CHAPTER-II

HINDUISM AND ITS DIFFERENT SECTS
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Religion – A Binding Force

Religion is the regenerating force that leads the soul towards the blissful freedom. Religion reforms human life, transforms the mind, opens the heart to love and faith that give the soul a God-ward urge. Religion is a regenerative force that saves humanity from barbarity.

Religion is to bind back the mind to the soul and the soul to God. It is the same as Dharma which draws the soul toward God. It is yoga which yokes the pure soul to the Divine in the heart (1). The Messiah of every religion brings a particular message of Truth that redeems man from the bondage of evil and sins.

In the religious sphere south excelled the north. Tamil country in the south contributed much for the promotion of modern Hinduism. At one time the onward march of Buddhism and Jainism in the Tamil country went unchecked. It threatened the very existence of Hinduism. Hence its saints and seers evolved a new type of Bhakthi (fervid emotional surrender to God) to liberate Hinduism from the clutches of evils like ritualism and sacrifice.

Their tireless efforts once again made it a religion of the masses. The Bhakthi movement mainly gifted by the Siva Nayanmars and Vaishnava Alwars came as a solution to the problem. It created a mystic effect for the spiritual awakening and for the renaissance of Hindu faith\(^2\).

**Principle of the Hinduism**

The power of Good and Evil found in every object of animate or inanimate nature. This common truth as the days passed by became the fundamental principle of the Hindu religion \(^3\). The early Indians saw this power of Good or Evil in the Earth, Water and Fire in abundance as they promoted creation or production, protection or growth and destruction or disaster. This mode of viewing things in due course paved the way for the Trimurthi concept in Hinduism. The three original powers of Earth, Water and Fire are personified in Brahma, Vishnu and Siva respectively and popularly known as Trimurthi\(^4\).

**Brahma**

It is the belief of Hindus that Brahma appeared when the earth began to appear \(^5\). He has four faces \(^6\). He is the God of creation. He creates everything in the world. According to Tarachand, Brahma was the first of created things.

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\(^3\) Ibid, P. 8.


\(^6\) Kalithogai-2.
Brahma then created gods, heaven, earth, sky, sun, moon, universe and man\(^7\). It is said to be that Siva’s begging bowl made of Brahma’s skull\(^8\).

**Vishnu**

Vishnu is the God of preservation. *Rigveda* addressed to him as he is the pervader as he strode the heavens. His name is Dravidian and he seems to have some association with beliefs which must be regarded as represented chiefly by those surviving among primitive tribes\(^9\). Vishnu is the Hero of the two great epics, the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharatha*\(^10\). His body is in blue Colour\(^11\). He has Chank and wheel in his hands\(^12\). There are many stories about Vishnu as he had attained ten ‘Avadars’ (different appearances). He is called as Rama, Krishna, Thirumal, Perumal and Narayana by his devotees, Stories about the incarnations (Avadars) of Vishnu were elaborated by the Alwars\(^13\).

**Siva**

Siva is the God of destruction. He is very much anger often. He keeps poison in his neck. He has crescent on his head. He has three eyes. He is red in colour. It is the reason for his name ‘Sivan’\(^14\). He has applied ash on his body. He has destroyed *Tripuram* by fire\(^15\). His different reactions are said as “Thiruvilaiyadal” stories.

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\(^7\) Tarachand, *op.cit*, P.3.
\(^15\) *Kalithogai* – 2:1-5.
Vaishnavism

The two sects of Hinduism namely Saivism and Vaishnavism commonly followed by the South Indian Hindus, generally Vaishnavism refers to the faith which prescribes the exclusive worship of Vishnu, the God of preservation. In the Tamil country, the Sangam literature contains numerous references to Vishnu worship in the beginning of the Christian era. Tholkappiam mentions Mayon, as the God of Mullai region. I conographical features about Vishnu are referred to in the Mullaipattu Paripadal and Perumpanatruppadai. Worship of Vishnu seems to have appeared earlier than the Siva – cult in Tamil country. Paripadal mentions Tirumal as a separate deity.

The earliest mention of the term Vaishnavavadi (Vishnu Temple) occurs in Manimekalai. The worship of Tirumal in three postures of standing, sitting and reclining had commenced only in post Sangam period. During the period of the Pallavas, Vishnavism emerged as religious movement protesting against Buddhism and Jainism and formed as an essential component of Bhakthi Movement.

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16 Yesudhason V and Isaac Jayadhas R., op.cit, P-12.
17 Puram – 50,166; Aham – 59, 360.
18 Tholkappiam – 5.
19 Paripadal – 2.
20 Manimekalai – 27, 84; 98.
21 Silapathikaram – 2; 35; 40.
It is a wing of the Bhakthi movement represented by Twelve Alwars. They were Poigai, Bhutathalwar, Peialwar, Tirumalisai, Nammalwar, Madurakavi, Perialwar, Andal, Tiruppan, Thondaradipodialwar, Kulasekara and Tirumangaialwar\textsuperscript{(23)}. They sang many devotional songs. \textbf{Nadamuni} compiled them under the title \textit{Nalayiradivyaprabandam}\textsuperscript{(24)}.

In the South Vaishnavism was promulgated by \textbf{Ramanuja} and \textbf{Madhavacharia} in the thirteenth and sixteenth century respectively. Ramanuja was the propounder of the philosophy of ‘Visistadvaita’ which means qualified non-duralism\textsuperscript{(25)}. The Vaishnavites of the Tamil country were the followers of Ramanuja. So, every Vaishnava temple has his image in South.\textsuperscript{(26)} They are divided into two hostile sects-the \textbf{Vadakalai} and \textbf{Tenkalai} or the school of northern learning and the school of Southern learning. Each sects has its own views and practices on their religion.

Some of the practices are given below. The Vadakalai Vaishnavites preferred Sanskrit vedas as religious texts for worship; they stressed arduous efforts to attain divine grace and favoured caste rigidity. The Tenkalai Vaishnavites on the other hand adopted Tamil Prabandas as religious texts of worship. They believed in the free flow of divine grace and liberalised caste isolation\textsuperscript{(27)}.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{23} Giriraj Shah, Saints, Gurus and Mystics of India, New Delhi, 1999, P.195.
\item \textsuperscript{24} Tarachand, op.cit, P.87.
\item \textsuperscript{25} Yesudhasan.V. and Issac Jayadhas.R., op.cit, P .12.
\item \textsuperscript{26} John Gilbert, Tiruchi Birth Place of Bhakti Movement, Souvenir, 23rd session of South Indian History congress, 31 Jan.2 Feb, 2003, Tiruchi.
\item \textsuperscript{27} Yesudhason and Isaac Jayadhas., op.cit, P .13.
\end{itemize}
The first is summed up in the phrase 'Markatanyaya' – the rule that young monkey clings to its mother with no effort. The next is summed up in the phrase ‘Marjara Nyaya’ – the rule that the kitten is carried about by its mother in her mouth. To the Tenkalai absolute surrender is the only way of salvation. To the vadakalai it one of the ways to attain salvation. Difference is also there in the matter of caste mark worn. The Tenkalais have ‘Y’ mark with a central line and the vadakalais have ‘U’ mark with yellow or red central line. The Tenkalai and Vadakalai traditions found their centres at Srirangam and Kanchipuram respectively(28).

Vedantha Desigar was a great leader of the Vadakalai school in the fourteenth century. In the fifteenth century Tamil country the Tenkalai school saw a great leader in Manavala Mahamuni of Alwar Thirunagari. He was liberal and his liberalism against the conservative orthodoxy of vadakalai school made him stranger. He strengthened the Tenkalai school by his socio-religious reforms and also established eight mutts(29). The Navathirupathi temples in Tutucorin district belongs to Tenkalai.

Saivism

Saivism stands for single minded devotion to Siva. When Hiuen-Tsiang (yuang-Chwang) visited South India he found Hinduism Vigorously established by the side of Buddhism. His narrative is full of references to the prevalence of

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Saiva workshop especially in **Pasupata** form\(^{(30)}\). He also says that Saivism was rising swiftly as a formidable antagonist \(^{(31)}\). Of the Saiva uprise the **Pallavas** were the great protagonist. \(^{(32)}\) They made stone images of Siva in their region. They said Siva as the Father of **Murugan** and husband of **Parvathi** and **Uma**. Also they made a stone-image of **Arthanareeswaran** that is the image seen like half body as Siva and another half body as his wife **Parvathi**\(^{(33)}\).

**Periyapuranam** is a Saiva-literature of Tamil. It was written by **Sekkizhar**. In this literature the author says about some **Nayanmars** who were the Pallava Kings. Among them **Simmavarman-III** alias **Iyadikal Kadavar Kone** and **Nandhivarman-III** were the Nayanmars. The **Siruthondar** led the Pallava army\(^{(34)}\). There were three types of Saiva devotees in Pallava period. They were **Pasupathas**, **Kabalees** and **Kalamugas** \(^{(35)}\). Some of the Pasupathas cut off their hair, others made it into a top knot, they covered their bodies with ashes and by the practice of all sorts of austerities they sought to escape from birth and death \(^{(36)}\). Their apostle was a spiritual angel in human form riding on a bull, with a crown of human skulls on his head and a garland of shells round his neck with a cranium in one hand and a trident in the other\(^{(37)}\).

\(^{31}\) Tarachand, *op.cit.*, P.85.
\(^{32}\) *Ibid.*
\(^{34}\) Dharmaraj J, *Tamilaka Varalaru* (Tamil), Sivakasi, 2005, P. 74.
\(^{35}\) *Ibid.*, P. 123.
The Kabalees who wore chaplets of bones round their heads. Kalamugas sang devotional songs with music. They were inteligents in education. They knew magics and they were popular in Tamil country. Cholas were the followers of Saivism. Saivism got its zenith during the period of cholas.

The saiva literature was arranged into eleven groups, called Tiru-murai by Nambiar-Nambi of Tanjore in the time of Rajaraja Kulasekara Chola (985-1013 AD). Of these eleven groups, the first three are the works of Tiruganasambandar, the next three of Tirunavukkarasu (Appar) and the seventh of Sundarar. These seven together form the Devaram. They contain hymns offering praise and prayer to God.

The Saiva saints were known as Nayanmars. They were sixty three in number. They were the hymn-makers of Tamil Land. Their songs are used on ceremonial and religious occasions like the Vedas. The eighth book of Tirumurai which corresponds to the Upnidas is the Tiruvasakam of Manikkavasahar. The ninth is the Tiru-Isaippa, a compilation of minor poets, the tenth contains songs of Tiru-mular and the eleventh consists of miscellaneous writings of Nakkirar, Nambiar-Nambi and others. These eleven books with the Periyapuranam constitute the sacred lore of the Saivas.

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38 Beal, Life of Hiuen-Tsiang, P.161.
39 Dharmaraj J., op.cit, P.123.
40 Tara Chand, op.cit., P.87.
41 Ibid.
42 Ibid.
Tiruganasambander is celebrated as one of the three champions of the Saiva faith against the Jainas in the reign of the king Kunpandyan (Maravarman Arikesari, Seventh century AD). The king professed the Jaina faith, but the queen Mangaiyarkarasi and the Chief Minister Kulachirai Nayanar were both staunch saivites, and they invited Tiruganasambander to exert his influence to change the mind of the king.

Sambander succeeded in curing the king of a fever which (according to the legend) had baffled the drugs and spells of the Jaina priests. Sambander not only reconverted the king to Siva religion, but at the same time instigated him to impale alive thousands of Jainas on the banks of the Vaigai river at Madurai. The Jainas who had disputed with Tirugnanasambander and been vanquished. Thus Kun Pandyan embraced the Saiva religion and exerted his utmost to establish it throughout his kingdom.

The Tamil country during the Vijayanagar period saw the spread of Saivasiddhanda. The development of the Saiva siddhanda philosophy is based on Agamas. Manikkavasagar speaks of the Agamas as revealed by Siva. However, the Agamas are the vedic texts of the Saivas. During the twelth and thirteenth centuries the Siva Siddhanda philosophy based on the Agamas flourished in the Tamil country. This philosophy of the Tamil Saiva Siddhantha

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44 Tara chand, op.cit., P.88.
46 Nilakanda Sastri, K.A. The Pandyan Kingdom, Madras, 1972, P.85.
47 Yesudhason and Isaac Jayadhas, op.cit., P-10.
was first formulated by Meikanda deva. He was a vellala, lived on the banks of Pennai river early in the thirteenth century.\(^{48}\)

It is said that he received instruction from Paranjothimuni. This saint was believed to be sent down from Kailasa for that purpose Meikanda deva made Saivism popular among the masses. His out-standing work Sivaganaboham is a Tamil translation of twelve sanskrit sutras from Raurava Agmas\(^{49}\). He had a line of followers called Sidhanda sastris or Saiva Apostles. Umapathi, Arulnandi and Sivacharia are some of the Saiva Sastris. The extensive philosophic literature sprang from their work promoted discussion. The progress of discussion led to the growth of different schools within fold of the Saiva Sidhanta. One such school that flourished in the Tamil country during the 16\(^{th}\) and 17\(^{th}\) centuries was Siddic School. Its members were called Siddhars\(^{50}\).

Their creed was monothesitic as well as puritan and condemned idolatory\(^{51}\). Sivaprakashor who belonged to this school had philosophical disputations with Christian Missionaries\(^{52}\). To popularise this philosophy, Siddhantha sastras established monasteries in important centres of the Tamil country. Tamil literary luminaries like Meenakshi Sundaram Pillai played a key role to promote the cause of Saivism. But some of the subsequent developments appeared unfavourable for the Un-interrupted progress of

\(^{48}\) Devasenapathi. V.A., The Place of Saiva Siddhanta in Indian Philosophy, article in Subbiah Pillai Pavala Vizha Malar Souviner, Madras, 1973, P. XII (English articles).

\(^{49}\) Ibid, P.XIII.

\(^{50}\) Yesudhasan and Isaac Jeyadhas, op.cit., P.10.

\(^{51}\) Tarachand, op.cit., P.128.

\(^{52}\) Yesudhasan and Isaac Jeyadhas, op.cit., P.10.
Saivism. They made Saivism too dogmatic and rigid to preserve its purity and tradition. Among them the promotion of western education\(^{(53)}\).

**Veera Saivism**

Another development in Saivism was the growth of Veera Saivism. It is known as Lingayat cult in the Karnataka and Telugu countries. The Lingayats regarded Siva as Supreme and worshipped him only and hence got the name **VeeraSaiva**. Lingayatism arose in the twelfth century. **Basava** and **Channabasava** his nephew are universally recognised by Linayats. Dr.Fleet on the strength of an inscription of about 1200AD. found at **Ablur**, associated **Ekanta Ramayya** with Basava as the founder of the sect\(^{(54)}\). It gave utmost importance to monastries and stood for complete socio-religious equalities among different sectorians. Veera Saivites disbelieved the doctrine of rebirth and recognised the need of widow’s remarriage.\(^{(55)}\) They also hated the evil of child marriage. The Lingayats are worshippers of one God. The preceptor is considered as superior even to the deity\(^{(56)}\). There are no sacrifices, no fasts or feasts, no pilgrimages. There is no river; there is no caste. There are no distinctions based on differences of birth or sex. All men are holy in proportion as they are temples of the great spirit.\(^{(57)}\) It is difficult to resist the inference that

\[^{53}\textit{Ibid.}\]
\[^{54}\textit{Epigraphia Indica, vol.V, P.239.}\]
\[^{55}\textit{Thurston, castes and Tribes of South India, Lingayats, P.280.}\]
\[^{56}\textit{Tarachand, op.cit., P.118.}\]
\[^{57}\textit{Brown, Madras Journal of Literature and Science, January 1840, P.146.}\]
Lingayatism was a result of the influence which the Muslims exerted in these parts of India.\(^{58}\).

Their God (Allama) whose very name is probably of Muslim origin\(^{59}\). The Lingayats of Tamil country gave respect to sixty three Nayanmars and 770 later saints including Basava\(^{60}\).

**Worship of Murugan**

The Gods of ancient Tamil country were Sivan, Tirumal, **Murugan** and Balaraman\(^{61}\). Murugan is the God of **Kurunchi** land people who live in forest and mountain areas. He has peacock as his car\(^{62}\), cock as his symbol \(^{63}\). He is the son of Siva \(^{64}\). Most of Hindu people in the coastal area of Tuticorin district worship Murugan. There is temple in Tiruchendur for Murugan. The devotees of Murugan wear green colour dress. Mixed fruits jam is the sacred food.

**Other Cult Worshippers**

Altogether the Trimurti concept became a Brahmanical creation and the access to it was denied to the low castes in the society. The social groups who were subjected to the evils of untouchability and unapproachability found their

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\(^{60}\) Yesudhason and Isaac Jeyadhas, op. cit, P.11.

\(^{61}\) Puranamuru-36.

\(^{62}\) Agananuru – 149.

\(^{63}\) Kurunthogai – 1.

\(^{64}\) Swami B.L., op.cit., P.90.
Gods and Goddesses in a host of idols and deities and worshipped them in a traditional manner.\(^{(65)}\)

The common feature of religion for the majority of Indian lies in the worship of the mother goddess and the fertility cults. Emphasis is continually given by historians to the spread of Hinduism as reflected in the Sanskritic tradition. Yet so little recognition is given to the fact that in the practice of religion it is the local cult, the non-Sanskritic tradition which is often predominant\(^{(66)}\).

Mother Goddess’s terracotta figures were found out by archaeologists in India\(^{(67)}\). Virgin Mother Goddesses also mentioned in literatures like Tiruvarur Puranam, a song by Thaiumanavar, etc. Periplus says about a virgin Goddess when he mentioned Capcomarin\(^{(68)}\). Megasthanes says about Madurai Meenatchi in his book\(^{(69)}\).

There are many evidences for the Vindhiya mountain’s mother Goddess Durka. It is believed that she lives in mountains, caves, rivers and forests with wild animals. Mahabaratam mentioned her as Kali, Makali, Kabali, Vijaya, Jeya and Ranapriya \(^{(70)}\). Some people worship the Goddess Uma. Uma stands for mother. Because Uma of Sumeriars and Amma of Tamils are same which

\(^{(65)}\) Yesudhason and Isaac Jeyadhas, op.cit., P-8.
\(^{(67)}\) Melville J. Herskovits, Cultural Anthropology, quoted by Swami., B.L., op.cit., P.40
\(^{(68)}\) Periplus of the Erthean Sea, quoted by Swami B.L., op.cit., P. 41.
\(^{(69)}\) Mccrindle J.W., Ancient India as described by Megasthanes and Aerian, quoted by Swami. B.L., op.cit., P.45.
\(^{(70)}\) Swami B.L., op.cit., Pp.51-52.
denote mother. So, Uma is said as Amma, Mootha Amma, Muththaramma, Athal and Thayar by Tamilars. The first Tamil Lexicon – Tivakara says about three mother Goddess and their various names. They are

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No.</th>
<th>Mother Goddess</th>
<th>Other Names</th>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Kali</td>
<td>Sooli, Gauri, Bairavi, Mukkanni, Veeri, Samundi, Vethali, Yamalai, Sandikai, Yogini and Makali</td>
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**Saktism**

Brahmanism is itself in a curiously fluid condition, syncretism is taking place in its pantheon on at least three lines – Siva, Vishnu and Sakthi. Sakthi philosophy, worship and cult follow exactly the model of the Siva sect. Sakthi is the wife of Siva. Also she is known as Parvathi. Parvathi created by the mixed culture of Ariyan and Dravidian cultures. It is confirmed by Govindacharya as the deities of hills and forests in Tamil lands were assimilated to Aryan gods and goddesses. Small Colonies of Brahmin pioneers had settled down in the Dravida Kingdoms bringing with them the vedic religion and Sanskrit learning and modifying the life of the Southern people. The devotees of Sakthi wear red colour dress. Women devotees of Sakthi are

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71 Hutton, census of India, quoted by Swami, B.L., op.cit., P.57.
74 Swami B.L., op.cit., P. 95.
75 Govindacharya A. The coming of the Brahmans to the South of India. J.R.A.S., 1912.
more than men devotees in number. They apply turmeric on their body and put a dot of red kumkum powder on their forehead. A kind of dilute boiled rice flour known as Kool, is the sacred food.

**Sattanism**

Worship **Sattan** is known as Sattanism. Many Tamil literatures mentioned Sattan as God. During the Sangam age Sattan celebrated as a main God. Many poets and kings of that time had Sattan as suffix in their names. Examples are poets like **Seethalai sattanar, Mosisattanar, Amoor Sattanar**, etc. and Kings like **Pandyan keeran Sattan** and **Karur Cheraman Sattanar**. Sattans like **Masattan** and **Arasattan** of Sangam age are worshiped today as **Mahasasta** and **Darmasasta**. **Nakkirar** said that he was hailed from the society of **Pidavur Ara Sattan**. **Pidavur** was the ancient name of a town. **Pida** was hailed from **Pidari** which is the name of a lady sattan. There is a Pidari monolithic ratha in Mamallapuram. In later periods many Sattan temples arose in Pandyan country. They are called as **Iyanar** temples, **Sasta** temples.

Iyanar is believed as a God who lived out of the village for the duty of watchman. There is an evidence for a Sattan temple out of the village in **Silappathikaram**.

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77 Purananuru – 395.
80 Silappathikaram – Kanathiramuraittha Kathai, - lines 12-15.
Devotees dedicate horse and elephant terracottas for this Iyanar as their worship. Like this other Sattans are worshiped by the Hindu people in South Tamil Nadu particularly in Madurai, Dindugal, Theni, Tirunelveli and Virudunagar districts. The names of the Sattans are Madurai Veeran, Pandi, Muni, Karuppu and Kochadai. There is a Muni temple in Anurathapuram of Ceylon\(^{(81)}\). There are many Sattan temples in Kerala. Superior of them is Sabari hill Ayyappan\(^{(82)}\). There is no any evidence for Sattan worship in North India. The Kerala Ayyappan becomes popular in Tamil Nadu also. When Sattans were the Gods of Villages, Brahman did not worship them. But where the sattan became popular there Brahmans worship them. Example Ayyappan and Bagavathi\(^{(83)}\). To make Ayyappan as a Saiva God they created a story which says Ayyappan is the son of Siva \(^{(84)}\). Mostly the figures of Sattans are seen with horse and sharp weapon like sward and with big eyes. Village people sacrifice animals for the Sattans. During the period of Pallavas Sattan is celebrated as Siva’s son. But in Chola period, they put Sattans as watchman statues for main God in the temples\(^{(85)}\).

Thus Hinduism has many sects. They are formed due to the difference between castes. There was a conflict between Saivism and Vishnavism, through the ages. These reasons paved the way for the invasion of

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\(^{(82)}\) Swami B.L., op.cit., P.22.

\(^{(83)}\) Ibid. P.36.

\(^{(84)}\) Ibid. P.20.

\(^{(85)}\) Ibid. P.21.
Christianity and Islam. The research place Thirukolur Vaithamanithi Perumal temple is one of the famous Vaishnava temples.