Tirunadisams about Tiruvaikāru by Appar remain the basis for this explanation. They are explained philosophically by two Sidhānta works - Tirukkalirupadivār and Tiruvantivār.
CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSION: AN ESTIMATE

From the history of philosophy it is clear that there are two ways of developing philosophical doctrines. The first is a systematic reflection on what is found in the written works and developing thereby into a philosophical system of thought; the second is a systematic reflection on the events taking place in the daily life, and constructing a doctrine therefrom. The first follows the method of eliminating what is not true until it reaches a higher reality which is beyond everything; the second follows the method of discovering and experiencing a higher reality in the midst of ordinary events of daily life, and of establishing a doctrine thereof. While in the first method the ultimate reality is inferred, in the second is encountered and experienced directly.

The Tamil thinkers had mostly followed the second method for developing their philosophical systems. The words of Piruvalluvar makes this point clear:

Whatever may be the nature of just whatever object eyed,
'Tis wisdom's part to see and grasp its core of truth inside.

Experiential knowledge alone can give a real understanding of the true nature of the reality (Neyyungarital). Whereas the same author says in the chapter on knowledge (Apyutukami)
that the knowledge would consist in understanding the true meaning of a thing heard:

\textit{Whate'er may be the matter heard thro' whate'er source,}

To perceive and to grasp its core of truth is wisdom's force.

Generally it has been interpreted that Saiva Siddhanta means 'a settled conclusion'. That is to say, its conclusion cannot be refuted further by any other system, for it is the final one. On this account Saiva Siddhanta is considered to be a complete and perfect system. But, the following interpretation of the expression 'Saiva Siddhanta' would be the proper one. It means the essence of the reflection derived from the experience rather than from written works. The history of philosophy also bears testimony that there had been a change in the historical method for it was necessitated by the deficiency inherent in the very method. In the process of constructing a systematic reflection on the basis of life-experience and of trying to establish the existence of a thing, there might occur certain mistakes and consequently the conclusions too might be erroneous. Hence while attempting to define the nature of a reality, one should first become united with the reality that is highest of all the realities present in him, and then he should reflect on the events of life and of those things that are connected with them. This would imply giving up the old method and replacing it by a
new method. Śāiva Siddhānta insists very much on this change.

In the process of knowing, importance should be given to experiences for by experience alone one can have a real knowledge of things. However, experience may be in need of some tools for this purpose. So, while one is having an experience of things, he should also make use of both the internal faculties like the mind, and the external faculties, like the sense-organs. The fruit of this method would be an experiential knowledge. This is the normal procedure of knowing. But Śāiva Siddhānta says that even this normal procedure of knowing should be given up, because there is self-effort in it, insofar as one associates himself with the internal and external faculties for knowing. Instead, one should associate himself with a higher reality, with the help of which he can know the true reality. This process is called in Tiruvantivar 'Pashakkan tavira pashakutal':

Pashakkan tavirap pasbakavat pari
Usahappuvate peṇē antēpera 3
Ora porulēē enpantēpera.

We may paraphrase the meaning of this verse in the following way: Following the path shown by the arulēē one should give up the old practice (pashakkan) and let himself used to realize the Primal One who is ever present in his own under-
standing. The conclusions found in the written works will be of no avail in this process. Here the 'apuporu' stands for the Supreme Reality present in man. This is the 'yoga-katchi' according to Saiva Siddhanta. Such a perception or vision may be called "a knowledge seen through the divine grace", or simply 'arul-ina' or 'para-ina'. Hence to know the Supreme Reality, in addition to the method of basing oneself on the events of daily life, one should also unite himself with the divine grace and then try to know the nature of the reality.

From this it is clear that the method adopted by Saiva Siddhanta to arrive at the conclusion about the realities, is a method of experience in the light of divine grace. The concept 'Saiva' from this point of view, points to an experience that is had in conjunction with Saiva; 'sidhanta' means the conclusion arrived at by a systematic reflection on the same experience.

The experience of the 'arulalara' were the basis for the Saiva Siddhanta to develop its system in this way. The 'arulalara' associated themselves with the divine grace and had the experience of God thereby. The Tirumurais are the expressions of the experiences of these arulalara. To establish the existence of God, we can also base ourselves on the experience of the 'arulalara' Tirumavukkarasar,
whose very life remains a historical event bearing testimony to the truth about the existence of God.

Tirunāvukkarāsār wants to see God at Kailas; he starts to go to Kailas. On his way he is stopped by God and is told that he can have already here on earth the same vision of God which he wants to have at Kailas; so he makes him to return to the earth. Accordingly he was given the happiness of having the vision of God. This takes place at Tiruvayyūru. Henceforth, for Tirunāvukkarāsār the vision of Tiruvaiyāru is at once the vision of God Himself. In eight Padigams, he sings on the different aspects of the vision of God he had at Tiruvaiyāru and contrasts it with the previous visions. So these eight Padigams are considered as the expression of his experience of God.

A brief explanation of the experience of God as found in these Padigams would give us some idea about the existence of God which so many thinkers were at pains to establish.

To have the experience of God, first and foremost one should know himself. In him, his body is associated with his self as an aid, and the self is united with the body in order to have some knowledge. He should realize that similarly he is also united with a Supreme Being which abides ever in him as his source. A reflection on the events of his life will
confirm this truth. Thus his experience of God will be based both on the reflection of the events of his life and on the grace-experience. By this combined method alone man can arrive at the realization that there is in himself a reality helping him all throughout. If this method is over-whelmed by love, then he is led to a deep silence; he realizes also that it is God who thinks and has experience in him. This is what is known as 'anubhuti vil nirali'; it may be called also 'vinnukuta-neri' 'Rātu m ouvedupadāmasi-
neri'. But in the process of having the vision of God, man should be very vigilant; he should renounce all his 'akankara' and 'makankara' and should submit himself fully to God. This would be the first phase of the experience of God. At this stage (in the union of male (āppai) and female (ppai) of the things of the world) he will see the sacred feet of God (God's Tirumāl). Though both are united, only one of them functions. This points to the union of God and soul in which only the soul functions, and God makes it to function. This idea is expressed well in the words of Tirumūlar:

\[
\text{Annamirandula āṟṟāṇkarařiñinē} \\
\text{Tunniyirandu tṽṟaiippiriyyatannē} \\
\text{Tannilai yannē taniyonratenṟakkē} \\
\text{Finna saqavannē pēraṇukātēnu.}
\]
Here the two swans standing together indicate the union of God and the soul. The expressions 'tūnpaipipiyātu' and 'tannilai annam' mean that God is not in need of any help, but he stands united at the same time in order to help the soul. That is to say, God is independent (tani ninja annam) and helps the dependent soul (pinninja annam) to act.

Tirunavukkarasar sees in all things two contradictory qualities (or principles) united into one in which one of them functions and the other does not, but stands there helping the other to function.

The second Padigam speaks of the headship of God. Tirunavukkarasar has the experience of this headship of God through his acts. Insofar as this was not experienced previously, this is a new one. This is indicated by the expression 'Gaṅkalyaisaṅgyiyil vaittār'. The expression 'iyan iyarnār' also expresses the newness of the experience.

In the third Padigam the experience of God is compared to the experience of honey. That is say, Tirunavukkarasar finds felicity in the experience of God which is sweet like honey. As a consequence of this experience, he feels that all his two-fold deeds have disappeared. This is described in the following words: "Kaṇṭināl kāṇappaṟṟu karutippirṟē mudintatu". God is experienced here as 'Mūtaṟṟivāḷan' (The First knower).
The next Padiyar speaks of the experience in which he understands that without God there can be nothing in the world, and that God is in all things in advaitic union. Tirumāvukkarasar has the experience of the relation between himself and God as 'adimai' and 'Iyan'; or as remedy or honey and the one who enjoys it. Thus he understands the nature of God and of himself. He sees God directly, knows his grandeur, experiences his advaitic union with Him, and realizes his relation of 'adimai' to the Lord.

These experiences of God by Tirumāvukkarasar show that the existence of God can be realized through experience. Perception of the external world and the evidences of the epistemic method can show only the reasonableness of accepting the existence of God; but they cannot establish God's existence. The fact that the different aspects of the five-fold arguments for the existence of God are experienced in the Kallai-katchi by Tirumavukkarasar, indicates that the existence of God can be established by experience, and there is no need for having recourse to arguments. God is shown in Tiruvaitiaru-katchi as an object of experience rather than as an object of reasoning or argumentation. To establish the existence of God through experience is the goal of Śaiva Siddhānta, and this is its 'settled conclusion'.