



Introduction

Indian literatures on divinity talk about the direct relationship of the soul with God. There are diversified philosophies and views over this relationship. Here we are going to see such a literature, explaining the relationship of the two – rather three. The third thing is the one that stands between the soul and God. Thus we have three aspects. God, The Sath (The Truth – the ever existing). Delusion, The Asath (that seemingly existing). Soul, The Sathasath (the one that wavers between the two). All the philosophies basically admit one point. The soul can remove the delusion through the light of Wisdom and can realise its own nature.

Here we are going to see an incomparable scripture in Tamil that talks about the three. I am grateful to my tutor Mr. Selvaraj, a doctorate in the language and a writer as well, who took special interest in teaching me the basics. It materialised my long awaiting will of writing a work on Saivam. It is the will of God, I should say. So, now we have Mei Kanda Devar's 'Siva Gnana Bodham' here– as interpreted by a layman. Let me give a brief account of where it comes and what it is all about. The interpretation might look brief, but one needs lots of time and maturity to grasp this scripture.

Siva Gnana Bodham is a root literature in Saivam. Saivam is a sect of Hinduism. Of the six major sects recognised by Sri Adhi Sankaracharya, Saivam is one. It calls the Omnipresent God as 'Sivam'. It is one of the oldest, if not the oldest of all ancient sects.



Archeologists have found Saivite symbols of more than 5000 years old. It is still alive and young as ever.

The Saivaites say that God is in every soul. As the body can not act without the soul, so too the soul can not 'act' without God. As the body is unaware of this fact, so too, the soul is unaware of this fact. Body is basically different from the soul, as it doesn't have the capacity to discriminate and reason. The soul being a drop of God, which is pure knowledge (Sith), has the consciousness of 'being'. When it uses it properly, it can reach God. Thus, the soul and God are same in nature - but not the same, say Saivites. The river when reaches the ocean becomes a part of the ocean. But it is wrong to say that the river is ocean. So, the Saivites adopt a modified 'Adhvaitha' philosophy. Ocean, river, stream, pond and whatever name you put to it - it's all water. The water, by its core characteristic is the same everywhere. It derives different names according to the places of it's reach and to the objects of it's association. So too God is one, the same God appears to be several in varying atmosphere which (the atmosphere and the objects) again is a form of God. So, nothing is away from God - nothing is distinct to God. The duality or the multiplicity seems to exist only to learn and relish.

Like other sects of the religion, the Saivam too acknowledges the Vedas, Agamas, Upanishads, Ithihasas and Puranas with its concepts on God. In addition to the authentic scriptures of the religion, many divine literatures are written on Saivam in various Indian languages. In my mother tongue also there are hundreds of literatures on Saivam. They are broadly classified as Thothiram (Devotional Chants) and Saathiram (Literature of Divine Wisdom).



In Thothiram, with regard to Saivam, we have twelve divine collections called 'Panniru-Thirumurai'. Thirumurai means divine order. These collections comprise the devotional poems of several Saivaites over a period of 1000 years - from 3 BC to 12 BC. We lost many poems. At present we have only a few thousands of them.

Saathiram is also a divine literature primarily in poetical form. These are the works that prove the base and beliefs of the sect. We have 14 Saathiras (with regard to Saivam) in Tamil - which emerged after 12 BC. Of this, the gist or the nucleus around which all other Saathiras revolve is 'Siva Gnana Bodham' scripted by 'Mei Kanda Devar'. It has only 12 songs for which volumes of description are available in many languages! This is the literature we had taken. With the Grace of Lord Siva and beloved Masters, here I am trying to give interpretations on Siva Gnana Bodham in brief.

Siva Gnana Bodham means teaching of Siva Gnana or the Supreme Wisdom.

To say about the author 'Mei Kanda Devar', he was a three year old child when he scripted these 12 verses. It might be hard to believe or even to imagine. But this is the history. He was born in 13th century BC in Thiruppen-nagadam, a village in Tamil Nadu. He had 49 eminent and aged scholars as his disciples. He left the world at a young age. Here, we are going to see about the 12 Sutras of Mei Kanda Devar in simple terms.

All these Sutras talk about Padhi, Pasu and Paasam OR God, Soul and Delusion. These Sutras prove the existence of God, Soul and Delusion and give general and special definitions for them. They also give the way through which



the soul can reach God. The twelve Sutras are divided into two sections. The first six Sutras come under the General Section. The rest come under the Special Section. The General section deals with the proof and definitions part. The Special section deals with the way through which the soul can reach God.

To say about the title picture, it's the most famous symbol of Saivaites in the south. It depicts the cosmic dance of God. He dances not only in the cosmos but within every being. This dance picture expresses the five activities of God – creation, protection, destruction, hiding or illusion and bestowing of Grace. This scripture tells more about the last two activities.

The author, first, prays to Lord Vigneswara and then tells a few words to his audience. "Those who have the knowledge of the self will not have contradicting views to that of mine. Those who do not have that knowledge may not accept these sayings. They may even give contradicting views and remarks. I am not affected by such remarks." Thus he acknowledges his superior nature and establishes the authentication of his work.

As an interpreter of this scripture, I too want to say something in the same style. Some new friends, after reading 'God is in our land', asked me, "is it you who wrote this?"; I said 'yes'. Then, they tried to test my scientific knowledge (don't know why!). I avoided their test. First thing, I am not a scientist. Secondly, I don't want to be tested by the worldly people that too on the subject of lower cadre. Science is not the ultimate thing. There are so many things beyond the reach of worldly sciences which mainly depend on sensual and mental perceptions and are limited and changing with so many contingencies. If



one asks with true thirst (not for that he knows to ask anything) ‘why there is a God? Why He has created delusion and soul? Why there is an earth? Why there are so many things happening around?’, it means he had at last come to the right point of his life. If he keeps asking this to himself and tries sincerely to find the answer through whatever means he feels right and just, the thirst would find the answer for him one day. Mere asking the question for name sake will lead one nowhere. Even when one gets the answer through others, it will not quench one’s thirst; unless one takes the answer to one’s core where one feels and becomes It. So, instead of wasting your time in testing others, put yourself in the test.

It may give some real help.

Thiruchitrambalam

(Salutations to the Lotus Feet of the Supreme Indweller)