற்
கருதுகிள்ளைக் குலந்தெரிந்து தீர்க்கும்கடற் காழியே
— 2.249.5

22. U. V. Swaminatha Iyer (ed.), *Maṇimēkalai*, Madras, 1965, 27, ll. 89-95

23. புவிமுதல்ஐம் பூதமாய்ப் புலனைந்தாய் நிலனைந்
தாய்க் கரணநான்காய்
அவையவைசேர் பயனுருவாய் அல்லவுரு வாய்
நின்றான் — 1.129.7

24. பற்றுமாகி வானுளோர்க்குப் பல்கதிரோன் மதிபார்
எற்றுநீர்தீக் காலுமேலை விண்ணியமா னனோடு
மற்றுமாதோர் பல்லுயிராய் மாலயனும் மறைகள்
முற்றுமாகி வேறுமானான் மேயது முதுகுன்றே — 1.53.2

25. *Maṇimēkalai*, 27, ll. 89-94.

26. நீரும் நிலனும் தீயும் வளியும்
மாக விசும்போ டைந்து தானியற்றிய
மழுவாள் நெடியோன் தலைவனாக

Maturaiikkāñci, ll. 453-455

27. ll. 15-16; also see his invocatory songs to the *Ainkurunūru*, *Paṭirupattu* and *Kalittokai* — S. Rajam (ed.), Madras, 1958, 1957 and 1957 respectively. See also *Silappatikāram*, 5.169

28. C. V. Narayana Aiyar, *Origin and Early History of Saivism in South India*, University of Madras, 1974, p. 116

29. K. Sivaraman, *Saivism in Philosophical Perspective*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1973, pp. 31-32

30. *Taittirīopaniṣad*, 3.1

31. புவம்வளி கனல்புனல் புலிகலை யுரைமறை திரிகுண
மமர்நெறி
திவமலி தருசுரர் முதலியர் திகழ்தரு முயிரவை யவைதம்
பவமலி தொழிலது நினைவொடு பதுமனன் மலரது
மருவிய, சிவன்... — 1.21.1

32. மலைபல வளர்தரு புலியிடை மறைதரு வழிமலி
மனிதர்கள்
நிலைமலி சுரர்முத லுலகுக ணிலைபெறு வகைநினை
வொடுமிகும்
அலைகட னடுவரி துயிலம ரரியுரு வியல்பரன்... 1.21.2

33. பழுதில கடல்புடை தழுவிய படிமுத வியவுலகுகண்மலி
குழுவிய சுரர்பிறர் மனிதர்கள் குலமலி தருமுயி ரவை
யவை
முழுவது மழிவகை நினைவொடு முதலுரு வியல்பரன் ...
— 1.21.3

34. 1.42.1; also see 1.27.2, 1.44.8, 1.132.5, 2.166.3, 2.203.1, 2.214.6, 3.286.4 and the *Tiruveḷḷukāṇṇirukkai*, 1.6

35. தேவராய மசுரராயஞ் சித்தர்செழு மறைசேர்
நாவராய நண்ணுபாரும் விண்ணொரிகா னீரும்
மேவராய விரைமலரோன் செங்கண்மாலீச னென்னும்
முவராய முதலொருவன் ... — 1.53.1

36. As quoted by Centinata Iyer - *Tēvāram Vētasāram*, Mangaiyarkkarasiyar, Madras, Pingala year, Chittirai Month, pp. 20-21.

37. இருநிலனதுபுன லிடைமடிதரதவெரி புகவெரியதுமிகு
பெருவெளியினிலவி தரவளிகெடவிய னிடைமுழுவது
கெட
இருவர்களுடல்பொறை யொடுதிரியெழிலுரு
வுடையவன் ... — 1.22.7

38. *Rgveda* — 10.129.1, 2, 4

39. *Svetāśvatāropaniṣad* as quoted in *Tēvāsam Vētasāram*, p. 12

40. உறவியு மின்புறுசீரு மோங்குதல் வீடெளி தாகித்
துறவியுங் கூட்டமுங் காட்டித் துன்பமு மின்பமுந்
தோற்றி
மறவியஞ் சிந்தனை மாற்றி வாழவல் லார்தமக்
கென்றும்
பிறவி யறுக்கும் பிரானார் ... — 2.203.8

41. பிறப்பாதி யில்லான் பிறப்பார் பிறப்புச்
செறப்பாதி யந்தம் செலச்செய்யும் தேசன் — 1.134.4

42. Cf., 'முன்னவன் விளையாட்டென்று மொழிதலும்',
Śivajñāna Siddhiyār, sūtra I, 36

'ஏற்றயிவை அரனருளின் திருவிளையாட்டாக இயம்புவார்கள்'
— *Śivapprakāśam, potu*, 6

43. Śivajñānayogi compares this to the dictum that, 'ஐங்
கலப் பாரம் சுமத்தல் சாத்தனுக்கு விளையாட்டு' (It is a play for
Cāttan to carry loads of five *kalams*) — *Śivajñānopāṭiyam*, Kazha-
gam ed. 1968, p. 112

44. 1.43.3; 1.109.7, 3.362.6

45. 1.1.11; 1.100.2-10, 1.102.10, 2.213.5, 2.242.9

46. பன்னீர்மை குன்றிச் செவிகேட்பிலா
படர்நோக் கிற்கண் பவளந்நிற
நன்னீர்மை குன்றித் திரைதோலொடு
நரைதோன்றும் ...

— 1.59.6; also see 1.59.7, 1.118.2

47. 1.118.3; also see 1.118.6

48. தந்தையார் போயினார் தாயரும் போயினார் தாமும்
போவார்
கொந்தவேல் கொண்டொரு கூற்றத்தார் பார்க்கின்றார்
கொண்டு போவார் — 2.215.2

49. செடிகொணோ யாக்கையைம் பாம்பின்வாய்த்
தேரைவாய்ச் சிறுபறவை
கடிகொள்பூந் தேன்சுவைத் தின்புற லாமென்று
கருதி னாயே — 2.215.6; also see 2.215.8-9

50. Mircea Eliade, *Yoga, Immortality and Freedom* — Trans-
lated from French by Willard R. Trask, Bollingur Series L VI,
Pantheon Books, 1958, p. 10

51. நீநாளு நன்னெஞ்சே நினைகண்டா யாரறிவார்
சாநாளும் வாழ்நாளுஞ் சாய்க்காட்டெம் பெருமாற்கே
பூநாளுந் தலைசுமப்பப் புகழ்நாமஞ் செலிகேட்ப
நாநாளு நவின்றேத்தப் பெறலாமே நல்வினையே
—2.177.3; also see 3.361.4

52. பறையின்னொலி சங்கின்னொலி பாங்காரவுமார்
அறையும்மொலி யெங்கும்மவை யறிவாரவர் தன்மை
... நின்றியூரில்
உறையும்மிறை யல்லதென துள்ளம்முணராதே —1.18.3

53. Cf., மாலற நேயம் மலிந்தவர் வேடமும்
ஆலயந் தானும் அரன்னத் தொழுமே
—*Sivajiñāṇabōdham*, *sūtra* 12

54. *Sivajiñāṇayogi* — *Sivajiñāṇapūṭiyam*, Kazhagam ed. Madras, 1968. p. 484

55. *Tiruvācakam* — *Tiruvempāvai*, Tapōvaṇam ed. 1968, 19

56. *Ibid.*, 9

57. 1.59.1-10; also see 1.23.4, 2.233.2, 3.294.9

58. *A.P. Tiruvantāti*, 2

59. 1.16.11; also see 1.118.11, 2.187.11

60. Cf., *Tēvārat Tiruppatikaṅkaḷ*, Dharumapuram Ādinam, ed. 1953, notes on 1.52.3, p. 245

61. *Ibid.*, 1.2.7, notes, p. 15

62. 1.71.5; also see 1.43.10, 2.170.1, 2.188.6, 2.223.10

63. N. Katirai Pillai (ed.), *Srīmat Tāyumaṇasvāmikaḷ Tiruppāṭal Tiraṭṭu*, B. Irattinanayagar Sons, Madras, 1935, 10.3, p. 164

64. 2.176.3; also see 2.177.3

65. தஞ்சும்போதுந் துற்றும்போதுஞ் சொல்லுவனுன்
... .. நிறமே,
... .. நாளுநினைந் தடியேன்
வஞ்சமுண்டென் றஞ்சுகின்றேன் வலிவலமே யவனே
— 1.50.5

66. தாயுநீயே தந்தைநீயே சங்கரனே யடியேன்
ஆயுநின்பா லன்புசெய்வா னாதரிக்கின் றதுள்ளம்

ஆய்மாய காயந்தன்னு னைவர் நின்றொன்
 றலொட்டார்
 மாயமேயென் றஞ்சுகின்றேன் வலிவலமே யவனே
 — 1.50.7

67. என்ன புண்ணியஞ் செய்தனை நெஞ்சமே
 யிருங்கடல் வையத்து
 முன்னநீபுரி நல்வினைப் பயனிடை
 முழுமணித்தரளங்கள்
 மன்னுகாவிரி துழ்திரு வலஞ்சுழி வாணனை வாயாரப்
 பன்னியாதரித் தேத்தியும்பாடியும் வழிபடுமதனாலே
 — 2.242.1

68. In fact Sambandhar calls himself a saint endowed with the knowledge of the Lord

(பதியான ஞான முனிவன் — 2.220.11)

69. 2.201.10; 3.326.2, 3.378.2

70. மறத்துறை மறுத்தவர் தவத்தடியருள்ளம்
 அறத்துறை யொறுத்துன தருட்கிழமை பெற்றார்
 — 2.166.7

71. அகனமர்ந்த அன்பினரா யறுபகைசெற் றைம்புலனும்
 அடக்கிஞானம்
 புகலுடையோர் தம்முள்ளப் புண்டரிகத் துள்ளிருக்கும்
 புராணர் — 1.132.6

72. பொடியார்மெய் பூசினும் புறவி னறவம்
 குடியாலூர் திரியினுங் கூப்பி டினும்
 கடியார்பூம் பொழிற்சோலைக் கள்ளின் மேயான்
 அடியார்பண் பிகழ்வார்க ளாதர் களே — 1.119.7

73. சொன்னய முடையவர் சுருதிகள் சுருதிய தொழிலினர்
 பின்னையர் நடுவுணர் பெருமையர் ... — 3.342.6

Also see the notes on 3.342.6, in the *Dharumapuram* ed. (1955), p.394. Cf., G. Vanmikanathan, *Periyapurāṇam*, Condensed English version, Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras, 1985, pp. 572-573

74. சுருதிகள் பலநல முதல்கலை துகளறு வகைபயில்
 வொடுமிகு
 உருவிய லுலகவை புகழ்தரவழி யொழு குமெயுறு
 பொறியொழி
 அருதவ முயல்பவர் தனதடி யடைவகை
 நினையரன் ... — 1.21.6

75. ஊனில் உயிர்ப்பை யொடுக்கி யொண்சுடர்
ஞான விளக்கினை யேற்றி நன்புலத்
தேனை வழிதிறந் தேத்துவார் ... — 3.280.3

76. Cf., foot note on 3.267.4. Dharumapuram ed. 1955. p.47

77. அவனே தானே யாகிய அன்னெறி
யேகனாகி இறைபணி நிற்க
— *Śivajñānabōdham*, sūtra 10

78. 2.146.5. and also see *Śivapprakāśam* — 10. It is stated here that higher knowledge (*vyar jñānam*) is of two kinds. The first one occurs on the onset of God's grace (*tiruvāru!*), when the *malas* are discarded. The second one is the knowledge acquired through the *Śaiva Āgamas*.

79. M. Hiriyanna, *Outlines of Indian Philosophy*, George Allen and Unwin (India) Private Ltd., Bombay. 1976, p. 177

80. V. A. Devasenapathi, *Śaiva Siddhānta*, University of Madras, Madras, 1966, p. 16

81. மறையினா லயனா ல் மாலா ல் மனத்தினால்
வாக்கால் மற்றும்
குறைவிலா அளவினாலும் கூறொணா தாகி நின்ற
இறைவனார் கமல பாதம் ...

Meykaṇṭa-Cāttiram Patināṇku, Part I, Kazhagam ed. Madras, 1969, Prefatory verse 5

82. *Ibid.*, v.6

83. Cf., V. A. Devasenapathi. *Saiva Siddhānta*, p. 69

84. T. J. N. Pu. 76.

85. *Ibid.*,

86. 86 T. N. A. Pu. 281

87. V. Rathinasabhpathy, *Tirumuraṭṭeṭivē Śivajñāna bōdham*, University of Madras, Madras, 1979, pp. 46, 47

88. நாளும் இன்னிசை யால்தமிழ் பரப்பும்
ஞான சம்பந்த னுக்குல கவர்முன், தாளம் ஈந்தவன்
— 7.62.8

89. நனவிலும் கனவிலும் நாளும் தன்னொளி
நினைவிலும் எனக்குவந் தெய்து நின்மலன் — 3 279.1

90. ...நள் ளாறர்தந் நாமமே,
மிளிரிள வளரெரி யிடினவை பழுதிலை மெய்ம்மையே
— 3.345.1

91. தெற்றென்று தெய்வந் தெளியார் கரைக்கோலை
தெண்ணீர்ப்
பற்றின்றிப் பாங்கெதிர்வி னூரவும் பண்பு நோக்கில்
பெற்றொன் றுயர்த்த பெருமான் பெருமானு மன்றே
— 3.312.11

92. பருமதின் மதுரைமன் னவையெதிரே
பதிகம தெழுதிலை யவையெதிரே
வருநதி யிடைமிசை வருகரனே ... — 3.371.12

93. T. J. N. pu. 844

94. பணிவாயுள்ள நன்கெழுநாலின் பத்தர்கள்பத்திமை
செய்யத்
துணியார் தங்க ஞள்ளமிலாத சுமடர்கள்சோதிப்
பரியார் — 1.42.5

95. 1.133.5; compare also 'virakintiyinā' of Appar
— 5.90.10

96. பேச்சி னாலுமக் காவதென் பேதைகாள் பேணுமின்
வாச்ச மாளிகை தும்மழ பாடியை வாழ்த்துமே
— 2.145.2

97. Cf., “வாத சாத்திர மிருதி புராண கலை ஞானம்
... நாதமுடி வானவெலாம் பாச ஞானம்”

quotation cited by C. K. Subramania Mudaliar, *Tiruttoṇṭar Purāṇam ennum Periyapurāṇam*, Part-V, Kovai Tamil Cankam ed. Coimbatore, 1.6.1950, p. 1016

98. ‘கற்றகேள்வி ஞானமான காரணம்’ — 1-51.7

99. *Tirupṭṭsuram*, (3.312)

வாழ்க அந்தணர் வானவ ரானினம்
வீழ்க தண்புனல் வேந்தனு மோங்குக
ஆழ்க தீயதெல் லாமர னாமமே
தூழ்க வையக முந்துயர் தீர்கவே 1

அரிய காட்சிய ராய்த்தம தங்கைசேர்
எரிய ரேறுகந் தேறுவர் கண்டமும்
கரியர் காடுறை வாழ்க்கைய ராயினும்
பெரிய ராரறி வாரவர் பெற்றியே 2

வெந்த சாம்பல் விரையெனப் பூசியே
தந்தை யாரொடு தாயிலர் தம்மையே
சிந்தி யாவெழு வார்வினை தீர்ப்பரால்
எந்தை யாரவ ரெவ்வகையார் கொலோ 3

- ஆட்பா லவர்க்கருளும் வண்ணமு மாதிமாண்பும்
கேட்பான் புகிலள வில்லை கிளக்க வேண்டா
கோட்பா லனவும் வினையுங் குறுகாமை யெந்தை
தாட்பால் வணங்கித் தலைநின் றிவைகேட்க
தக்கார் 4
- ஏதுக்க ளாலு மெடுத்த மொழியாலு மிக்குச்
சோதிக்க வேண்டா சுடர்விட்டுள னெங்கள் சோதி
மாதுக்க நீங்க லுறுவீர் மனம்பற்றி வாழ்மின்
சாதுக்கண் மிக்கீரிறையே வந்து சார்மின்களே 5
- ஆடும் மெனவும் மருங்கூற்ற முதைத்து வேதம்
பாடும் மெனவும் புகழல்லது பாவநீங்கக்
கேடும் பிறப்பும் அறுக்கும்மெ மனக்கேட்டிராகில்
நாடுந் திறத்தார்க் கருளல்லது நாட்டலாமே 6
- கடிசேர்ந்த போது மலரான கைக்கொண்டு நல்ல
படிசேர்ந்தபால்கொண்டங் காட்டிடத் தாதைபண்டு
முடிசேர்ந்த காலையற வெட்டிட முக்கண் மூர்த்தி
அடிசேர்ந்த வண்ணம் அறிவார் சொலக்கேட்டு
மன்றே 7
- வேத முதல்வன் முதலாக விளங்கி வையம்
ஏதப் படாமை யுலகத்தவ ரேத்தல் செய்யப்
பூத முதல்வன் முதலே முதலாப் பொலிந்த
சூத னொலிமாலை யென்றே கலிக்கோலை
சொல்லே 8
- பாராழி வட்டம் பகையா னலிந்தாட்ட வாடிப்
பேராழி யானதிடர் கண்டருள் செய்தல் பேணி
நீராழி விட்டேறி நெஞ்சிடங் கொண்டவர்க்குப்
போராழி யீந்த புகழும் புகழுற்ற தன்றே 9
- மாலா யவனும் மறைவல்ல நான்மு கனும்
பாலாய தேவர் பகரில் லமுதாட்டல் பேணி
காலாய முந்நீர் கடைந்தார்க் கரிதா யெழுந்த
ஆலால முண்டங்கம ரர்க்கருள் செய்த தாமே. 10
- அற்றன்றி யந்தண் மதுரைத் தொகை யாக்கினானும்
தெற்றென்று தெய்வந் தெளியார் கரைக்கோலை
தெண்ணீர்ப்
பற்றின்றிப் பாங்கெதிர்வி னூரவும் பண்பு நோக்கில்
பெற்றொன் றுயர்த்த பெருமான் பெருமானு மன்றே 11

நல்லார்கள் சேர்புகலி ஞானசம் பந்தனல்ல
எல்லார்களும் பரவு மீசனை யேத்து பாடல்
பல்லார் களும்மதிக்கப் பாசுரஞ் சொன்ன பத்தும்
வல்லார்கள் வானோ ருலகாளவும் வல்ல'ரன்றே 12

100. T, J. N. Pu. 845
101. C. K. Subramania Mudaliar, ed. op. cit; p 1014
102. *Irupāirupatu*, 2—11; 32—33.
103. Śivajñānayogi, *Sivajñānapūṭiyam*, p. 335
104. T. J. N. Pu. 826
105. Cf., foot note by Ramanatha Chettiar—quoted: C. K. Subramania Mudaliar. *op. cit.* p. 1019.
106. உம்ப ராலு முலகின் னவராலும்
தம்பெ ருமைய ளத்தற் கரியான் 1.29. 5.
107. Cf., Tāyumāṇavar:
'என்று நீயன்று நான் உன்னடிமை யல்லவோ'
108. 3.364.6; compare also Appar:
'தொண்டலால் துணையுமில்லை' — 4.40.4
109. C. K. Subramania Mudaliar, *op. cit.*, p. 1041
110. *Tirumantiram*, 257
111. 3.284.5 and also see 1.51.7, 1.89.2, 1.109.6, 2.167.1, 3.310.3
112. 1.50.2; and also see 2.142.7, 2.203.4, 3.310.3
113. நெறிநீர்மையர் நீள்வானவர் நினையுந் நினைவாகி
அறிநீர்மையி் லெய்தும்மவர்க் கறியும் மறிவருளி
— 1.17.6
114. Parimēlaḷakar's Commentary on the *Tirukkuraḷ*, Chapter 'நு'. But according to Śaiva Siddhānta *niyati* is a separate principle through which God metes out the effects of *karma*.
115. திறங்கொண்ட வடியார்மேற் றீவினைநோய் வாராமே
அறங்கொண்டு சிவதன்ம முரைத்தபிரான் — 2.179.6
116. இன்னவுரு வின்னநிற மென்றறிவ தேலரிது நீதிபலவும்
தன்னவுரு வாமைனமி குத்ததவன் — 3 329.4

117. See his *Philosophy of Mysticism*, 1919, pp. 33ff.
118. P. N. Srinivasachari, *Mystics and Mysticism*, Sri Krishna Library, Madras, 1951, p. 284
119. Tiruvaraṅgattamudanār, *Rāmānuca Nārāyaṇī*, 40, Vidvan Ki. Venkatasamy Reddiar (ed.), *Nālāyira Divyaprabandham*, Tiruvengadathan Tirumanram, Madras, 1981
120. *Bṛahadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, II, iv. 5 in *The Upanishad*, Swamy Nikhilananda (Trans.), Vol. III, Harpert and Brothers Publishers, New York, 1956, p. 176
121. *Ibid.*, I. iv. 3, Vol. III, p. 113
122. *Tiruvēlukūṇṇirukkai* (1.128), ll. 1-2
123. *Ibid.*, ll. 1-4
124. P. N. Srinivasachari, *op. cit.*, p. 305
125. B.R. Purushothama Naidu, *Tiruvāymoḷi Ittiṇṇam*, *Mutarpāṭṭu*, part I, University of Madras, 1971, pp. 28-29
126. 6 5.6
127. *Iti*, 1.4, Introduction, p. 176
128. *Tiruvāymoḷi*, 1.3.10
129. *Iti*, 1.4., Introduction, pp. 178-179
130. *Ibid*, pp. 222-223
131. *Ibid.*, pp. 180-181
132. சிந்தையுள்ள நாவின்மேலுஞ் சென்னியுமன்னினான்
வந்தென்னுள்ளம் புகுந்துமாலை காலையாடுவான்
— 1.73.9
133. சிறையார்வண்டுந் தேனும்விம்மு செய்யமலர்க்
கொன்றை
மறையார்பாட லாடலோடு மால்விடை மேல்வருவார்
இறையார்வந்தெ னில்புகுந்தென் னெழினலமுங்
கொண்டார் — 1.73.3
134. எளிவந்தார்போ லையமென்றெ னில்லேபுகுந்துள்ளத்
தெளிவுநாணுங் கொண்ட கள்வர் ... — 1.73.6
135. தமிழினீர்மை பேசித்தாளம் வீணை பண்ணிநல்ல
முழவமொந்தை மல்குபாடல் செய்கையிடமோவார்
குமிழின்மேனி தந்துகோல நீர்மையது கொண்டார்
— 1.73.8

136. சிந்தை யேபுகுந் தான்றிரு வாருரெம்
எந்தை தானெனை யேன்றுகொ ளுங்கொலோ
— 3.303.1

137. E.g., P. S. Shelly, *Ode to the West Wind*; J. Keats, *Ode to a Nightingale*; *Puraṇḍūru*, 66; *Silappatikāram*, *Kāṇalvāri*, 23

138. ஞாயிறு திங்க ளறிவே நானே
கடலே கானல் விலங்கே மரனே
புலம்புறு பொழுதே புள்ளே நெஞ்சே
யவையல பிறவு நுவலிய நெறியாற்
சொல்லுந் போலவுங் கேட்குந் போலவுஞ்
சொல்லியாங் கமையு மென்மனார் புலவர்

Tolkāppiyam, *Poruḷatikāram*, with the commentary of Pērācīriyar, Kazhagam ed., Madras, 1966, *sūtra* 513, p. 410

139. S. Michael Irudayam, "Treatment of Nature in Tiruvāymoli" in *Proceedings of the Second International Conference Seminar of Tamil Studies*, Vol. II, International Association of Tamil Studies, Madras, 1971, p. 165; also see J. S. M. Hooper, *Hymns of the Ālvārs*, First Reprint, Pioneer Book Service, Madras, 1985, p. 60

140. M. A. Dorai Rangaswamy, *The Religion and Philosophy of Tēvāram*, Book II, Vol. IV, University of Madras, 1959, p. 1248

141. *Ibid.*, (quoting from P. N. Srinivasachari, *Mystics and Mysticism*, p. 306), p. 1248

142. *Ibid.*, pp. 308-309

143. 3.334.4; see also 1.1.10, 1.10.4, 2.201.3, 3.279.5

144. 1.132.4; 1.13 7, 3.296.7, 3.377.3

145. Śivajñānamunivar's commentary, *Śivajñāna Siddhiyār*, *Cupakkam*, *sūtra* one, *adhikaraṇa* one, v. 27; *Meykaṇṭa Cāttiram Patināṅku*, Part I, Kazhagam ed., Madras, 1969, p. 52

146. M. Arunachalam Pillai, "Avaiyē tāṇēyātal" *Ponviḷā malar*, Śaiva Siddhānta Samājam, Madras-14, 1955, p. 96

147. *sūtra* 10, *adhikaraṇa* 2, *udāraṇa* verse 2

148. 1.22.5; also see 2.238.9, 3.371.11, 3.379.2

149. K. Vellaivanan, *Panniru Tirumuṟai Varalāru*, Annamalai University, part I, Annamalai Nagar, 1972, pp. 876-877

150. See footnotes on 1.53.9, p.251; also see footnote on 1.38.3, p. 179

151. *Saiva Siddhanta*, Vol. XIV, number 3, Madras, December 1979, Meditoria, p. iii

152. *Ibid* , p. iii

153. Cf., V. Rathinasabhapathi, *Tirumuraiṭṭeṭivē Sivajñāna bōdham*

154. V.K. Subramanian (tr.), *Saundaryalaharī*, Motilal Banarsi Dass, Delhi, 1977, p. 40

155. There is a Tamil translation of this work by one Virai Kavirāja Paṇḍitar who along with the commentator, Saiva Ellappa Nayakar, stresses this point.

156. *Tirumurukūrṟuppaṭai*, l. 294

157. *Ibid.*, l. 295

158. *Ibid.*, l. 63

159. T. P. Meenakshisundaran, *Advaita in Tamil*, University of Madras, Madras, 1974, p. 15

160. *Ibid.*, p. 18

161. A. R. Malaiyappa Sastri, "Nālvar Molīyil Advaitam" *Advaita Siddhānta Ponṇiṭṭi Malar*, Sri Kamakoti Koshasthanam, Kumbakonam, 1952, pp. 77-87

162. எங்கேனும் யாதாகிப் பிறந்திடினுந் தன்னடியார்க்க்
கிங்கேயென் றருள்புரியு மெம்பெருமான் — 2.176.6

163. ஆறுசம யங்களும்வி ரும்பியடி பேணியர னாகமமிகக்
கூறுமனம் வேறிரதி வந்தடியர் கம்பம்வரு
கோகரணமே — 3.337.6

164. T. J. N. Pu. 1018

165. போதியாரும் பிண்டியாரும் புகழல சொன்னாலும்
நீதியாகக் கொண்டங்குளு நிமலன் — 1.66.10

166. *Sambandharum Camanamum*, Rudra Patippakam, Madras, 1957, p. 13

167. 1.45.11; also see 3.317.10, 3.318.10

168. ... சிராப்பள்ளித்

தலைவரைநாளுந் தலைவரல்லாமை யுரைப்பீர்காள்
நிலவரைநீல முண்டதும்வெள்ளை நிறமாமே — 1.98.5

169. See also Parimēlaḷakar's commentary on the *Kuṛaḷ*,
27

170. In 3.261.10 Sambandhar calls the Buddhists '*kaṇikai nōṇṇinar*'. Though the notes for the verse in the Dharumapuram ed., gives the meaning as false penance, scholars like T. P. Meenakshisundaran give the meaning as '*kṣaṇika-vāda*' — Ref. *Sambandharum Camanum*, p. 120; also see 1.21.10

171. 1.10.10; 1.41.10, 1.49.10

172. 1.11.10; 1.49.10, 1.119.10

FOURTH CHAPTER

THE RELIGION OF SAMBANDHAR

4.1 *An analysis*

Philosophy answers the problem of the whole by logic, while religion answers it by faith. Philosophy tries to interpret the meaning of things by the concepts of understanding while symbols which satisfy the heart are the field of religion... Philosophy arises out of the logical demands and aims at theoretical satisfaction. While the philosopher reasons and argues, the religious man believes and acts, lives and loves.¹

The above words of Radhakrishnan may help to explain the position of Sambandhar as a philosopher and as a man of religion. He is not a doctrinaire philosopher and hence could not be confined to a particular system. His philosophy, as we find, effuses from his songs that flow from his intense love and devotion to the Lord Śiva, (*pattiyil varuvana* — 1.124.11); (*pattimaippāṭalka!* — 1.8.2). For that reason his religion is Śaivism. But he, again refuses to belong to a particular brand of Śaivism; because he embraces all who love and worship Śiva. That attitude stems from his philosophy that Śiva is the subject matter of all knowledge and the basis of all lives of the three worlds (*munniya kalaipporuḷum mūvulakil vāṭṭum, paṇniya oruttar* — 2.165.1). As a man of religion, he loves and worships Śiva through songs, dance and certain accepted rituals. He exhorts his fellowmen to do the same.

As metaphysical truths are explained through mythological stories, Sambandhar sings of Śiva's heroic exploits and acts of grace, in every temple. His language of mythology is significant in highlighting this truth. Mythology finds expression not merely

in poetry but also in arts, sculptures and iconographic figures as symbols representing greater truths. These are enshrined in temples situated in natural setting such as on the banks of the rivers, atop the hills and in the midst of fields and groves, ponds and tanks. With the advent of the Nāyanmārs especially the *Tēvāram* Trio and Ālvārs, temples sprang up rapidly throughout Tamil country and temple-worship became the very essence of religion, while temples turned to be the centres of socio-economic and cultural life of the masses. The Āgamas systematized temple-building and worship. Various modes of worship are described and prescribed in the hymns. They are studied and analysed herein.

4.2 *The role of mythology and its language*

The Absolute, the impersonal God, here Śiva, to Sambandhar, is beyond the reach of word and light (thought) (*corṟeriāpporu! cōtikku appāt ninra cōti* — 3.267.10). There is no one who knows His trait (*taṇmai yārum aṟivārilai* — 2.142.2). He is great, but who knows His trait? (*periyar, yāraṟivāravar peṟṟiyē* — 3.312.2). He is my Father, yet of what kind is He? (*entaīyār avar evvakaiyār kolō* — 3.312.3). These words affirm that Sambandhar admits of the *svarūpa* (transcendental) state of Śiva. But Sambandhar experiences Him and that ecstasy could not be contained within himself. A great poet that he is, he outpours his unique experience in musical songs. On analysis, the songs are found to speak of two aspects of his experience. One aspect is about his experience of Śiva as the Absolute. The second aspect of his experience of Śiva is in terms of the collective mass of symbols and myths that have been handed down to him by the society from time immemorial.

Now it has been widely accepted by the historians of religions and psychologists that great metaphysical and religious truths could be expressed through mythology and music and in no other way. Kerenyi, a Hungarian classicist, writes: "There are times when the greatest "Thoughts" could only have been expressed in music. But in that case the "greatest" is precisely what can be

expressed in music and in no other way. So with mythology.”² Rudolph Otto, a renowned historian of religions, postulates the notion of the *numen*, a category translatable as the “wholly other” which is *a priori* to every religious experience. The *numen* is the indescribable depth of the other whose reality is only dimly described in symbols or ideograms. The *numen* is the basis of all religions. It is to the *numen* man responds. The religious experience is *sui generis*; all perceptions of the *numen* are symbolic ways by which man seeks to apprehend the ultimate.³

Alan W. Watts says:

Myth-form, according to modern criticism, is a complex of images or a story whether factual or fanciful taken to represent the deepest truths of life...⁴

To Kerenyi

Mythology, like the severed head of Orpheus goes on singing even in death and from afar. In its lifetime, among the peoples where it was indigenous, it was not sung like a kind of music, it was also lived.⁵

These observations help one to understand the scope of mythology, not merely as a biography of gods and celestials but representing deeper and more valid truths of metaphysics and religion. No wonder Sambandhar gives expression to his unitive experience of the Absolute through mythology and other symbols. For that matter, even language is a symbol. He inherits the rich store-house of the wealth of mythology. Psychologically it is highly tenable. A great psychologist, C.G. Jung, the co-author of the *Essays on a Science of Mythology*, gives a psychological commentary on the investigations of mythological archetypes and postulates that every man has an unconscious psyche in which “myth-forming” structural elements are present which are caused by ‘autochthonous revivals’ — a kind of racial memory. He claims that by his investigations he is obliged to assure the existence of a collective psychic substratum which he calls ‘the collective unconscious.’⁶

4.2.1 *Mythology in the hymns of Sambandhar*

The hymns of Sambandhar are replete with mythological references. On analysis they could be classified into two types.

One type consists in the form of description of various anecdotes or acts of Śiva represented in a number of motif stories. The other lies in the descriptions of Śiva's person, personal ornaments, insignia, etc. Sambandhar calls the anecdotes *caritaikaḷ* (the purāṇic or mythological stories). He is never tired of singing those *caritaikaḷ*. He is very much enamoured of styling himself as one who melts himself in singing repeatedly of the *caritaikaḷ* of the Lord who has the crescent on His crest (*piraiyutai aṇṇal caritaikaḷ paravi niṇṇuruku sambandhar* — 1.78.11). This shows to what extent he gives importance and significance to the anecdotes.

The *caritaikaḷ* are many and varied. They could be grouped under some system of classification. Some of these relate to Śiva's valour, power and prowess. They are eight in number and are called *aṭṭaviraṭṭam* — the eight heroic exploits of Śiva pertaining to eight places. In a way, all purāṇic stories relating to Śiva can be brought under these eight heads. This concept plays a very significant role in the history of temples of Tamilnadu. There are stories which speak of His grace and love. In fact the heroic exploits are also a form of His grace — *maṇḍakaruṇai* (aggressive grace). Some stories may be taken as interpreting the philosophy of Śiva's essence and pre-eminence. To quote Kerenyi, about the material used in mythology:

A particular kind of material determines the art of mythology, an immemorial and traditional body of material contained in tales about gods and god-like beings, heroic battles and journeys to the Under world — "mythologem" is the best Greek word for them — tales already well known but not unamenable to further reshaping. Mythology is the *movement* of this material: it is something solid and yet mobile, substantial and yet not static, capable of transformation.⁷

So the 'mythologem' of these stories which must have been very popular at the time of Sambandhar became embellished at his hands and captured the feelings and fancies of the people which at once elevated their spirits and purified their beings. These are not just stories but are "held to explain themselves and everything else in the universe not because they were invented for the purpose

of explanation but because they possess among other things the property of being explanatory.”⁸

4.2.2 *Tales of heroic exploits*

The term *aṣṭāṇam* which is the modified form of *aṣṭasthānam* occurs in Sambandhar’s hymn (2.176.3). It denotes the eight holy places wherein Śiva performed His acts of valour,⁹ deemed to be performed within the Tamil country. Appar also uses the term. Therefore, this concept must have been popular in the age of the *Tēvāram*. Sambandhar sings on six of these eight places, according to his hymns now extant, leaving out Kuṟukkai and Vaḷuvūr. Perhaps the *patikams* pertaining to these two places must have been lost. But he refers to all the eight acts. The eight acts are: i. Destruction of Antaka; ii. Burning down Kāmā to ashes; iii. Kicking off Kāla; (god of death); iv. Slaying Jalandhara; v. Destruction of Dakṣa and his sacrifice; vi. Destruction of Tripura; vii. Beheading Brahmā and viii. Flaying of Gajamukāśura.

Dorai Rangaswamy has extensively dealt with these stories in his work (*The Religion and Philosophy of Tēvāram*, Book-I) with special reference to Nambī Ārūrar’s hymns. He has also made ample use of Āgamic description and the account of the sculpture of Kailāsanātha temple, which he believes, was a temple belonging to the period of Ārūrar. Notwithstanding minor deviations, by and large, they give us a good account of the mythological treatment of the subject at that period which is not far off from that of Sambandhar. A brief study is attempted to highlight Sambandhar’s conception of these stories.

4.2.2.1 *Destruction of Antaka*

Antakāśura was a demon. He went about harassing the gods. According to the *Matsya Purāṇa* he was slain by Śiva when he attempted to carry off Pārvatī. He also tried to carry off the *pārijāta* tree (one of the celestial trees) from heaven. Sambandhar calls him *antaṇ*. He, in three hymns, recounts that Śiva killed the demon with His trident.¹⁰ In another hymn, he just recollects the

terrific end of Antaka (2.255.6). He makes another reference to the demon in the hymn 2.167.7. But here it may also relate to the god of death (Antaka). Tirukkōvalur in South Arcot district of Tamilnadu is the *vīraṭṭāṇam* pertaining to this story. Though this story is not very popular in the Tamil land, Tirumūlar gives it the first place in his account of Śiva's heroism. According to the tradition, the demon was ultimately blessed by God's grace and he was made one of His *gaṇas* (celestial attendants).

4.2.2.2 *Kāma was reduced to ashes*

After the destruction of Dakṣa's sacrifice Śiva's consort Dākṣāyaṇī took the form of Haimavatī and was born again as the daughter of the Lord of the Himalayas. She went to perform penance for winning the hand of Śiva who, as an ascetic, was teaching the scriptures to His disciples in the Himalayas (1.75.7). A son had to be born for them in order to destroy the three demon brothers, Tāraka, Simhamukhāsura and Śūrapadma who had been harassing the celestials. Kāma or Maṇmatha — the god of love was deputed (2.167.6). In order to enkindle the fire of passion in Śiva, Kāma hiding himself (2.255.6) aimed his five flowery arrows (2.139.2) at Śiva. At that time, being highly offended, Śiva opened His third eye. Kāma was burnt to ashes. Sambandhar refers to this feat of Śiva in as many as 73 hymns. It is interesting to note that he points out that this particular feat was performed after the destruction of Tripura by Śiva (2.256.2, 3). Śiva ultimately granted His grace to Kāma's beloved consort (3.358.1). She obtained a boon from the Lord by which Kāma got back his life, though without his body.

4.2.2.3 *The destroyer of death (Kālakāla)*

Conquest of death is the dream of man. The Śaivites have realised this dream in their concept of Śiva as *Kālakāla*. It is not merely an act of destruction of death; it is as well an act of grace bestowing deathlessness to Mārkaṇḍeya. This story is very popular in Tamilnadu. There was a poet by the name Mārkaṇḍeyaṇār in the *caṅkam* age, singing the ephemeral nature of this world in the *Puranānūru* (365). According to the *Purāṇas*, Mārkaṇḍeya was

the son of Mṛkaṇḍu who was blessed with this child on account of his austerities. On his own choice, Śiva gave this child to him to live for sixteen years, rather than useless children who might live upto old age. When Mārkaṇḍeya reached his sixteenth year his parents' grief knew no bounds. He went to worship Śiva, and Yama's servants could not approach him. Yama himself came. When he was about to bind the boy, the latter embraced the Liṅga and Śiva sprang forth from there and kicked Yama to death thus saving the child, and granting him immortality. Sambandhar sings this story in as many as 120 hymns. He also expresses his pleasure to sing repeatedly in praise of the reason (grace) for which the Lord vehemently kicked Kāla on his chest with His leg.¹¹ Mārkaṇḍeya is praised in as many as twentyseven hymns. This heroic feat, according to the Tamil tradition, took place at Tiruk-kaṭavūr, one of the eight *vīraṭṭānams*.

4.2.2.4 *Jalandharāsura slain*

According to the *Śiva Purāṇa*, the fire that emanated from Śiva's eye in the forehead, after burning down the three castles, was let into the sea where the river Indus commingles with it. From there rose up a child, Jalandhara. He grew up and married Bṛndā, noted for her chastity. He conquered and plundered the gods after knowing of their riches from Rāhu. Instigated by Nārada, he demanded of Śiva the surrender of Pārvatī Herself. At the fight that ensued between him and Śiva, the latter killed him with a discus called *Sudarśana* obtained from the sea. According to the tradition in Tamil land, Śiva drew up a circle with his toe on the earth and this became the discus, *Sudarśana*.¹² A challenge was thrown whether the demon could lift the wheel on to his head. When the demon lifted it on to his head, it cut his body through. This feat, according to the Tamil tradition, was performed at Tiruviṇkuṭi near Tiruvārūr. There is another episode connected with this act of heroism. It relates to the grace of Śiva being bestowed upon Viṣṇu by presenting him with *Sudarśana* which killed Jalandhara. Viṣṇu worshipped the Lord for the wheel by performing worship with thousand lotus flowers. When he found one flower missing he did not hesitate to pluck his eye and offer it

as flower. That was how he obtained Śiva's grace. This act of grace is supposed to have taken place in two places: Tiruccakkarappalli near Tañjāvūr and Tirumālpēru near Kāñcīpuram.¹³ Sambandhar gives his account of Jalandhara's destruction in seven of his hymns. In one of them he refers to both this feat as well as grace (bestowing the wheel to Tirumāl) (*cakkaram māṇku intāṇum calantaraṇaippilantāṇum* — 2.184.7).

4.2.2.5 Destruction of Dakṣa's sacrifice

The episode of Śiva wrecking the sacrifice performed by Dakṣa has got its religious and historical bearing. It reveals the existence of a conflict at that time between Śiva's devotees and the devotees of Viṣṇu, and also the establishment of Śiva's supremacy over other gods. The story is narrated in the Śānti Parva of the *Mahābhārata*. There are two or more versions of the story as to why and how Śiva destroyed the sacrifice. Notwithstanding the differences in details, all versions agree on one point. Dakṣa performed a great sacrifice for which all gods were invited. But he did not invite Śiva. On the other hand he insulted Him. This enraged Śiva resulting in the destruction of the sacrifice. Tirumular also gives the same reason for Śiva's wrath (326).

According to Sambandhar's account, Dakṣa, the father-in-law of Śiva (*māmaṭi* — 2.170.7) has committed a great blunder of insulting Umā (1.124.5) out of his folly and little mind (1.20.3). He repeats this reason in three other hymns as well.¹⁴ He abuses Dakṣa as unintelligent and perverted (*aṇivilāccetumatit takkaṇ* — 3.351.5) and also as hard hearted (*vaṇ takkaṇ* — 1.75.10); that is why Śiva destroyed his sacrifices. Sambandhar narrates this incident in as many as twenty hymns. Dakṣa's head was cut (1.124.5). All the gods including Brahmā, Candra, Indra, Sūrya, Agni, Ecce who attended the sacrifice were duly punished (1.131.3). Nāmakaḷ — goddess of learning, got her nose cut out.¹⁵ *Pariti* (the sun) lost his teeth.¹⁶ Agni's hand was cut off (1.20.3). Śiva's punishment is not malafide. It results in His grace. Sambandhar glorifies this grace. Dakṣa got a goat's head. He was granted boon (1.9.4), glory and life (3.381.8).

4.2.2.6 *Tripura burnt down*

The story of burning down the castles in the sky by Śiva is quite ancient. It is mentioned in the *Taittirīya Saṁhitā*, *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* and in the commentary of the *Vājasaneyī Saṁhitā* of the *Kṛṣṇa Yajur-veda* apart from the *Mahābhārata*, the *Śarabhoṇiṣad*, the *Dharma saṁhitā*, etc.¹⁷

According to a tradition in Tamil, there was a Cōḷa monarch who was celebrated in the *Caṅkam* classics as one who wore bracelets in his shoulders and had destroyed the castles suspended in the sky — *tūṇkeyil eṇinta toṭittōḷ cempīyan*. The *Puṛaṇānūru* (55) vividly describes how Śiva granted victory to the gods after destroying the three castles with the mountain bow, serpent sling and a singular arrow. The great epic, *Silappatikāram*, presents a graphic picture of Śiva's famous dances, *koṭukoṭṭi* and *pāṇṭarāṅkam* which He performed whilst and after destroying the Tripura. Tiruvatikai *Viratṭāṇam* is the heroic place where this feat has been conceived to have taken place. The story became so very popular that the surrounding places, Acciruppākkam and Pēraṇi are connected with this episode.

There are many versions of the story. But the central theme runs as follows: The three sons of the demon Tāraka who himself was killed by Kārttikeya were Tārakākṣa, Kamalākṣa and Vidyunmālī. They, on account of their severe penance, obtained super power from Brahmā to occupy three moving or flying castles so that they could harass their enemies — the gods — as they liked. They could be destroyed only by a single arrow, wielded by Mahādēva, Śiva, who ultimately destroyed the castles. Now Sambandhar's account may be seen.

Tripura has been described variedly such as, the abode of the demons (*asurartam pati* — 3.279.1); Tripura which soars in the sky (*antaram ulītarum tiripuram* — 3.344.5); the castles with wings (*ciṛai koṇṭa puram* — 1.36.4); the three castles capable of destroying (the enemies) in the very duration of thought (*niṇaikkumaḷavil nalitarum muṇṇupuraṅkaḷ* — 2.219.6); the castles that have obtained the boons and commit violence (*varamatē koḷā uramatē ceyynm puram* —

3.368.1), etc. The demons who occupied the castles were those who had performed penance (*tavat tāṇavar* — 2.218.7) but they were highly conceited and proud (*tarukkiya tiripurattavar* — 3.271.3). Their aim is to commit murder indiscriminately (*kolai varaiyāta kolikaiyar* — 1.98.5). They were the evil and powerful demons (*tīyarāyā vaḷ arakkar* — 1.53.3). They flew in all the eight directions in the space, thronged all the territories ruled by the celestials and waged victorious battles which could not be resisted even by the gods.¹⁸ They raised up and persecuted the entire world (*eḷuntulakai nalintu* — 1.132.3). Above all, they would never think and meditate on the Lord, our Father (*entai perumāṇai ulki nīnaiyār* — 2.222.11).

Śiva destroyed the castles and the demons for the following reasons: to make the world escape from the misery (*ulaku uyya* — 1.2.4); for the sake of good of the world (*ulakukkoru nanmaiyaḷē* — 3.315.7); because the celestials worship Him (*imaiyōr toḷa* — 3.265.6); because the people of the earth worshipped and the celestials bowed down (*pārōr toḷa, viṇṇōr paṇiya* — 1.84.3), etc.

Sambandhar states that Śiva had used the golden mountain (*irumpon malai* — 1.82.1) — Mount Meru — as his bow in as many as sixty five hymns. The sling used was the serpent — Vāsuki (1.11.6). The reference occurs in as many as eighteen hymns. The arrow is described variedly. That Ari — Hari — Viṣṇu was the arrow is told in four hymns. Agni — the fire — also was described as the arrow in twenty nine hymns. The wind was the shaft of the arrow (in thirteen hymns). The full description of the arrow occurs in three hymns: Ari as the barb, wind as the shaft, fire as the point. That the gods turned themselves as the chariot is told in three hymns. Brahmā yoked the *Vedas* (as horses) in the chariot, formed by the gods and drove it along (*vāṇōrellām orutērāy ayan maraipṇṇi nīṇṇuyppa* — 1.11.6).

Sambandhar generally narrates the account that Śiva destroyed Tripura with his bow and arrow. But we also find references to other modes employed. That He has destroyed Tripura by burning it with fire emanating from His eye is told in four hymns. Similarly

in five hymns, we find references to Śiva burning down the castles by His sheer smile or laughter. The destruction was also effected by Śiva's frowning face (3.271.1). The whole feat was enacted at the wink of an eye (3.322.6), during the time of the snap of fingers,¹⁹ during the time taken by a little black-gram to roll on a glass plane (*uḷunturūḷum aḷavaṭṭin*, — 1.132.3), and so on. It is interesting to observe Sambandhar describing the Tripurāntakamūrti being mounted on the Bull.²⁰ and also with Umā.²¹ We find Śiva, at the end granting His grace to the three demons. When the fortified castles were broken down Araṇ (Śiva) placed His grace to please the three (vanquished demons) who worshipped Him (*eyilukko aṭa muṇintu toḷu mūvar maḷiḷat takka aruḷ pakkamura vaitta aranār* — 3.336.5). This aspect has been stressed in eight hymns. We find in *patikam* 271, all the eleven verses referring to the destruction of Tripura.

4.2.2.7 *Brahmā loses his fifth head*

According to the *Śaṅkara Saṁhitā*, Brahmā who had originally five heads, insulted Śiva. Śiva infuriated over this, created Bhairava and commanded him to cut Brahmā's upward (fifth) head. When Bhairava cut off his head he was almost drowned in the flush of Brahmā's blood. He took the blood in the skull of Brahmā. Brahmā was restored to life with only four heads. He accepted Śiva's supremacy. According to the *Dakṣakāṇṭam*, Bhairava went about begging for the blood of Viṣṇu in Brahmā's skull as a begging bowl. Viṣṇu tore his forehead and poured down his blood into the bowl. But even after thousands of years, it could not fill up the bowl, and consequently he swooned on account of bloodlessness. All these details are meant to highlight the superiority of Śiva over others of the Trinity. This story of Śiva cutting Brahmā's head is referred to by Sambandhar in twenty four hymns. He also gives a few reasons for this act. One reason is to establish amidst the gods the superiority of Śiva. That is what he means by '*vāṇuḷōrkaḷukkāka*' (for the sake of the celestials — 3.296.6). In one verse he says that Śiva wanders abegging with that head of one who flourishes on the lotus flower (Brahmā), and who has slipped from the path. It is suggested that the particular

head of Brahmā slipped from the path by insulting Umā.²² This act of heroism is believed to have taken place at Kaṇṭiūr Vīraṭṭam, near Tanjāvūr.

4.2.2.8 Flaying of the elephant

Another story which Sambandhar is very fond of singing, is about Śiva flaying an elephant and wearing its skin over His body. The *Varāha-purāṇa* and the *Śaṅkara Samhitā* narrate this story in one form. A powerful demon, Gajāśura by name, was causing endless misery to the gods. When they took shelter in Śiva, He fought and flayed the demon. The *Purāṇas* tell how the ascetics of Dāru-kāvana enraged at Śiva's enchanting influence over their wives as Bhikṣāṭana, performed a sacrifice for killing Śiva, when deadly objects, including an elephant, emerging out of the sacrifice were neutralised by Śiva. The *Silappatikāram* attributes this feat to Koṭṭavai - Goddess of victory.²³ Sambandhar calls the elephant *alti*, *ānai*, *kari*, *karumāṇ*, *kaḷiṟu*, *kuñcaram*, *kāṭṭumā*, *kaimmā*, *tumbi*, *nāgam*, *pakaṭu*, *pōtakam*, *matamā*, *mā*, *vāraṇam* and *vēlam*. Its description, invariably very graphic, occurs in as many as one hundred and five hymns. It is interesting to observe that in no place the elephant is described as a demon (*asura*). Probably the episode of the elephant emerging out of the sacrifice was the uppermost in the mind of Sambandhar when he gave his account of the story. In one instance, he describes the elephant as '*vañca matayānai*' (3.330.5) (rusty elephant with or created out of deceit) suggesting thereby its origination from the sacrifice. In sixty eight hymns, the flaying of elephant has been referred to, while the act of Śiva wearing its skin occurs in one hundred and seventeen hymns. Another noteworthy point is that Sambandhar describes the advent and flaying of the elephant as causing horror and terror to Umā. This occurs in almost all references barring only a few. In these hymns, we find the description of Śiva dancing while flaying the elephant (3.351.6). It is only to enlighten Umā when she is disturbed in mind: (*mātumai pēṭuralum cittamtēiya ninṛāṭi* — 3.358.3). This act is supposed to have occurred at Vaḷuvūr. But, as mentioned earlier there is no *patikam* of Sambandhar for this place. Tirumūlar reads deeper significance in these stories.²⁴

As pointed out already all the purāṇic stories relating to Śiva can be brought under these eight heads. The story of Śiva being in the company of Umā is a sequence to the stories of the destruction of Dakṣa and Kāma. The wearing of the crescent on the crown is related to the story of Dakṣa. Śiva's unique ornaments, weapons and clothes are related to the events connected with the Kapāli form of Brahmaśiraścedana-mūrtti and the ascetics of Dārūkāvana. So also the stories of Bhikṣāṭana and Naṭarāja are connected with Kapāli and Dārūkāvana episodes. It looks as though the *aṭṭavīraṭṭāna* concept explains all the mythological stories relating to Śiva.

The concept of Śiva holding Umā as His part and the Bhikṣāṭana motif have been extensively dealt with later (chapter 3, sec. 3. 6). Similarly it has been shown how Sambandhar in each and every *patikam* deals with the two episodes, one connected with Śiva subduing and granting grace to Rāvaṇa and another with the failure of Brahmā and Viṣṇu to realise the Absolute through their conceit and ego.

4.2.3 Śiva, the Dancer

Before we proceed to analyse Sambandhar's conceptions of Śiva's dance, it would be quite appropriate to quote Ananda K. Coomaraswamy:

... it may not be out of place to call attention to the grandeur of this conception itself as a synthesis of science, religion and art. How amazing the range of thought and sympathy of those rishi-artists who just conceived such a type as this, affording an image of reality a key to the complex tissue of life, a theory of nature, not merely satisfactory to a single clique or race, nor acceptable to the thinkers of one century only, but universal in its appeal to the philosopher, the lover and the artist of all ages and all countries.²⁵

He continues:

Now to summarise the whole interpretation we find that the Essential significance of Shiva's Dance is threefold: First it is the image of his Rhythmic Play as the Source of all Movement within the cosmos, which is represented

by the Arch; Secondly the Purpose of his Dance is to Release the countless souls of men from the Snare of Illusion; Thirdly the place of the Dance, Chidambaram, the Centre of the Universe, is within the Heart.²⁶

Sambandhar, who possesses a remarkable aesthetic vision, is blissfully absorbed in this concept of Śiva's dance. Because, in the profound words of Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, "Whatever the origins of Shiva's dance, it became in time the clearest image of the activity of God which any art or religion can boast of."²⁷ Sambandhar describes Śiva as the dancer (*āṭavallāṇ* — 3.320.6; *naṭṭapperumāṇ* — 1.80.10) in as many as sixtyseven hymns. We also find many forms of dance as given hereunder:

1. Śiva dances with the serpent tied as a waist-belt (in 10 hymns)
2. Śiva dances with the snake held in hand (2.223.7)
3. Śiva dances wearing the snake as an ornament (in 8 hymns)
4. crematorium (*cuṭalai* or *kāṇ* or *kāṭu*) as the stage (in 116 hymns)
5. the time of His Dance:
 - (i) in the twilight (*anti*) (in 3 hymns)
 - (ii) in the midst of day and night (*canti*) (3.374.4)
 - (iii) in the night (*iravu, al*) (in 16 hymns)
 - (iv) in the dark (*iruḷ*) (in 24 hymns)
 - (v) in the dusk (*elli*) (in 13 hymns)
 - (vi) in the midnight (*kaṇkul*) (in 5 hymns)
 - (vii) in daylight (*pakal*) (in 4 hymns)
 - (viii) in the evening (*mālai*) (in 7 hymns)
6. dance with the Gaṅgā (in 11 hymns)
7. dance with Umā:
 - (i) when She is terrified (3.279.3)
 - (ii) when She looks on (in 10 hymns)
 - (iii) when She keeps time (2.247.1)

- (iv) when She forms His part (in 29 hymns)
- (v) when She sings for Him (in 12 hymns)
- (vi) when She rejoices over His dance (in 6 hymns)
- (vii) to remove Her anxiety (3.358.3)
- 8. dance while He sings (in 6 hymns)
- 9. dance holding fire on the palm (*eri āṭal*) (in 146 hymns)
- 10. dance when the anklets (*silambu* or *kaṭal*) ring (in 22 hymns)
- 11. dance with the lifted leg (*kāl tūkki āṭutal*) (in 4 hymns)
- 12. dance with Kālī:
 - (i) dance when Kālī looks on (3.314.3 and 1.41.5)
 - (ii) dance to surpass Her dance (1.115.6)
 - (iii) dance to appease Her (3.377.1; 1.126.5 & 2.168.5)
- 13. dance holding the skull or wearing the garland of skulls (*kapālam*) (in 9 hymns)
- 14. dance to the accompaniment of Nandi's drum beat (2.168.3 and 2.232.7)
- 15. dance wearing the crescent (in 24 hymns)
- 16. dance in the company of *bhūtas*, *pēys*, etc. (imps and ghosts) (in 65 hymns)

4.2.4 *Śiva drinks the venom to save the souls*

The story that has captivated the highest imagination and commanded greatest reverence of Sambandhar is the story of Śiva swallowing the poison. In order to obtain the divine nectar — the *ambrosia* which would make them immortals, the *devas* and *asuras* churned the ocean of milk. The Mandara mountain was planted as the churning post, the snake-king Vāsuki was used as the rope; Viṣṇu himself became the support of the post. Much to the consternation of all, there arose the all-destroying poison. The terrified gods surrendered to Śiva. He swallowed the poison and saved them. Pārvatī who was close by held His neck tight, and thus prevented the poison getting into the stomach. Due to the presence of the poison, Śiva's neck became blue. Hence His

name '*Tirunīlakaṇṭam*'. To the Śaivites the 'blue throat' has become a symbol of Śiva's grace and sacrifice.

The *Ṛgveda*, *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, *Atharva Veda*, *Yajur Veda*, *Śvetāśvataropaniṣad*, *Śarabhopaniṣad*, *Taittirīya Saṁhitā*, *Mahābhārata*,²⁸ etc., refer to this story in one form or other. The invocatory verse to the *Puṇḍarīk* describes the blue throat as '*kaṛaimiṭṭaru*' and points out how it has been celebrated by the scriptures. Avvaiyār blesses Atikaimāṇ the great philanthropist-king, to be as eternal as the blue-throated One.²⁹ Sambandhar holds the 'blue-throat,' as a symbol of Śiva's grace and swears by the name of '*tirunīlakaṇṭam*' (1.116.1-6; 8, 10). He refers to this act of Śiva's grace in as many as one hundred and four hymns. He also affirms that Śiva, by this act of grace, has surpassed the strength and supremacy of other gods.³⁰ He declares that no one could possibly measure His grace except by speaking high of His greatness in the act of drinking the poison and thereby saving the world of souls.³¹

4.2.5 *Ornaments, dress, etc.*

Sambandhar's hymns are replete with descriptions of the ornaments, flowers, garlands, dress, weapons, flag, vehicle, etc., attributed to Śiva (*vide* Table on p. 160). They are all symbols, held sacred and as representing certain deeper aspects of Śiva. Cēkkiḷār calls them '*aṭaiyāḷaṅkal*' (symbols).

The term which Mircea Eliade uses to denote the Ultimate is the "Sacred". It connotes the Real or the Meaningful. According to Eliade, the "Sacred" manifests itself in the Profane by means of an hierophany. An hierophany is any object or event which embodies something of the Sacred for those who apprehend it. There are various kinds of hierophanies. The kratophany is a manifestation of Power which is one aspect of the Sacred. The theophany is a divine form, embodying some aspects of divinity in particular dress.

Eliade assigns six functions to every religious symbol. (i) The religious symbol reveals the Sacred World — that world of *illo-*

tempore or mythic time, not ordinarily known in everyday experience. (ii) It reveals Reality as Reality embodied in the Sacred. (iii) A religious symbol is multivalent, for it expresses a diversity of meanings whose relationship or continuity may not ordinarily be evident. (iv) The symbol articulates a whole and integrates a system whereby the cosmos and all of life may be apprehended. (v) A religious symbol embodies the integration of polarities — it is a *coincidentia oppositorum* which reconciles apparent paradoxes. (vi) The symbol is existentially revelatory — it reflects and classifies the meaning of the human situation in which it is set.

The Sacred has the undefinable, yet pervasive character. Nonetheless, Eliade observes, that man has sought to define or apprehend the Sacred in terms of symbols or images. This may be called the process of imaging.³²

Eliade's observation throws a great deal of light on the significance of various symbols referred to by Sambandhar who calls them '*vēṭaṅkal*'. He also assures, that these symbols, *veṭaṅkal*, will get rid of the effect of *karma* from the souls and also help one to realise what could not be (easily) realised.³³ He also affirms that they are the *ambrosia* (*marundu*) as well as the *mantras* (3.283.1). He further enumerates a number of other benefits. Apart from his own direct narration and descriptions of Śiva's deeds, features, etc., Sambandhar also brings out these matters in the form of questions and answers. He calls these *patikams vinā-urai* (question-answers).³⁴ Some of the *patikams* (such as 2.137, 138, 140, 173) are addressed to Śiva and some (2.172; 3.296) to the tried and trusted devotees. In these *patikams* he asks for the secret of all these characteristic features and acts of grace. In the *patikam* 296 belonging to Kaṇṭiyūr, Sambandhar confesses that he poses the questions out of ignorance (of the real significance of Śiva's acts) such as '*vinavinēṇ aṟiyūmaiyl*', '*aṟikin-rilēn*'. (3.296. 1, 3). This is done to bring out the deeper significance of the symbols.

Sambandhar here uses an effective language-technique to suggest that no explanation will be adequate to unravel the mys-

teries of God's grace.³⁵ God's grace is not governed by any set rules or laws. It is a spontaneous outflow.³⁶

Śiva as Godhead is beyond the reach of thought, word and deed. To attribute these characteristics to Him, it may be argued, may be tantamount to undermine His absoluteness. But the saint describes Him from his personal experience as having the features, deeds and characteristics usually ascribed to Him in the *Purāṇas*. Sambandhar, employs a unique technique by which he reconciles the two apparent inconsistencies. In the *patikam* of Tiruppiramāpuram (2.201) each line is a denial of the characteristics and deeds attributed to Śiva by the *Purāṇas*; e.g., "it would seem that He has not the spear adorned with the stain (of the blood of the enemies) (*kaṇaiyaṇi vēlilar pōlum*); it would seem that He has not even the ring on His ear (*tōṭum cevikkilar pōlum*)."³⁷ Each denial is guarded by the word, '*pōlum*'. It means 'it would seem'. It is here where Sambandhar uses this unique technique. Grammarians explain away this word as '*oppil pōli*', a kind of expletive or refrain. But more is meant than what meets the eye.

Maṛaijñāṇa Dēśikar in his commentary on the *Śivajñāna Siddhiyār* quotes Sambandhar's negation while explaining the verse that Śiva has neither form, nor no-form (*Śivan uru aruvumallan cittiṇōṭu acittumallan*). The explanation here is in terms of the *svarūpa-lakṣaṇa* (transcendence) and the *taṭastha-lakṣaṇa* (immanence) of the Lord. As Godhead (*svarūpa*), i.e., in Himself without relation to the souls and the world, no features or deeds may be attributed to Him. But in relation to the souls and the world (*taṭastha*), they are ascribed to Him. Sambandhar's word '*pōlum*' (it would seem) subtly brings out this great truth. In the words of Devasenapathi, "the denial or doubt about the features and deeds is only to caution us against limiting the Infinite by these. The denial by implication, is a challenge for continuous and comprehensive affirmation."³⁸ In the last verse of the *patikam* Sambandhar confirms this idea. He says that he has sung the ten verses with understanding the diverse ways of all the deeds *not done* by the Lord of Piramāpuram, who is neither of the form

of female nor of the form of male. "All determination is negation" (Spinoza). Language has its inherent inadequacy. Our great seers have overcome this inadequacy of keeping in view both the affirmation and the negation. The *Upaniṣads* use *iti, iti* (this, this) mode as well as *neti, neti* (not this, not this) mode. Sambandhar delineates this in the form of pairs of opposites as follows:

aṇiyanē cēyanē — (One who is near and far away) - 2.151.4

antamum ātiyum — (End as well as the beginning) - 1.39.1

antanīr mutalnīr — (You are the end, you are the first) -
2.138.7

ariyai eḷiyai — (You are difficult, you are easy to obtain) -
2.156.8

arumaiyan eḷimaiyan — (He is difficult, He is easy to obtain) -
1.121.3

āṇalar peṇṇalar — (He is not male, He is not female) - 3.291.9

āṇum peṇṇumāy — (He is male as well as female) - 1.84.5;
3.311.6

iravoṭu pakalatām emmān — (He is my Lord who has become the night as well as day) - 3.261.8

iḷivu ēṇṇamāṇār — (He has become the lowly and great) -
1.11.2

eḷiyai ariyai — (You are easy; you are difficult to obtain) -
2.157.4

cītamum vemmaiymūki - (He has become cool and hot) - 1.39.3

taṇṇiyan veyyan — (He is cool and hot) - 1.61.6

tuyaravan tuyarakarṇum kaḷalavan — (He is the grief as well as one having the ankle (feet) that will dispel grief) - 1.110.5

tuṇṇanumāy inṇanumāy — (He is of agony and of ecstasy) -
2.147.7

tōṇṇam īṇu — (Beginning and end) - 1.51.5

nallar tiyar — (He is good, He is evil) - 3.379.6

nuṇṇiyan mikapperiyan — (He is microcosmic, He is macrocosmic) - 1.61.6

neṭiyāy kuṟiyāy — (You are lofty, you are short) - 2.157.3

periyāy ciṟiyāy — (You are big, you are little) - 2.156.8

pirintanai puṇarntanai — (You have separated yourself; you have mingled with) - 2.166.3

piṟaviṇḍoṭu iṟavumāṇāṇ — (He has become the birth and death) - 1.110.1

puṇattinar akattulaṟ — (He is the outsider, He dwells in the interior) - 3.351.5

virintaṟai kuvintanai — (You have expanded and converged) - 2.166.3

maṇṇinai viṇṇinai — (You are of the earth; you are of the sky) - 2.150.9

viruttanākip pālāṇāki — (You have become an old man; you have become a boy) - 1.52.6

vēṟṟy uṭaṇṇāṇ — (He has become different; yet remains together with) - 1.11.2

Table Showing Different Types of Ornaments Adorning Śiva

Sl. No.	Description	Number of hymns wherein they are referred to
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I. HEAD / EAR

- | | | |
|-------|--|-----|
| (i) | The Gaṅgā river as <i>appu</i> , <i>aruvi</i> , <i>alar</i> , <i>alai</i> , <i>āru</i> , <i>Gaṅgaiyāl</i> , <i>Gaṅgai</i> , <i>calam</i> , <i>tirttam</i> , <i>tirai</i> , <i>nati</i> , <i>puṇal</i> , <i>nīr</i> , <i>vāri</i> , <i>vellam</i> | 502 |
| (ii) | Crescent as <i>ampuli</i> , <i>intu</i> , <i>iravaṇ</i> , <i>uṭupati</i> , <i>elli</i> , <i>śaṣi</i> , <i>cantiraṇ</i> , <i>cōti</i> , <i>cōmaṇ</i> , <i>tiṅkaḷ</i> , <i>niḷā</i> , <i>piṟai</i> , <i>mati</i> , etc. | 629 |
| (iii) | Serpent as <i>aravam</i> , <i>urakam</i> , <i>nāgam</i> , <i>pāmpu</i> , <i>puyaṅkam</i> , <i>māsuṇam</i> , etc. | 170 |

(iv)	Skull as <i>talai</i> , <i>cenni</i> , <i>ciram</i> , etc.	76
(v)	The feather of crane - <i>kokkiṟaku</i>	12
(vi)	Flowers — <i>konṟai</i> , <i>vanṇi</i> , <i>kamalam</i> , <i>mattam</i> , <i>vellerukku</i> , <i>kōṭal</i> , <i>kōṇku</i> , <i>marām</i>	25
(vii)	<i>Ear-rings:</i>	
1.	<i>kuḷai</i>	30
2.	<i>aravak kuḷai</i> (snake as ear-ring)	2
3.	Conch - as ear-ring - <i>caṅkaṇi kuḷai</i>	9
4.	<i>tōṭu</i>	34
5.	Conch as <i>tōṭu</i> (<i>caṅkaveṇ tōṭu</i>)	6
6.	Snake as <i>tōṭu</i> (<i>aravat tōṭu</i>) (1.62.2)	1
7.	<i>tōṭu</i> & <i>kuḷai</i> (both)	10
8.	<i>kuṇṭalam</i>	2
(viii)	Matted locks - <i>caṭai</i>	827

II. NECK / CHEST

(i)	Garland of <i>akku</i> - a kind of <i>rudrākṣa</i> ;	16
	Garland of snakes	15
(ii)	Snakes as ornaments of chest	234
(iii)	Garland of tortoise shells (<i>āmai ṭōṭu</i>)	41
(iv)	Garland of <i>kaṇṭi</i>	1
(v)	<i>tāl vaṭam</i>	1
(vi)	Ornaments of bones of the dead	35
(vii)	The teeth of boars - <i>ēnattu eyiṟu</i>	31
(viii)	Garland of skulls (<i>talai mālai</i>)	16
(ix)	The Holy ash: <i>nīṟu</i> , <i>suṭalaip poṭi</i> , <i>veṇpoṭi</i> , <i>sāntam</i> , etc.	238
(x)	<i>Garland of flowers:</i>	
1.	Garland of <i>konṟai</i>	93
2.	„ of lotus (<i>kamalam</i>)	1
3.	„ of <i>kūviḷam</i> (the <i>Crataeva religiosa</i>)	5
4.	„ of <i>kōṇkam</i> (the <i>Bombax gorrupinum</i>)	1
5.	„ of <i>kōṭal</i> (the white species of the <i>Gloriosa</i> flower)	1

Sl. No.	Description	Number of hymns wherein they are referred to
6.	Garland of <i>umattam</i> (<i>datura</i>)	2
7.	„ of <i>mara</i> (<i>Engenia race mosa</i>)	1
8.	„ of <i>vanni</i> (<i>Propolis Spicijera</i>)	2
9.	„ of <i>ve[lerukku]</i> (A white species of <i>calotropis gigantea</i>)	1

III. WAIST

(i)	Belt of <i>rudrākṣa</i> (<i>akku</i>)	15
(ii)	Belt of snake	127
(iii)	Colourful clothes, stitched waist clothes - <i>vaṇṇa āṭai, tuṇṇa vaṇṇa āṭai</i>	11
(iv)	<i>kaccu</i> - (a waist robe)	3
(v)	Snake used as <i>kaccu</i>	10
(vi)	Loin cloth (<i>kōvaṇam</i>)	68
(vii)	Snake used as belt over <i>kōvaṇam</i>	7
(viii)	Cloth made of tiger's skin	94
(ix)	Cloth made of lion's skin	2
(x)	Snake as belt tied over tiger's skin	13
(xi)	Cloth made of deer's skin	23
(xii)	<i>mēkalai</i> - a kind of ornamental belt made of pearls	3
(xiii)	Sword tied to the waistrobe	1

IV. HAND

(i)	A string of <i>rudrākṣa</i> (<i>akku mālai</i>)	1
(ii)	Fire - <i>aṅki, anal, aṭal, eri, kaṇaḷ, taḷal</i> (left hand - 373.9)	101
(iii)	<i>kaṇkaṇam</i> - a kind of bangle	1
(iv)	<i>kallavaṭam</i>	3
(v)	<i>koṭu koṭṭi</i>	2

(vi)	<i>ḍamarukam</i> (a small drum)	3
(vii)	<i>cirantai</i> - a drum	1
(viii)	<i>cutti</i> - a weapon	3
(ix)	<i>cīlam</i> - trident (<i>taṇṭu</i>)	2
(x)	<i>kaṅkālam</i> - a club made of bones	2
(xi)	Skull - <i>ōṭu</i> , <i>kapālam</i> , <i>ciram</i> , <i>cenni</i> , <i>talai</i> , etc.	102
(xii)	<i>parasu</i> , <i>maḷu</i> - an axe	6
(xiii)	<i>paṛai</i> - a drum	1
(xiv)	<i>pūsam</i> - rope	2
(xv)	<i>pāmpu</i> , <i>nākam</i> , <i>paṇi</i> (serpent)	22
(xvi)	<i>bēri</i> - a drum	1
(xvii)	<i>paḱkaṇam</i> - another drum	1
(xviii)	<i>māṇ</i> , <i>maṛi</i> , <i>kaṇṇu</i> , <i>piṇai</i> , <i>uṭai</i> , <i>iralai</i> , <i>kalai</i> (deer)	87
(xix)	<i>yāl</i> - (a lute)	2
(xx)	<i>viṇai</i> - another lute	16
(xxi)	<i>vēl</i> - a spear	2
(xxii)	Flag - with the mark of bull - <i>iṭṭapam</i> , <i>ēṇu</i> , <i>cē</i> , <i>peṇṇam</i> , <i>viṭai</i>	69

V. FEET

Anklets

(i)	<i>kaḷal</i>	52
(ii)	snake as <i>kaḷal</i>	5
(iii)	<i>silampu</i>	23
(iv)	<i>kaḷal</i> and <i>silampu</i> - both	17
(v)	<i>kiṇkiṇi</i>	1

4.3 *Temple worship — its significance and role*

If mythology is the great store-house of stories and symbols representing the great and deep truths of religion and metaphysics, the stories and motifs themselves have come to be represented in art, sculpture, iconography, etc. They have become objects of worship both personal and public. The places wherein they have been installed have become the places of worship - the

temples. The object of worship and the place of worship have assumed wider and deeper significance. To visit these places and worship the icons installed therein have become an article of faith and the veritable way of religious life of the people. The phrase — *mūrtti, talam, tīrttam* (the icon, place of worship and the holy tank) — speaks volumes for this great precept and practice of the religion of the people. The *Āgamas* have come to play a vital role in systematising temple worship. As temple worship is also collective worship, the entire community has got itself deeply involved in the conduct of the affairs of temples. In the course of time, temples have become the life-centres not only of religious affairs but also of the socio-economic activities of the community at large.

The ancient Tamils, as depicted by the *Caṅkam* literature, worshipped God in the ecological background of nature. As cited already (chapter 3. sec. 2), the *Tirumurukāṟṟuppaṭai* enumerates the nature-spots as the abode of Muruga — the ancient God of the Tamils.³⁹ The *Paṭṭiṇappālai* presents the picture of a small shrine wherein was installed a stemlike structure, representing the deity, *kaṇṭuṭaippotiṭṭil*,⁴⁰ reminding one of a *liṅga*. We also learn that arrangement was made to burn a perpetual, unfailing lamp — *nantāvilakku* — in that shrine. Similarly reference is found in the *Malaipaṭukaṭām* to the abode of God who swallowed the dark venom (Śiva) — *Kāriuṇṇik kaṭavu!* (line 83). The *Maturaikkāṇṇi* describes a festival in which offering is made to the gods headed by the lofty One wielding the axe — *maṭuvāḷ neṭṭiyōṇ* — Śiva.⁴¹ There is another reference in the same poem to a seven day festival at the end of which there is a great bathe. It is meant for purification, and the general public thronged there to have a holy bathe. The *ōṇam* day was celebrated as the birthday of Māyōṇ. The *Kalittokai* and the *Paripāṭal* are replete with references to various shrines and festivals. The *Silappatikāram* and the *Maṭimēkalai* (2nd century A.D.) register a progressive trend in the development of temple-culture in the cities and towns of the Tamil country. But neither the *Caṅkam* classics, nor the twin epics use the word '*kōyil*' or '*kōvil*' to denote a temple. The former

uses the word *nakar*,⁴² while the latter uses the word *kōṭṭam*. By '*kōyil*' it was originally meant only the palace of a king. The *Tirukkural* (*vāṇ-cirappu*) refers to gods and the celestial beings and also to the daily worship and periodical festivals. But strangely, it is silent about the temples. Nor do the other works of the eighteen classics (*Patinēṅkīlkkāṇakku*) make any reference to temples. Kāraikkālammaiṃyār, Tirumūlar and the first three Ālvārs are taken to belong to the period preceding the advent of the great Pallavas of Simhavishnu line. But we do not find any reference in Kāraikkālammaiṃyār's work to the usage of the word *kōyil* to denote the temple. Perhaps the word has come to mean the temple from the time of Tirumūlar (v. 500) and Poykaiṃyār.⁴³ Similarly the word *taḷi* which originally meant a palace is later on had come to mean a temple.

By the time of Tirumūlar, temple worship in the Tamil country had become more complex and advanced, thanks to the advent of the *Āgamas* and various Tantric lores. K. Sivaraman says:

Tirumular's Tirumandiram is the earliest exposition of Śaiva Siddhānta in its metaphysical, moral and mystical aspects, and the work describes itself as an *āgama*. Tirumular also was aware of the affinities and differences between Vedānta and Siddhānta as may be seen from his interpretation of *mahāvākyas*... Tirumular shows acquaintance with Tantricisim of different shades and also with innumerable sects and schools of Śaivism...⁴⁴

Even before Tirumūlar, temple worship has become widespread. Many temples had come into being. Kōccēṅkaṇān, a Cōḷa monarch, is said to have built many temples. Tirumaṅkai Ālvār, the Vaiṣṇavite saint, states in his hymns on Tirunaraiyūr that this Cōḷa has built seventy temples to *Īśa* (Śiva) who has eight shoulders.⁴⁵ He has also built a temple for Viṣṇu at Tirunaraiyūr. Sambandhar also attributes the construction of many Śiva - temples to Kōccēṅkaṇān.⁴⁶ These temples were built on high basements with a flight of steps leading to the sanctum on the style of "*māṭamāḷikai*". These were therefore called "*māṭakkōyil*". As compared with the old puny temples of small

stature, these were huge and big.⁴⁷ Before the advent of the Pallavas, Kōcceṇkaṇāṇ must have been a great builder of temples. The hymns also refer to '*perum kōyil*',⁴⁸ *tūṅkāṇai māṭam*, *ilaṅkōyil*, *karak kōyil*, *kokuṭikkōyil*, *ñāḷal kōyil*, *maṇikkōyil*, *ālakkōyil*, etc.⁴⁹ All these temples must have been built with brick (*cuṭumaṇ*), wood and mortar. The Pallava king Māhendra I was the first to claim to have built the temples without bricks, without timber, without metals and without mortar.⁵⁰ Cave temples developed during his reign. From his time onwards started the building of temples in rocks, probably after the old features in ancient temples built by Kōcceṇkaṇāṇ and others.

First starting with the *karuvaṇai* or *garbhagr̥ha* or sanctum sanctorum adorned with a '*vimāna*' or dome, for worshipping the presiding deity in the centre, the temple began to grow in ever enlarging circles, from age to age, with *naṭumaṇṭapa*, the central hall in front, with the construction of compound walls, thus giving place for enclosing with a certain amount of vacant space within the compound. Gradually there developed within the compound, the *cuṟṟālai* or a pillared corridor accommodating therein the shrine of other deities, like those of Caṇḍeśvara, Gaṇeśa, Subrahmaṇya, and so on. Still later, gateways were opened on the four points of the compass with small *gopurams* or towers raised on their tops. These *gopurams* gradually dwarfed the *vimānas* and grew to gigantic heights. Tanks were built and more and more *prakāras* or compounds with *māḷikais* and *maṭams* (monasteries) were built, with artistic workmanship. There, the *purāṇas* — the mythological stories — were expounded. Colleges and libraries were formed. Later on, separate shrines for the divine Mother were built up.

The temples came to occupy a significant place in the minds of the people, and in the social, political, cultural, religious, artistic and educational life of the land. The architect, the sculptor, the painter, the dancer, the musician, the philosopher, the religious man, the mythologist, the administrator, the humanist, and the poet found their vocations there. Halls with many pillars, sometimes in memory of saints such as *Ciṟuttoṇṭanambi maṇṭapam*⁵¹ were

built. Apart from other activities, election to the local self-governing assemblies and committees took place in these halls. Public documents and grants were preserved by being inscribed on the temple walls. On account of these complex activities, temple administration became a matter of state concern. We hear from the inscriptions about the temple assemblies of *māhēśvaras*, *srikāryam ceyvōr*, *kōyil kaṇapperumakkal*, *pātamūlattār*, etc. Tax-free lands (*dēvadānas*), some times in the form of whole villages, were granted to the temples, for the maintenance of families connected with temple services and for feeding the pilgrims. A compulsory contribution of grain known as '*magammai*' or '*magamai*' for a temple or a feeding house was made. Regarding the economic activities of the temples of the Pallava age, C. Minakshi says:

The functions discharged by the temple were of a varied nature. As one of the biggest land owners in the locality it looked after the interests of the agriculture in the area. It cultivated lands, extended cultivation to uncultivated areas (A.R. 258 of 1919) and for the rehabilitation of dilapidated villages. As a consumer it purchased different articles for various services connected with the worship in the temple ...

The temple encouraged rural industries like weaving by granting to the families of weavers lands round the temple precincts.... the temples during the later Pallava days were functioning as a substantial economic institution to which the villages could turn for help at times of famine, floods or economic depression.⁵²

The hymns of Sambandhar were sung in relation to hundreds of temples in the villages, towns and cities throughout the length and breadth of the Tamil country. According to his work now extant, he must have visited 228 temples where he has sung 384 *patikams* in all. They brought eminence and prominence to these temples because of their philosophical, devotional, musical and poetic excellence, and because of the personality and popularity of Sambandhar. The *tirukkāṭaikkūppu* verses of the *patikams* bring out this truth. Moreover, the beautiful descriptions of landscape in every village sung by the hymnists made the local

people take a pride in their native villages and cherish the temples as well as the associated musical hymns. The role the hymns played in the development and spread of temple culture is in no small measure.

With the development of temples, grew the cult of pilgrimage to temples. People reverentially made strings of holy places of pilgrimage — the *Kṣēttirakkōvai*. These strings (lists) took the form of songs sung in honour of the Lord of the temple. The earliest known literary list of temples is sung by a Pallava king, Aiyāṭikaḷ Kāṭavarkōṇ by name. He must have lived before Sindhavishnu, the father of Mahendra I. The work entitled as the '*Kṣēttirat-tiruveṇṇpā*' consists of twentyfour verses. Each verse mentions the name of one place of pilgrimage. But in the verses (10) and (23), no names are given. Thus twentytwo holy places are enlisted.⁵³ This tradition continues over the succeeding centuries. Sambandhar too has sung one *Tirukṣēttirakkōvai*. We have similar lists of Appar, i.e., the *Kṣēttirakkōvait tiruttāṇṭakam* and the *Aṭaiyut-tiruttāṇṭakam* while, Sundarar also has sung the *Ūrttokai*, *Nāṭṭuttokai* and *Iṭaiyāṇṭuttokai*. These literary lists of the three hymnists show the growth of temples and that of the cult of pilgrimage.

In Sambandhar's *Tirukṣēttirakkōvai*, names of 104 holy places are clearly given. But in the third verse apart from the *aṭṭaviraṭṭāṇams* which can be identified, and one Pācūr, other names are not given individually but only in groups such as *kā anaittum* (all the names ending with *kā*, *turai eṭṭu* (8); *kāṭu onpatu* (3); *kuḷam mūṇṇu* (3); *kaḷam aintu* (5); *pāṭṭi nāṇku* (4); and *pāḷi mūṇṇu* (3). Moreover, totally five lines are missing in three verses. Though all these places could not be easily identified, yet with the help of the lists given by the other two hymnists, many of them are sought to be identified.

The list of 193 names given by Appar who survived Sambandhar refers to 58 names which are not found in Sambandhar's list. Some of them must have come into being after Sambandhar. Sundarar also refers to seven names which are not found in the

lists of Sambandhar and of Appar. These lists thus show the progressive development and growth of temples in that limited period and also speak of the rich contribution made by the hymnists for the growth.

As Sambandhar and others sung and popularised their hymns in the respective temples, the practice of singing hymns in temples has become regular and indispensable part of temple worship. The *Kāmikāgama* which governs most of the temples in South India lays down that the hymns in Tamil should be sung immediately after the daily worship in every temple.⁵⁴ This practice came to be called, '*tiruppatiyam viṇṇappittal*'. By the 8th century, this practice had become fully established in the Tamil country as is made clear by an inscription of the great Nandivarman Pallavamalla which refers to this usage.⁵⁵ In the Cōḷa period this practice was not only continued but elaborate arrangements were made for singing the hymns at the temple and provisions were made for those who were employed to sing. Even special halls, such as '*tirukkaik koṭṭi*' were built.

To conclude this section, the significance of temple worship could be explained as follows: According to Sambandhar *bhakti* or loving devotion is the finer and emotional or aesthetic side of *jñāna*. The highest form of *bhakti*, through worship, aims not only at individual salvation but universal salvation also. Temple worship is the most suitable medium through which this aim or ideal could be most perfectly realised. The love or devotion demands the wilful surrender, and sublimation of all individual aspirations, desires and aims, in order to realise the unitive, unifying and universal consciousness. That is why we find the temples being the store-house of all that stands for the highest representation of aesthetic and artistic values. Incidentally, as the temples assumed a dominant role in the society, thanks to the hymnists, who popularised temple worship, they had become the centres of socio-economic life of the people. In spite of the onslaught of the modern socio-economic values and transformation, the people in our villages and towns even to-day continue to be beholden to temples for their cultural, aesthetic and religious values. Thus

we find the religions of the Nāyanmārs and Ālvārs existing with all their vivacity in temples and life of the contemporary people.

List of the Names of Temples,
Not Mentioned in Sambandhar's *Tirukṣēttirakkōvai*,
But Found in the Lists of Appar and Nambi Ārūrar

I. Appar's list

- | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Kollikkulīraipaḷḷi | 30. Maṇṇippaṭikkarai |
| 2. Murugaṇpūṇḍi | 31. Mantāram |
| 3. Cattimurram | 32. Viḷattoṭṭi |
| 4. Pērūr | 33. Virāṭapuram |
| 5. Pērāvur | 34. Pirampil |
| 6. Peruntuṟai | 35. Kaṇṇai |
| 7. Kāmpili | 36. Kārai |
| 8. Piṭavur | 37. Veṅkūr |
| 9. Kuṟukkaivīraṭṭam | 38. Uruttirakōṭṭi |
| 10. Iṭavai | 39. Potiyilmalai |
| 11. Inṇampar | 40. Tañcai |
| 12. Ēmappērūr | 41. Vaḷuvūr |
| 13. Caṭaimuṭi | 42. Māṭālam |
| 14. Cālaikkūṭi | 43. Veñcamākkūṭai |
| 15. Takkalūr | 44. Viviccaram |
| 16. Talaiyālaṅkāṭu | 45. Kañcāru |
| 17. Talaiccaṅkāṭu | 46. Pañcākkai |
| 18. Ecciliḷamar | 47. Tiṇṭiccaram |
| 19. Ēmanallūr | 48. Koṇṭiccaram |
| 20. Iṟaiyāṇcēri | 49. Kuḷaiyūr |
| 21. Aḷappūr | 50. Kumari |
| 22. Aḷuntūr* | 51. Koṅku |
| 23. Añcaikkaḷam | 52. Asōkanti |
| 24. Koṅkaṇam | 53. Cūlamaṅgai |
| 25. Niyamaṇallūr | 54. Sōmēccaram |
| 26. Eḷumūr | 55. Ūṟrattūr |
| 27. Ēlūr | 56. Kaṟaiyūr |
| 28. Tōlūr | 57. Kaṇṇāppūr |
| 29. Ēmakūṭam | 58. Pulivalam |

*but, there is Sambandhar's *patikam* on this temple.

II. Nambi Ārūrar's list

- | | |
|--------------|-----------------|
| 1. Koḷunal | 5. Kurakkuttaḷi |
| 2. Cuḷiyal | 6. Nāṅkūr |
| 3. Cōpuram | 7. Tēṅkūr |
| 4. Kārikarai | |

4.4 *Worship — the essence of religion*

It is said that while the salvation of the soul is the end of religion, the discovery of truth is the object of philosophy. For mystics like Sambandhar, both the ends are but the two sides of the same coin. The salvation of the souls consists not in mere disembodiment or in the attainment of the heavenly pleasures, but in the highest state of realisation of Truth which is God. Such a realisation could be attained through constant and loving devotion or *bhakti*. Worship is the essence of such loving devotion. Cēkkiḷār gives a meaningful phrase to describe *bhakti* and worship — 'worship through love with pointed devotion', (*kūḷum anpinil kumpiṭal*).⁵⁶ This devotion, though essentially individualistic, had been evolved into a social phenomena, thanks to the spread of temple worship which is the basis of collective worship. The *Āgamas* systematised both individual and collective worship in temples.

Before going into details, we should examine what is meant by worship. It could be broadly said that worship consists of acts, both mental and physical, which help one to express as well as to experience metaphysical and religious truths. The acts are called rituals. John Woodroffe says:

Ritual is an art, the art of religion. Art is the outward material expression of ideas intellectually held and emotionally felt. Ritual art is concerned with the expression of these ideas and feeling which are specially called religious. It is a mode by which religious truth is presented and made intelligible in material forms and symbol to the mind. It appeals to all natures passionately sensible of that Beauty in which, to some, God most manifests Himself. But it is more than this. For it is the means by

which the mind is transformed and purified. In particular according to Indian Principles it is the instrument whereby the consciousness of the worshipper (*Sadhaka*) is *shaped* in actual fact into forms of experience which embody the truths which scriptures teach us.⁵⁷

He continues:

“The ultimate object of the ritual — that is, the realisation of God — is effected by the transformation of the worshipper into likeness with the worshipped.”⁵⁸

That is the efficacy of worship and rituals. As pointed out earlier (chapter 3. sec. 3.3) the *Āgamas* chalk out a fourfold path of spiritual progress. They are the *caryā*, *kriyā*, *yoga* and *jñāna*. By the time of Sambandhar, the practice of the fourfold path became well established in this part of the country. We find innumerable references to them in the hymns. They are generally known as *toḷil* (manual worship)⁵⁹ or *toṇṭu* (service).⁶⁰

Regarding the *caryā* path, apart from the clear mention of the term, ‘*cariyāittoḷil*’ (3.339.7), there are several descriptions about it such as the following:

“We — the servants (*aṭiyārs*) shall lay groves, dig many a pond (around the temple), pluck the flowers (from the gardens) and glorify His flowery feet with our hearts ripe with love.”⁶¹

The *kriyā* path is well described in 1.21.4: “The servants (of Cirapuram) everyday worship (the Lord) with deep meditation, offering the fragrant sandal-paste, unblossomed bright flower-buds, the smoke of Aquila, flowers, high lamps and pot-full of pure water as oblations.”⁶² The Lord will grant them the *sāmīpya* which is the status of being close to the Lord at His abode. The Lord has the disposition to allow them to come near His blemishless feet (*kuṟaivilā patamaṇaitara aruḷ guṇamuṭai iṟai*).

Similarly the *Yoga* path is highlighted in the next verse: “The *aṭiyārs* practise the holding of breath (*prāṇāyāma*) so as to smash the mischief of the six inimical evil conducts like anger

and the dominating senses. With a finer sense so acquried, they constantly experience (*dhyāna*) the supreme Principle which is seated on the (thousand petaled lotus) flower.”⁶³ The supreme Lord will grant them His own beautiful image (*sārūpya*) (*tanatu eḷiluru kaṭuvaṭaitaku paran*).

The next verse of the same *patikam* deals with the *jñāna* path which will bring *jñāna* or *sāyujya*: “The Lord Ara—Śiva—intends to allow to reach His feet (*sāyujya—jñāna*) those who strive to perform hard penance after the deep and doubt-free study of many arts like the scripture and after having trod on the righteous path so as to be praised by the world.”⁶⁴

Apart from the fourfold path, Sambandhar’s *āḷalneri* (the path of dance), *pāḷalneri* (the path of song) and the *vēḷaneṇi* (the cult of the *aṭiyārs*) have been already extensively dealt with (chapter 3. sec. 3.3). The path of singing Sambandhar’s *patikam* (the *patikappperuvali*) has also been treated in depth. Some general patterns or modes of worship as depicted in his hymns are observed and listed:

(i) *Offering of flowers and water*

“Thinking deeply of Him who besmears the sacred ash on His person, the servants carry the flowers and water, and are capable of saluting His feet with their hands.”⁶⁵ Ākkūr (is the holy place) where His servants everyday carry the flower and water (to be offered) to His golden feet.⁶⁶

(ii) *Offering of flowers*

“They will worship (Him) day and night, without any deceit offering beautiful and fresh flowers.”⁶⁷

(iii) *Offering of water*

“The *aṭiyārs* carry the cool water in a pot and bathe (Him)” — *kuṭaṇ koṇṭaṭiyār kuḷirṇir cumantāḷḷa* — 1.32.2; 3.315.5

(iv) *Offering of garland*

“Kēṭāram is a place where the servants, after controlling the five elephants of the senses, worship (the Lord) by making gar-

lands with flowers that are swarmed by bees.”⁶⁸ “They (the servants) will adorn (His) feet with garland made of golden flowers” (*ponmalarkaḷ koṇṭu, kaḷalin̄misai iṇṭaiṇaiṇvār* — 3.351.6)

(v) *Offering of sandal-paste, incense, etc.*

“Kaḷumalam is the place where the maidens daily worship the image of the Lord by holding in their hands golden flowers, water, the fragrant smoke and the sandal paste.”⁶⁹ “Naḷḷāṇu is the place where Naḷa daily worships (the Lord) by holding the flourishing *dīpa* (light) and by sprinkling the pure flowers.”⁷⁰

(vi) *The ceremonial bath of the Lord in milk, etc. (abhiṣeka)*

“The *aṭiyārs* glorify the Lord by bathing Him with milks fragrant ghee and fruits according to the norms of the scriptures (*āgama*), and adorn Him with fragrant garland.”⁷¹ “The Lord of Aiyāṇu has the crest which is bathed with honey, milk, curd, the sweet water of the tender coconut, the pure juice of the sugarcane and the five products of cow.”⁷² (The five products of the cow are the milk, curd, ghee, the cowdung and urine.)

(vii) *Performance of arcana*

When the celestials descend to the earth, pray to and praise Him by offering incense and *dīpa* (lamps) in many a dawn and dusk, and perform the *arcana* (a kind of worship by chanting the names of the Lord and offering oblations) the beautiful One is very much pleased.⁷³

(viii) *Chanting the mantras, etc.*

“They (the *aṭiyārs*) worship Him with fresh flowers and chant the *ṛk mantras* with concentration of mind.”⁷⁴ “The servants who are rooted in service to the Lord say the prayer, (*stotras*).”⁷⁵

(ix) *Telling the beads*

“They (the *aṭiyārs*), melting in ever-increasing love, think of Him and tell the beads of *rudrākṣa* with their beautiful hands.”⁷⁶

(x) *Smearing the body with the sacred ash (nīru)*

"The *aṭiyārs* bathe themselves in the sacred ash which is properly prepared out of the dung of the sacred cow" (*āṇmuraiyāl āṇṇa veṇṇīṇṇāṭi* — 1.49.3). "Many servants smearing their bodies with the ash gather at the dawn and worship His feet intensively."⁷⁷

(xi) *Bathing in the holy water*

"Valaṇṇuḷi is the holy place which will remove the hardship of those who, after offering flowers, dip and dive into the waters of the Ponni (Kāviri) where the holy waters reach and flow."⁷⁸

(xii) *Singing and dancing in groups*

The *aṭiyārs* worship and meditate upon the Lord by means of music (*isaiyāl vaḷipāṭu ceytu unṇinār* — 3.306.7); and they sing as a group (*kaṇaṇkaḷ pāṭavum* — 2.239.3). "The *aṭiyārs* as a family gather at the temple and worship His feet by verily singing the *gītas* — a kind of musical composition (*gītattai mikappāḷum aṭiyārkaḷ kuṭiyāṇṇap pātattait toḷa* — 2.179.5). "Night and day they cherish the music and dance in their mind and rise up (in the morning) deeply thinking about the Lord" (*maṇattakattōr pāṭalāḷal pēṇiyirāppakalum niṇaintu eḷuvār* — 1.52.2). Sambandhar uses the term "dancers and singers" (*niruttar gītar* — 1.52.5) to denote the worshippers. The *aṭiyārs* who dance and sing music do their worship with their minds ever uniting with the Lord (*nātattōṭisai pāṭumaṭiyārkaḷ, naṇṇiya maṇattin vaḷipāṭucey* — 2.169.2). "At Vēdavaṇam along with the damsels who are enraptured by the richness of meaning that spring from the melodious Tamil poems, people from different directions (countries) also participate in the chorus and experience the thrill of music."⁷⁹

We find references to *aṭiyārs* dancing in circular formation (*vaṭṭam cūḷintu* — 2.228.1 and 2.253.8) and also about some plays (*kūttu*) called *cokkam* (3.267.9) and *kuṇalai* (2.245.2).

Another gratifying feature is that women also participate in the worship. In Āvūr, during a festival, the damsels whose slender waists resemble the creepers, mount on the stage and sing in

praise of the Lord together with men (1.8.9, 1.8.6, 2.232.3). In one hymn it is said that the women who are qualified to perform the marriage ritual, do so, desiring to give the maidens in marriage to men of their choice (3.336.7).

It is interesting to note that women even convert their pastime into prayer. At Kaḷumalam in the houses of brahmins who have a helping hand and who cherish the three types of sacred fire, the dark and large eyed damsels sing in praise of the virtues of God while they play the singing games of ball and *ammāṇai*.⁸⁰

References to the celebration of various festivals are found in the hymns. At Kapāliccaram of Mayilai, the festival of feeding the *uruttirappalkaṇattār*, *ōṇaviḷā* during the month of *aippasi*, lighting the lamps (*viḷakkīṭu*) during *kārttikai* day, *ārtirai* festival in the month of Margali, *pūsam* festival in the month of *tai*, sea-bath in the month of *māsi*, *uttiram* festival in *paṅkuni*, the festival on the *aṭṭami* (eighth day) in honour of the eighteen *Śivagaṇas*, the festival of the golden swing (*poṟṟāppu*) and the festival of purification — *peruñcānti* were celebrated (2.183-1-10). Reference to the great bath on the day of *pūsam* star in the month of *tai* is mentioned in 1.32.5 and 2.192.5. Car festival must have been in vogue (1.71.5 and 1.27.1).

Singing and dancing and other worships were performed to the accompaniment of instruments like *paṟai*, *caṅku* (conch), *muḷavu*, *vīṇai*, *montai*, *tāḷam* (cymbal), *takuṇiccam*, *tuntubi...kuḷal*, *yāḷ*, *maṇi*, *murasu*, etc.

(xiii) *Chanting the name of the Lord*

At Puttūr, the earthly gods (the brahmins) daily chant the name of the Lord with the fourfold *Vedas* and flowers and water.⁸¹ Those who observe austerities, hail and praise the name of the Lord by all means and at all temples (*kōyilenkum nānā vitattāl vīratikaṇaṇ nāmamē yēttivāḷṭta* — 2.208.7). "He is the Lord whose hundred thousand names the celestials chant and worship."⁸²

Hitherto different modes of collective worship have been referred to. However, references to individual worship reinforced with supreme wisdom (*jñāna*) are not a few as noted below:

The Lord has the feet worshipped (by the seers) with the finest wisdom (*Śiva jñānam*) (*nuṇṇarivāl valipāṭu ceyyum kāluṭaiyān* — 1.5.4). "The brahmins (*antaṇālar*) whose consciousness is filled with divinity adore (His) feet with wisdom."⁸³

Now, turning to the nature and state of the worshippers, many vivid descriptions are found in the hymns. The sentiment of love is so delicate and sensitive that it cannot brook even a minute's separation. The very thought of separation will make the lover or love break down into sobs and cry. Perhaps the intensity of love becomes more felt and pronounced during separation. That is why sometimes we find the mystics in crying mood. Māṇikkavācakar affirms that one is sure to obtain God's grace by crying out for Him (*aṭutāl uṇṇaiṭṭeṭalāmē*).⁸⁴ That state of mind is most conducive to get one nearer to God. The virtuous *tonṭars* of Viḷimilalai could afford to make such a cry (to unite with God). "They could fall at His feet; rise, and, by singing and dancing, could worship Him."⁸⁵ "They worship the Lord at the appropriate time, chant the devotional songs, sing His praise, cry and laugh for Him. That is how they love the Lord."⁸⁶

That does not mean that their emotions are only raw; for they are the people of wisdom. Their minds are compared to the glow of a lamp (*dīpamanattār* — 1.86.8). They are always pointed towards the centre — God (Hence *ēkamanattār* — 1.86.8). "After casting away the falsehood and agony of illusion they have become men of truth and perfection."⁸⁷

A phrase, "*pattar cittar*" is frequently mentioned in the hymns.⁸⁸ *Pattar* may be taken to mean those who strive hard to reach the ideal of *bhakti*, while *cittar* may mean those who have reached their goal.⁸⁹ *Tonṭar*,⁹⁰ *paḷaiyaṭonṭar*,⁹¹ *aṭiyār*,⁹² *ciṭṭonṭar*,⁹³ *antaṇālar*,⁹⁴ *orukkum maṇṭattanṭar*,⁹⁵ *uruttirar* or *uruttirappal kaṇattar*,⁹⁶ *ālāṇār*,⁹⁷ *tavattar*,⁹⁸ *viratikāl*,⁹⁹ *niruttagītar*,¹⁰⁰ *pittar*,¹⁰¹ *cittar-kal*,¹⁰² *toḷilinar*,¹⁰³ *ciṭṭappaṭṭār*,¹⁰⁴ etc., are some of the other terms often used in the hymns to denote the servants of God.

NOTES

1. S. Radhakrishnan, *The Reign of Religion in Contemporary Philosophy*, Macmillan and Co., Limited, London, 1920, p. 5

2. C. Kerenyi, *Essays on a Science of Mythology*, "Prolegomena", Trans. R.F.C. Hull, Bollingen Series XXII, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1969, p. 3

3. Cf., Fred W. Clothy, Mircea Eliade, "Man's Imaging of the Sacred", *Indian Philosophical Annual*, Vol. VII, University of Madras, Madras, 1971, p. 149

4. *Myth and Ritual in Christianity*

5. "Prolegomena", *Essays on a Science of Mythology* p. 4

He also quotes Bronislaw Malinowski, who did field work on mythology in the Trobriand Island, from his study entitled, "Myth in Primitive Psychology", and we repeat that quotation in "his scientifically well-weighed words":

The Myth in a primitive society, *i.e.*, in its original form, is not a mere tale told but a reality lived. It is not in the nature of an invention such as we read in our novels today, but living reality, believed to have occurred in primordial times and to be influencing ever afterwards world and destinies of men... These stories are not kept alive by vain curiosity, neither as tales that have been invented nor again as tales that are true. For the natives on the contrary they are the assertion of an original, greater, and more important reality through which the present life, fate and work of mankind are governed ... (*Ibid.*, p. 5)

6. *Ibid.*, II, "The Psychology of the Child Archetype", pp. 71, 74

7. *Ibid.*, p. 2

8. *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5

9. They are as follows: Tiruvatikai, Tiruppariyālūr, Tirukkuṟukkai, Tiruvaḷuvūr, Tiruvīṟkuṭi, Tirukkaṭavūr, Tirukkōvālūr and Tirukkaṇṭiyūr

10. 1.12.5; 3.267.3, 3.296.10

11. ... ஓர் காலனைக்
கடுத்தடிப் புறத்தினா னிறத்துதைத்த காரணம்
எடுத்தெடுத் துரைக்குமாறு வல்லமாகி னல்லமே
— 2.234.2

12. *Tirumantiram*, 342

13. M. A. Dorai Rangaswamy, *op. cit.*, Book I, Vol. I, pp. 353-354

It is worthwhile to quote what Dorai Rangaswamy says about this point:

Of course, it is not open to us to conclude that these saints (Sambandhar and Appar) want us to believe that these feats were performed in the particular places; for they refer to these feats in almost all hymns. The tradition must have grown probably, because of the first or early representation of the episode being made in stucco work before the age of stone sculptures, in the particular temples. Otherwise it is not possible to appreciate the claim of more than one place for one and the same feat as here.

14. 1.20.3; 1.75.10, 3.384.6

15. 2.258.5; 3.376.5

16. 3.267.2; 3.373.7, 3.376.5

17. *Op. cit.*, Book I, Vol. II, pp. 304-305; also see Centinata Aiyar's *Tēvāram Vēlasāram*, pp. 242-250

18. அண்டத்தா லெண்டிக்கு மமைந்தடங்கு மண்டலத்
தாறேவேறே வானாள்வா ரவரவ ரிடமதெலாம்
மண்டிப்போய் வென்றிப்போர் மலைந்தலைந்த

வும்பரு

மாறேலாதார் ...

— 1.126.4

19. 3.323.6; 3.327.2, 3.344.5

20. 1.69.4; 2.225.6

21. 2.223.2; 2.256.2

22. Cf., footnote on 1.20.8, *Dharumapuram* ed. *Tirumurai* I, p. 105

23. *Vēṭṭuvavari*, XII. 11, 54

24. *Tirumantiram*, 329, 330, 331, 332

25. Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, *The Dance of Śhiva*, Sagar Publications, New Delhi, 1968, p. 77

26. *Ibid.*, pp. 76, 77

27. *Ibid.*, p. 67

28. *Tēvāram Vētasāram*, pp. 237, 238

29. *Puṛanāṇūru*, 91

30. உரங்கெடுப்பவனும்பர்க ளாயவர் தங்களைப்
பரங்கெடுப்பவனஞ்சையுண்டு ...

— 2.145.3

31. ... நஞ்சம் உண்ட

உரிமையின் உலகுயிர் அளித்தநின்றன்
பெருமையை நிலத்தவர் பேசின் அல்லால்
அருமையில் அளப்பரி தாயவனே

— 3.261.5

32. Mircea Eliade, "Methodological Remarks on the Study of Religious Symbolism," *History of Religions; Essays in Mythology*, ed. by Mircea Eliade and Joseph Ktaghwa, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1959, pp. 98, 99

33. ... வினையைவீட்டுவ்வன

ஓதியோர்க் கப்படாப் பொருளையோர் விப்பன

— 3.283.2

34. 2.137; 2.138, 3.296

35. An explanatory footnote in the Tiruppanandal edition of the *Tēvāram* says that the nature of grace is indicated in the form of questions.

36. Remember what Sambandhar affirms in the *Tirupppāsu-ram* (*nāṭum tirattārkku aruḷ allatu nāṭṭalāmē*).

37. Recall his first verse commencing with the words "*tōṭu-taiya Ceviyar*". Obviously here Sambandhar is not repudiating his own experience.

38. "It would seem" — (*pōlum*), *Saiva Siddhanta*, Vol. XIV, July - Sept. 1979, Number 3, The Saiva Siddhanta Maha Samajam, Madras, p. iii

39. *Tirumurukāṇṇuppaṭai*, II, 223-226

40. *Paṭṭinappālai*, l. 249

41. ll. 455-459; also see Naccinārkkīyār's commentary on these lines which identify the other gods as Māyōṇ, Murugaṇ, etc.

42. *Puraṇānūru*, 6; *Tirumurukāṟruppaṭai*, l. 244

43. *Mutal Tiruvantāti*, 5

44. *Śaivism in Philosophical Perspective*, p. 31

45. எண்ணோள் ஈசர்க்கு எழில் மாடம் எழுபது செய்து

— *Periyatirumoli*, 6.6.8

46. 3.276.2, 4; 3.277.1-2, 5-9

47. Sambandhar describes them as *māṭakkōyil* as big as the northern mountain — 3.276.10

48. They were 78 at the time of Appar — 6.71.5

49. *Ibid.*; also see 3.378.4

50. Mandakapattu Cave inscription, *S.I.I.* Vol. XII, No. 12

51. M. E. R. 57/1913

52. Dr. C. Minakshi, *Administration and Social Life under Pallavas*, University of Madras, Madras, 1977, fn. p. 159

53.

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| (1) Tillaicciṟrambalam | (13) Uñcēṇai mākālam |
| (2) Teṇkuṭantaikkīlkkōṭṭam | (14) Valai Kuḷam |
| (3) Aiyāru | (15) Pūmpukārc Cāikkāṭu |
| (4) Ārūr | (16) Pāccīṟṟiruvāccirāmam |
| (5) Tirutturutti | (17) Cīrāmalai |
| (6) Tirukkōṭikkā | (18) Maḷapāṭi |
| (7) Tiruviṭaiṇvāy | (19) Teṇtiruvāppaṭi |
| (8) Neṭuñkaḷam | (20) Kacciyēkampam |
| (9) Kuḷittaṇṭalai | (21) Tiruppanantāl tāṭakayic- |
| (10) No name is given | caram |
| (11) Āṇaikkā | (22) Oṟṟiyūr |
| (12) Mayilaittiruppuṇṇaiyaṇ | (23) No name is given |
| -kāṇal | (24) Tirumayāṇam |

54. *tadūrdhvaṁ grantha-bhāṣādyair-gūṇaṁ dhūpāntam-ācaret |*
ūrdhvaṁ drāviḍa-bhāṣaṅgam gūṇaṁ nṛtyayutaṁ tu vā ||

Kūmikōgama, Part I, Dakshinabharatha-Archaka Sangam, Madras, 1977, Chapter IV, *arcanū vidhi*, *śloka* 438

55. *S.I.I.* Vol. III, Part I, 43; see also 423/1908, 624/1909, 129/1914, 349/1918, etc. of Epigraphical Reports of Madras.

56. *Periyapurāṇam*, *Tirukkūṭaccirappu*, 8

57. Sir John Woodroffe, *Sakti and Śākta*, Ganesh & Co., Madras Private Ltd., Madras-17, p. 12

58. *Ibid.*, p. 421. Compare it with what Sambandhar says, "He will transform as Himself those who experience Him" (சேர்வார் தாமே தாமாகச் செய்யுமவன் — 1.126.7)

59. 1.17.4; 1.30.8

60. 1.34.10; 1.35.3

61. காவின்னையிட்டுங் குளம்பல தொட்டுங் கனிமனத்தால்
... இருபொழுதும்

பூவினைக் கொய்து மலரடி போற்றுது நாமடியோம்
— 1.116.2;

also see 1.15.9; 1.33.7, 1.54.1

62. நறைமலிதருமள றொடுமுகைநருமலர் புகைமிகுவள
ரொளி

நிறைபுனல் கொடுதனை நினைவொடு நியதமும்

வழிபடுமடியவர் — 1.21.4

63. சினமலியறுபகை மிகுபொறிசிதைதரு வகைவளி
நிறுவிய

மனனுணர்வொடுமலர் மிசையெழுதருபொரு ணியதமு
முணர்பவர் — 1.21.5

64. சுருதிகள்பலநல முதல்கலைதுகளறு வகைபயில்
வொடுமிகு

உருவியலுலகவை புகழ்தரவழியொழு குமெயுறு
பொறியொழி

அருதவமுயல்பவர் தனதடியடைவகை நினையரன்

— 1.21.6

65. பொடியணி மேனியி னானையுள்கிப்

போதொடு நீர்சுமந் தேத்திமுன்னனின்
றடிகையி னாற்றொழ வல்லதொண்டர் — 1.5.7

66. பொன்னடிக்கே நாடோறும் பூவோடு நீர்சுமக்கும்
தன்னடியார் ... — 2.178.8

also see 1.15.9; 1.16.7, 1.33.7, 1.52.3, 2.169.6, 2.191.3, 2.200.3, 2.200.6

67. கரவின் றிநன்மா மலர்கொண்டு, இரவும் பகலுந்
தொழுவார்கள் — 1.38.1;

also see 1.17.9; 1.34.10, 1.54.1, 1.55.4, 1.61.1

68. தொண்டரஞ்சு களிறும் மடக்கிச் சுரும்பார்மலர்
இண்டைகட்டி வழிபாடு செய்யு மிடம் ... — 2.250.1

69. பொன்னியனறுமலர் புனலொடுதூபஞ்
சாந்தமு மேந்திய கையினராகிக்
கன்னியர் நாடொறும் வேடமே பரவுங்
கழுமலம் ... — 1.79.6

70. வளங்கெழுவு தீபமொடு தூபமலர் தூவி
நளன்கெழுவி நாளும்வழி பாடுசெய்நன் ளாறே
— 2.169.3;

also see 1.57.3; 2.219.4, 2.251.4, 2.257.4, 3.275.9, 3.376.3

71. பாலினா னறுநெய்யாற் பழத்தினாற் பயின்றாட்டி
நூலினான் மணமாலை கொணர்ந்தடியார் புரிந்தேத்த
— 1.61.5

72. தேனெய் பாறயிர் தெங்கிள நீர்கரும் பின்றெளி
ஆனஞ் சாடுமுடி யானுமை யாறுடை யையனே
— 2.142.5;

also see 1.7.4; 1.87.2, 2.182.9

73. ... இமையோர்
வந்துதுதி செய்யவளர் தூபமொடு
தீபமலி வாய்மை யதனால்
அந்தியமர் சந்திபல வர்ச்சனைகள்
செய்யவமர் சின்றவழிகள் — 3.333.1;

also see 1.61.4; 3.338.4

74. நன்று நகு நாண்மலரா னல்லிருக்கு மந்திரங்கொண்
டொன்றிவழி பாடுசெய..... — 1.62.3

It is valuable to note that in a hymn (3.325.1) on Piramā-puram, it is stated that Brahmā worships the Lord's pair of feet by chanting the *Upaṇiṣads* — *Curuticiravurai* — the words of the crest of *Śruti* (*Vedas*), that is, the *Upaṇiṣads*.

75. தொழிலால் மிகுதொண்டர்கள் தோத் திரஞ்சொல்ல
— 1.30.8;

also see 1.42.7; 1.43.6, 1.52.10, 1.73.11, 1.118.2, 2.218.2

76. நெக்கு ளார்வ மிகப்பெரு கிந்நினைந்
தக்கு மாலைகொ டங்கையி லெண்ணுவர் — 3.307.3;
also see 1.65.8 — *akku — rudrākṣa*
77. பொடிகள்பூசிப் பலதொண்டர் கூடிப் புலர்காலையே
அடிகளாரத் தொழுதேத்த ... — 2.254.1;
also see 1.52.7; 1.53.9, 2.187.2, 2.232.6, 2.237.4, 2.250.6
78. தீர்த்த நீர்வந் திழிபுனற் பொன்னியிற் பன்மலர்
வார்த்த நீர்குடை வாரிடர் தீர்க்கும் வலஞ்சுழி — 2.138.9;
also see 1.104.2; 1.121.7, 2.138.6,7; 2.139.2
79. ஊறுபொரு ளின்றிழி மிழியற்கிளவி
தேருமட மாதருடனார்
வேறுதிசை யாடவர்கள் கூறவிசை
தேருமெழில் வேதவனமே. — 3.334.4;
also see 1.38.6; 1.54.5, 2.181.9, 2.197.9, 3.336.4, 3.362.7—9
80. தருந்தடக்கை முத்தழலோர் மனைகள் தொறும்
இறைவனது தன்மைபாடி
கருந்தடங்கண் ணார்கழல்பந் தம்மானைப் பாட்ட
யரும் கழுமலமே — 1.129.2
81. நாவா னாத னாம மோதி நாடோறும்
பூவா னீராற் பூசுரர் போற்றும் புத்தூரே — 2.199.
82. நாமநா றாயிரஞ் சொல்லிவா னோர்தொழுநாதன் ...
— 3.265.5;
also see 3.280.9; 3.307.3, 3.311.7, 3.325.6, 3.378.8
83. தேவார் சிந்தை யந்தணாளர் சீராலடிபோற்ற — 1.72.5;
also see 1.9.8; 1.16.2, 1.17.9, 1.66.10, 1.84.6, 2.153.10
84. *Tiruvācakam, Tiruccatakam*, 90, Swami Chithbhava-
nanda (ed.), Tapovanam Publication, Tiruparaitturai, 1968
85. அழவல் லவரா டியும்பாடி
எழவல் லவரெந் தையடிமேல்
விழவல் லவர்வீ ழிம்மிழலை
தொழவல் லவர்நல் லவர்தொண்டே — 1.35.3
86. தொழுதுபொழுதுதோத்திரங்கள் சொல்லித்துதித்துநின்
றழுதுநக்கு மன்புசெய்வார் — 1.73.11;
also see 2.156.1; 2.188.7, 2.197.4, 3.307.1

87. மெய்யராகிப் பொய்யைநீக்கி வேதனையைத் துறந்து
செய்யரானார் ... — 1.50.4;

also see 1.50.1; 2.167.1, 3.237.4

88. 1.43.10; 1.71.5, 2.170.1, 2.188.6, 2.233.10

89. T. S. Avinasilingam (ed.), *Kalaikkalāñciyam*, Vol. IV,
Tamilvaṭarccikkalākam, I ed., Madras, 1956, p. 643

90. 1.30.8; 1.38.6, 1.44.11, 1.99.2

91. 3.296.4; 3.361.10

92. 1.33.7; 1.37.3,4; 1.52.3, 1.84.1

93. 1.45.7; 1.99.5, 1.103.6

94. 1.72.5

95. 2.172.8

96. 2.173.9; 2.183.1

97. 2.180.8

98. 2.183.2; 2.189.3, 9; 2.192.5, 3.330.6

99. 2.208.7

100. 1.52.6

101. 3.280.9

102. 3.338.2

103. 3.342.6

104. 3.383.6

FIFTH CHAPTER

THE SOCIAL OUTLOOK OF SAMBANDHAR

5.1 *The basis of Sambandhar's social outlook*

To Sambandhar the world is not a non-existent. Even his first hymn which speaks of his God-love proclaims the affirmation of the world in no uncertain terms. In his hymns, the world unfolds itself as a beautiful manifestation of the Absolute. Even poverty (*nalkuravu* — 2.165.7) is a part of this manifestation. Therefore, he displays a positive outlook on the affairs of the world. He bears profound sympathy for the sufferings of his fellow beings and his concern and earnestness are well demonstrated by his service to the society. He goes from place to place not only to worship at the temples, but also to meet people there, so that they could be given proper guidance to lead a noble life and thereby attain valuable spiritual maturity. That is why he chooses to communicate with the people through the language of the people. By birth he is steeped in Vedic lore and Sanskrit studies. *Vētam*, *vētāntam*, *aṅkam*, *curuti*, *curuticiram*, *maṛai*, *kēlvi*, *antaṇar*, *maṛaiyōr* are some of the terms mentioned in as many as 478 hymns. Sambandhar calls himself '*maṛaijñāṇasambandhan*' (Sambandhar who cherishes the *Vedas* — 1.12.11). He is an exponent of the four *Vedas* and six *aṅgas* (3.358.11). He states that he has learnt the four *Vedas* (*nāṇmaṛai karṇavan* — 3.280.11) and that he performs the duty of cherishing the glowing triple fire of the sacrifice (1.131.11). Yet he not only puts Tamil and Sanskrit on an equal footing but also calls himself the custodian of Tamil. That speaks of his love for his fellowmen. He had rendered Tamil and music as the powerful media to spread God-love and thereby love for all. It is interesting to find that he does not run away from the world, but obser-

ves life with keen interest which finds expression in his hymns. From Cēkkiḷār's account it could be understood that Sambandhar played an important role in effecting social reformation. His strong reactions against the Jains and Buddhists also have some bearing on the sociological problems. All acts are God's acts and all beings are under His grace. His universal outlook stems from this philosophy.

5.2 *Sambandhar's contribution to the growth of music*

It is quite appropriate here to recollect the thoughtful words of C. Kerenyi: 'There are times when the greatest "Thoughts" could only have been expressed in music. But in the case the "greatest" is precisely what can be expressed in music and in no other way. So with mythology.' To one who is familiar with the hymns of Sambandhar he will be the most ideal personage who will personify the sense and spirit of the above statement. For, Sambandhar himself states that all his out-pourings are rendered in the highest musical mood or consciousness (*paṇ matiyāl conṇa pāṭal* — 3.360.11). He also vehemently questions whether it is possible to realise and speak of God in the case of those who are merely wellversed in the scriptures without being gifted with the sense and skill of music (*gītam vanta vāymaiyāl kiḷar tarukkinārkkalāl, ōtivanta vāymaiyāl uṇarnturaik kalākumē* — 3.310.7). In fact, it is very often felt and expressed that without a proper music sense it is not easy to fully comprehend the spirit of Sambandhar's hymns. Cēkkiḷār describes him as the incarnation of music which has taken seven generations to attain that perfection in him (*gāṇattin eḷu piṇappu*).² Ārūrar calls him 'nallisai jñāṇasambandhan' (7.67.5) — Jñāṇasambandhan of sweet (divine) music. Sambandhar calls himself Bandhan who is conscious of jñāna steeped in melody (*sanda miku jñāṇamuṇar bandhan* — 2.170.11), Jñāṇasambandhan of music (*isai jñāṇasambandhan* — 3.319.11), Jñāṇasambandhan who worships music (*sandam paravu jñāṇasambandhan* — 1.18.11), Jñāṇasambandhan who renders the Tamil *Vedas* in music (*tamiḷ kiḷavi innisai cey jñāṇasambandhan* — 3.337.11), and so on. That he has rendered his *patikams* in music and sung the same is referred to in many of his hymns; e.g., "the garland of ten verses which Jñāṇasam-

bandhan has composed in his own music" (*jñānasambandhan nalla tannisaiyār conṇamālai pattum* — 1.5.11); "the musical song which Jñānasambandhan has repeated by his own mouth" (*jñānasambandhan vāyṭṭ pannu pāṭal*).³ Even at a tender age, he used to visit temples, being mounted on the shoulders of his father and sing his sacred hymns with music accompanied by the beat of a drum (*iṭupaṇai onṇa attar piyaṁṇēl irundu inṇisaiyāl uraitta paṇuval* — 2.220.11). He also desired that his *patikams* must be rendered in music by others too in the temples. That was also how the people recited his *patikams*, e.g., "those who could sing the ten hymns in sweet music are qualified to be the lords of this large world" (*pattum ētti innisaiyār pāṭavallār irunilattil iṣaṇennum iyalpinarē* — 1.132.11); "for those who sing the garland of ten hymns in *paṇ*, according to their capacity, there is no demerit at all" (*īraintu mālaiyum iyalumṭṭ paṇṇinār pāṭuvārṭṭ killaiyṭṭ pāvamē* — 3.292.11). Above all, Sambandhar is strongly convinced, that he is able to sing his musical songs because of the grace of the Lord (*vēndan aruḷālē viritta pāṭal* — 1.45.12); for, they come out of deep and loving devotion (*pattiyil varuvaṇa* — 1.124.11). The above points will indicate the place of importance given to music in the life and philosophy of Sambandhar.

Now we have to deal with the place of music in the hymns and Sambandhar's contribution to its growth. As mentioned already, all the *Tēvāram* hymns in general and Sambandhar's hymns in particular, belong to a literary and musical category called the *teyvam cuṭṭiya vārappāṭal* or the *perum tēvaḥṇi* — a kind of musical poem dealing with God. The musical songs are of two kinds. When a poem is composed on the basis of musical notes and tunes it is called "*isaiḥṭṭā*". If a poem is first composed and set to music afterwards it is called "*isai aḷavupā*." Sambandhar's hymns belong to the first category. They are the garland of verses made up of seven musical notes (*ēḷṇinisai mālai* — 2.173.11); they are the garland of pristine Tamil verses wherein the melody flourishes (*paṇ poli centamiḷ mālai* — 2.184.11); the melody that combines with the poem (*pā*) is called *isai*. *Isai* is rendered into a *paṇ* by means of eight kinds of actions with the aid of chest, throat, tongue, nose, palate, lips, teeth and head.⁵

Sambandhar's knowledge of music is profound, intricate and erudite. According to the ancient Tamil schools of music, the human body measures 96 digits of one's own hand. The middle portion, between the upper $47\frac{1}{2}$ digits and the lower $47\frac{1}{2}$ digits is just a span of one digit. That portion is called the '*mūlātāra*'. The sound that comes out of the '*mūlātāra*' is called '*āḷatti*'. It is made up of the consonents *m*, *n* or *t*. With the '*m*' sound, the basic sound of music which is also the unit of sound, is produced. Sambandhar gives this basic concept when he says that the beetles (*vaṇṭukaḷ*) hum the musical note as '*mum*' (*mummenṇu isai mural vaṇṭukaḷ* — 1.11.3). When *āḷatti* is sung, it is sung in the musical formulae such as '*tenna*', '*tena*' and as '*tenna tena*'.⁷ We find these expressions as in '*tennena vaṇṭinaṅkaḷ*' — 2.106.10 (the beetles are humming as *tennena*); '*tenna venṇu vari vaṇṭu isai cey*' — 2.143.1; *tumbi* (a kind of bee) '*tettē yēna murala*' (humming as *tettē*) — 2.208.5; '*tettēna isai mural saritaiyar*' (the Lord of anecdotes sings as *tettēna* — (3.343.3). When the sound (*nātam*) comes out of *mūlātāra* as *āḷatti* it becomes *isai* and *paṇ*. The musical note which combines with the poem (*pā*) is called *isai* (or *vara*). That *isai* is rendered into a musical tune (*paṇ*) by means of eight kinds of actions⁸ at eight centres such as chest, throat, tongue, nose, palate, lips, teeth and head.⁹ *Kural*, *tuttam*, *kaikkilal*, *uḷai*, *ilī*, *viḷari* and *tāram* are called *eḷḷisai* — seven musical notes. With permutation and combination of these seven *isai*, the *paṇ* (*rāga*) is produced. There are four major *paṇs* (*perum paṇ*). They are *pālai*, *kuṇṇi*, *marudam* and *cevaḷi*. There are twenty one minor scales (*paṇs*).¹⁰ They are called *tīraṁs*. They are distributed as follows: 5 *tīraṁs* for *pālai*, 8 *tīraṁs* for *kuṇṇi*, 4 *tīraṁs* for *marudam* and 4 *tīraṁs* for *cevaḷi*. But according to Vipulānanda Aṭikaḷ the author of the *Yāḷnūḷ* — a treatise on Tamil musicology, Sambandhar suggests a different system of distribution of *tīraṁs* among the major four *paṇs*. In the *patikam* on Tirukkaḷumalām, we find the mention of "seven plus seven plus four and three" (*eḷē eḷē nālē mūṇṇiyalisai* — 1.126.11). This means that *pālai* and *kuṇṇi* *paṇs* are allotted seven *tīraṁs* each, while four and three *tīraṁs* are given to *marudam* and *cevaḷi* *paṇs* respectively.¹¹

TABLE

I. The major Paṇs (perum paṇ) and their four major variations:

<i>Paṇs</i>	<i>akanilai</i>	<i>puṇanilai</i>	<i>arukiyaḷ</i>	<i>perukiyaḷ</i>
Pālaiyāḷ	1. pālaiyāḷ	2. deva tāḷi	3. nirupatuṅkarāgam	4. nāgarāgam
Kuṇṇiṇciyāḷ	5. kuṇṇiṇciyāḷ	6. sendu	7. maṇḍaliyāḷ	8. ari
Marudayāḷ	9. marudayāḷ	10. āgari	11. cāyavēḷarkolli	12. kiṇṇaram
Cevvaiyāḷ	13. cevvaiyāḷ	14. vēḷavāḷi	15. ciṇṇaram	16. santi

II. The tīraṃs of Pālaiyāḷ paṇ and their four variations:

<i>tīraṃ</i>	<i>akanilai</i>	<i>puṇanilai</i>	<i>arukiyaḷ</i>	<i>perukiyaḷ</i>
arākam	17. takkarākam	18. antāḷi pāṭai	19. anti	20. maṇṇal
nēṇṇiṇam	21. nēṇṇiṇam	22. varāṭi	23. periyavarāṭi	24. sāyari
uṇṇuppu	25. paṇcamam	26. tirāṭam	27. aḷuṅku	28. tanāsi
kuṇṇunkali	29. sōmarāgam	30. mēgarāgam	31. tukkarāgam	32. kollivarāṭi
āsāṇ	33. kāntāram	34. cikaṇṭi	35. tesākiri	36. surutikāntāram

III. The tīraṃs of Kuṇṇiṇciyāḷ and their four variations:

<i>tīraṃ</i>	<i>akanilai</i>	<i>puṇanilai</i>	<i>arukiyaḷ</i>	<i>perukiyaḷ</i>
naivaḷam	37. naṭṭapāṭai	38. antāḷi	39. malakari	40. vipaṇci
kāntāram	41. kāntāram	42. cerundi	43. kauṭi	44. udayagiri
paṇcuram	45. paṇcuram	46. paḷampaṇcuram	47. mēgarāgakkuṇṇiṇci	48. kēṭāḷikkuriṇci
paṭumalai	49. kauvāṇam	50. pāṭai	51. sūrtuṅkarāgam	52. nāgam

maruḷ	53. maruḷ	54. paḷantakkarāgam	55. diviyavarāṭi	56. mutirnta intaḷam
ayirppu	57. anuttirapañca-	58. kuccari	59. aruṭpuri	60. narāyaṇi
araru	61. kuṟiñci	62. naṭṭarāgam	63. irāmakkiri	64. viyāḷakkuriñci
centiṟam	65. centiṟam	66. takkaṇāṭi	67. cāvakkakkuṟiñci	68. ānantai

IV. *The tīrams of Maruṭayāḷ paṇ and their four variations:*

<i>tīram</i>	<i>akanilai</i>	<i>puṇanilai</i>	<i>arukiyaḷ</i>	<i>perukiyaḷ</i>
navir	69. takkēsi	70. kolli	71. āriyakuccari	72. nāgadoni
vatuku	73. intaḷam	74. sāṭaḷi	74. tamīḷ vēḷarkolli	76. kantarapañcamam
vañci	77. pākkaḷi	78. tattaḷapañcamam	79. māṭuñkarāgam	80. kauśikam
ceytiṟam	81. piyantai	82. cikāmaram	83. cāral	84. cāṅkimam

V. *The tīrams of Cevaḷiyāḷ or mullaḷiyāḷ paṇ and their variations:*

<i>tīram</i>	<i>akanilai</i>	<i>puṇanilai</i>	<i>arukiyaḷ</i>	<i>perukiyaḷ</i>
nōtiṟam	85. kuṟaṇṭi	86. āriyavēḷarkolli	87. taṇukkāñcu	88. viyaṇtam
peyartiṟam	89. yāḷpatam	90. tāḷi	91. koṇṭaiṅkiri	92. cīvaṇi
yāmai	93. yāmai	94. cāḷarpāṇi	95. nāṭṭam	96. tāṇu
mullai	97. mullai	98. cātāri	99. bhairavam	100. kāñci

Note: These hundred with *tārappanṭiṟam*, *paṇṭiḷkāñci* and *paṭumalai* make the 103 paṇs.

According to one tradition, each of the four *paṇs* and each *tiṇam* get further multiplied by four varieties called *akanilai*, *puṇanilai*, *arukiyaḷ* and *perukiyaḷ*. Thus $(4 \times 4 = 16 \text{ plus } 21 \times 4 = 84)$, we get 100 *paṇs*. With these, three more *paṇs*, *tārapaṇṭiṇam*, *payyul kāṇṇi* and *paṭumalai* are added to get the total of 103 *paṇs* (see the details in the Table). Both *paṇs* and *tiṇams* are called by the generic term *paṇ*.¹² This tradition, mentioned by the *Piṅkalan-tai* (an ancient Tamil Lexicon) must have been prevalent between the age of Arumpatavuraiyāciriar and Aṭiyārkkunallār of the *Silappatikāram*.¹³ However, Aṭiyārkkunallār points out another tradition by which the 103 *paṇs* are derived from the seven major (*ēḷperum*) *Pāḷaiṇṇaṇ* and their variations.¹⁴

Out of the 103 *paṇs* listed, according to the former tradition, twentythree *paṇs* are found to be used in the *Tēvāram* now extant of the three hymnists. They are given hereunder with the serial number of the *paṇ* within brackets.

sevvaḷi (13)	naṭṭapāṭai (37)
takkarākam (17)	antāḷikkuriṇci (38)
nētiṇam (puṇa nīmai) (21)	paḷampaṇṇuram (46)
paṇcamam (25)	mēgarāgakkuriṇci (47)
kāntāram (33, 41)	kollikkāvāṇam (49)
paḷantakkarākam (54)	intaḷam (73)
kuṇiṇci (61)	kāntārapaṇcamam (76)
naṭṭaṇṇam (62)	kauṣikam (80)
vīyāḷakkuriṇci (64)	piyantaikkāntāram (81)
sentīṇam (senturutti) (65)	cikāmaram (82)
takkēsi (69)	sātāri (98)
kolli (70)	

Out of the twentythree *paṇs* listed above, barring *senturutti* (or *sentīṇam*) all the other twentytwo *paṇs* are employed by Sambandhar in his hymns now extant. Tirunāvukkaracar's hymns account for ten *paṇs* while seventeen *paṇs* are ascribed to Nambi Ārūrar. Thus Sambandhar is credited to have employed the maximum number of *paṇs*. In the classification of the *tirumuṇais*, according to the *paṇ* method, the distribution of *paṇs* to the first

three *tirumuṟais* of Sambandhar has been already given (Chapter 1. Sec. 4).

According to the manuscript texts on palm leaves found in the custody of Tiruvāvaṭuṭuṟai Mutt by Poṇ Ṫuvār Mūrtti the *paṇs* are classified on the basis of time. Certain *paṇs* are ascribed to be sung during the day, some in the night and some others in general. It is given in the table below.

DAY

Duration in units of <i>nāṭṭikai</i> (24 minutes)	<i>Paṇ</i>	<i>Rāgam</i> identified
0 — 3	puṇanīrmai	śrikaṇṭi
3 — 6	kāntāram, piyantai	iccicci
6 — 9	kauśikam	bhairavi
9 — 12	intaḷam, tirukkuṟuntokai	neḷita pañcamī
12 — 15	takkēsi	kāmpōti
15 — 18	naṭṭarāgam, sātāri	bandhuvarāḷi
18 — 21	naṭṭapāṭai	nāṭṭakkuṟiñci
21 — 24	paḷampañcuram	śaṅkarābharaṇam
24 — 27	kāntārapañcamam	kētāraḷai
27 — 30	pañcamam	āgiri

NIGHT

Duration	<i>Paṇ</i>	<i>Rāgam</i> identified
30 — 33 $\frac{3}{4}$	takkarākam	kaṇṇaḍakāmpōti
33 $\frac{3}{4}$ — 37 $\frac{1}{2}$	paḷantakkarākam	śuddha sāvēri
37 $\frac{1}{2}$ — 41 $\frac{1}{4}$	cikāmaram	nādanāmakriyai
41 $\frac{1}{4}$ — 45	kolli, kollikkavāṇam, tirunērisai, tiruviruttam	sindhukaṇṇaḍa
45 — 48 $\frac{3}{4}$	viyāḷakkuṟiñci	saurāshtram
48 $\frac{3}{4}$ — 52 $\frac{1}{2}$	mēgarāgakuṟiñci	nīlāmpari
52 $\frac{1}{2}$ — 56 $\frac{1}{4}$	kuṟiñci	malahari
56 $\frac{1}{4}$ — 60	antāḷikkkuṟiñci	sailadēsātchi

Paṇs sung in general

sevvaḷi	yadukulakāmpōti
senturutti	madhyamāvatī
tiruttāṇṭakam	piyakaṭai

Sambandhar's music sense is so very sharp that he is able to discern music and identify the *paṇs* in the natural phenomena when the bees are humming around the flowers. *Maruḷ* (1.66.8), *mullaiyāḷ* (1.63.7), *nērisai* (1.75.3; 2.189.10), *sevvaḷi* (1.99.10; 1.132.7); *pālaiyāḷ* (1.108.10); *pañcuram* (3.272.3; 3.362.4); *sendu* (2.144.4; 2.218.9; 3.305.11); *sendisai* (1.101.2; 1.14.11); *kāmaram* (1.47.3) are the *paṇs* referred to in his hymns. *Maruḷ* is a *tīram* as well as *akanilaittīram* of *kuṛiñcippaṇ*. *Mullai* or *mullaiyāḷ* is a *tīram* as well as *akanilaittīram* of *sevvaḷippaṇ*. *Nērisai* is not found in the list of 103 *paṇs*. But during the time of Sambandhar it must have been a musical tune widely in vogue.¹⁵ *Nērisai* is also the name of a poetic composition. In the fourth *tirumuṛai* of Appar the *patikams* from 22 to 79 are called the *tirunērisai patikams*. According to a tradition, *nērisaikkolli* under the *kollippaṇ* is ascribed to *tirunērisai* hymns.¹⁶ So *nērisai* may be taken as a kind of *kollippaṇ*; *sendu* is listed as *puṇilai* of *kuṛiñcippaṇ*. *Sendisai* is given as a *sevvaḷippaṇ* in the footnote for the *patikam* 1.101.2 in the Dharumapuram edition. But it is not found so in the list cited above. *Kāmaram* is the modified name of *cikāmaram paṇ*.

Sambandhar also describes a scene when the damsels (at Tiruvaḷiyāru) make the *kāntāram isai* (string in the *yaḷ*)¹⁷ and sing the *paṇ* (*kāntāram isai amaittuk kārikaiyār paṇpāṭa* — 1.130.6). Thus we get the reference to one more *paṇ* (*kāntāram*) in his hymns.

In the *araṇkēṇṇukkātai* of the *Silappatikāram*, Aṭiyārkkunallār stipulates eleven means of analysing the *paṇ* for effecting its perfection. They are *mulai*, *muṛai*, *muṭivu*, *niṇṇai*, *kuṇai*, *kiḷamai*, *valivu*, *melivu*, *saman*, *varaiyarai* and *nīrmai*.¹⁸ The Sanskrit sources give the ten qualities of *rāga* as, *graha*, *aṁśa*, *mandra*, *tāra*, *nyāsa*, *apanyāsa*, *sanyāsa*, *vinyāsa*, *bahutva* and *alpatva*. But Sambandhar mentions the number of qualities of *paṇ* as only nine.

(*paṇṇitai onpaṭu* — 1.79.3). In the same hymn he describes the *paṇ* as "that which is blended with the seven *isai* and eight artistic actions" (*ēḷisai eṭṭirūṇ kalai cēr paṇ*). The eight actions are those that go to make up a *paṇ*. Vipulāṇanda Aṭikaḷ also means the phrase '*eṭṭirum*' as eight into two (16) actions that are associated with the *yāḷ* in which the *paṇ* is to be played.¹⁹

When a musical tune is composed of seven notes (*isai* or *svara*) it is called *paṇ*. With six notes it is *paṇṇiyal*. With five notes it is called *tiṇam* and the fourth is the *tiṇattirām* which is the combination of the above three. This classification corresponds to the Sanskrit one wherein it is called *sampūrṇa*, *śāḍava*, *auḍava* and *caturtha* respectively.

When a *paṇ* of seven *isai* is sung with each *isai* at all the three pitches (*melivu*, *samaṇ* and *valivu*) low, medium and high), then that *paṇ* or *rāgam* takes 21 notes. Even the *Caṅkam* classic, the *Puṇanṇūru*, speaks of "three multiplied by seven methods" (*mūvēḷ turai* — 152). Sambandhar claims that his *patikam* (1.126.11) could be sung with 21 variations of the *paṇ*.

Dance and music are closely associated with each other. *Āḥāl* or *āḥṭam*, *niruttam*, *naṭam* are the terms used in the hymns to denote dance. One *patikam* on Kaḷumalam (1.126) is called the *Tiruttāḷaccati*. '*Cati*' is a mark of time (*tāḷam*) in the dance sequence. This *patikam* is meant for singing and dancing. Even as the *santakuḷippu* is used in singing, similar syllabic formulae such as *tanta*, *tinta* (2.141.4) *tēntām* (1.130.6) are used in dances. To Sambandhar, dance is as sacred as music and he believes in the efficacy of both; for example, he affirms that by singing and dancing, the demerits (of a soul) will vanish (*pāṭiyāṭak keṭum pāvamē* — 3.266.11). Sambandhar himself revels in the act of dancing and singing. Nambiyāṇḍār captures this scene in his poem. "He (Sambandhar) is the exponent of divine Tamil who has obtained Śiva's grace through dance by lifting up his foot, red with tenderness and adorned by resounding anklets (*kiṇkiṇi*), while his hands, inseparable as they are from cymbals, are tossing in the act of

keeping time."²⁰ People were probably captivated by this dance posture of Sambandhar. In some temples like that one at Uttarakōsamaṅgai, we find the image of Sambandhar with one leg held up in a dancing pose and playing upon the cymbal whilst singing. The important instruments mentioned in the hymns are many such as *kuḷal* (flute),²¹ *yāl*,²² *vīṇai*,²³ *paṇai*,²⁴ *caṅku* (conch)²⁵ *muḷavu*,²⁶ *montai*,²⁷ *muḷā*,²⁸ *kuṭamuḷā*,²⁹ *takkai*,³⁰ *kokkarai*,³¹ *kallavaṭam*,³² *koṭukoṭi*,³³ *paṇilam* (a conch) and *paṭakam*,³⁴ *kattirikai*, *tuttiri*, *tuṭi*, *iṭakkai*,³⁵ and *callari*.³⁶

Amongst the seven *isais* (*svaras* or notes), except *kural* (*śadja*) and *ilī* (*pañcama*) the other five i.e., *tuttam* (*ṛṣabha*), *kaikkilāi*, (*kāntāra*), *uḷai* (*madhyama*), *viḷari* (*daivata*) and *tāram* (*niṣāda*) are of two kinds. Usually in a *paṇ* only one kind is used. When both the kinds are used in a *paṇ* it is called *bhāṣāṅgam*. The *paṇs* *kausikam*, *takkēsi*, *viyālakkuṇiñci* and *mēgarāgakkuṇiñci* used in the *Tēvāram* hymns are *bhāṣāṅga rāgas*.

In modern Karnatic music the songs have many parts such as *pallavi*, *anupallavi* and *caraṇam*. No such parts could be noticed in the hymns. The hymns generally consist of four lines. What is used as the pattern of music in the first two lines is repeated in the second two lines too. But, it is claimed, Sambandhar has introduced a new method by which in the same hymn a variation in the music pattern is effected.³⁷ Such hymns are called the *Nāḷaṭimēlvaiṇṇu* (e.g., 3.261.1-11; 3.262.1-11; 3.361.1-10) and *Īraṭimēlvaiṇṇu*, (e.g., 3.263.11; 264.1-11). In the case of the former there are two additional lines over and above the usual four lines in each verse. These two lines are repeated in all the verses of the *patikams*. In the case of the latter, the main verse consists of two lines only, to which two more lines are added. These again are repeated in all the verses of the *patikam*. By these methods the variation is skilfully effected. S. Ramanathan says that this method is a pioneer method, followed by later music luminaries like Muttusvāmi Dīkṣitar, in his *maddhima kāla sāhityas*. He also cites the composition of Saint Tyāgarāja such as *Tōcana kamala*, *Ēmi dova* and *Dārinitelisi kōṇṭi* as belonging to this category.

The term for the mode of measuring time in music is called *tāla*. The hymns of Sambandhar are set to *āti*, *rūpakam*, *jambai* and *tiripuṭai tālas*. It is interesting to note that most of the present day songs are set to these *tālas* only. Each *tāla* is characterised by the number of counts in a unit of measuring time. For example, *ātitāla* has the unit which consists of eight counts. If each count contains four syllables (*takadimi*) then it is called *orukaḷaic cavukkam*. When the units are multiplied twice, thrice and four times they are called *iraṇṭu kaḷaiccavukkam*, *mūṇṭu kaḷaiccavukkam* and *nāṇku kaḷaiccavukkam*, respectively. The song and *paṇ* set to the *nāṇku kaḷaiccavukkam* naturally takes longer duration. Sambandhar's *patikam* commencing with *kātalāki* is said to have been set on the *nāṇku kaḷaiccavukkam*. It is said that different moods or emotions (*cuvai*) are ascribed to the *paṇs*.³⁸ Sambandhar also stresses the importance of the inner mood or emotion (*uṇṇiṇratōr cuvai*- 1.11.4).

According to the *Tirumurai Kaṇṭapurāṇam*, a descendent of Nilakaṇṭayāḷppāṇar set the *Tēvāram* hymns to various *paṇs*. Cēkkiḷār preserves the form of these *paṇs* in his *Āṇāyaṇār purāṇam* of *Periyapurāṇam*. Sāraṅgadeva who travelled widely in the Tamil country admired and preserved the identity of some of the *paṇs* like *nattarāgam*, *pañcamam*, *takkarāgam*, *cātāri* and refers to a *rāga* called "*Tēvāravardhini*" in his Sanskrit musical treatise, the *Saṅgītaratnākara*. This tradition must have been flourishing well upto 16th century.³⁹

Sambandhar's intense devotion to music and Tamil is based on his conviction and philosophy of music and Tamil. To him they are finest manifestations of the Absolute. He says that "Śiva has manifested Himself in the *paṇs*, the seven notes, the Tamil of many rhythms, the inner emotion or mood and the appropriate and various *tālas*."⁴⁰

5.3 Sambandhar and Tamil

Ārūrar praises Sambandhar as one who has popularised (the divine) Tamil through music.⁴¹ Nambiyāṇḍār calls him '*tamiḷ-ākaraṇ*'⁴² (the saviour of Tamil). It is quite significant to note that Sambandhar himself speaks high of his association with Tamil

[e.g., '*Tamiḷ jñāṇasambandhan*' in 40 verses; '*Tamiḷvirakan*' (the exponent of Tamil) — in 8 verses; '*Tamiḷnātan*' (the Lord of Tamil) — 3.297.11; '*naṟṟamiḷkku intunai*' (the happy custodian of the divine Tamil — 1.76.11); *muttamiḷ virakan* (the exponent of the threefold Tamil — literature, music and drama — 3.373.11); '*tamiḷkkiḷamai jñāṇan*' (Jñānan who has a rightful hold on Tamil — 2.166.11); one who has become kith, kin and everything to Tamil (*Tamiḷ curru murṟumāyina* — 2.234.11)]. For him, as pointed out earlier, all languages in general (2.228.7) and Sanskrit and Tamil in particular are the manifestation of God's grace. It has been shown how Sambandhar describes the Lord as speaking Tamil with all its felicity (1.73.8). Tamil and Sanskrit take resort under the shade of the Lord's feet (1.73.8).

Even though Sambandhar has made his own innovation in the field of music and Tamil, yet it is gratifying to note that his hymns stand upto the hoary traditions and meet the requirements of grammar both literary and musical. It has been established by scholars that the metre employed in the *Tēvāram* hymns is *koc-caka oru pōku* of *kalippā*.⁴³ Sambandhar himself calls it *Kalikkōvai*. On the basis of musical Tamil prosody, they come under the name of *Tēvapāṇi*. According to Aṭiyārkkunallār, these musical compositions (*isaiṭṭpā*) consist of ten kinds as per the *Isainuṇukkam*, and of nine kinds as per the *Pañcamarabu*.⁴⁴ The ten kinds are *centurai*, *veṇṭurai*, *peruntēvapāṇi*, *cirutēvapāṇi*, *muttakam*, *vaṇṇam āṟṟuvari*, *kāṇalvari*, *virimuṟan* and *maṇṭilam*. The musical songs under *centurai* deal with the characteristics of a person in a natural manner; while *Veṇṭurai* songs speak with hyperbole. *Muttakam* is a single musical song with complete sense. All individual hymns could be brought under the category. *Vaṇṇam* is the variation in the rhythm of the songs. It again consists of three kinds, i.e., *peruvaṇṇam*, *iṭaivaṇṇam* and *vaṇṇappuvaṇṇam*. Sambandhar says that his hymns could be sung in all the three *vaṇṇam* (2.211.11). *Āṟṟuvari* is a kind of musical poem singing in praise of rivers (see Sambandhar's hymns 3.349.1-6, 8-10). *Kāṇalvari* is sung about the sea (3.424.4). Thus it has been seen that Sambandhar continues the literary and musical traditions prevalent in his age, from the

hoary past. More than that, he has been credited with innovation in the field of prosody and music. Nambiyāṇḍār enumerates some facts only. Cēkkiḷār adds many more to the list.

In this connection it will be of high value to quote certain important observations made by Virabadhra Mudaliar in his erudite and extensive research article contributed to the *Siddhānta Deepikai*, some 87 years ago:

We have simply to open the inimitable pages of our Lord Sambandha to understand the profuse richness of Tamil poetry during this Tamilic period (*Sambandhar's period*). We are able to point out nearly one hundred metrical varieties in his poetry. Was there ever, we ask, any poet, ancient or modern, in any language on the face of the earth not excluding Sanskrit, who has spontaneously and with such an insatiable thirst for the praise of his Divine Father in Heaven, sung on the same subject so many interesting varieties of lovely verses, as nearly as one hundred varieties, not based on small distinctions such as are recognised in Sanskrit, but differing as widely as any two meters of a language, leaving of course out of consideration the verses which are alleged to have perished? We fear the unparalleled poetical excellences of Sambandha has overflowed the Tamil land with an enormous number of meters of unknown varieties and of unsurpassed perfection, accuracy and beauty and how have we profited by the heavy rains. What have we but a few ponds in the poems of a few poets to remind us of the heavy rains having allowed the precious waters to run down into the salt sea... Even his biographer, his most ardent and enthusiastic lover and admirer, has not drawn the attention of the world to the unparalleled poetical sources of his greatness...¹⁵

According to Nambiyāṇḍār, *Irākam*, *Irukkukkuṇal*, *Pācuram*, *Palpattu*, *Yālmūri*, *Cakkaramāṇṇu* and *Īraṭimukkūl* are the innovations introduced by Sambandhar.¹⁶ But Cēkkiḷār is able to give a longer list of these innovations (*mūla ilakkiyam*) which set the standard for the later day works of similar genres. They are the *Moḷimāṇṇu*, *Mālaināṇṇu*, *Valimoḷi*, *Maṭakku*, *Iyamakam*, *Ēkapātam*, *Irukkukkuṇal*, *Elukūṇṇirukkai*, *Īraṭi*, *Īraṭi vaiṇṇu* (*īraṭimēl vaiṇṇu*), *Nāḷaṭimēl vaiṇṇu*, *Arākam*, *Cakkaram* and others.¹⁷ These are called pictorial poems (*Cittirakkavi* or *miṇaikkavi*). In *moḷimāṇṇu*

the words are not arranged in the sense sequence. Though the words are not found in the order of the sense of the poem, they are so arranged as to make one comprehend the sense by striving to rearrange the words (1.117).

Mālaināṛṇu: It is a kind of pictorial poem. If the letters of the first line are read from the end of the line, they will form the second line and *vice versa* (3.375). The letters and syllables are so arranged.

Vaḷimoḷi is a poetic form. The second letter of the first foot (*cīr*) in the first line is repeated in all the feet of all the lines (see *Curarulaku*... 3.325).

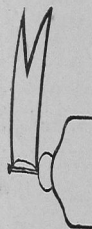
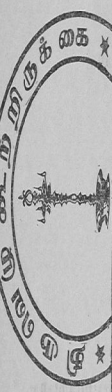
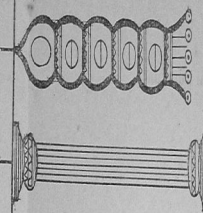
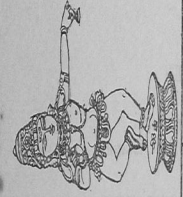
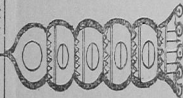
Maṭakku: Here the same feet of the front line are repeated in the subsequent line (3.352 to 367).

Iyamakam: It is a poetic form in which either a word or phrase used in a particular sense in one line, is repeated in another line with different connotation. It is a sort of punning (*patikams* from 3.371 to 374).

Irukkukkuṛaḷ: *Irukku* is the Tamilised form of *ṛk* in Sanskrit, meaning the *Veda*. *Kuṛaḷ* is a prosody by which a poem is composed in two lines, each line consisting of two feet. As these songs resemble the *Vedas*, in form and content, they are called *irukkukkuṛaḷ* (from 1.90 to 96 and 3.298, 299).

Ēkapātam: *Ēkam* means one; *pātam* means line. Hence it means one line. The same line is repeated in the subsequent three lines, each line differing from the other in sense (1.127).

Tiruveḷukūṛṇṇirukkai - (1.128): It is a unique pictorial poetic form, later on used by the Vaiṣṇavite saint Tirumaṅgaiyālvār, Nakkiradēvanāyaṇār and Aruṇagirināthar. The numerical nouns from one to seven are used here in a peculiar order as given in the chart (see *Annexure*). It is claimed that the picture of a chariot could be drawn by arranging the words of the poem both in this order and the reverse order. It is called *rathabandham* (Fabrication of a chariot).

[illegible][illegible][illegible]

Tiruveḷukūṟṟirukkai

I Deck:

ōruru vāyinaṁ māṇāṅkāratu īriyalpāy oru viṇ mutal pūtaḷam

II Deck:

onṟiya irucutar umparkaḷ piṟavum
pataittaḷittaḷippa mumṁmūrtti kaḷāyinaṁ
iṟuvarōṭu oruvaṇāki ninṟaṇai

III Deck:

ōrālṇilal unkaḷal iraṇṭum muppoḷutu ēttiya
nālvarkku oḷineṟi kātṭinaṁ nāṭṭamūṇrākak
kōṭṭinaṁ irunati aravamōṭu orumati cūṭinaṁ

IV Deck:

orutāḷ īrayil mūvilaic cūlam nārkaḷ māṇmaṟi
aintalai aravam ēntinaṁ kāyṇta nālvāy
mummatattu irukōṭṭu orukari iṭaḷittu urittaṇai

V Deck:

orutaṇu irukāl vaḷaiya vāṅki muppurattoṭu
nāṇilam aṇcakkonṟu talattuṟa avuṇarai aṟuttaṇai
aimpulam nālām antakkarāṇam mukkuṇam
iruvaḷi oruṅkiya vāṇōr ētta ninṟaṇai

VI Deck:

oruṅkiya maṇattōṭu irupiṟappōṇtu
muppoḷutu kuṟaimuṭittu nāṇmaṟai oṭi
aivakai vēḷvi amaittu āraṅkamutal eḷuttōṭi
varaṇmuṟai payinṟu eḷuvāṇtaṇai vaḷarkkum
piramaṇpuram pēṇinaṁ
ārupatam muralum vēṇupuram virumpinaṁ
ikaliya maintuṇar pukali amarntaṇai
poṅku nārkaṭal cūḷvēṅkuru viḷaṅkinaṁ
pāṇi mūvulakum putaiyamēḷ mitanta tōṇipuratturaintaṇai
tolaiyā irunitivāyṇta pūntarāy ēyṇtaṇai
varapuram onṟuṇar cirapuratturaintaṇai

VII Deck:

orumalai eṭutta irutiṟal arakkaṇ viṟal keṭut taruḷinaṁ
puṟavam purintaṇai
munṇiṟt tuyinṟōṇ nāṇmukaṇ aṟiyāppaṇpoṭu ninṟaṇai
caṇpai amarntaṇai aiyuṟum amaṇarum aṟuvakait tērarum
ūḷiyum uṇarāk kāḷi amarntaṇai
eccaṇ ēḷisaiyōṇ koccaiyai meccinaṁ ārupatamum aintamar
kalviyum maṟaimutal nāṇkum
mūṇrukālamum tōṇraṇiṇṟaṇai
irumaiyiṇ orumaiyum orumaiyiṇ perumaiyum

maṟuvilā maṟaiyōr
kaḷumala mutupatik kavuṇiyaṇ katturai
kaḷumala mutupatik kavuṇiyaṇ aṟiyum
aṇaiya taṇmaiyaṁ yāṭaliṇ ninṇai
niṇaiya vallavar illaiṇiḷ nilattē.

The Tiruppanantāl ed. of the Eleventh Tirumurai (*Patinōrām Tirumurai*) published in 1972, compares this kind of poem to a game of children wherein they enter into and emerge out, one by one, of a seven decked formulation (pp.117-119).

Īraṭimēlvaippu and *Nālaṭimēlvaippu* have already been explained (see 5.2).

Arākam is another kind of poem. In this, there are only short letters (*kuṟil*) without being mixed with long letters (*neṭil*) in an unbroken flow. This arrangement of letters produces a rolling rhythm. Hence it is called *Uruṭṭuvannam* in the *Tolkāppiyam*.⁴⁸ In the *Tēvāram* hymns it is now called *Tiruvirākam*, a modified form of *Tiruvarākam* (3.326 to 346).

Cakkaramāṟṟu: (*cakkaram* = wheel). It is a kind of pictorial poem. There are two *patikams* (2.206 and 209) which belong to this category. In the former, twelve names of Cīrkāḷi are given in the first verse in the following order: 1. Piramaṇūr; 2. Veṇupuram; 3. Pukali; 4. Veṅkuru; 5. Tōṇipuram; 6. Pūntarāy; 7. Cīrapuram; 8. Puṟavam; 9. Caṇpai; 10. Kāḷi; 11. Koccai-vayam; 12. Kaḷumalam. Each of these names in the same order becomes the first name of the verses from first to twelfth respectively. Thus a wheel is produced. Hence its name *Cakkaramāṟṟu*. In the *patikam* no. 209 another pattern is given. Here the twelve names fall in the same order as noticed in the *patikam* 206. But here, the last name of the first verse becomes the first one in the second verse; in the same manner, subsequently, the last name of the preceding verse becomes the first name of the succeeding verse. Here too, a wheel is obtained.

Valimuṭakku māvinpāccal: The *patikam* No. 2.210 is somehow labelled as the *Gōmūtrī*. According to its rule, in a verse of four lines, the first two lines are extended to form one upper line, while the second two lines are extended to form the lower line. When the letters are read from the upper and lower lines alternatively we can have the same verse of four lines. It is compared to the urinal mark of a moving cow on the ground. But this *patikam*, on examination, does not satisfy the above rule and hence it is a

misnomer. On the other hand, Sambandhar calls it '*Vaḷimūṭakku māvin pāccal*' which means the gallop of a cow in a zig-zag manner. It sounds credible. This *patikam* also speaks of the twelve names of Cīrkāḷi. The last name found in the previous verse becomes the first name in the succeeding verse. Thus a zig-zag course is produced. That is why, Sambandhar gives it the above name. It is also to be noted that in the Dharumapuram edition it is labelled as the *Tirukkōmūtri antāti*.

Kūṭa catukkam: The *patikam* commencing with '*maṇṇatu uṇṇari*' (3.367) is described as '*Kūṭacatukkam*'. *Catukkam* means the junction of four roads. This *patikam* was sung at Kūṭal-Madurai in praise of the Lord who is enshrined at Mayēndiram, Kayilāyam, Ārūr and Āṇaikkā. Thus Kūṭal becomes the centre of all these four holy places. Hence it is called the *Kūṭacatkkum* or *Kūṭal catukkam*. These apart, two more patterns are there. They are the *Tirumukkāl* and *Īraṭi*. In the former, the verse consists of four lines. The first and third lines are made of four feet each while the second and fourth lines consist of three feet only (see *patikams* from 3.352 to 3.357). Since the second and fourth lines end up with $\frac{3}{4}$ (*mukkāl*) of a regular line, these hymns are called the *Tirumukkāl*. *Īraṭi* hymns consist of two lines only. Hence they are called the *Īraṭi*, meaning "two lines" (see *patikams* from 3.368 to 3.370).

As noted earlier, in the sphere of bridal mysticism Sambandhar along with Appar is the pioneer. The concept of conceiving God as the lovable Lord and the soul as the lady-love is as old as the *Vedas*. But the present writer, after verifying it from the Tamil sources and Sanskrit scholars, strongly believes that Sambandhar and Appar are chronologically the first in India to have sung hymns on the theme as a separate form of literature.⁴⁹ However, this form is there in the *Song of Solomon* in the old *Testament* of the *Holy Bible*.⁵⁰ But that is not an Indian literature.

Above all these things, the outstanding service of Sambandhar to the cause of Tamil and Music lies in the upliftment of them to a position of pre-eminence and divinity before the eyes of

the masses and the monarchs alike; and especially so when music was condemned as a social evil under the Jain influence in the Tamil country. The poignancy of this truth is well brought out in the words of T.P. Meenakshisundaran:

Jains and Buddhists were poets and philosophers, artists and patrons of art. They saw however the weakness and failing of the arts. These could be used in the service of religion; but in essence, they were worldly, unless safeguarded, they kindle the degrading passion. A Jain poet called lust the wealth of music. When the inspiration of the great men of Jainism evaporated this attitude ended in a negativism, not a blossoming of the inner spirit but a cloister virtue when the soul and heart lay cabined, cribbed and confined. The world in all its aspects was to them something to runaway from...⁵¹

The songs and their (hymnologists) music appealed to the common man. The idea of the spoken tongue and its rhythm had changed from the times of the Cankam Age and Campantar sang in this changed rhythm. That was the reason why the learned scholars did not take recognition of these hymns for a very long time, though the common people including their rulers were enthralled by this music and poetry. This music and poetry were the very heart and soul of the rising temple cult.⁵²

Some orthodox pandits hold the view that the poetry of Sambandhar and his contemporaries is not amenable to the so-called rules of Tamil grammar and prosody and is remarkable for looseness of metrical and grammatical construction. This certainly is a misconception which arises out of certain historical reasons. The Tamil prosodians of the period of Sambandhar had not made much head-way in their observations as their predecessors had done in the case of prosody belonging to the pre-caṅkam and post-caṅkam works. With the result, they had failed to recognise, appreciate and admire the new literary trends and metrical varieties. But Veerabadhra Mudaliar had made deep and far reaching comparative studies with Telugu and Canarese prosodies. He claims that Sambandhar's poetic varieties 'become perfectly intelligible, scientific and admissible metres when we look at it in the light of principles assumed in Telugu and Canarese prosodies.'⁵³

Modern research is progressing to highlight the evolution of music since the days of the *Tēvāram*. In the Annual Tamilisa Festivals at Madras, the close resemblance of the songs of later day classical composers are brought to light. Musicologists like S. Ramanathan have pointed out that Jayadeva, Annamācārya (the Telugu composer who had used the name of the *paṇ, paḷam-paṇcuram* for one of his songs), Purandaradāsa, Nārāyaṇatīrtha, Kṣetrājña, Saint Tyāgarāja, Śyāmāśāstri, Mutusvāmi Dikṣitar, Svāti Tirunāl, Ponniah Piḷḷai and recently Lakshmana Piḷḷai have drawn inspiration from the *Tēvāram* musical phrases. It was obvious that Saint Tyāgarāja should have been influenced by the rendering of the *Tēvārams* in the Tiruvaiyāṟu temple.⁵⁴

It will be a truism to say that the *Tēvāram* will continue to guide and influence the savants of music and Tamil in the years to come.

5.4 *Sambandhar's concern for his fellow-beings*

Lord Jesus said, "Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted."⁵⁵ Sambandhar assures, "God dwells in the mouth of those who suffer (pain)" (*nōvuḷār vāyulaṇ* — 1.61.6). It is evident that Sambandhar is moved at the sight of others' sufferings. Tradition has it and Cēkkiḷār and others confirm it that he has saved the man who died of snake-bite and got him married to the lady who eloped with him at Tirumarukal. His *patikam* commencing with '*caṭaiyāy eṇumāl caraṇī eṇumāl*' is ringing with his sympathy for the suffering soul. He cured the princess of epilepsy, at Pāccilāccirāmam. At Koṭimāṭacceṇkuṇṇam, he again cured his followers of virus fever. Even when he wanted to teach a lesson to the king of Madurai he commanded the fire to go and get hold of him rather mildly, and he ultimately cured him of the same. From the mortal remains of a girl who died of snake-bite she was brought to life again. One may call these miracles; but to Sambandhar they are manifestations of God's grace. We could see in these acts his deep sympathy for the suffering lot. Sambandhar was not a cold ascetic being insensitive to human suffering and hunger. The *Tirukkuraḷ* says: "the power of the ascetics lies in

their capacity to endure hunger; but greater is the power of those who could remove the hunger from others" (225). Sambandhar knew this truth, and in as many as twentyone hymns he glorified the philanthropists of his time who mitigated the suffering of their fellow-men from hunger and poverty. He calls the philanthropists '*varakkaruṇaiyālar*' (those who have the boon of grace — 2.168.8); they are the people of truth who have unshaking will and philanthropy even at a time when all the planets and the clouds fail (1.129.3). Even if the world is harassed by the high price of commodities they will never allow their glory to wane; they will never utter harsh words to the poets (3.336.6). When people did not come forward to help the poor, his mind was at great anguish and he advised it not to set foot at the doors of those who concealed themselves from the view of the poor (2.236.2). As he comes across poor devotees who suffer from hunger and thirst, Sambandhar hastens to address the Lord of Āmāttur and asks Him why he has not taken pity on those poor people and remove their hunger (2.186.5).

Sambandhar cherished the fire cult and praised others, brahmins, because he believed that by performing the sacrifice, the adversity and suffering of the society at large could be removed; e.g., he praises the brahmins of Tillai as those who cherish the fire according to their (Vedic) learning by which they thwarted the adversity from setting in the world (*karṇāṅkeri ṁpik kaliyai vārāmē, ceṇṇār* — 1.80.1). His *Tirupṇāsuraṁ* commencing with '*vāḷka antaṇar*', apart from its metaphysical import, also could be viewed through the social welfare point. If at all he obtained the bag of gold coins from the Lord of Tiruvāvaṭuturai, it was only for this purpose. It was seen how he obtained gold coins at Viḷimiḷalai to feed the *aṭiyārs*, when the whole area was oppressed by the excessive hardship owing to famine/drought. Nambiyāṇḍār remembers this incident with gratitude and exclaims that the world has come to stay without being destroyed by famine and hunger on account of the meeting that took place between Sambandhar and Appar at Viḷimiḷalai (*Jñāṇasambandhan ... Nāvukkaracoṭu eḷil miḷalaik kūṭiya kūṭattināl uḷaiṭyttik kuvalayamē*).⁵⁶

The above points are significant to highlight Sambandhar's concern for his fellow-beings. To quote S.T. Coleridge, from *The Ancient Mariner*:

He prayeth best, who loveth best
All things both great and small;
For the dear God who loveth us
He made and loveth all.

5.5 *Sambandhar as a social reformer*

For various reasons, certain practices have come into vogue in society and they, in course of time have not only outlived their purpose but also become evils that cripple the soul and spirit of the society. It has been given to certain great men who are born from time to time to strive to remove these evils not merely by preaching but through the way of life they live. One such evil is untouchability. The modern Governments, presently, boast of enacting legislations that are sought to remove all social, racial and sectarian distinctions and animosities in societies. But their success is not very much ensured or realised. One of the reasons may be the lack of faith which is most vital for any reform.

It is interesting to note that during the *bhakti* movement, that is, during the period of Sambandhar and other religious leaders, they successfully tried to apply the religious principles to solve certain sociological problems. All creatures are God's creatures. The highest ideal of man *i.e.*, God-love can be realised only by loving His creatures. That is the message of Sambandhar's teaching; that is the essence of all religions. Based on this faith a new society was established where distinctions were relegated if not fully removed. Periyālvār, the great Vaiṣṇavite saint, calls this society the community of God's servants (*tonṭakkulam*) and exhorts all members of this community to eschew their old caste distinctions and to come and unite to chant the one thousand names of the Lord.⁵⁷ Nīlakāṇṭha yālpāṇar, the great musicologist, was a *pāṇar*, an untouchable. According to the *Periyāpurāṇam*, when Sambandhar met him, he not only embraced him but also took him

inside the temple at Tōṇipuram.⁵⁸ Ever since, he adopted him as his life's companion and allowed him to play his *patikams* on *yāl* till his last days. When Sambandhar visited Cāttamaṅkai he was received warmly by Nilanakkar, a brahmin devotee. During his stay at the latter's house, Sambandhar asked him to provide a lodging place for the *pāṇar* and his wife. Nilanakkar readily accommodated them in no less a place than the *yāgaśālā* which was considered most sacred to brahmins. That was the reformation that was brought about by Sambandhar and others.

5.6 *Sambandhar's reaction to the role of the Jains and the Buddhists*

One of the striking features of Sambandhar's *patikams* is that he, invariably in every tenth verse, either criticises, condemns or (at times) pities the roles played by the contemporary Jains and Buddhists.⁵⁹ We also find his contemporary, Appar, speaking in the same vein. But neither his predecessors, Tirumular and Kāraik-kālammaiṃār, nor his successor, Nambi Ārūrar deal with Jains and Buddhists so vehemently. Therefore it could be said that it was given to Sambandhar and Appar, by historical necessity, to put up a strong resistance to them. What is that historical necessity? Before it is taken up for discussion, it should be noted that Sambandhar never speaks ill of the common public following Jainism or Buddhism. Only a section of ascetics of these religions figures in his hymns.

Jainism and Buddhism had established their contacts with South India even a few centuries before Christ. In the Tamil country, the *Tolkāppiyam* is widely accepted as holding a number of concepts and doctrines that are of Jain origin. In the *Caṅkam* works and the *Tirukkuraḷ*, one can hear the echoes of Jain thoughts. *Ulōccu* is a Jain term meaning shaving the head while one embraces asceticism. There is a *caṅkam* poet by name Ulōccaṇār to whom the authorship of the twentyfive *Caṅkam* poems is attributed. There is another poet by name Nikaṇṭaṇ kalaikkōṭṭu taṇṭaṇār. Nikaṇṭaṇ means a Jain monk. Iḷaṅkō Aṭikaḷ, the author of the *Silappatikāram* is believed to be a Jain monk. Cīttalaiccāttāṇār is a Buddhist poet. Most of the authors of the eighteen minor

works are either Jains or Buddhists. Their contribution to the cause of Tamil poetry, grammar, prosody, logic, etc., is so immense and vast that their influence spread throughout the Tamil country. The idols of their deities even now are found in the fields and groves of our villages and the names of many villages, such as Amaṇappākkam, Arukattuṟai, Namaṇasamuttiram, Jinālayam, Amaṇkuṭi, Camaṇartiṭal, Camaṇamalai, Arukamaṅkalam and all the places with names ending with *paḷḷi* stand testimony to the hold they had over the common public. During the age of the *Caṅkam* and the *Silappatikāram* there was prevalent a principle of peaceful co-existence amongst various sects. The Cēra king Ceṅkuṭṭuvan who was the elder brother of Iḷaṅkō Aṭikaḷ was a great devotee of Śiva.⁶⁰ Even the latter admits of it. He also admires the Buddhist poet Sāttanār.⁶¹

That the relations between the Hindus and the Jains were quite cordial and friendly is well depicted by the Aṭikaḷ. For instance, in the *Kāṭukāṅkāṭai* (lines 30-161) it is told that when Kōvalaṇ and the Jain monk were on their way to Madurai along with Kaṇṇaki, they met a brahmin of Māṅkāṇu returning from the city, and that when they asked him the route, he gave them a description of two routes with an account of the Hindu gods and of the several *siddhis* that could be obtained by worshipping them in the prescribed manner. Kavunti Aṭikaḷ gave a patient hearing with courtesy and replied: "O Brahmin ... I have no desire to go through the cave for realising the ends you have described... you go ahead to worship the gods you love; we shall go on our own way." It is also told in the epic that after Kōvalaṇ's death, his father embraced Buddhism, while Kaṇṇaki's father adopted *ājivaka* religion. And Mātavi with her daughter became a Buddhist monk (*Nirppaṭaikāṭai*, ll. 90 - 108). Such was the spirit of tolerance and goodwill that existed between the Jains and Hindus. There is no mention of any Jain condemning the *Vedas*, either in the *Caṅkam* literature or in the *Silappatikāram*. But in the case of the Jains and Buddhists belonging to the age under review, there is a definite shift in their outlook and actions, according to Sambandhar. They dwell to indulge in the polemics and condemnation of the

Vedas and the sacrifice (*vētavē/viyai nintanai ceytuḷal ātamilli amanōṭu tērar* — 3.366.1). In scores of hymns Sambandhar voices his deep anguish over their united onslaughts on Śiva and Śaivism, e.g., “The senseless *camaṇars* together with the Buddhists speak ill (of the Lord) at the back and unitedly utter identical words that do not lead to the righteous path” (*puttarōṭu poriyil camaṇum puṇaṅkūṇa neṇiṇillā otta colla*)⁶² The Jains, whom Sambandhar encountered, were unlike the Jains of the *Caṅkam* period who were, as has been explained, great men of Tamil learning and culture. They violated the code of learning and denounced the poets (the men of wisdom) with sarcasm (*poṅkunūlvaḷiyanṇiyē pulavōrkalaip-paḷikkum polā aṅkatar* — 3.297.10). They did not have the decorum of speaking the polished and conventional words (3.295.9). They had no scruples in distorting and destroying the elegance and beauty of Sanskrit in which the *Āgamas* and *Vedas* are composed (*ākamattoṭu mantiraṅkaḷ amainta saṅgata baṅkamāy* — 3.297.2). They are blind to realise the real fruit of the *āriyam* (Sanskrit) and the pristine Tamil (*āriyattoṭu sentamiḷḷ payaṇarīkilā antakarkaḷ* — 3.297.4). Speaking of these neo-Jains, C. V. Narayana Ayyar comments:

... the Jains of the sixth century A.D. who disliked the Hindus and whom the Hindus disliked were, if we are to believe Sambandhar, were disbelievers in the *Vedas* and were ignorant of Tamil literature... we may, therefore, conclude that there were new Jains who came into the country during this period.⁶³

If so, from where did they come? Scholars like C.V. Narayana Ayyar and T.P. Meenakshisundaran have dealt with this subject at length and hold the view that the neo-Jains had come from the Kadamba country and Kannada country (along with Kaḷabras) respectively.⁶⁴ It is revealing to note that the names of the Jain monks found in the list furnished by Sambandhar (3.297.4, 6) do not resemble the ancient Tamil Jain names such as Ulōccaṇār, Nikaṇṭaṇār, Iḷaṅkō and Kavunti. Even the third or fourth century names found in the inscriptions (288 of 1904, M.E.R.) are Tamil or Tamilised names, e.g., *Cantirananti* and *Ilaiyapaṭāram*.⁶⁵ According to some inscriptions found in the

Kannada country, the Jain priestly order was divided into four groups or *saṅgas*, i.e., *deva saṅgam*, *nandi saṅgam*, *siṁha saṅgam* and *senā saṅgam*.⁶⁶ They are also called *gaṇas*. The Jain monks referred to by Sambandhar perhaps belonged to the *nandigaṇas* and *senagaṇas*. Another important factor to reckon with is that the neo-Jain ascetics somehow gained vast political influence and hence the consequent fall in their moral and spiritual standards.⁶⁷ They, if we are to believe Sambandhar, became intolerant towards other religious sects. They could not even stand the touch of the wind that blows from the side of the persons who had besmeared themselves with the (sacred) ash (Śaivites)! (*nīṟṟu mēṇiyarāyiṇar mēlurra kāṟṟuk koḷlavum nillā amaṇar* — 3.366.8). They along with the *teras* used to mock at Lord Śiva (or the Śaivites in general) as ghosts (*tērar amaṇar pēyppēyenna varuvar* — 2.216.10). It has been shown how Sambandhar affirms that in fact, the Jains had set fire to his place (3.309.1 - 10). They criticise others with words burning with the fire of anger (2.257.10). They used to persecute the people of other religions (2.145.10). These apart, the lives of Mūrttināyaṇār, Taṇḍiyaṭikaḷ and others, as told by Cēkkilār, bear ample evidence to the religious intolerance and animosity of the jains towards others sects, especially Śaivites. The life and words of Appar compel us to conclude the same.⁶⁸

These factors lead us to believe that the forces to which Sambandhar had to react strongly were not only alien to this soil and tradition but also formidable because of their close identification with the seats of power.

The *Nilakēsi* is a Jain epic in Tamil. It has emerged as a sequel and rejoinder to the Buddhist epic the *Kuṇṭalakēsi*. Both the epics speak of the bitter fight between the two religions in this part of the country. As they are found mentioned in the work, the *Yāpparuṅkalavirutti* (tenth century A.D.) their dates could not have been later than the tenth century. Both speak of other religious sects and philosophies but none mention anything about the Advaita of Śaṅkara. So they should have been anterior to the eighth or ninth centuries. Cakkaravarttināyaṇār, a Tamil

scholar puts them around the fifth century A.D.⁶⁹ Anyhow the works could have been taken to represent the period round about that of Sambandhar. They are of some value to the present work as they depict the condition of, and controversies amongst the Jains and Buddhists. The *Mattavilāsaprahasana*, a farce in Sanskrit by Mahendravarman I (600 - 630 A.D.), also deals with the subject. The *Nilakēsi* tells how Buddhistic monasteries were rolling in opulence wealth and extravagance, and affirms that all these were obtained from the overseas countries by ships (*kaṭal-kaṭantu kalam tanta nalam* — 268). Certainly it could not be possible without the support of the political powers and influences. Even though the Jains, Buddhists and other sects like Ājīvaka, fought between themselves, it has been seen, that they were united in one thing, that is, in their onslaught against the rising *bhakti* cult of Śaivism and Vaiṣṇavism. That is why Sambandhar puts up his resistance not only to Jainism, his main and formidable rival but other sects such as *tēras* and *ājīvakas* on one and the same plane. And his task was not small.

After the advent of the *Maṇimēkalai* we find the emergence of the *Kuṇṭalakesi*, *Nilakēsi*, *Piṅgalakēsi*, etc. Though they are all in the epic form, their main theme is the dialectical and logical debates upholding the supremacy of their respective religions and philosophy over those of others. Somehow this kind of logical debates had come to attract the attention and appreciation of the masses as well as the monarchs. By the time of Sambandhar, the Jains and Buddhists, because of their logical power, captured the minds of the people. Sambandhar calls them '*tarkkasāttirattavar*' (1.62.10) and especially the *amaṇars* '*kaṇṇamaṇar*' (the learned *amaṇar*, 2.162.10). Their power of eloquence was equated to the magic or myth of Indra (*indira-ñāla moḷi* — 1.105.10). They were capable of using powerful language (*moḷivallana* — 1.37.10). Sambandhar observes that the people in a frenzied mood and running after the *amaṇar*, *cākkīyar* and *ājīvakas* appear like the people who are running after the mirage with pots in hand (*pēyttērppin, kuṭaṇ koṇṭu nīrkkucceḷvār* — 1.118.10). He also says that the people were deluded by hearing

their words (1.18.10) and that the people were confused by their folly — (Tiruvīṭaivāppatikam, 10).

There was nothing wrong, had they used their talents and powers for the establishment of truth and for the benefit of the people at large. In fact, Sambandhar clearly acknowledges the fact that amongst his opponents there were good souls who preached *aṛam* (*nallār aṛam colla* — 1.84.10). But he had to combat with those who used their talents and powers to distort the truth and cheat the people with their hypocrisy and transgressions of their own codes of good conduct. To Sambandhar God is the Truth of all truths. That which from eternity remains unchanging and never forgotten in the consciousness is the Truth which is God. The main grievance of Sambandhar with these alien religions is that they do not realise and accept the truth (*neriyilvaru pēṇāvakai ninaiyā ninaivonṇai aṇivil camaṇātar* — 1.18.10). They are the deluded lot (*pirāntar* — 1.127.10). They do not know the state of higher truth (*māpatam aṇiyātavar* — 2.141.10). The doubting Jains (*aiyurum amaṇar* — 1.128, l. 36) do not realise the truth in a clear manner (*terrenṇu teyvam teliyār* — 3.312.11). That is why the Jains say that that sort of a thing (God) is and is not (*attaku poru! uṇṭum illaiyum* — 3.297.3 — *asti-nāsti*). They try to explain it away through their doctrine called the *syādvāda*. Similarly Sambandhar criticises the *kṣaṇikavāda* (the doctrine of momentariness) of the Buddhists (1.21.10 and 3.241.10). He also criticises them for their doctrine that the efforts will bear fruit of their own accord. (*muyanṇa paṭum* — 3.335.10) without the aid of an efficient cause or *kartā*. For him all are done by God's will because He is the very embodiment of order and justice (3.329.4). He also brushes aside the *ārambhavāda* and exhorts the people not to believe the words of those of the *ārambhavāda* (*ārambartam urai koḷḷanmin* — 1.10.10). The Jains and the Vaibhāṣikas profess this doctrine of the *ārambhavāda*.

God is the end, beginning and middle of all things (2.165.11). He shines within the soul. One could not reach Him by relying too much on reasoning and the logic of comparison (3.312.5). But they go on debating till their very end (*cāvāyum vādu cey*

cāvakar cākkiyar — 2.147.9). Even though Sambandhar realises the futility of their debate (2.145.2) however, he accepts their challenge to face them in the debates at Madurai. Sambandhar also laments that they do not think of Him in spite of the exposition of justice in his plea (3.273.10). According to him, the holy books of the alien sects do not accept the truth, and therefore he calls them falsehood, (*poynūl* — 1,107.10; 2.148.10) and all their words as the words of liars (*poyyar* — 1.88.10), as lies (*poymal* — 1.89.10; 2.146.10; 1.51.10). When the basic truth is lost sight of, he says, whatever their efforts are, to perform penance and to preach their ethics, still they are ignorant. They do not know the real significance of penance. Therefore the words they repeat could not be trusted (1.79.10). That is why we find Sambandhar, very often, exhorting the people not to pay heed to the words of the Jains and the Buddhists.⁷⁰ He was well aware of the militancy (*miṇṭurai* — 3.328.10) in the arguments of his opponents and hence warns his followers not to be swayed by the militant words (*miṇṭavai*) of these militant people (*miṇṭar*).⁷¹ They are more cruel than poison (*naṇcinum koṭiyārē* — 3.275.10; and also 3.285.10).

The Jain ascetics held seven habits as the cardinal principles and virtues of their asceticism. They are *ulōccu*⁷² (tonsuring), *digambaram* (nakedness),⁷³ refraining from bath⁷⁴ and dental cleaning,⁷⁵ lying on the floor,⁷⁶ eating while standing⁷⁷ and eating once a day. Sambandhar refers to all these practices and criticises them vehemently. As long as the mind is attuned to the spirit of all these things they might have helped them towards their spiritual advancement. But when that was not there, according to Sambandhar, they had produced horror and embarrassment amidst the members of the society. Yuan-Chwang who travelled in the Tamil country during this period had observed that the Buddhist monasteries were almost deserted, as the monks there indulged in mean acts and that the Jains who were in large numbers were all *digambaras* (naked ascetics).⁷⁸ To renounce even the cloths may be an act of utter detachment to the worldly things. But that itself will not become *dharma* or *aram*, as Sambandhar points out that they show

off their *aṛam* only by removing their clothes (*āṭai tavirttaṛam kāṭ-
ṭuvār* — 2.204.10; and also see 2.177.10) and not otherwise.

Those who looked at them were very much ashamed (*kaṇṭār
nāṇumpaṭi* — 2.198.10). That the very sight of them frightened
the womenfolk is observed by Appar (4.5.8; 5.58.5). Though
many of them cast away their clothes without being ashamed
(*nāṇātu uṭai nittōrkaḷ* — 1.98.10), yet some of them could not hide
their sense of shame, and therefore covered their private parts
with mats woven out of palmyra leaves (1.101.10; 2.255.11).
That indicates their own mental reservation. Another conduct
Sambandhar despises is their hypocrisy in matters of food. Both
Buddhists and Jains would take their food only once a day; the
former in the first part of the day and the latter in the second part
of the day (2.207.10). But it was a practice more outward than
supported by the spiritual will. They were, on the other hand,
accused for their gluttony and insatiable fondness for eating. The
moment the morning dawned, they used to rush to have their
gruel food, without even washing their eyes (and face) (*kaṇṭār
kaḷuvā munnē ṭṭik kalavaikkaṇṇiyar uṇṭu* — 1.67.6). They some-
how managed to fatten their bellies (*paṇṭiyaip perukkiṭum paḷa-
karkaḷ* — 3.290.10). The Buddhists and the Jains indulged in debat-
ing over the issue whether it was good to eat the mutton or not.
While the former held the view that there was nothing wrong in
eating the flesh of the animals and fish, when they themselves did
not kill them,⁷⁹ the Jains preached that even then it was a sin. But
in actual practice, as pointed out by Sambandhar, the Buddhists
were clandestinely catching the fish from the waters near the
monasteries.⁸⁰ The Jains while they showed off many-faceted *aṛam*
(ethics), in actual life, had stolen the goats that came near their
monasteries for grazing (*pallaṛam kāṭṭi varum āṭelām kavār kaiyar*
— 3.297.5).

Sambandhar blames the Jains for the treatment meted out
by them to their own women monks (*nāḷum kurattikaḷ pēṇār* —
1.72.10). Probably, he here criticises the Jains for their doctrine
that no woman could directly attain salvation. In the *Nīlakēsi*,
we find the mutual acrimony thrown at each other by the Jains

and Buddhists (244;245; 323). That was why they were despised by the public (*paṭu paḷi uṭaiyavar* — 3.289.10). We also find in the hymn how the Jains and Buddhists unnecessarily tortured themselves like standing under the hot sun, sweating profusely and emitting bad smell.⁸¹ Sambandhar considers that their vain acts could not help any one realise the truth, and calls the penance of his adversaries false penance (*poṭṭavam* — 1.39.10). Thus we find how it was given to Sambandhar to resist the onslaught of the bad elements amongst the Buddhist and Jains who not only decried the basic tenets of his religious truths, but also, being intoxicated with the political power and support, indulged in acts that affected the sound and healthy principles and practice of ascetic as well as social life.

However, commensurate with his philosophy that all acts are God's acts, he realises that even the Jains and Buddhists are the manifestation of Śiva's grace, and for some divine purpose the Lord puts them under some illusion which prevents them from coming nearer to Him (*tannai nanṇaraiyāvakai mayakki* — 1.132.10). He even feels sorry for the Jains and Buddhists who have no good destiny to realise Him, and he wonders as to what would they do to save themselves (1.50.10). He pities them for they did not have the good fortune (of loving God) and hence had forfeited the blissful experience of both this world and the other (*pāḷḷiyaminṇi irutalaip pōkamum paṇṇum viṭṭār* — 1.116.10). That is why he exhorts his followers not to be provoked by, or angry with their acts of polemics and acrimony, e.g., '*vekuḷēnmin*' (do not be angry — 2.147.9; 2.150.10); '*vāṭiyā vamin*' (come without arguing with them or come without harming them — 2.148.10). He believes that it is Śiva who has created their religions; and all the Jains and Buddhists are His creations. That is why, before he commences his debates with the Jains he seeks Śiva's permission and grace, not only once, but thrice, and that too, for the only purpose of winning them in the logical disputation (*vāṭil venṇaḷikkat tiruvuḷḷamē* — 3.366.1 — 10).

Before concluding the section, one important point has to be made clear. Sambandhar has been held responsible by some for

the execution of the Jains at Madurai by transfixion at the stakes. There is no internal evidence in his hymns to prove this contention. Appar in his *patikam* on Tiruppaḷaiyāraivaṭataḷi makes the following statements: (i) the Lord has made the temple for Himself after cutting at the roots of the community of the Jains who carry the waterjug (*kuṇṭikai, tūkkinār kulam tūraṭuttē taṇakkākkināṇ aṇiyārai vaṭataḷi* — 5.58.2, 6); (ii) Lord Śaṅkara has destroyed the community of those who are in the habit of eating in naked state (*amaṇēyūṇum, sātiyaikkeṭumā ceyta Saṅkaraṇ* — 5.58.6); (iii) He has caused the destruction of one thousand Jains (*āyiram camaṇum aḷivākkināṇ*, 9). These statements make two points clear, that is: (i) that they refer only to the incidents in the life of Appar;⁸² (ii) and that they also point out that in the period under review religious persecution was not untrue. But the statements, on no account, refer to the incidents at Madurai. However, they have given rise to a tradition that the vanquished in the religious debates were subjected to presecution. Similarly a tradition might have been woven around the debate Sambandhar had with the Jains at Madurai.

Ārūrar does not say anything about the transfixion of the Jains by Sambandhar; not even Yuan-Chwang who has recorded many events, makes mention of it. It is only Nambiyāṇḍār Nambī who first attributes this act to Sambandhar in so many words.⁸³ Next to him, Oṭṭakkūttar (12th century A.D.) deals with this story elaborately in 53 verses in his *Takkayākapparaṇi*. He titles this story as '*amaṇar kaḷumisaikoḷvatu*' which means *Amaṇar's* mounting on the stake of transfixion (170). The early commentator gives the meaning to this title that the *amaṇars* mount on the stake of their own accord. He also says that Sambandhar (*Pillaiyār*) did not kill them as they themselves ended their lives by transfixion, because of their vow not to tell lies. Thus, it is implied here that it was not Sambandhar who caused their death. Apparently, on their defeat at the hands of Sambandhar, they mounted on the weapon and gave up their lives. At this crucial juncture, Cēkkilār affirms that Sambandhar did not harbour any malice towards the Jains (*ikalilar*),⁸⁴ but at the same time he did not try to prevent their execution because he did not want to

interfere with the jurisprudence of the king. As the Jains had committed an offence of trying to kill the devotees by setting fire it was only proper on the part of the king to discharge his judicial duty.⁸⁵ Thus it is seen from Cēkṣilār's account also that Sambandhar was not responsible for the execution of the Jains. But somehow in the later centuries, when religious intolerance was not considered undesirable or unnatural, later sources took credit and pride in attributing the transfixion of the Jains to Sambandhar. For those who have understood Sambandhar's loving mind through his hymns, to attribute this to him is a great disservice to him. The noble soul which asked his followers not to be angry with the Jains because of their polemics would not have descended to the level of seeing them killed. Yet, it has to be admitted that he too could not control himself from using harsh words against his adversaries. Perhaps there were also problems other than religious which conditioned his reactions towards the Jains and Buddhists. It is for the sociologists to study this aspect in greater depth.

5.7 *Sambandhar's universal outlook*

The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English gives the meaning of the word 'Universalist' as 'one who holds... that all mankind will eventually be saved.' Sambandhar's universal vision is more universal in the sense that he hopes for the salvation not only of all mankind but also of all living beings. He believes that the Lord will instantly bestow His grace on (and save) all creatures that seek Him, wherever and as whatever they are born. In his hymns we find not only men and women worshipping the Lord; even animals and birds adore and worship Him. To go further, even the inanimate objects like the rivers (Muttāru, etc.) are personified as *aṭiyārs* that carry the flowers, sandal wood, etc., and fall at His feet in all love and devotion (1.12.1). To achieve this universal viewpoint one must cross all barriers, sink all differences and seek common cause with one and all through love. The basis of Sambandhar's all-embracing love is God. He loves Tamil, Sanskrit, Music — in short — the entire existence as they are the loving and beautiful manifestations of God. That is why his love for Tamil or Sanskrit does not become narrow. In fact,

he believes that all languages could express the Love of God. Though Sanskrit is hailed to be the language of the gods, he says that the celestials sing the glory of God in all the languages (*ellā moḷiyālum imaiyōr toḷutēṭta*, 1.85.1). In Vēdavanam we find the damsels who seek and experience the music that springs from the choice Tamil diction, and people who hail from different directions, countries and speak different languages gather and enjoy the musical prayer offered to the Lord (3.334.4). At Pukalūr the great savants of Tamil, Sanskrit, and other languages of different directions gather, sing, play on the lute (*yāḷ*) and seek to dispel the darkness that besets their minds (2.227.7).

Sambandhar trusts that in essence even the alien religions seek to realise the same God which he worships. He proclaims that Lord Śiva is glorified and worshipped by the very gods whom the Jains and Buddhists seek to know (*'nāṭiya tēvarellām nayantēṭṭiya nannalattān'* — 3.317.10); (*'tēṭiya tēvar tammāl iraiñ-cappāṭum tēvarpirān'* — 3.318.10). Thus, it is seen, Sambandhar's broad vision evolves out of his basic philosophy — a philosophy of God-love.

NOTES

1. C. Kerenyi, *op. cit.*, p. 3
2. T.J.N. Pu. 728
3. 3.303.11; also see 3.259.11, 3.295.10
4. *Silappatikāram, kaṭalāṭukātai*, l. 35; Aṭiyārkkunallār's commentary, p. 188
5. *Ibid.*, *arañkēṭṭukkātai*, Aṭiyārkkunallār's commentary, p. 105
6. *Ibid.*, p. 104
7. *Ibid.*, they are called musical syllabic formulae or *santakuḷippu* in Tamil.
8. They are: *eṭuttal* (ascent), *paṭuttal* (descent), *nalital* (softening), *kampitam* (vibration), *kuṭilam* (oblique action), *oli* (making the tune louder), *uruṭṭu* (throbbing or rolling), and *tāḱku* (stress).

9. *Ibid.*, p. 105

10. ஈற்று பண்ணும் எழுமுன்று திறனும்

— *Piṅgalantai*, 1380

11. *Yāl Nūl, paṇṇiyal*, p. 154

12. *Ibid.*, p. 153

13. *Ibid.*, p. 152

14. *Silappatikāram, vēṇirkātai*, Aṭiyārkkunallār's commentary, p. 232

15. It used to be sung as *suddhāṅgam* without the time beat (*tālam*) in the form of an *ālatti* — S. Ramanathan, *Tēvārappāṇṇisai*, Kalaimakal Isaikkallūri, Madras, 1970, p. XI.

16. Cf., Ka. Vellaivaranan, *Paṇṇiru Tirumuṟai Varalāru*, Part I, p. 409

17. According to Kanchipuram Nayanappillai, the *kāntāram* here is the *kāntāram*-note (*svara*) while the *paṇ* is the *kāntāram paṇ*; see S. Ramanathan, *Tēvārappāṇṇisai*, p. XIV.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 63

19. *Yāl Nūl*, p. 153

20. *A.P. Mummaṇikkōvai*, 19

21. 1.5.6; 2.148.3, 2.205.4

22. 1.5.6; 2.148.3, 2.187.9

23. 1.44.5; 1.73.8, 2.221.11, 3.339.2

24. 1.18.3; 2.204.4, 2.220.11

25. 1.18.3; 2.204.4

26. 1.73.8; 2.148.3, 3.339.2, 3.343.7

27. 1.45.5; 1.73.8, 2.205.4

28. 1.44.5

29. 1.75.4

30. 1.75.5; 3.334.5

31. 3.317.4; 3.343.7

32. 1.24.7

33. 1.75.4

34. 3.334.3, 5
35. 3.334.5
36. 3.339.2
37. S. Ramanathan, *Tēvārappanṇisai*, p. XVII
38. See *Tāl Nūl, pāyiraviyal*, p. 11
39. *Ibid*, p. 269
40. பண்ணும்பத மேழும்பல வோசைத் தமிழவையும்
உண்ணின்றதொர் சுவையும்முறு தாளத்தொலிபலவும்
மண்ணும்புன லுயிரும்வரு காற்றுஞ்சுடர்முன்றும்
விண்ணும்முழு தானானிடம் வீழிம் மிழலையே—1.11.4
41. 7.62.8; 1.24.1.8; 1.77.4, 1.88.7, 1.108.1, 8, 9, 10; 2.205.1,
2.242.9, 2.261.1
42. *A.P. Antāti*, 79
43. Ka. Vellaivaranan, *op. cit.*, p. 480
44. *Silappatikāram, kaṭalāṭukātai*, Aṭiyārkkunallār's commen-
tary, p. 188
45. T. Virabadra Mudaliar, "Lord Sambandha and An
unknown Tamilian Prosody," *The Light of Truth or Siddhanta
Deepika*, monthly journal, Vol. II, No. 5, Madras, September
1898, p. 114
46. *A. P. Tiruvulāmālai, kaṇṇi* 83 - 85.
47. T.J.N. Pu., 276, 277
48. *Poruḷatikāram, ceyyuliyal*, 232
49. Pēyālṽār is anterior to Sambandhar. Periyavāccāṇ
piḷḷai in his commentary on Pēyālṽār's *Mūṇṇām Tiruvantāti* (69),
says that in that verse the poet by losing his identity as āḷṽār
assumes the state of the lady - love and speaks the words of her
mother (āḷṽārāṇa avastai pōy oru pīrāṭṭi avastaiyai bhajittu
avaluṭaiya daṣaiyai tēyār colkiṇā!) — Sri Suktimālā malar, 25,
Pēyālṽār aruḷiya Mūṇṇām tiruvantāti — Periyavāccāṇ piḷḷai's com-
mentary, S. Krishnaswamy Iyengar (ed.), Tirichirappalli, (year:
1972) p. 218.
50. *The Holy Bible, Old and New Testaments*, "Song of
Solomon", British and Foreign Bible Society, London,
pp. 586-590

51. T.P. Meenakshisundaran, *A History of Tamil Literature*, Annamalai University, 1966, pp. 74-75

52. *Ibid.*, p. 25

53. See *Siddhanta Deepika*, Vols. II, III and IV

54. *The Hindu*, Madras, 27.12.1978

55. *The Holy Bible*, New Testament, St. Mathew, Chapt. 5.4

56. *A.P. Tiruvantāti*, 80

57. *Tiruppallāṇṇu*, 5

58. T.J.N. Pu. 134

59. The Jains are called *sravanas*. From this term are derived the Tamil words *camaṇar* and *amaṇar*. They are also called *piṇṇiyar*, for *piṇṇi* is the (Ashoka) tree under which Mahāvīra obtained his wisdom. The Buddhists are generally called *pauttar*. *Pōṭiyar* is derived from the word *pōṭi* -- the pipal tree under which Lord Buddha got his enlightenment. *Tērar* points to Buddhists belonging to *teravāda*. Buddha's teachings are called *piṇṇakas* and hence the word *piṇṇakar* to mean Buddhists. The term *cākkīyar* also refers to Buddhists.

60. *Silappatikāram*, *kāḷkōṭikātai*, ll. 65, 66; *varantarukātai*, l. 141

61. *Ibid.*, *kāṇṇikātai*, l. 66

62. l.1.10; also see l.3.10, l.4.10, l.14.10, l.32.10, l.86.10, 2.257.10

63. C.V. Narayana Ayyar, *Origin and Early History of Saivism in South India*, pp. 286, 287

64. *Ibid.*, pp. 287 - 301; T.P. Meenakshisundaran, *Camaṇat Tamil Ilakkiya Varalāṇṇu*, Kalaikkattir Publication, Coimbatore, Feb. 1961, p. 9

65. *Ibid.*, p. 7

66. E.G. 11, No 254, p. 111; No 258, p. 117

67. C.V. Narayana Ayyar, *op. cit.*, pp. 299-303

68. From the *patikam* of Appar on Paḷaiyāṇai vaṭataḷi, it is known that the shrine of Śiva there was concealed and defaced by the Jains — 5.58 l.

69. *Camanaṭ Tamil Ilakkiya Varalāru*, p. 90
70. 1.3.10; 1.27.10, 1.31.10, 1.44.10, 1.85.10, 1.101.10, 2.148.10, 2.240.10, 3.304.10
71. 1.42.10; 1.100.10, 1.133.10, 2.143.10, 2.150.10, 2.184.10, 2.225.10, 2.240.10, 3.323.10
72. 1.17.10; 1.20.11, 1.22.10, 1.92.10
73. 1.27.10; 1.36.10, 1.42.10, 1.46.10, 1.99.10, 2.208.10
74. 1.90.10; 1.10.10, 1.25.10, 1.27.10, 1.64.10
75. 1.174.10; 3.286.10
76. 2.151.10
77. 1.35.10; 1.36.10, 1.77.10, 3.327.10, 3.340.10
78. U.S.V. Raghavan, *Yuan-Chwang*, Maṇivācakar Nūlakam, Madurai, Jan. 1978, p. 171
79. See Samayadivākara Vāmaṇa Muṇivar's commentary on *Nilakēsi*, Kazhagam ed., Madras, 1964, pp. 279, 280
80. 3.250.10; 3.305.10, 3.340.10, 3.342.10, 3.358.10
81. 1.10.10; also see 1.45.11; 2.153.10, 2.196.10
82. T.N.A. Pu. 297, 299
83. *A.P. Tiruvantāli*, 6, 12, 28, 39, 51, 66, 98; *A.P. Mummaṇikkōvai*, 4, 6, 13; *A.P. Tiruvulāmālai*, 59, 74, 135; *A.P. Kalam-pakam*, 1, 8; *A.P. Tiruttokai*, l. 12
84. T.J.N. Pu. 854
85. See Parimēlaḷakar's commentary on the *Kuṟaḷ*, 550

SIXTH CHAPTER

CONCLUSION

The study undertaken hitherto reveals Sambandhar, emerging before us as a great integrated personality. He resembles a magnificent ocean wherein the mighty rivers of Music, Tamil, Sanskrit, *Vedānta*, *Āgamas* and *Purāṇas* converge. He is a scintillating poet, philosopher, religious leader, reformer and above all an apostle of universal peace, hope, love and salvation that are grounded on God-love. His life, though short on the earth, is a life of constant consciousness of God's grace and love (*tiruntaṭi maṛakkumāṇṭillāta* — 2.234.5). He finds everything and every action as an act of God's grace. With that consciousness (*vayajñānam*) he worships Him through music and poetry and obtains the supreme knowledge (*uyar jñānam*) when he experiences oneness with Him (*tannoḷi mikku uyarnta*), losing all his personal identity (*tanniyalpillā*). Even though he is a Saint of God-consciousness (*patiyāna jñānamunivan*), he does not treat this world as a non-entity or a non-existent. On the other hand, he treats this universe which includes the souls as His eight-faceted form (*aṣṣamūrta*). The Absolute which is changeless (*māṇṇili*) and endless (*kēṇṇili*) unites with His own power (*śakti*) and manifests Himself in the universe for the reasons of His grace (*aruḷ kāraṇaikaḷ varuvān*) to redeem the souls that are contaminated by the impurities (*malas*). That is the purpose of creation.

The souls are many (*palluyir*). They are beginninglessly shrouded in *mala* which degrades them by not allowing them to know and to unite with the Lord. Hence the *mala* is described as *ūnattu iruḷ*. The soul's initial attachment to the *mala* is *pāṣa valvinai*. On account of the *malas* the souls are thrown into the ocean of

births and deaths that bind the souls (*piṇiṇaṭu kaṭal pīraṇikāl*). Even though the embodiment is meant for the purification of the soul, it always thinks of itself as the body and mind. But owing to God's grace, and through the progression of spiritual advancement by various methods, the soul comes to know of its limitation and then of the Lord in whom it finds itself grounded and identified. Apart from the method of *caryā*, *kriyā*, *yoga* and *jñāna*, the method of realising the bliss of oneness with God is achieved by the path of song (*pāṭal neṇi*), the path of dance (*āṭal neṇi*) and the cult of *aṭiyārs*, (*vēṭa neṇi*). In this connection, Sambandhar's own *patikams* as vouched by himself, lead to different and graded attainments. An analytical study of the *Tirukkaṭaikkāppu* hymns has explained the role of the path of the *patikams* (*patikapperuvali*). The souls that have thus realised the Truth become one with God, being always conscious of their unforgettable service (*maṇṇappilā aṭimaikkaṇ maṇamvaiṇṇār*). The Absolute is beyond the reach of word; it is the light beyond all light (*corṇeriyāpporuḷ cōtikku appālinṇa cōti*). One could not know it by the logic of causation or comparison beyond a point. That does not mean that it is a non-entity. It is there in one's consciousness as a self-luminous light. No physical power steeped in arrogance could affect the Absolute. The episode of Rāvaṇa lifting the Mount Kailāsa speaks this truth. No knowledge of the phenomena could reach it. This again is highlighted in the episode of Viṣṇu and Brahmā, trying to reach Śiva's feet and head. The episodes tell us how one could know God by His grace which is obtained by loving devotion.

Sambandhar's loving devotion to God is not a raw emotion. It is tempered by supreme wisdom. He realised God as *Jñāna*. But God is also Beauty and Love. He could be loved and realised. The bridal mystic songs stress this truth.

The metaphysical truths are expressed through mythology (*caritaikāl*). Sambandhar is very much fond of using the language of mythology to express what is otherwise inexplicable. His life itself is religion. He goes from place to place and sings his *patikams* on the Lord enshrined in those places. On account of this, the temples became more popular and the temple-worship

had acquired a social dimension resulting in a mass movement of devotion. Temples, over the years, have come to be centres of socio-economic and cultural activities and temple-worship has become more organised.

Sambandhar accepts the world as God's manifestation. So his approach is a positive approach. He has supreme concern and consideration for his fellow beings. He goes to his fellow-men direct, singing in their own language. In the process, he divinises Tamil and Music and has made rich contribution to their growth. Though he resists some of the ascetics of Buddhism and Jainism for their negativism, yet he admits that they too are the making of God for His own divine purpose. He pities them and pleads for them. It has been shown that such a mind could not even think of putting them, in large numbers, to death.

It is found, in the study, that it is not possible to confine the philosophy of Sambandhar to any one or particular system. He inspires more schools of thought than one. Nambiyāṇḍār Nambi, in his *Tiruttokai* (29), describes Sambandhar as the son of God who has (uttered) the Great word, (*peruvārttai tāruṭaiya pillai*). Śivajñāna Munivar in the preface to his *Māpāṭiyam* (p. 5) equates the phrases '*perumpeyar*' and '*oruvārttai*' with '*Mahāvākya*'. If that is so, '*peruvārttai*' also might be taken to mean '*Mahāvākya*'. Even as the *Mahāvākyas* are capable of being interpreted by many schools of thought in order to establish their respective stand-points, so also the hymns of Sambandhar are sought to be interpreted by more than one school, at least both by the *Vedānta* and the *Siddhānta*.

Sambandhar has realised the Absolute as Śiva and also worships his God as Śiva. Therefore his religion is Śaivism. Even here he refuses to be sectarian. He embraces all those who worship Śiva. His Śaivism is more catholic than sectarian as it has the will to treat even alien religions as the making of Śiva. Śiva of Sambandhar is not only the God of religion but the Absolute of philosophy as well. In short, his philosophy and religion are one

and the same upholding the supremacy of Love which is represented in the form of Parents Divine.

“Does not the great noble Lord dwell at Kaḷumalam along with the Mother who is the noblest among women? When it is so, all could live in happiness and prosperity on this very earth for eternity. If they think of Him together with Mother they will not lack anything in obtaining their good destiny.”

maṇṇilnalla vaṇṇam vāḷalām vaikalum
eṇṇilnalla gatikki yūtumōr kuṇaivilaik
kaṇṇilnal lahturuṇ kaḷumala vaḷanakarṇ
*peṇṇilnal lāḷoḷum peruntakai yiruntatē — 3. 282.1**

This is, indeed, the message of the philosophy and religion of Tirujñānasambandhar. It holds out a promise and hope here and now for the welfare and salvation of the entire humanity — nay the universe of all ages.

*மண்ணில்நல்ல வண்ணம் வாழலாம் வைகலும்
 எண்ணில் நல்ல கதிக்கி யாதுமோர் குறைவிலைக்
 கண்ணில்நல் லஃதுறுங் கழுமல வளநகர்ப்
 பெண்ணில்நல் லாளொடும் பெருந்தகை யிருந்ததே.

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Tirujñānasambandhar holds a unique place among the poet-saints of Tamil Nadu. Through his songs and music, Sambandhar sought, and succeeded in finding the unitive experience binding himself with nature and God. He loved and worshipped that unitive Principle in the name and form of Śiva. He is not a system-builder, nor a philosopher in an ordinary sense. Yet philosophical and religious concepts are embedded in his poetry. This work aims at identifying and bringing to focus the basic conceptual frame-work of his thought.

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