

# SAIVA SIDDHANTAM

A SHORT SURVEY

BY

TIRUVACHAKAMANI

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**Dedicated**  
**TO**  
**THE LATE**  
**J. M. NALLASWAMI PILLAI**

**DISTRICT MUNSIFF**

**AND**

**"DEFENDER OF THE FAITH"**

**WHOSE WONDERFUL ZEAL**

**AND**

**WHOLE - HEARTED WORK**

**FOR**

**THE SACRED CAUSE OF SIDDHANTAM**

**ARE**

**AN EXAMPLE TO ALL**

**AND**

**AN INSPIRATION TO ME.**

D. S. Kumaraswami Raja

CHIEF MINISTER OF MADRAS

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FORT ST. GEORGE

MADRAS

17th August 1951

## Foreword

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The booklet “Saiva Siddhantam” published by Sri. K. M. Balasubramaniam is a short and analytical exposition of the metaphysics of Saiva Siddhantam which cannot but give an interesting reading to any one wanting to know something about Saiva Siddhantam. Within the short compass of this booklet, the author has brought out succinctly those aspects which form the fundamentals of Saiva Siddhantam. This booklet also reflects the author’s devotional approach of the subject that he has chosen for his exposition.

(Sd.) P. S. Kumaraswami Raja

# Blessings

Sir A. L. MUDALIAR M.D., LL.D., D.C.L.

VICE-CHANCELLOR,

UNIVERSITY OF MADRAS.

The short brochure that Mr. K. M. Balasubramaniam has got up gives a good exposition of Saiva Siddhantam, a system of religious thought very highly revered and adopted in South India. Many great scholars have attempted an exposition of the great moral principles of Saiva Siddhanta philosophy. This short survey will serve as an incentive to those who wish to follow more thoroughly the works of Saiva Siddhanta by the great authors who have been referred to in this brochure. Mr. Balasubramaniam is well fitted for this task and I hope this will be a precursor to other publications that he will bring out in due course.

Kilpauk  
Madras 10.  
19—8—'51. }

(Sd.) A. L. Mudaliar



Sir K. VAITHIANATHAN

PERMANENT SECRETARY

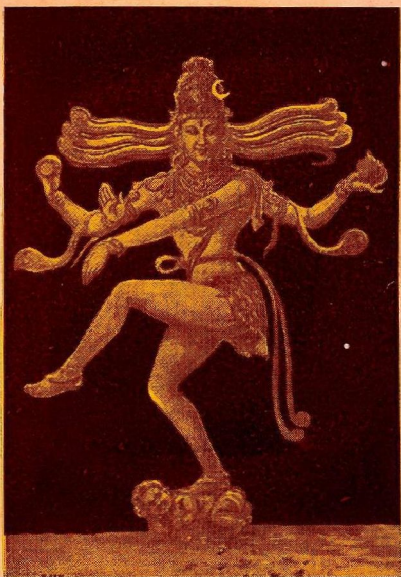
TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF CEYLON

"..... I have read the book at one sitting and I am yet to read a clearer exposition of the principal aspects of a most difficult subject in so few words."

Senate Building  
Colombo. }  
23rd August, 1951. }

(Sd.) K. Vaithianathan





**LORD NATARAJA**

## PREFACE

THIS brochure called Saiva Siddhantam—A Short Survey is a reprint in book form of the three Talks in English which I was recently privileged to broadcast from the All India Radio, Madras. At the specific instance of the Director of A. I. R. Madras I had to deal with the subject of my Talks under three broad headings namely (1) Saiva Siddhantam : The Saints (2) Saiva Siddhantam : The Tenets, and (3) Saiva Siddhantam : Music and devotion. These three Talks were broadcast on 19-4-51, 10-5-51 and 24-5-51 respectively. To compress and comprehend within the short compass of three Radio Talks such a vast and recondite subject as the Siddhantic Philosophy is too ambitious a task to be undertaken and too difficult a task to be performed even by the ablest of experts. And I would not have dared to rush in where mightier men are afraid to venture but for the generous call from the A. I. R. which I instinctively took for the divine call. And I have responded to that call to the best of my ability. But the purpose of the series arranged by the A. I. R. was not an exhaustive treatment of the subject, which is simply impossible. To induce the layman, too long scared and far too shy, to be bold enough to drink in the Siddhantic Ambrosia at the very fountain-head was the only aim of the Talks; and to multiply further the number of those people whose interest in Saiva Siddhantam should become

live and enlightened is the purpose of this present publication of those Talks in book form. Nothing will give me and the publisher greater satisfaction than the knowledge that such a humble aim as this has become fulfilled. And the generous recognition of this efficacy of this brochure by the eminent Internationalist Dr. A. L. Mudaliar is a sufficient index of its success.

Now it remains for me to thank the authorities of the All India Radio, Madras for the fillip given to the task of popularising the Siddhanta Philosophy by their generous arrangement of this series of Talks. These Talks have been republished in this booklet form with the kind permission of the All India Radio ; our indebtedness to them for their kind permission to reproduce is acknowledged with great pleasure.

Though many requests had been made by kind friends and appreciative listeners that the Talks broadcast by me should be republished, it was not easily possible for me to find a publisher for such an "abstruse" and "uninteresting" work as the Siddhantam which will not make a glittering appeal to the galleries. But my good friend Mr. G. Varadarajan B.A. who is the worthy President of the Tirisirapuram Saiva Siddhanta Sabha made the most unexpected and spontaneous response to my casual request to him and came forward to publish this brochure on behalf of his Saiva Siddhanta Sabha. He is the distinguished editor of the popular Tamil Monthly Journal called "TIRUVALLUVAR" which he owns as well. Mr. Varadarajan is the popular scion of a

noble family in Tiruchi District and his indefatigable efforts in the excellent cause of popularising the Kural and propagating its teachings have almost become a legend amongst the Tamils. He is also anxious to do his best for the Saiva Siddhanta Philosophy in the study of which he is now evincing a keen and lively interest. This publication by him, as President of the T. S. S. Sabha is an eloquent index of his sincere interest in the spread of Saiva Siddhantam throughout the English-speaking world. I wish to place on record my deep sense of gratitude and indebtedness to him for this spontaneous and significant gesture of helpfulness to the cause of holy Siddhantam.

Hon. Sri. P. S. Kumaraswami Raja, the Chief Minister of Madras has been kind and noble enough to honour me with a Foreword for my booklet for which I am ever indebted to him. He is a Prince among ministers and a minister among princes and his enlightened interest in religion and philosophy is an example to his colleagues on the Treasury Benches. His latest address at Mayavaram exhorting the Heads of the Saiva Muts to do their duty by their religion as ever in the great Task-Master's eye and conform to the pattern of such a divine life as would scorn delights and live laborious days will ever be a classical example of the secular authority's exhortation to the Spiritual Heads. I offer my heartfelt thanks to him for his generous Foreword.

I am equally proud and pleased to have been blessed with a kind appreciation from the pen of Dr. A. L. Mudaliar, the world-renowned Vice-Chancellor of the Madras University. Dr. A.L. Mudaliar who recently made history by being elected the

Vice-Chancellor for the fourth term by the Madras University is not merely an unrivalled educationist. He is an eminent savant of international reputation who would do honour to any country in the world at any period in history. Having adorned the medical department as its most resplendent Kohinoor, Dr. A. L. Mudaliar is making history in the academic world as the popular Vice-Chancellor of four-terms. The Doctorate of Law of the Glasgow University and the Chairmanship of the UNESCO are the British and world editions respectively of the distinction and honour which are his birthright even at home. That such a great man could have found the time necessary to peruse my humble brochure and to write and send his blessings argues eloquently for his ardent feeling of generosity. With a wonderful sense of foresight he has wisely anticipated my future attempts at similar publications and his sincere blessings therefore have strengthened and fortified my spirit. I thank him sincerely for his message of blessings.

My thanks are no less due to Sir K. Vaithianathan of Ceylon for his very brief but valuable appreciation of my humble attempt.

I would be less than human if I failed to acknowledge my unmixed feeling of gratitude to my honoured friends Sri T. Sivaprakasam Pillai and Sri T. Sivagnanam, Directors of the Trichinopoly United Printers for their very magnanimous helpfulness in the matter of this publication.

May God Siva bless the world with health, prosperity and peace !

Tiruchy, }  
1—9—51. }

K. M. Balasubramaniam.

# SAIVA SIDDHANTAM

## A SHORT SURVEY



“As a system of religious thought, as an expression of faith and life, the Saiva Siddhānta is by far the best that South India possesses. Indeed, it would not be rash to include the whole of India and to maintain that, judged by its intrinsic merits the Saiva Siddhanta represents the highwatermark of Indian thought and Indian life”..... This was the considered verdict of the Rev. Mr. Gowdie a christian missionary of half a century ago. It was another missionary, Rev. G. U. Pope that solemnly passed his judgement that “Saiva Siddhanta Philosophy is the choicest product of the Dravidian intellect”.

### MEIKANDA DEVAR

Meikanda Dēva Nāinār is generally considered as the greatest divine theologian of Saiva Siddhantam in Tamil. He was a boy prodigy who flourished in the village of Tiruvennainallur in South Arcot district in the 13th century A. D. His treatise of condensed and sententious sūtras numbering twelve is called the Sivagnāna Bōdham, which is, as it were the New Testament of South Indian Saiva Siddhantam. Tradition has woven a miraculous story around his own indoctrination into this philosophy in his early infancy. Paranjōthi from Kailas who was on his aerial journey in the sky suddenly descended on earth and finding this precocious and predestined child in play, he poured out the divine and mystic word into his ear and flew again his way. This is

perhaps the Middle age edition of the descending of the dove of Holy Ghost on the divine child Jesus. That very moment this three-year-old prodigy got the inspiration and composed his immortal Sivagnana Bodham—the sheet-anchor of Saiva Siddhantam of the South Indian School of Saivism. As yet a child, nor yet a fool to fame, he lisped in metaphysics as metaphysics came.

Shorn of its miraculous aroma that sublimates this Shastra with a divine origin, Sivagnana Bodham is usually known as the authentic translation of the sutras in the Raurava Agama in Sanskrit. This is the traditional, immemorial view held to be true by great men and saints like Sivagnana Yōgigal. But there has also been a School of Orientalists whose favourite theory is that Meikandar's Tamil text is the original and the Sanskrit sutras in Raurava Agama are the translations thereof. It is enough to just mention this difference of opinion; it is needless to decide the question.

### ARULNANDI SIVAM

Arulnandi Sivāchārya<sup>1</sup> was the greatest and most accomplished disciple of Meikandār and he was responsible for two works on Saiva Siddhantam namely Sivagnāna Siddhiār and Irupā Irupahdu. Of these two, Sivagnana

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1. He was the family priest of Meikandar's father. He was so erudite and profound a scholar that he was celebrated with the popular appellation of 'Sakalagama Pandithar'. The story goes that while the child sage Meikandar was engaged in instructing the pupils on Saiva Siddhantam, Arulnandi, the senior guru walked into the classroom, full of self-consciousness and proud of his learning. But he was completely ignored by Meikandar who was busy explaining what Anava Malam is. The great Brahmin guru, full of wounded vanity, intervened and asked Meikandar if he could illustrate Anavam. At once and with a supreme look of disdain, Meikandar pointed at Arulnandi himself with his fore-finger as such an example of Anavam. The elder guru at once fell prostrate at the child's feet and accepted him as his guru and got initiation.

Siddhiar is the most elaborate, interesting and learned commentary in verse on the original laconic treatise of his guru, namely the Sivagnana Bhodham. "There is no god above Sivam and no Shastra above Siddhiar" is one of the many proverbs that very well illustrates the greatness of this monumental work. It is divided into two parts, the Parapaksham and the Supaksham. The first part states and ably refutes the metaphysics of all other Faiths then prevalent in the land while the second part states and explains lucidly the principles and tenets of Suddhādvaita Siddhāntam.

### UMAPATHI SIVAM

Of the fourteen works in Tamil collectively styled as the Siddhanta Shastras, eight are reputed to be the excellent works written by Umāpathi Sivācharyā<sup>2</sup>, a member of the Thillai Assembly of Three Thousands. They are: Sivaprakasam, Unmaineri Vilakam, Tiruvarutpayan, Vina Venba,

2. There is a significant story about this saint. While he, as a Thillai Dikshitar, was returning from temple seated on a palanquin and accompanied by torch-bearers during day time, St. Maraignana Sambandar who was passing by made a cutting remark loud enough to be heard by Umapathi "Here goes a sun-blind man." Stung by these words, Umapathi jumped down from the palanquin and giving up all, simply followed his guru. Maraignanasambandar after traversing through many a street began to quench his thirst by drinking with his palms the conjee water poured by a weaver. Seeing this, Umapathi the disciple hurried to his guru and held in his palm the conjee water trickling down his guru's hand and avidly drank it himself. On learning about this 'profane' and 'unholy' act of Umapathi, the Thillai Anthanars deprived him of his caste and the attendant privilege of performing puja to Sri Nataraja once a year. But unmindful of this, Umapathi was staying in a place near by. On the day when his turn of puja fell, the substitute archaka went into the temple to perform his duty but he could not find the idol. The Thillai Assembly was informed by God that the idol had gone to Umapathi and was with him, in preference to them. The disillusioned Brahmins then hastened to Umapathi and begged his pardon and restored his caste and his privilege. Later on, this Umapathi initiated into dikshai an adi-dravida wood-cutter Pethan at the specific command of Lord Nataraja. This story is a good reply to the caste-ridden Hindus and their blind prejudices.



Pōtri Palthodai, Kodi Kavi, Nenju Vidu Thoothu and Sankarpa Nirākaranam. Among them the most noteworthy is Sivaprakāśana work of one hundred and one stanzas. Its elegance, clarity and brilliance are equally famous in the Saiva world. A study of it is indispensable for a clear mastery of the Saiva metaphysics. This Umapathi Sivam was the disciple of Maraigāna Sambandar who had been himself the disciple of Arulnandhi Sivam, the stately author of the Siddhiar. In his work "Sankarpa Nirakaranam" Umapathi Sivam has expressly stated the date of his work as 1313 A. D., which fact is responsible for fixing the date of his immediate predecessors and Meikandar more or less accurately. Unmai Vilakam is another Siddhanta work which is said to have been composed by Mana Vāsakam Kadanthār, a direct disciple of Meikanda Devar.

### THE OTHERS

Though Sivagnana Bodham is the most authoritative and self-contained text on Saiva Siddhanta Philosophy with the sanction of divine inspiration, yet chronologically speaking, it is not the earliest composition. A little prior to it had been composed two works in Tamil verse dealing very succinctly but pointedly with some aspects of Saiva Siddhantam. One was called Thiruvunthiar consisting of 45 triplets of verse and composed by Uyyavantha Dēvar of Thiruviyalur and the other was called Thirukalitrupadiyār which contains one hundred venba quatrains remarkable for beauty of thought and expression and which was composed by another Uyyavantha Dēvar of Tirukadavūr; he was the disciple's disciple of his previous namesake. Most elaborate of all and in no way less authentic is the classical work called Tirumūlar's Tirumanthiram. It contains about 3000 stanzas minutely describing the Saiva System of metaphysics and it is perhaps the earliest of all the extant works in Tamil on

the Siddhantam. For St. Sundarar of the 8th Century A. D. refers to Tirumular as one of the canonized Seventytwo of the Saiva creed. Thus we have quite a formidable list of Siddhanta Shastras in Tamil, dealing with all aspects and details of the age-old philosophy of Āgamāntam. And here are their names once again: 1. Sivagnāna Bodham 2. Sivagnāna Siddhiar 3. Irupa Irupadhu 4. Thiruvunthiār 5. Tirukalitrupadiyar 6. Unmaineri Vilakam 7. Unmai Vilakam 8. Sivaprakasam 9. Kodi Kavi 10. Vinā Venbā 11. Nenju vidu Thoothu 12. Sankarpa Nirakaranam 13. Potri Palthodai and 14. Tiruvarutpayan and finally Tirumular's Tirumanthiram<sup>3</sup>.

### SAMAYACHARYAS AND SANTANACHARYAS

The four great Acharyas namely Meikanda Devar, Arulnandi Sivam, Maraignana Sambandar and Umapathi Sivam are considered as the four great Santānāchāryās of Saivism. They are called Pura Santanacharyas as distinguished and descended from the Aha Santanacharyas who are Nandi Devar, Sanatkumārār, Satyagnana Darsinigal and Paranjothi-the last of whom gave initiation to Meikandar. And all these eight great Santana Kuravars trace their spiritual lineage to Lord Siva on Mount Kailas. This traditional geneology of the spiritual Fathers of the Siddhantam would prove, if nothing else, at least the fact that this metaphysics is not a modern product but an immemorial system with its ancient origin in the dim past and the distant north with a divine Guru of no less sanctity than Lord Siva. A consideration of the four other Acharyas called Samayacharyas as distinct from these Santanacharyas and their

3. Strictly speaking the Siddhanta Shastras are fourteen only. But Tirumular's Tirumanthiram stands by itself and is a comprehensive code of the Siddhantic Creed. This is placed in a period anterior to St. Tirugnanasambandar. Tradition says that he unearthed the manuscript of Tirumanthiram from a place in the temple at Tiruvaduthurai.

contribution to this system is reserved to another occasion. Saints Gnānasambandar, Tirunāvukarasar, Sundaramūrti and Manikkavāsagar are the Sacred Four of the Saiva Psalms who had clearly flourished long before these Theologians of the Tamil School and carried out their Himalayan mission of resuscitating Saivism. Well had they withstood and weathered the storm of the wild opposition and the withering attacks by rival religions like Jainism and Buddhism. Well had they stood four-square and firm against the submerging avalanche and the slaying fury of their rivals and survived with miraculous vitality. Vedic truths and Agamic principles were couched in gem-like words which rained in spontaneous rhythm from the tongues of those religious geniuses. Their soulful, sublime words had the seeds of Siddhantic creed which sprouted into luxurious growth in the later day Theologians of Tamil. Theirs was the literature of religion and these saints have prepared the grammar thereof!

### EARLY COMMENTATORS

In course of time, the Saiva Siddhanta Philosophy came to be more and more elaborately commented on by a long line of learned doctors and theologians. The most noteworthy of them all was Sivagnana Munivar, an intellectual giant and an able linguist, a versatile scholar and an unrivalled controversialist who lived in the 18th century. He was attached to the Tiruvaduthurai Adinam. His Critique on Sivagnana Bodham is called Drāvida Mahābāshyam<sup>4</sup> and it is a masterpiece of erudition, clarity, and

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4. Though it is the best and most elaborate commentary on Sivagnanabodham, it is a pity that the whole treatise in its entirety is not yet available in print. It is reliably learnt that an authentic copy of this Bashyam, the very copy written and used by Sivagnana Munivar himself, is now being preserved by the Head of the Tiruvaduthurai Adinam. The H. R. E. Board and the Government will be doing a signal service to Saivism by arranging for the publication of this treatise in the near future. Not a single Matadhipathi has so far realised the need for this step, in spite of entreaties by eminent scholars and savants.

infinitely subtle arguments. Sivagnana Siddhiyar found in Sri Velliambalavāna Munivar of the Dharmapuram Ādinam an equally able commentator for itself. His Gnanāvarana Vilakam is an excellent guide to Siddhiar. Another collection of miscellaneous works more in the nature of commentaries in verse on the principal Siddhanta texts goes by the name of Pandāra Shāstrās<sup>5</sup>. It derives its name from the authors thereof who have been Pandarams or hermits of the Mutt. Among them, the most celebrated and masterly is the work called 'Muthinischayam' by Sri La Sri Gurugnāna Sambanda Paramāchārya Swamigal, the highly spiritual and learned founder of the Dharmapuram Adinam who flourished in the 17th century.

### EUROPEAN TRANSLATORS

This historical consideration of the pioneers and founders of the Tamil School of Agamantic Philosophy would be obviously incomplete without a short account of the modern savants who too have done their best in polishing and publicising this priceless legacy more and more and in handing it over, in their turn to posterity in still more attractive shape. The Anglo-Indian period in Indian history has been quite remarkable from the point of view of Siddhantam and its popularisation far and wide. An enviable stream of able missionaries of European countries has borne aloft the ship of Siddhantam on the wonderful waves of its wide and deep scholarship and landed it on the distant shores and dazzling ports to invite the admiring obeisance of alien peoples and religions. They all deserve our sincere thanks. Siddhantam has had neither a Paul Duessen nor a Max Muller but it has not suffered from want of foster-fathers. More than

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5: A complete edition of these Pandara Shastras has been published by the Dharmapuram Adinam and copies can be had from the Head of that Mutt.

a hundred years ago one Rev. H. R. Hoisington, an American missionary had published his pioneer English translation of two works of the Siddhanta Shastras namely Sivagnana Bodham and Sivaprakasam. Almost about that time came the English translation of the famous Sivagnana Siddhiar by another European scholar Dr. Carl Graul. Some time later came out the translations of Tiruvarutpayan by both Rev. G. U. Pope and Rev. G. M. Cobban. This work has again been translated by the late J. M. Nallaswami Pillai. In the year 1913 Rev. H. W. Schomerus, after his long study of it in India brought out in Germany a translation of Sivagnana Bodham into German. Prof. R. W. Frazer of the London University has contributed a learned article on Siddhantam to the Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics. Rev. Mr. Gowdie quoted in the beginning has done much to popularise this metaphysics, in spite of his pronounced missionary leanings. Another Westerner who has done his best towards this philosophy was Mr. J. N. Farquhar. The services of some other missionaries like the Rev. T. Foulkes, Rev. G. E. Phillips and Rev. C. A. Clayton to this Saivagama school can never be forgotten or minimised.

### J. M. NALLASWAMI PILLAI

Last but not least was the unique Rev. G. U. Pope, the Oxford University Professor of Tamil. He was the author of the English translations of Tiruvāchakam and Tiruvarutpayan besides, of course those of Tirukural and Nāladīyār and some other Tamil works. The most heroic and voluminous propagator of the Saiva Siddhanta Philosophy has been J. M. Nallaswami Pillai. He has translated into English a number of Siddhanta Shastras like Sivagnana Bodham, Sivagnana Siddhiar, Tiruvarutpayan, Unmaineri Vilakam, Sivaprakasam, Irupa Irupadu and others. More than any other single work of an individual, Mr. Pillai's

unrivalled book in English called *Studies in Saiva Siddhantam* has contributed to the spread and popularity of this metaphysics among the educated public of India and abroad. Mr. Nallaswami Pillai started single-handed an English monthly called *Siddhanta Deepika* or the *Light of Truth* in the year 1897 and its services to *Agamantam* during a period of a decade and a half of ups and downs are indeed monumental and invaluable. He was the last of a generation of giants and geniuses who had dedicated their lives and their talents to the propagation of the *Siddhanta Philosophy*. The late Swami *Vēdāchalam* also finds a place in that galaxy of giants<sup>6</sup> and with him perhaps has closed a fine chapter of fruitful endeavour on behalf of the *Siddhanta Philosophy*.

### SAIVA SIDDHANTAM DEFINED

Saiva is the adjectival form of Siva and *Siddhantam* means the End of Ends or the True End. Hence *Saiva Siddhantam* means the final conclusions or the proved propositions as determined by Lord Siva. These truths and conclusions are contained in the *Saivagamas*. Hence St. Arulnandi declares: "*Saivāgamas are Siddhāntam*". *Sāram*, *Sanmārgam*, *Samarasam*, *Saiva Darsanam*, *Agamantam*, *Siddhantam* and *Suddhādvaitam* are all synonyms of this metaphysics which variously denote its supremacy as a system of thought. There is also a school of modern commentators represented by savants like Tiru. V. Kalyana-sundara Mudaliar<sup>7</sup> and the late Tagore Law Lecturer

6. For want of space no mention has been made here of savants like the late Somasundara Nayagar, Arumuga Navalar, Kathiraivel Pillai and a host of other scholars who had spread the *Siddhanta* philosophy throughout Tamil Nad and Ceylon.

7. He is the most enlightened, erudite and experienced scholar of *Saiva Siddhantam* that is still happily with us. He was the pupil of that great controversialist Kathiraivel Pillai. His chaste Tamil, classical style and character have held aloft the banner of *Saiva Siddhantam* and Tamil culture.

K. Subramania Pillai<sup>8</sup> whose view is that Siddhantam is the creed of the ancient Siddhars of Tamil Nad whose Tamil name is Arivars.

### VEDAS AND AGAMAS

Saiva Siddhantam is itself Vedantam in so far as the Vedas are recognised as its vital source and authority. The conclusions of the Vedas as arrived at in the Upanishads are all acceptable to the Siddhantins. Only, they hold that they are not the whole Truth, at any rate as interpreted by the other schools of Hindu thought. These Upanishadic conclusions conclude, in their turn in the Āgamāntic conclusions which alone are the ultimate conclusions. Hence their nomenclature as Siddhantam. Thus Vedantam is crowned and concluded by Siddhantam<sup>9</sup>. The one does not crowd out the other; on the other hand, one is completed by the other. Therefore for the Siddhantins the Vedas and Agamas are of equal authority, if not of antiquity. "The Vedas and Agamas" says St. Tirumūlar "are both of them true, both being the Word of the Lord! Think that the first is a general treatise and the latter a special one".

### ORIGIN OF THE AGAMAS

The origin of these Agamas is usually traced to mythological sources by the orthodox theologians of the Saiva.

8. Though the most accomplished and profound scholar of his days, a cruel fate has made it impossible for him to render and for Tamil Nad to benefit by the wonderful service to Saiva Siddhantam that he was capable of. The broken arc of his actual achievement reminds us of the tragic loss of the perfect round we have sustained.

9. The intimate and inherent connection between the Vedas and the Agamas is also established by the fact that the Brahma Sutras of Badarayana crystallising the Vedic truths have been most logically and convincingly interpreted by Sri Nilakanta Sivacharya principally in the light of the Saivagamas. Of the four schools of metaphysics springing out of Vyasa Sutras, Nilakanta's Sivadvaitam is the earliest, clearest and the best.

School. The following is the account as given by St. Umāpathi Sivam :

“To save and redeem the souls which lie wallowing in the slush of the three Malas and which cannot cross the sea of births and deaths, Lord Paramasiva created first out of His boundless mercy the 28 Agamas from Kāmikam to Vāthulam in the shape of pure Sound only. Then He assumed the form of Sadāsiva and transformed those Agamas in Sound form into stanzas of words and duly taught them to the ten sivas and eighteen Rudras.

“Then Lord Srikanta condensed and clarified those numerous Agamas and crystallised their teachings into the Paushkarāgama for the benefit of less intelligent beings. Later on, sages like Sanatkumārār received their instruction on the Gnana Pāda of this Agamam besides of course on the Sariya, Kriya and Yoga Padas. And Sivagnana Bodham is the clearest and most authoritative exposition of this Gnana Pada. It was this treatise that had descended to Meikanda Devar through a succession of gurus from Nandī Deva downwards ”

There is, however, an historical account of the origin of these Agamas which will be, of course, more convincing to the modern minds. The Rev. H. R. Hoisington, the very first translator of Sivagnana Bodham says: “The Agamantam which contains the doctrinal treatise given in this work may safely be ascribed to what I would term the Philosophical Period of Hinduism, the period between the Vedic and Puranic eras.” Mr. J. M. Nallaswami Pillai, another great authority on the subject adds: “When the polity of the sacrifice was given up in favour of the worship of the Jyothi Linga (as developed in



some leading Upanishads) and the symbolism of the sacrificial ground was invested with a more spiritual meaning, then we would seem to have arrived at the period of the Agamas. The Agamas brought into use the very same mantras<sup>10</sup> which had been used in the old sacrificial worship but the offer of the self as a sacrificial oblation was made in the place of animal sacrifice. The Pasu was the animal in man and when it was offered as a sacrifice in the Gnānāgni, it became the Nandi or Siva".

Two great scholars like L. D. Barnett and V. V. Ramana Shastri would fain ascribe the Tamil Sivagnana Bodham to the influence of the Kashmiri School of Saivism called the Pratya Bingna Darsanam. But J. M. Nallaswami Pillai has ably refuted that theory and has traced back its origin to the Sanskrit Rauravāgama as well as the eight Tamil Saiva Thirumurais namely the Thēvāram and Thiruvāchakam. Therefore, Sivagnana Bodham or the entire Meikanda Shastras are to the Tamil Tirumurais what the Upanishads are to the Vedas on the one hand and what the Agamantam is to the Upanishads on the other. Hence the significant Tamil verse which says: "The Veda is the cow; the Agama is its milk; the Tamil Tevara-Tiruvachakam of the Four Saints are its ghee and the excellence of the instructive work Sivagnana Bodham of Meikandan of Tiruvennainallur is the sweet taste thereof."

There are also agmas as authority to various other religions, besides Saivism. They are for example the Pancharatra Agamas and Sāktaic Agamas besides those of Buddhism etc. We are concerned with the Saivagamas, also known as

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10. From the viewpoint of their affinity to the Vedas the Agamas are of two kinds—the Vaidika and the Avaidika Pasupathams. It is the latter Avaidika Pasupathams and not the Saivagamas that have been decried and deprecated by sacred books like the Vayu Samhita.

Divyāgamas which are 28 in number with a host of Upāgamas numbering 207. Most of them are in oblivion now. Each Agama is divided into four Pādas called Sariya Pada, Kriya Pada, Yoga Pada, and Gnana Pāda. The Saiva Siddhanta metaphysics is the quintessence of the Gnana Pada of these Agamas; hence also its nomenclature of Agamantam.

### THE THREE ETERNAL ENTITIES

This Agamantam treats principally of the subject of Tripadārtham or the three eternal entities of God, Soul and Matter. It is mainly concerned with the discussion of the existence of these three entities and the determination of their relationship vis a vis each other. According to the Saiva Siddhanta Philosophy, Pathi, Pasu and Pasam otherwise called God, Soul and Matter are ever eternal. They have neither beginning nor end. This is the central doctrine of this creed and on this vital axis do revolve all the other tenets and dogmas of this School.

### GOD

Let us consider each of these three briefly. No better definition of God than that by St. Tirumūlar has ever been given by any other Faith.

“ ‘Love and God are different’ quoth the fools:  
That Love alone is God no one knows.”

And the late Prof. Romanes exclaimed with exquisite wonder “What has all the science and philosophy of the world done for the thought of the mankind to be compared with the one doctrine that God is Love?” But God is not merely Love. He is also Wisdom and Bliss. Hence He is called Sachithānandam. He is omnipotent, omnipresent and supremely independent. He is both transcendent and immanent. He is of form, of no form and is neither. So

He is said to have rūpam, arūpam and rūpārūpam. Though Matter and Soul are also eternal like God, neither of them are independent of Him or are like Him. They cannot exist without God. They live, move and have their being in Him. To be more accurate, God is the soul of the Souls and Matter. As St. Manikkavasagar aptly sings "He is naught in the world; yet without Him nothing is." Though He pervades all, creates and sustains and takes them back again into Himself; though he is the God in the fire, the God in the water, the God who has entered the whole world in plants and trees and in everything else, yet he stands behind all time and all persons, and is beyond all tattvas. Again, He is the one God "Ekō Dēva", hidden in all beings, all-pervading, the Antaratma of all things, watching over all works, dwelling in all beings, the Witness, the Perceiver, the Only One, the Nirguna. "Ekōhi Rudrō Na dvittiyāya Tasthe", That God is He who is Brahman to the Monists and Sivam to the Siddhantins.

### MATTER

Matter, the other of the three Padārthas is also and more generally known as Pradhāna or Māyā. This Maya is also a Sakti of God namely Mayasakti, but differing from the other Saktis, Ichcha, Kriya and Gnana as darkness differs from light. This Maya is again one of the three Malams or Bhandhams which always attach themselves to the Souls. They are Anava Malam, Karma Malam and Maya Malam. Of these, Anava Malam is of many saktis and pervading through the numberless jivas as dirt in copper, it binds them from gnana and kriya. It is ever the source of ignorance. It is the beginning-less and unaccountable darkness that envelopes the soul and steepes it in a stupour of senseless numbness. It blocks all the chances of a soul's emancipation and salvation. This condition is called its

**Kēvalāvastha.** The Lord who is all Love and Mercy pities the souls bound down in paralysing bondage and to afford them release, He wills with His Ichcha<sup>o</sup> Sakti that these souls should attain salvation out of His Pure Grace called Arul Sakti. Then by means of His own Energy called Kriya Sakti, He agitates and puts life and motion into Prakriti or His Maya Sakti and thus the souls and the whole manifested universe are brought forth from His womb. In thus creating the world the second Malam called Karma Malam is used by God as an aid. This Karma Malam is nothing but the law of causality and deserts which operates rigorously and unremittingly by attaching itself to the souls eternally till the stage of complete discharge thereof is reached. The third Malam is the Prakriti or Maya Sakti of God which constitutes the substance of the universe and with which alone souls are given the indispensable instruments of Thanu, Karanam, Bhuvanam and Bogham and without which salvation is impossible. Thus we have seen the three Malams which are called by the generic term Maya or Matter. But we must note the distinction between Anava Malam on the one hand and the Karma and Maya Malam on the other. The detachment of the soul from Anavam and the attachment of it to God is the sole purpose of creation. It is to effect this that the other two Malams are used. Anavam binds the soul but the other two aid its release. Anavam is darkness; the other two are lamp-light. With the help of this lamp-light the soul must see its true path towards the limitless and effulgent lustre of the lovely Sun of Siva. Thus the Maya of the Siddhantins is altogether different from that of the Monists<sup>11</sup>.

11. Maya, to the Monists is a negation ; it is not a substance. It is called avidya.

## SOUL

Let us now deal with the Soul. Saiva Siddhantam holds that the souls are distinct centres of knowing, feeling and doing. Like Prakriti which is limitless the souls too are numberless. Each soul is distinct from God as an entity, though it is pervaded by God. The soul is not an *anu*, but it is *vibhu*. Its characteristic nature is to become that to which it is attached. It can never exist by itself; it must always be in union with either Matter or God. Whenever it is in union with the one it will turn its back on the other. Water changes its colour and value along with the colour and nature of the land on which it flows; so the soul assumes the colour and character of the thing to which it attaches itself for the time being. It lives in *advaitic* union with *Maya* and the whole purpose of the creation and the goal of each soul is to terminate its union with Matter and effect its merger into God.

The soul has intelligence but it is limited and it knows nothing without instruction. Matter is inert and unintelligent. God is All-Intelligence. Hence God is called *Chit*, Matter is called *Achit* and Soul, which is unlike both, is known as *Chitachit*.

## SUDDHADVAITAM

Saiva Siddhantam's is Pure Advaitam. As opposed to the Advaitam of Sankara's School which is called *Kēvalādvaitam*, the Siddhantins call theirs as *Suddhādvaitam*. The prefix of 'NĀ' or 'Ā' has a negative meaning. Hence *Nadvaitam* or *Advaitam* means 'Not Two'. Surely, argue the Siddhantins, to say 'They are not two' (*Advaitam*) is not the same thing as to say 'There is only One' (*Ekam*).

## ADVAITAM EXPLAINED

Various schools describe this inter-relationship between God and Soul variously. Some say it is Abēdha and point out the similie of gold and ornament. Others hold it to be Bēdha and cite the example of darkness and light. Yet others prove it to be Bēdābēdha with their illustration of word and meaning. But as Umapathi Sivam points out, the relationship really involves all these namely Bedha, Abedha and Bedabedha<sup>12</sup>. Only, he gives more convincing similies. Soul and God are in Abedha relation like the body and soul, in Bedha relation like the eye and the Sun and in Bedabedha relation like the eye and the soul. One of the best similies adopted by Siddhantam to demonstrate this relationship is that of vowels and consonants. And that is indeed what Thiruvalluvar himself has pointed out in his very first couplet,

## DISILLUSIONMENT AND DIVINE GRACE

The embodied soul is in Advaitic union with matter on the one hand and with God on the other. But the soul in bondage is altogether oblivious of its inseparable identity with God and is unconscionably aware of its injurious identity with matter. The soul is possessed of an ingrained perversity, inherited from Nature and therefore eradicable, whereby it mistakes its sensuous and sensual wallowing in the 'lap of nature' for its appointed goal and thus converts its God-given instruments of emancipation into its own engines of

12. The conception of the relationship between God and Soul is according to the Siddhanta School neither dualism nor monism nor Visishtadvaitam. As Sivagnana Munivar observes, though an identity is perceived, a difference in substance is also felt. It is the relation which could not be easily postulated in words but which may perhaps be conceived. They are (God and Soul) seen as two (Dvaitam) and at the same time as not two (Advaitam). It is this relation which is called Advaitam and the Philosophy which postulates it is the Advaita Philosophy.

perdition. But this Rake's Progress of the soul on the highway to its ruin maintained by the seductive fascinations of sensuous Nature cannot be endless or eternal. It must come to a stop some time or other—earlier in the case of some souls and later in the case of many. So when that point of satiety of the fleeting joys and the cloying of the evanescent pleasures of human life is reached by the soul, it inevitably comes to the conclusion like the Abyssinian Prince of Dr. Johnson that "human life is everywhere a state of misery where much is to be endured and little to be enjoyed." Then it realises the utter worthlessness of matter and arrives at a stage of mental equipoise wherein it views both pleasures and pains with equal indifference. In Siddhantic parlour this is called 'Iru Vinai Oppu'. Next comes the stage of 'Mala Paripagam' when the Malas get ripened and are ready to drop down. The merciful and gracious Lord duly takes cognizance of this repentance of the soul and its rigorous penances and appears before it in the shape of a human guru and blessing it with His grace, He beckons it on unto Himself. Thus descends the Arul Sakti of God on the soul—it is the descent of the dove of grace and the divine baptism of the soul. This is what the Siddhantins call 'Saktinipādam' and what the Christians style as 'Aloft-becoming'. This is the dying of the soul unto the world and the being reborn in God—the birth of Christ in man. From now on, the soul eschews Nature and embraces God. Now commences its God-ward journey in sack cloth and ashes to the Journey's End wherein the glorious soul enters the glow of supernal Lustre of the effulgent rays of Siva Surya!

### SOUL-CULTURE

But all this cannot happen in a day or in a simple way. This momentous conversion and marvellous

bliss are the result of a series of graded training and graduated exercises. This is what is called soul-culture.

While on the subject of soul-culture, mention must necessarily be made, though no explanation is possible now, of the mystic experiences of the soul in the process of its unravelling the mysteries of Soul, Matter and God. They go by the collective name of Dasa Kāryāni or the Ten Spiritual Conquests of the soul. It is, in short, the process of disillusionment of the soul about Nature and its true enlightenment about God. They are called (1) Tattva Rūpam, (2) Tattva Darsanam, (3) Tattva Suddhi, (4) Anma Rūpam, (5) Anma Darsanam; (6) Anma Suddhi, (7) Siva Rūpam, (8) Siva Darsanam, (9) Siva Yōgam and (10) Siva Bōgham.

### THE FOUR-FOLD LOVE FOR GOD

If God were to be defined as Pure Intelligence alone, the sinful and imperfect soul can never see Him. But in reality, God is Love, Light and Life. As Pure Being, God is unknowable but as Light and Love He unites Himself to man and it is possible for the soul to approach Him through love. Saiva Siddhantam has devised a practical method of four-fold sadhanas by which the soul, by loving God with all its heart and with all its strength, is trained to reach and see God who is All-Love. The deep mixes with the deep and love alone can meet love !

Human love is mainly divisible into four kinds and it can be viewed from four different standpoints. They are the love of a servant for his master, the love of a child for its parent, the love of a friend towards a friend and the infatuation of the beloved for her lover. These four margas or modes of loving exhaust the possibilities of the manifestation of man's



emotion of love. Each soul may love God as its Master or Father or Friend or as its Lover. These four ways of devotion are called respectively Dāsamārga, Satputra marga, Sahamarga and Sanmarga. Their respective synonyms are Sāriya, Kriya, Yoga and Gnanam. It must however be noted, as pointed out by J. M. Nallaswami Pillai that this scheme differs from the so-called scheme of Karma, Bakti, Yoga and Gnana Margas. The latter is no logical scheme at all but it involves cross-division. For it may easily be perceived that when one approaches his Maker as a servant, as a child, as a friend or as a beloved would, he must necessarily know Him and thus he needs gnanam, he must necessarily love Him and thus he needs bakthi and he must necessarily adjust his conduct towards Him and thus he needs karma. So all the three are necessary for any one who loves God in any capacity whatever. From the Dāsa to the Sanmarga these elements of karma, bakthi and gnaana are to be found in each in a progressive proportion.

The duties of a Dasamargi are : lighting lamps, culling flowers and making garlands, sweeping and washing the temples etc.

Puja, reading scriptures, reciting prayers, japa and tapas are the duties of a Satputramargi.

The Sahamargi would purify himself by Ādhāra and Nādi Sōdhana and entering the temple of Gnānakāsa would get rid of his senses and mind.

The Sanmargi has to get rid of his egoism and bondage, and becoming one with Pathi he will finally enter the true presence of God and stand steadfast therein.

No more concrete or living illustrations of the efficacy of these four margas could be found than in the lives of the

seventy-two saints of the Saiva Calendar<sup>13</sup> whose wonderful acts of devotion have been narrated by that worthy Poet of God, Sēkkizhār. Those saints were historic exemplars of the all-consuming flame of unbounded love for God; they had become dead unto themselves and to the world and had surrendered their soul and their all to Lord Siva.

## GOD AND NADA TATTVAM

Now we must deal with the place of music in the theological scheme of Saiva Siddhantam. God the Love can be approached or seen only by godly love. And this emotion of love seeks its spontaneous expression and sumptuous flow through music and song. Hence music is called the child of love and hand-maid of devotion.

Nādam or Sound is the thirty-sixth and the highest and subtlest of Tattvas which are the evolutes of matter into which Maya, the substratum of the universe, evolves itself from God. Out of the 36 Tattvas<sup>14</sup>, the first 24 beginning from Prakriti at the bottom are called Prakriti Tattvas, the next 7 are called Purusha Tattvas and the last and the highest five are known as Siva Tattvas. The highest and subtlest

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13. Sixty-three are the saints who are usually and popularly referred to. But they are individual saints. There are also nine group-saints like the Thillai Brahmins, Temple Archakas etc. Hence strictly speaking, seventy-two is the number.

14. Tattvas are usually counted as thirty-six only, though on a more minute analysis they may also be counted as ninety-six. These 36 tattvas are divided into three kinds-the lowest 24 are called Prakriti Tattvas or Asuddha Maya Tattvas. The next 7 are styled as Anma Tattvas or Suddhasuddhamaya tattvas and the highest five are called Siva Tattvas or Suddhamaya Tattvas. For an enumeration of these tattvas a reference to the Siddhanta texts is necessary. Various schools like the Visishtadvaidins recognise varying number of tattvas. The Siddhantins alone recognise the maximum number of tattvas which are 36.

Tattva which is nearest to God and above which is God and into which the unknowable God descends, as it were, in His creative operation is called the Nada Tattvam. This is so akin to God that it is also called Sivam and Nada Brahman. Hence poets and philosophers are wont to characterise this Nadam itself as God and propitiate it through sound or music. The Siddhanta conception of Lord Siva is also such as would lend support to these votaries of God in His aspect of Supreme Sound or Para Nadam. Thus God Siva is Love as much as Music.

### NATARAJA'S MUSICAL DANCE

Nataraja is the most concrete, appealing and suggestive Form which Lord Siva has assumed for the sake of attracting the erring souls unto Himself. 'Frozen Music' is the word for His fine and exquisite pose. He is the King of Dancers at Thillai. His Ānanda Tāndava, symbolical of His Panchakritya is the sublimest and best and He gave a demonstration of it to the twin rishis Patanjali and Vyāgrapādha at their earnest request. The four-faced Brahma kept time to the dance and Maha Vishnu played on the mridhanga. Tumburu and Narada sang in accompaniment.

St. Kāraikkāi Ammaiṃ, in her 'Mūtha Thirupadigam' describes in vivid details how the Lord dances at Tiruvāḷankādu to the tune of the sevenfold notes and to the accompaniment of such a bewildering variety of beautiful instruments as Sachari (சச்சரி) Kokkarai (கொக்கரை) Thakkai (தக்கை) Takunitham (தகுணிதம்) Dundubi (துந்துபி) Karadikai (கரடிகை) Veenai (வீணை) Mathalam (மத்தளம்) Vankai (வன்கை) Menthōl (மெந்தோல்) Damarukam (தமருகம்) Kuda Muzhā (குடமுழா) and Menchai (மொந்தை). St. Thirugnanasambandar also mentions that Lord Siva is exceedingly fond of Palai Yazh Pan (பாலையாழ்ப்பண்)

and that He Himself sings Vāi Mūri Pan (வாய்மூரிப்பண்) St. Sundaramurthi Nainar describes Lord Siva as "the seven notes of music, the luscious effect of it all, and the sweetest Ambrosia." Rudra is ever associated with Veena, a kind of lute which is known after Him as Rudra Veena. St. Thirunavukarasar sings that "Our Lord would play on the good Veena after the dissolution of the universe". St. Manikkavasagar also refers to the bidding of the Lord in the beautiful Veena's tunes. There is also a Form of Dakshinamurthi with a Veena in his hand known as Veena Dakshināmūrthi. The very ear-rings worn by Siva are said to be two Gandharvas of music. "The heart of Lord Chokkanāthar melts on hearing a song" says St. Kumaraguruparar, the founder of Kasi Mutt at Tirupanandal. Siva is thus not merely Music in His Form, but also He is a music lover, a musician, an instrument-player and a dancer.

### SIVA'S LOVE FOR MUSIC

Sambandar, Appar and Sundarar, the Trinity of the Thevaram Hymns used to worship in every shrine of Siva by means of their thrilling musical compositions in Tamil. Their compositions are called Thevaram Pans. They are the profusest and most spontaneous outpourings of their ecstatic soul in exquisite rhymes and ennobling music. They are the very food that Lord Siva would be delighted with, the noblest and most pleasing offering that anyone could make to Siva. In fact, St. Sundarar was explicitly asked by Siva to sing His praises because "songs are the best archana" for Him. The Lord was so fond of His vassal's music that on many an occasion He had extracted the price of a song from him for every boon He conferred. Lord Siva's infatuation for music is so proverbial that

He would forgive the mightiest offence for a song. The most classical case is that of Rāvana. Having enraged Siva by lifting up His Kailas, Ravana was about to be crushed. Soon, the giant managed to enrapture the Lord by singing the Sāma Veda. He was not merely forgiven but he was well given boundless boons. It is the Sama Veda that has the full complement of the seven notes of music; hence Siva delights in the chant of Samam. That is the reason why Lord Krishna said in the Gita "Of the Vedas I am the Sama Veda". The waves of wondrous music that went on floating in ether from out of the rapturous flute played on by Saint Ānāyar are described by St. Sekkizhar to have filled up the earth and flooded the heavens and flowed into the ears of Nataraja. Such is the efficacy of music. "Gānāt Parataram nāsti"—there is nothing more helpful to the spirit than music. And this reminds us of the sublime lines of that high-souled poet, Tennyson :

" We revere and while we hear  
The tides of Music's golden sea  
Setting toward Eternity,  
Uplifted high in heart and hope are we".!

If the 'Word' of St. John's Gospel could be taken to mean music also, as indeed it could be, well then could we echo his very true words: "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God."

## CONCLUSION

We must now conclude this talk and this series. We have seen that Lord Siva has music itself for His Form; that

music is his pastime and that music is the best road to reach Him. The greatest of Saiva leaders and prophets, St. Gnanasambandar has been described by St. Sekkizhar as the "Sacred Incarnation of the Seven Notes of Music". And Gnanasambandar set the first and best example of worshipping Siva with tuneful songs.

The metaphysics of Saiva Siddhantam is a treat for the subtlest of intellects and the musical prayers thereof are a feast for the simplest of souls. Thus it caters to the needs of the highest and the lowest; it comprehends all grades of human souls. As a delightful drink for the thirsty souls, as a delicious food for the hungry ones and as a divine tonic for the sickly souls, this Ambrosia of Agamantam is altogether unrivalled. "Sāntam, Sivam, Advaitam, Chaturtham". SIDDHANTAM IS IN THE AIR AND MAY IT SPREAD EVERYWHERE !



# APPENDIX

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## SAIVA SIDDHANTAM

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### *Some Opinions.*

PROFESSOR MAX MULLER: ".....In the South of India, there exists a philosophical literature which, though it shows clear traces of Sanskrit influence, contains also original indigenous elements of great beauty and of great importance for historical purposes....."

Rev. Mr. F. GOODWILL: Referring to Dr. G. U. Pope's description of Siddhantam quoted in our text, the missionary remarks: "Those who have studied the system unanimously agree that this eulogy is not a whit too enthusiastic or free-worried. That the system is eclectic is at once apparent."

Rev. Mr. W. GOUDIE, also quoted by us in the text says, *inter alia*, as follows: "There is no School of thought and no system of Faith or worship that comes to us with anything like the claims of the Saiva Siddhanta. This system possesses the merits of a great antiquity. In the religious world the Saiva System is heir to all that is most ancient in South India; it is the religion of the Tamil people by the side of which every other form is of comparatively foreign origin."

"In the largeness of its following as well as in regard to the antiquity of some of its elements, the Saiva Siddhanta is, beyond any other form the religion of the Tamil people and ought to be studied by all Tamil missionaries."

