Chapter – I

INTRODUCTION
Hinduism is perhaps the oldest of all the living religions. It has neither any definite date of origin nor has it any definite founder associated with it. It is called Sanatana Dharma, a religion coming down to people through eternity\(^1\). It is thus a unique religion. There are six sects of Hinduism, as codified by Adi Sankara. They are Sauram - the worship of SunGod Surya, Ganapathyam - the worship of Ganapathy, Kaumaram - the worship of Kumara, Saktam - the worship of sakti, the worship of God as mother, Saivam - the worship of siva, Vaishnavam – the worship of Vishnu.

A Philosophical study’ as Dr. Seal has remarked, 'must be either comparative or nothing'\(^2\). The value and significances of comparative studies in Philosophy is growing at the present time. We are called upon by the exigencies of situation to eke out a method of mutual understanding and comparison of ideas for the benefit of both Saiva Siddhantha and Visistadvaita.

Bhakti is love towards the divine and the loving kindness bestowed by the divinity on all forms of life. None is to be excluded.
All are to be embraced in the fold of the Divinity. The basic principle of faith and ethics is to be accepted.

Saivas regard Siva as the Supreme Reality and He is supposed to perform five divine acts of creation, sustenance and dissolution of the Universe together with obscuration and liberation of souls. Sakti represents divine energy or power of Lord Siva, and Lord Siva acts through Sakti.

Siva is endowed with eight auspicious qualities as Omniscience, Omnipotence, Omnipresence, boundless benevolence, Independence, Freedom from impurities and Bliss. Individual souls are infinite, eternal and intelligence like God, but being in pasas, they are found to be ignorant, non-eternal and finite. Our past karmas, done under the spell of ignorance, are the pasas or the bonds and these can be removed by Siva-Sadhanas, which are to be practiced under the direct supervision of a Guru or a preceptor, and primarily by the grace of God. Religious discipline and grace of God constitute the means of liberation.

The vaishnavas accept Vishnu as the Highest Reality. Worship of Vishnu or Narayana and devotion to Him constitute the principal means of liberation. Lord Vishnu is the lover and protector
of all human souls. He is the first and the final cause of the universe. He is endowed with six auspicious qualities of jnana, sakthi aisvarya, bala, viryya and teja\(^3\). So, He is called saguna, He is devoid of all impure qualities. He lives in the hearts of all Bhaktas and so He is called Vasudeva. Knowledge of vaudeva is the supreme form of knowledge and God-realisation is possible through devotion and self-surrendering love to Vishnu.

1. **SAIVA SIDDHANTA**

   Saiva Siddhanta is the doctrinal side of Saiva Religion. The name "Saiva siddhanta" is coined from the terms, 'Saiva' and 'Siddhanta'. Both point out the kinship of this school with the other schools of saivism and also differentiates it from them\(^4\). In being one of the Saiva systems it is a agreement with those sects for whom the Supreme Being is Siva. The point of divergence from these schools is denoted by the term, 'siddhanta' which means "Accomplished end"\(^5\). The other schools of thought are considered to maintain positions described as 'purvapaksa' (prima facie) which must be transcended by a proved conclusion. They are yet on the way to the final truth, but have not reached it yet. This final end or "Siddhanta" has been attained by the highest faith, 'Siva Siddhanta', which signifies the Saivite-accomplished end.
Not only this meaning of the word Saiva siddhanta but also several meanings are given to the word with slightly different emphasis. Some have translated the word to read as, "sure end" others as, "assured results", "correct conclusion", "the true end, According to Tayumanavar the meaning of it is "The ultimate Goal". 

2. VISISTADVAITA

Visistadvaita is the doctrinal side of Vainava religion. Ramanuja's view is Visistadvaita or 'non-dualism qualified by difference'. The Absolute is an organic unity, an identity which is qualified by diversity. It is a concrete whole (Visita), which consists of the inter-related and inter-dependent subordinate elements, which are called 'visesanas' and the immanent and controlling spirit which is called 'Visesya'. Unity means relation of being a vital member of this organic whole.

God or the Absolute is this whole. He is the immanent, inner controller, the supreme real who holds together in unity the dependent individual soul as His body. Visistadvaita recognizes three things as ultimate and real (tattva-traya). They are matter
(acit), souls (chit) and God (Isvara). Though all are equally real, the first two are absolutely dependent upon God. Though they are substances in themselves, yet in relation to God, they become His attributes. They are the body of God who is their soul. God is the soul of nature. God is also the soul of soul. Our souls are souls in relation to our bodies, but in relation to God, they become. His body and He is their soul.

3. NEED FOR THE STUDY

Man is born with a mission (Religion). Human survival in this earth is penetrating with religious practices and rituals. Man without religion may be affected by barbaric attitudes. There are streamlined religious faiths, which give utmost importance for the aim of human life in this universe. The present study on Saiva siddhanta and Visistadvaita exposes the aim of human life on this earth. Both the systems are systematic religious faith and narrate the relevance of human life. This study awakens the entire humanity in realm of aim of life.

4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study focuses the following objectives. They are as follows:
1. The relevance of the existence of human being can be visualized through religious faith.

2. Among the religious faiths in the world the philosophy of Saiva siddhanta and Visistadvaita will be clearly exposed in various parameters.

3. Human emancipation may be viewed, based on sadhanas.

4. Saiva siddhanta and Visistadvaita scriptures expose the relevance and virility of self from various angles.

5. A study of the both philosophies from the beginning to the present day with a discussion on the principles of Saiva siddhanta and Visistadvaita.

6. A survey of Saiva siddhanta and Visistadvaita realities, sadhanas.

7. A study of the characteristic features of the Realities of saiva siddhanta and visistadvaita in nutshell.

8. A descriptive and analytical study of Realities in comparison of both philosophies.

9. A humble attempt to make this study as a opening of peaceful living and religious harmony against the perpetuating religious animosities.
5. AIM OF THE THESIS

We may hold that the aim of the thesis is to bring out the three realities in Saiva Siddhanta and Visistadavaita and to narrate similarities and dissimilarities between these two systems in descriptive and analytical means.

6. LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The scholar is interested to analyse the base work the as related to Panniru Tirumurais, Meikandasasstras, Nalayira Divya Prabandham, Saiva, Vaishnava Agamas and Saiva, Vaishnava puranas. The portion related to aim of life will be discussed with subsequently and consistently.

7. PLAN OF THE STUDY

We have Five chapters in this Thesis. They are as follows. The first chapter gives the introductory remarks to this thesis. The second chapter explaines the Realities of Saivasiddhanta. The third chapter contains the Realities of Visistadvaita. The fourth chapter deals with the Sadhanas of the both systems. The fifth chapter ends with concluding remarks as the findings of the scholar.
8. DELIMITATION

This Thesis "Realities in Saiva Siddhanta and Visistadvaita- A study" for the award of the Ph.D., Degree covers the basic concepts of both Saiva Siddhanta and Visistadvaita.

9. SOURCES OF THE STUDY

The primary sources of the research consists of the Vedas, Saiva Agamas, Vaishnava Agamas, Meykandasastras, Panniruthiramurai and Nalayiradivya prabantham. The secondary sources are the relevant books, articles, views and comments which appeared in journals, Magazines that have enormously helped the scholar for the work.

10. METHODOLOGY

Methology of research in Philosophy assumes greater importance, because Philosophy and religion analyses and elucidates Philosophy as well as religious concepts, such as God, Soul and World (matter) Sadhanas and liberation.

In the area of religious philosophy, the research is committed to find out the truth under religious analysis of the realities. In order to carry out this task, same amount of dedication and self
involvement are essential to the researcher to bring out the philosophical and religious truths. Descriptive and analytical methods are adopted.