CHAPTER II

PRELIMINARIES

In the first chapter we have situted the background and problem of our thesis. Before we enter into the detailed study of the various proofs for the existence of God, we should like to reflect over certain concepts which we are presupposed or used in the course of development. Hence we have entitled this chapter as "Preliminaries". Herein we shall briefly explain the meaning of 'atheism', 'theism', 'belief in God', 'the term 'God', 'existence' and so on in the overall context of philosophy in general and of Śiva Siddhānta in particular. We think that this study will serve as a stepping-stone to the main body of the thesis.

A. Atheism

We are living in a period of religious skepticism. It is said that the glorious ages of faith are the bygone historical facts, that we have lost faith in God. Subjectivism, rationalism and materialism are the watch-words of the day. But at the same time we shall not deny the potent factors of religion and faith. Still these are living forces even though the religious skepticism is more aggressive at present than it was in the olden days.
In recent years, even the most conservative religious groups have conceived that atheism could be considered as a "philosophical" ideology, that is adopted for the noble reasons. Jean-Marie Le Blond has appealed for a "truly human and mutually respectful dialogue" with atheists. He insists that a "life without God need not be ... bestial, unintelligent or immoral" and that atheism can be "serene and deeply human." But it was otherwise in earlier days. The atheists were treated then, like an untrue beings and disgraceful subjects. Plato and St. Aquinas wanted the atheists to be "shut off from the world by death."

1. Definition of Atheism

The term "atheism" comes from the combination of privative 'a' and of a Greek noun "theos", which means God and consequently atheism means "no God," or "without God." It is a system of thought opposed to theism. As doctrine, atheism represents the teaching of those religious, ethical and philosophical schools which do not include God either as a principle or as a conclusion of their reasoning. The word 'atheist', therefore, conveys the idea of a man who does not take God into consideration in his thoughts, words and actions. The atheists are grouped into two divisions: (1) theoretical atheist and (ii) practical theist. If a man does not believe in the existence of God because he thinks that there no suffi-
cient reasons for believing, then he may be called a theoretical atheist. On the other hand, if a man admits the existence of God, but does not believe in the Divine Law, he is called a practical atheist. Again, we can divide the theoretical atheists into two kinds: (i) dogmatic or positive and (ii) sceptical or negative atheists. The dogmatic atheists are those who assert that there is no God. Sceptical theists, commonly called agnostics, maintain that the existence of God cannot be proved or it has not been proved.

According to the most usual definition, an 'atheist' a person who maintains that there is no God, that is, that the sentence 'God exists' expresses a false proposition. But, according to Richte, 'true atheist' is the person who, instead of following the voice of conscience, always calculate the consequences before acting in a moral situation. Friedrish Jodl said that "only the man without idea is truly an atheist." According to Paul Tillich, the true atheist is the man who is uninvolved, indifferent, not deeply interested in anything. Again, he has defined 'atheism' as the view that "life has no depth, that it is shallow." Those who are having this view are called an atheist. Thus atheist do not always related to the idea that there is no God.
2. Causes of Atheism

According to Francis Bacon, it is little philosophy which leads to atheism. But many become atheistic because they fail to verify the rational demonstrability of the existence of God by external senses. Paul Tillich says that the first step to atheism is always a theology which drags God down to the level of doubtful things. The word 'God' has a number of usages. And, on the basis of one such usage, one's rejection of belief in God may be justified, but at the same time it may be quite inappropriate in the case of another. Hence we have to be very cautious in describing an atheist's position. According to Charles Bradlaugh, "The atheist does not say 'there is no God', but he says I know not what you mean by God; I am without the idea of God; the word 'God' is to be a sound conveying no clear or distinct affirmation..."

To those who become an atheist because of the indemonstrability of God's existence, we can say that the spiritual and supersensible truth of the existence of God would be not be a false one as someone fails in his attempt to demonstrate it.

2.1 Atheism and Science

According to Prof. J.B.S. Halden, "the spread of science inevitably leads to the spread of atheism." We can say that many scientists and physicians become atheists on account of
their one-sided study of nature and natural sciences. Some scientists have come to the conclusion that the science is able to explain everything in nature without any interference or without the intervention of any being superior to nature. They think that natural laws and natural forces can explain our world. But if we put the question about the first origin or the first existence of the things the scientists have long ago confessed with the eminent scientist Herr Lu Bois - Raymond that they do not know about the origin of the world. To the question, they said: "We do not know, we shall not know." Prof. Bateson admits that the origin and nature of species remain utterly mysterious. We can say that nature works in harmony as the natural laws are controlled by an unseen Power. 14. Boyle rightly observes: "The genuine scientists can never force their way into knowledge of the secret of creation without being aware of the finger of God." And we may say that since God's existence cannot be proved to demonstration, some scientists are of the view that God's existence is a matter of pure abstraction. According to them, as the existence is having no foundation in fact, God could be found only in metaphysical speculation.

2.2 The Problem of Evil

Others have taken shelter in atheism because of the problem of evil. We are unable to think the existence of a
"beneficent God" with the great problem of evil. Many philosophers believe that the existence of evil constitutes a difficulty for the theist, and many believe that the existence of evil makes belief in God unreasonable or rationally unacceptable. And hence evil has been called "the atheistic fact." Many atheists maintain that there is inconsistency in rationally accepting the existence of both God and evil.

This is the way the difficulty is usually stated: If God created the world, or if he sustains or supervises it, and if God is infinitely good, how shall we explain all the pain and evil, all the sin and sorrow and suffering, which are evident everywhere? If he could not prevent then, he is not God; if he could and does not, he is not good. As Hume points out: "Is he willing to prevent evil, but not able? Then he is impotent. Is he able, but not willing? Then he is malevolent. Is he both able and willing? whence the is evil?" Thus the fact of evil considered to be against the belief in God's existence and Russell says about as the hypothetical being as "an unjust God."

Brand Blanshard writes: "we are told that with God all things are possible. If so, it was possible for him to create a world in which the vast mass of suffering, that is morally
pointless—the pain and misery of animals, the cancer and blindness of little children, the humiliations of senility and insanity were avoided. There are ... apparently ... 20 inflictions of the Creation himself."

Many philosophers, like J.S. Mill, F.H. Bradley and others, have claimed that there is a contradiction in asserting that God is perfectly good, omnipotent and omniscient on the one hand, and on the other, that there is evil. This contradiction, says John Mackie to say: "Here it can be shown, not that religious beliefs lack rational support, but they are positively irrational, that the several parts of the essential theological doctrine are inconsistent with one another ..."

2.2.1 Categories of evil

The evils of the world have been grouped under three categories: (i) metaphysical evils or natural evils, (ii) physical and mental evils and, (iii) moral evils. In the first category, we have the imperfections in nature such as earthquakes, cyclones, drought and flood. The second stands for the pain and suffering. And in the third kind, we have sin and wickedness. By enumerating these, a severe indictment may be drawn against God as creator. We can also see a traditional distinction is made between 'moral evil' and 'natural evil'.
horal evil depends on the exercise of this. For St. Augustine, the reason for the natural evil is the free actions of non-
human spirits like Satan. As William Temple has remarked, while natural evil is admittedly the major evil is correspond-
ingly a major asset.

2.2. 2 Is evil an illusion?

Evil is alleged to be illusory, apparent or in some way less than real. Leibniz points out that all that can be oppo-
posed to the goodness and justice of God is nothing but appear-
ances. And it is not difficult to explain some evils as illu-
sory in the sense that they are evil only when looked at as parts of a whole. For instance, in the process of attaining anything worthwhile there is some discomfort or anxiety or even pain to be endured. Childbirth can cause a woman extreme pain; but apparently this is soon forgotten in the joy of the result. But, St. Augustine says that evil is not an illusion. To him, it is indisputably real. There are degrees of goodness as there are degrees of importance in any structure. In this view, evil is good but, like all good, is capable of decay.

But, we can say that evil is seen to be illusory because of our imperfect understanding, or of apprehension, only a frag-
ment of the whole universe. The Upanishads do not say that evil
is permanent. Evil is unreal in the sense that it is bound to be transmuted into good. That is, evil consisting merely in the absence of good. Also, it can be held that the evil is real to the extent that it requires effort to transform its nature.

According to St. Athanasius, evil is rather 'lapsing into nothing' or 'causing to be'. That is, evil is slipping back toward nothing, and being in itself nothing, it requires no cause or explanation. In so far as a thing exists and is real, it is good. God is the cause of this positive being, which is good. But, since evil has no positive being, but consists merely in the things lacking some other goodness, and hence we may say that evil is not caused by God or by anything else. There is nothing to cause it.

2.2.3 Evil and sin

Evil is due to sin. The atheists, then, ask, 'Does God permit sin?' To this question, theologian retorted, 'why does God permit sin?' God, in His love, creates finite human beings so that they enjoy Him forever. And also, He endows us with freewill. And we have the freedom of choice to do good or bad things. Thus we are allowed to be free to sin and produce the evil. From a theo-centric standpoint, all the selfishness is sin and produces evil. So, evil in the world is the consequence not of God's will but of man.
2.2.4 Solutions to the Problem of Evil

Simone Weil, a French woman analyses this problem of evil in a different manner. According to her, "either God is not almighty or he is not absolutely good, or else he does not command everywhere where he has the power to do so." Here she prefers the last of these three possibilities. Even though God causes this world to exist, He does not want to command it all over and he permit two forces to rule in his place. These two are, the blind necessity attaching to matter, including the psychic matter of the soul, and the freewill of the human beings. Thus, the existence of evil is far from disproving the reality of God. Simone Weil says that, "On God's part, creation is not an act of self-expansion but of restraint and renunciation ... God permitted the existence of things distinct from himself and worth infinitely less than himself." Thus we can say that there is no logical force against the belief in God from the problem of evil.

It has also been held that there is in every creative an original and inherent imperfection. It follows from the very nature of the creatureliness. In other words, creatureliness entails imperfect. Hence we can say that there lies the ultimate source of evil. Because the source is found in metaphysical imperfection, evil is to be regarded as having no efficient cause at all.
There is yet another idea which speaks of evil as presupposing a specification, hidden or patent, of the nature of the goodness as well as of the almightiness of God. And Pierre Bayle offers a dualistic solution. That is, the world is affected by two opposing ultimate principles, good and evil. But this view is not acceptable by many.

It is interesting to note the modern point of view of evil. Arthur Kenyon Rogers observes: “Modern thought takes evil, not as a given fact but as something which is capable of being transformed, and made to be that which we choose to have it be. It does not find the world good or bad. It sets out to make the world good, and it is able to do this because it has the source of good within a self who can master events.”

2.2. 5 Siddhānta and the Problem of Evil

According to Śaiva Siddhānta, evil is real and existent one. It is in the nature of the soul. Soul or Pātī is one of the three ultimate realities admitted by Śaiva Siddhānta. And hence there is no logical relation between the existence of evil and God (Pātī). Evil is, in a sense, termed as ānava-māla. According to Śaiva Siddhānta, the 'original sin' is primal ignorance. It is not mere absence of knowledge but it is of a positive nature. Ānava is a connate impurity; it is what may be called original 'sin', if by 'sin' we mean...
nothing more than imperfection. It is present without any beginning in souls, like the husk and bran in paddy or verdigris in copper. Although this śāya can never perish, as it is eternal, its activity can cease with the help of Śiva. So, we can say that the way the problem of evil is formulated in Śiva Sīkhānta is that it has to be felt existentially. It is not merely the balance sheet of pleasure and pain. The experience of the fact of evil is merely a test of faith.

3 Non-existence of God is not a self-evident truth

Thus, after seeing various causes for atheism, we can say that the atheists do not give arguments for the non-existence of God as a self-evident truth. If it were self-evident, all men would see it and all would admit it. Then it becomes a plain truth and all would convinced of the non-existence of God. But we do not have any such demonstration of the non-existence of God. It is clear, therefore, that the non-existence of God is not a self-evident truth. Hence, if anyone asserts that God does not exist, he must prove it and he must demonstrate it.

We can claim that there are no positive reasons to prove the non-existence of God. Also the non-existence of God cannot be proved by the three modes of reasoning, such as a priori,
a simultaneous and the a posteriori. Therefore, the claim of the atheists against the existence of God has no strength. Thus, against atheism the following questions are asked: (i) What is the self-evident proof against the existence of God? (ii) If there is none, why should one be an atheist rather than an agnostic? and (iii) why is atheism justified if we cannot be sure that there is no God?

4. Indian atheism

Each and every system of philosophy in India is, generally, characterised as the vision of truth. And every Indian school holds its own way of attaining or realizing the truth. At the same time, it also admits the views of others which are considered to be parapariksa. Thus one system admits the challenges raised by another and tries to replicate or reject them. This attitude of Indian schools clearly reveal their deep devotion to the search for truth. In the same lines, we can see that the history of Indian thought is interspersed with movements of religious reform on the one hand and on the other, attempts to eliminate the religion of God and put atheism in its place. Thus we meet a systematic view of atheism even from the Vedic period. It may be pointed out that all the major schools of heterodox (nāstika) thought, including the Cārvāka, and two of the six orthodox systems (āstika) of philosophy, namely, the Cārkhyā and the Mīmāṃsā,
rejected the religion of God and had recourse to atheism.

The Cārvāka, Jaina and Buddhism schools stand mainly by opposition to the Vedic culture in which God is the central theme.

4.1 Two Types of Atheism

Atheism may be classified into two types: (1) naive and (2) philosophical. The former has its roots in the disbelief in things which are unperceived. That is to say, it gives importance only to the perception. The Cārvāka school belongs to this type. The latter, viz., the philosophical atheism is the result of serious philosophical speculation. Jaina system belongs to this category of 'considered atheism' for its reflective rejection of God.

4.2 Atheism and Religion

Again, it is to be noted that atheism, from the Indian point of view, does not necessarily involve the surrender of the idea of spiritual realization. Here, the spiritual realization implies religion as a way of life. The atheistic standpoint is only to reject the religion of God but not the religion as a way of life. And this latter one, according to the atheists, belongs to the human freedom of choice. This is clearly demonstrated by the Cārvākas who not only deny the belief in God but also did not recognize any ideal for mankind
to pursue, except the policy of pleasure.

4.3 The Āryāvākas

Regarding the Āryāvākas, it is to be noted that they have not advanced any argument, as what other atheistic schools of Indian Philosophy have done, against God and in support of atheism. It has been held that their atheism is consequence of their dogmatic procedure. "With an audacious dogmaticism, the philosophy swept the world clean of all its value, and put down belief in God and the other world as a sign of mendaciousness, femininity, weakness, cowardice or dishonesty." Again, for the Āryāvākas, a God is not necessary to account for the world. And according to them, God cannot be apprehended and so must be regarded as fictitious. Dr. N.V. Banerjee observes: "And this amounts to the employment of extreme empiricism in the elimination of the religion of God, which bears a resemblance to the employment of the same epistemological doctrine by the logical positivists in recent times in the elimination of metaphysics."

4.4 Jainism

As far as Jainism is concerned, it presents its anti-theistic arguments which are mainly directed against the Nyāya-śāstra. It questions the nature of God in creating the world. If God is ex hypothesi a supremely intelligent being,
then its actions must be motivated by either self-interest or compassion for others. Jainism argues that since God could not be spoken of as having any motive to create the world, it would be utterly futile to try to prove his existence on the supposition that He is the creator of the world. If it is held that God has created the world, not out of any motive, but in sport (īla), it would follow that His creative act is as purposeless as the play of a child. Then He is not at all God. And according to the Jainas, the development of the world is possible due to the doctrine of the infiniteness of being and the interaction of substances. Hence, there is no necessity for the idea of God in the matter of creation and destruction. So also, God cannot be accounted for either the origin or the cessation of suffering.

4.5 Buddhism

Buddhism argues that if God exists, then He must be sole cause of all that happens, good as well as evil and thus man can have no freedom of his own. If God rejects wickedness and disowns the authorship of evil, then He is not a universal agent. And according to duêcha, a God who can neither adapt nor alter, neither produce nor modify, is no God at all. Again, Buddhism holds that the idea of a first cause does not help in moral progress. It only leads to inaction and irresponsibility. In the view of Buddhism, the
universe as a whole is essentially a causal connection and there is no possibility of any first cause. This view is obviously opposed to the conception of God as the uncaused cause of the world. Thus the early Buddhists reject the traditional arguments for the existence of God.

4.6 The Sāṃkhya and the Mīmāṃsā

The Sāṃkhya system also rejects the idea of God in the matter of creation of this world. It presents the dual principle of prakṛti and puruṣa as the material and efficient causes respectively, of the world. This picture of world-process given by Sāṃkhya does not make room for either divine creativity or divine purpose.

So too, the Mīmāṃsā schools oppose the idea of God as the creator of this world. Both Kumārila and Prabhākara give argument against theism. Kumārila argues that in order to believe that God has created the world, there must be someone to testify to this fact. But we could not produce any direct evidence of this creation. Thus there is no God. He also adds that a single cause, God, could not be the cause for both creation and destruction. It is but a contradiction and hence there is no God. Prabhākara also eliminates the hypothesis of God as the creator of the world. He observes that all effects are produced by their natural causes and
without the intervention of any imaginary supernatural cause. Animals and human beings are having births due to their parents and all things in the world are produced by their appropriate cause. And hence there is no necessity for the advent of God as a creator of this world. But we shall see the necessity or God as the creator of this world that which forms the central theme of theism.

B Theism

1 Definitions

'Theism' comes from the Greek 'Theos' which means 'God'. The root word represents the Indo-European 'theos'. We can compare this word with the Sanskrit term 'ubhayaas' which refers to 'pious' or 'devout' and also with the Armenian 'dikht' which mean 'loos'. It has been held that this word 'theism' is purely a modern formation. Anyhow, theism signifies belief in God (theos). Here we have three different shades of meaning for what this theism stands for.

1.1 Unspecified affirmation of God

In the first sense, theism can mean the unspecified affirmation of God. Theism in this sense does not say what it means if it uses the name of God. Because of the traditional and psychological connotations of the word God, an empty theism can itself produce a reverent mood if it speaks of God.
And thus people without a definite religious commitment wants to call themselves as theistic on the sole reason that they cannot live in a world without God. For them, God may be whatever. And on the highest level of this kind of theism, the name of God is used as a poetic or practical symbol, expressing a profound emotional state or the highest ethical idea.

1.2 The Living-Human Encounter

Theism can have another meaning, quite contrary to the first one. It can be the name of what we have called the divine-human encounter. Here, it emphasises the person-to-person relationship with God. Theism in this sense refers to the personalistic image of God, and the theists regard this personal God as the ultimate reality. But Hegel, F. Nietzsche and Shankara have rejected this idea of personal God. To them, personal images of God are intellectually immature depictions of a suprapersonal absolute. Again, in this sense of theism, the world as the tool of creation and revelation, the divine purpose, the ethical and social character of the kingdom of God and also the personal nature of human faith are all emphasised. Thus theism in this sense is the non-mystical side of the religion.

1.3 Theological Theism

Theism has a third meaning, strictly a theological one. Theological theism depends upon the religious substance which
it conceptualizes. The God of theological theism is a being beside others and as such a part of the whole of reality. He is certainly considered its most important part, but as a part and therefore as subject to 'the structure of the whole'. According to this type of theism, God is being not being itself. As such he is bound to the subject-object structure of reality, he is an object for us as subjects. Thus, the God of theological theism becomes the core of everything against which existentialism revolted. And this is the God that Nietzsche wants to kill because nobody can tolerate such a God which is merely an object of absolute knowledge and absolute control. And this type of theism depends on theism in the first sense insofar as it tries to prove the necessity of affirming God in some way. And it usually develops the so-called arguments for the existence of God.

2 Philosophy of Theism

The word 'theism' is used, also, as a name for a philosophical theory as distinct from a practical faith. And theism is concerned with the philosophical conception of God as the ultimate ground of things. Theistic belief raises many questions such as, how can finite terms refer to God if He is infinite? Is it possible to demonstrate, or at least to justify the belief in God's existence by reason? Is there a mode of experience which is specifically 'religious'? And, is the
belief in a God who is both omnipotent and good compatible with the fact of evil? These questions constitute the "philosophy of theism" or theism simpliciter, in a secondary, speculative sense. This philosophical theism has often been attacked. At the end of the Middle Ages, William of Ockham denied that reason could prove God's existence. As we have seen already that Kant also repeats this denial. And in this century, the existentialists and the empiricists have rejected the possibility of speculative metaphysics in any form. Yet many philosophers and theologians maintain that theistic reasoning is both possible and necessary.

3 Indian Theism

The basis for Indian philosophy is the reflection upon the life and the world. And the idea of reflection is a logical interconnection of all possible consistent answers to various questions about life and experience. Thus in India, philosophy is termed as a search for a comprehensive view of nature and an attempt at universal explanation of things. In the process of search, Indian philosophy wants to know the whole scheme of things and events and also the proper place of each thing in relation to whole. So in India, philosophy begins with the problem of value and particularly with the problem of highest values of human life. And here God is considered to be the highest value of human life and which gives
meaning and significance to the life. Thus there arises the belief in God.

Religion in India is not dogmatic. It has its own rational synthesis. The religious problems stimulate the philosophic spirit. Here, in India, we have the traditional exercises over the questions about God. And the existence of God is admitted as truism with the vast majority of mankind. Therefore, it would be natural desire of every sensible man to know something of God. Without knowing something of Him, it is not possible for us to believe His Existence. But Katha-Upanishad says: "God is only knowable to him who believes in His existence."

The Upanishads suggest that Brahman should be known negatively. That is, the existence of God can not be established by any direct evidences. According to the Vedas, the reality of God cannot be proved by logic. It can only be realized by faith and meditation.

4 Existence of God in Indian orthodox schools

We have already considered about the existence of God in the Indian heterodox systems. Now we shall consider this in Indian orthodox schools. When Indian schools of thought interpret the concept of the absolute through spiritualistically
they feel the need for the existence of God. And they are under the necessity of indicating the existence of God. There arises the need for the proofs for God's existence. Again, those schools which are not at all the advocates of ausculi-
cism but are realistically and pluralistically oriented feel the need for the religion of God. And since their philosop-
ical position is indifferent to the question if God, they are required to undertake to prove God's existence as a matter of justification. This is the position of the Nyāya Vaisēgika and Yoga schools. Hence they offer the proofs for the existence of God. The theistic arguments for God's existence are called as "Itiṣṭa antitya prācyā."

4.1 The Nyāya School

It is interesting to note that the Nyāya, though primarily interested in logic and epistemology has engaged in the reli-
bion of God and thereby argues forcefully for the existence of God. Nyāya's Kusumāntari is the classic statement of the Nyāya proofs for the existence. But, it has also been said that this Nyāya and the Vaisēgika were originally atheis-
tic. So also, Muir says that it "is unable to say if the ancient doctrine of the Nyāya was theistic." Garve too obse-
1ves: "The fundamental text-books, the Vaisēgika and the Nyāya Sūtras, originally did not accept the existence of God; it was not till a subsequent period that the two systems changed into theism..."
4.2 The Sāṃkhya School

Similarly, regarding the Sāṃkhya system the charge of atheistic basis was levelled. It seems that the Sāṃkhya system denies the existence of God. But in Sāṃkhya Sūtra, the existence of God as the Creator and regulator of the universe has been admitted. Again, verses 1/92 and 5/10 of the Sāṃkhya Sūtra state that there is no authoritative proof to show that God exists. Prof. Macmueller commenting on these two verses, remarks, “the atheism of Sāṃkhya philosophy is very different from what we actually mean by it. It is the negation of the necessity of admitting an active or limited personal God.” It is also claimed that the original Sāṃkhya was theistic while the classical Sāṃkhya, perhaps under the influence of Gārvāka, early Buddhism and Jainism, became atheistic. But, it does not establish the non-existence of God. And some commentators have tried to reject the existence of God. At the same time writers like Vijnānabhaikṣu, have tried to revive the necessity of admitting God. Patanjali takes a practical interest in God while the later writers have taken also a theoretical interest in Him and have tried to prove His existence as a necessary philosophical speculation.

4.3 The Vedānta Schools

In the Vedānta system of thought, Śaṅkara believes that the question of God’s existence is an absurd one. For him, to
state the question of God in terms of existence removes all
the possibility of solving it. Saṅkara, like Kant, believes
that God cannot be proved by our finite thought. And the lesson
which Saṅkara derives from the inadequate proofs for the exist-
ence of God is that the question has no meaning in reality
and arises only within the world of experience. But at the
same time, Saṅkara clarifies that to set aside the logical proofs
is not at all to deny the existence of Isāra. According to
him, no pure rational argument for the existence of God as per-
sonal supreme being is acceptable as the reality of God transcends
our rational powers. Thus, all arguments as Saṅkara holds,
are merely tells us that God is a possibility.

The Vaiṣṇavite school, as a system of theistic absoluti-
cism, does feel that there is no need for any proof for the
existence of God. And the Vaiṣṇavite schools are under no
obligation to undertake the proofs of God's existence. Śaṅkara
argues that the proofs offered by various schools, for the exis-
tence, are doubtful because there are many forceful counter
argument to these proofs. And then the Īśvārī represents an
intermediate position. According to it, that the proofs are
doubtful, if the truth of revelation is in question. But if
the revelation is accepted as true then the proofs become
convincing.
C  Belief in God

Religion stands or falls with the belief in God. Belief in God is a conviction or a faith. The question that troubles many minds is whether they should believe in the existence of God. We can see that the human mind entertained a belief in God ages before there was any problem about such a being. The spiritual roots of the belief in God lie, according to Feuerbach and Schleiermacher, in mind, feeling, and will. And William James speaks of a 'more' which man feels about him and to which he responds in worship and prayer. The sense of dependence may take many forms, depending on the intellectual and cultural development.

In considering the belief in God, we should keep three things in mind. First of all, there is a difference between God and the idea of God. To say that God is, means that the idea of God is not merely an idea in the minds of men, but refers to what is objectively real. It exists independent of the awareness.

Secondly, men have worshipped God long before doctrines and philosophical problems concerning God came up. Thirdly, no person's view of God is either final or adequate as our knowledge is growing and incomplete. And it has also been said that the belief in God is a common notion and it cannot be denied unless through some confusion of thought. "People quarrel", says
1. The Problem of Beliefs in God

Religious beliefs are the most far-reaching beliefs of the human mind, and the problems to which they give rise are difficult to envisage. They are inevitable problems emerging from the ills of man. And consequently, despite their baffling nature, they have been persistent in the course of man's intellectual enterprise. And one of the problems which give special concern to us is the problem of belief in God. The problem of God never dawned upon the mind of primitive man whose belief was so intense. The problem of God is checked by the religious attitude. The devout does not question the existence of God because he believes so intensely. When he is more devout and his belief is more intense, then the rise of any problem regarding God is quite impossible. But once man begins to reflect upon his belief in God then the problem of God is an inevitable problem of the human mind. It grows directly out of the belief through reflection upon it. Thus man reasons about God, not in order that he may believe Him, but precisely because he does believe in Him.

Also, the variations in the belief itself make the problem inevitable. Then, the developing moral experience of the race tends to make the problem of God an acute one. Religious faith assumes that God exists as the guardian of moral values,
and that the righteous are the special objects of His interest and care. But there are many facts that seem to make against this assumption. Also, the push of the problem of God is felt in the developing scientific experience of mankind. Thus, whatever may be the genesis of the problem or its justification, it is historically embedded in all stages of progress from savagery to civilization as a basis concept of the religious consciousness. Dr. Kraemer observes: "God is continuously occupying Himself and wrestling with man, in all ages and with all peoples."

2. **Truthfulness of the Belief in God**

The general belief in God is legitimate, right and truthful. The human race has ever been in possession of the belief in the existence of God. Such a constant and universal conviction in the existence cannot be explained if it is not deeply implanted in human nature. This belief has been withstood every difficulty of the physical and moral order and this cannot but the outcome of the natural and essential tendencies of the human mind. We are told that the universal belief in the existence of God was introduced in the world by priests, political leaders, kings, and lawyers. Thus it seems that the belief in God is a human invention. But it is not so, for if the belief in God was invented by priests and kings, it must be a historical fact. Consequently it must be roved like any other historical
fact. Till now, none has been able to substantiate this assertion by facts or figures. So, it is not an invention of human being. Likewise, the belief in God is not the result of his fear or the result of common agreement or the result of ignorance. Also, it is not a sentiment, a feeling, an emotion but it is firm conviction of the mind that God is the First Absolute Being.

D Meaning of the term 'God'

Before we start discussing the problem proper, i.e., about the arguments for the existence of God, we should have to consider the meaning of the term 'God'. The question about the meaning of the term 'God' is necessary as only after having a thorough knowledge about the content of the major problem we would be in a position to answer or analyse that problem. As French rationalist Vacherot observes, "The name of God is the grandest word of the human language. It is the grandest problem of high philosophy."

Suppose, if someone proposes for discussion the question, 'does God exist', it would be obviously futile to begin to construct arguments for or against the existence of God until some agreement has been reached as to what is meant by the term 'God'. If there is no agreement, then confusion would
prevail among those who affirm the existence of God, and those who deny the existence of God. And it is comparatively easy to secure very wide verbal agreement on the existence of God. But much of this, is exposed as unreal when we know the different meanings given to the key word 'God'. Hence there arise different questions about the existence of God on the basis of different interpretations of the term 'God'.

1 What is this God?

It is very difficult to answer this question with precision that might be described. It is important to consider this question independent of any particular system. Unless it is approached in this way, some of the logical consequences derived from the statements about God are likely to be misconstrued. It has also been said that the development of the meaning of God has two interdependent causes: (1) the tension within the idea of God and (2) the general factors determining the movement of history of religion, culture etc.

Before we consider the religious and philosophical meaning of the term 'God', we can say that God is a term which is used in many ways, and that some of them are very peculiar. A minimum definition of the word 'God' is that it means, "a Being which is unique, unitary, incorporeal, infinitely powerful,
wise, and good, personal but without passions are the maker and preserver of the universe."

2 Religious Meaning

The term 'God' is in the first instance a religious term. Then we can define 'God' as "the object of the act of worship." The supposition is that the object of worship is somehow worthy of man's devotion, because God is conceived in some philosophical traditions, to be holy, just, good, merciful, and so on. The basic idea of the most of the major religions is that there exists a supernatural being called God. God is defined as being and all-good, all-knowing all-powerful creator of the universe. Also, God is viewed as "concerned with our affairs rather than being withdrawn and aloof." We can see that a God who is not actual but ideal, is not at all acceptable to worshippers.

The Hebrews regard God as 'the righteous law-giver'. For the Christians, He is the beloved Redeemer. To the Muslims, God is all merciful. The Hindus regard Him as Supreme and Ultimate reality. Also, Berkeley considers God as the 'father of spirits'. For Hegel, He is 'Absolute Idea'. To Leucken, God is a 'spiritual life'. To Herbert Spencer, an Infinite and Eternal Energy', and for Bradley and Royce, God is their 'Absolute Experience'. So, the religious use of the term 'God' is, as Eliot says, "an omnipresent eternal
energy, informing and inspiring the whole creation..." Also, it has been held by the theistic religions that God is the one object of the supreme adoration; the creator and ruler of the universe. In one sentence, we may say that "God is an inexpressible sign fixed in the soil of the soul."

3 Philosophical Meaning

Philosophers like St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Anselm, Descartes and Kant have considered the term 'God' as (1) a reality that transcends space and time and, (ii) the ground of being and value. Kant calls God as "the moral law-giver or the brightest good'. Fried says, 'God is the reality of the ideal of the eternal good'. William James speaks of God as the 'highest part of the universe'. And H.H. Wieman identifies God with 'that process of existence which carries the possibilities of the highest value'. Also, Matthew Arnold defines God as 'the power not ourselves that makes for righteousness'. Paul Tillich has two ways of talking about God, viz., 'ground of Being', and as 'ultimate concern'. God is to be understood as 'the infinite and inexhaustible depth and ground of Being'. And it is also interesting to note that Feuerbach defines God as nothing but the human impulse towards happiness realized in imagination. That is, a pure embodiment of what one desires. Also, we have Llyod Morgan to explain God as the cause of evo-
lution and Dr. Robinson to define Him as an ultimate reality.

We are also having the views about God of different systems. Polytheism regards God as personified particular values; Monotheism considers God as personified National Spirit; Monotheism thinks Him as Supreme Personal Creator. Pantheism regards God as the whole of reality whereas agnosticism opines God as the unknowable source of all beings. Deistic supernaturalism extolls God as the tendency of nature to support or produce values. And the religious humanism, consisting of M.C. Otto, W. Sellars and John Dewey, thinks that God is to be found in "man's highest social experiences, not in any reality beyond man." Also God is, sometimes, defined as the system of ideal values. For example, God is considered as the eternal Form (or Ideas) of Justice, of Truth, and of Love. Fichte's conception of God as "the moral order of the universe", is also close to this view.

For Ganapji, truth is God.

4 Concept of God in Śāiva Siddhānta

To designate the Supreme Being, Śāiva Siddhānta makes use of several terms. These terms are used according to the experience one has about God in different contexts. The content of these experiences are expressed through concepts like Isā, Pāti, Upan, Adi and so on. The following words of Mānıkkaṉaṉgar
makes this approach clear:

"Cru nānas cru rūvam orūmillārku āyiras
Tirunānas pādi nām teḷḷēnas koṭṭāmē."

Here, we will take for our consideration the concepts Irai, Ugan and Pati.

4.1 Irai

The term 'Irai' is used for that which is present always and everywhere in all things. In one word this character is called all-pervasiveness. This concept is evolved into a personified name 'Iraivan'. Iraivan is the one who gives meaning and significance for all things in the world. Hence Umapati says, "Like the letter 'A', the Incomparable Lord is all intelligence and pervades everything without change."

In so far as Irai or Iraivan pervades all things uninterpretably, it is called 'Sat'. Iraivan as Sat is present in all things and in all unions. In the world everything is spoken of in terms of "Iraivan Kolkai" (doctrine of dualism). Though opposite, together they constitute a perfect and full being. For example, body and soul are two opposites, in so far as the former jiva and the latter is intelligent (cit). Yet they form one being, man. Iraivan, the Sat is present
in each of these opposites and also in the product resulting from the union of these opposites. **Iraivan** is not identified with any of them nor is He absent in them. Though He is beyond these constituents yet He is the one who unifies them at the same time. The relation of this third reality with the other two is called in *Saiva Siddhanta* 'mayaic' union. **Tirukkuralippadivar** expresses this in the following ways:

"Iruporulum angiyē innatitu ennētu  
Oruporulēyāyirukkum urru."

Intelligent beings are able to experience the presence of this **Iraivan** in them and recognise with gratitude His beneficial action. From this emerges the attitude of worshipping Him.

4.2. **Upan**

This concept is a natural outcome of what we have explained above. While *Sat* (**Ira** alone stands by itself, independent of anything else, other beings, like body and soul are dependent upon the previous one. The mode of this distinction is expressed in Tamil by two concepts 'iruthal' and 'umam'. While the latter is applicable to the *Sat* alone the former is used for the things other
than Sat. This is something specific to the Siddhānta doctrine. The philosophical meaning of 'ārthāntīk' and 'ānāya-chit' will be explained in the following pages.

4.3 Pati

The concept Pati is used to God in the sense of being commingled (patintu) with all things. Pati is also used to God to designate that He is the Prime Mover of all. He is the one who initiated the process. This term is also used in the sense of protection. Pati comes from 'Pā' which means 'to protect.' Strictly it corresponds what is called 'providence.' In this sense God is called pralapati.

In Śaiva Siddhānta, Śiva is also termed as 'Śiva-Sat,' 'Śīr-Sat' and 'Anana-chit.' God is identified with knowledge itself. The following verses give this idea.

"Arivyānai arivakappi apanullē
Arivutanai arulinnān ariyāte arintu."

"Arivyum arivatunru u nthipara."
"Arivai ninranum"
"Atu etu ennā anaitarivakus"

Also, it is held that it is only God that which give all true pleasures to us. Nothing has 'pleasure' as its quality.
Pleasures which come from the five senses are not at all true pleasures. According to Tirumūlar, the individual has the ability to make the ultimate reality as pleasure. He describes this process as 'Tamil covital' as the word 'Tamil' denotes pleasure.

2. **On Proofs**

1. **What is Proof?**

A proof is an argument that has a bearing on a conclusion. To give a proof is to give evidence for a conclusion. Also, a proof tries to give a rational justification for one's belief. We may say that the proofs are the exercises of philosophical reasoning. And all philosophical theses are ideally based on proof or evidence. But no philosophical proof for anything rests on indubitable premises. It has been urged that we must be as exact as we could, when proposing any philosophical proof. But as the same time we should also recognize that all philosophical knowledge "swims in a continuum of uncertainty" as Charles Sanders Pierce once put it.

2. **The Criteria of Proof**

It is quite but normal that people expect every statement that is made, to be proved. Hence the necessity of "proof". Many people seem to think that the notion of proof
can be defined purely in terms of logic and truth. But it does not mean that the logical requirement is more important than that of its validity. It has been said that not every attempted proof is a good one. There are two positive criteria for a sound proof of which have been recognised by the philosophers. The first is that of validity. The validity of a sound proof requires the strongest logical tie between its premises and its conclusion. That is, the truth of the premises in a valid argument is binding upon the truth of the conclusion. The second one is that all of its premises should be true. That is, if a proof is not possible, this can be only because the proposition involved is not true. For instance, we would fail to prove the existence of God only if He did not exist. If both of these criteria are satisfied then the conclusion of the argument must also be true. And, at sometimes we can admit that some premises are true, in the absence of any disproof. Bowne writes, "whatever the mind demands for the satisfaction of its subjective interests and tendencies may be assumed as real in default of positive disproof."

3 The Consequence of Proof

The notion of proof has some peculiar consequences. One of them is that it is easy to prove every true proposition. Another is that it could be possible to prove something without
knowing anything about in either before or after the proof. Thus it is held that a proof neither represents nor contributes to any knowledge of the one who offers the proof. Argumentation, as a method of proof, is not a substitute for knowledge. It follows that none could gain all of his knowledge by means of arguments and proofs only.

**Proofs of God's Existence**

There are many true propositions that have never been proved to anyone. Also, there might be some propositions that are known to someone but have never been proved by anyone. There are some true propositions which by its very nature could not be proved. Some may think that a proposition about God's existence might be one of the unprovable ones. It has also been said that the proposition 'God exists' could be knowable but unprovable. Jeremy Bentham points out that that which is used to prove everything else itself be proved.

We have to see the way in which the epistemological question about proofs is related to the theological and metaphysical question about the existence of God. It is held that the proofs and arguments are epistemological tools. And those who have an epistemological interest in the philosophy of religion always demand for some proof for the exist-
ence of God. The epistemological question depends upon the metaphysical one. And we cannot answer the epistemological question prior to answering the metaphysical question. A person who has settled the metaphysical question can settle the question of proof in the same way.

Again, if we examine the proofs of the existence of God, we shall have to consider the two aspects of proof. The first is the nature of proof and this belongs to the subject of logic. And the second is the content of proof, which is God Himself and this belongs to the sphere of religion. But it should also be noted that logic not only constitutes the formal, also occupies a very central point of the content.

5 Having a Proof

The idea of demonstrating that 'God exists' could scarcely suggest itself to reason. For, if God does not exist it would be impossible to prove it, and if he does exist it would be folly to attempt it. But it can also be said that a person's belief in God would be rational if there were a proof of His existence. That is, if a person had a proof for God's existence then his belief in God would be rational. At the same time we have to note that the soundness of an argument guarantees that its conclusion
is true but it does not guarantee that anyone's belief in
that conclusion is rational. Thus it leads to the distin-
cution between there being a proof of God's existence and
someone is having such proof.

6 Types of Proof

However, many philosophers of both East and West have
tried to formulate the proofs of God's existence in order
to defend the rationality of their theistic belief in God.
and many of them have limited themselves mainly to a consi-
deration of discursive types of proof. A discursive proof
is one which is given entirely by means of discourse, that
is, by talking or writing. A consists fully if an argument,
that is, of one or more statements which are premises and
a conclusive statement.

There are two types of proofs: (i) deductive and
(ii) inductive. The deductive proofs are those in which the
premises apparently provide conclusive evidence for the
conclusion. But, in a inductive proof, the premises provide
only some probability in favour of the conclusion. It is
also to be noted that we have three senses of 'prove' in
the formulation of proofs. They are (i) that the conclu-
sion follows from the premises, (ii) that the premises from
which it follows should be true and also (iii) that they
must be acknowledged as true by those to whom we are placing the proofs.

7 Demonstrations of Proofs

It is held that the word 'proof' easily conjures up the type of demonstration familiar to mathematics. Thus, there are various attempts to demonstrate the existence of God. But as we have seen already that some philosophers are of the view that the existence of God is indemonstrable. This clearly refers to the limitation of the logical proofs.

However, we are especially interested in whether there is any argument that will prove God's existence to everyone. We may demand for the invention of a drug which could cure all diseases. But it is quite impossible to have like this. And we can say that just like this demand for an invention, we have the demand for a proof of God's existence. Sometimes, some theistic arguments are attempted like this fashion. Alvin Plantinga observes: "When the natural theologian sets out to do is to show that some of the central beliefs of theist follow deductively or inductively from propositions that are obviously true and accepted by nearly every sane man together with propositions that are self-evident or necessarily true."
To Prove God's Existence

It is also interesting to note that there is view which expresses that neither in the traditional proofs nor in any subjective feeling that the real proof of God's existence is to be found. And according to Austin Farrer, "God... cannot be found for proof..." And if we want to have a proof of the existence of God, then it can be proved only in the struggle with God. Hence, Kierkegaard has said that the idea of 'proving the existence of God' is always possible only to those who have engaged in the struggle with God. And it is like trying to prove the existence of his own mother, while under her very nose. According to James MacGregor, it seems even more absurd than the above example, as it is like trying to prove to a man who engaged in a bayonet charge that there is a war on. In this connection we shall keep in our mind, also, what Socrates has said about the enquiries. He says: "That a man cannot enquire either about that which he knows, or about that which he does not know; for if he knows, he has no need to enquire; and if not, he cannot; for he does not know the very subject about which he is to enquire."

Sicchānta View on Proofs

As far as 'Śaiva Śicchānta is concerned, a proof cannot establish a metaphysical reality like God. It helps
only to remove the doubts which could come when approach
the problem through scriptures. Proofs are necessary to
eliminate such doubts. Saiva Siddhānta do not give any
criterion for a proof. It depends upon the mentality of
the doubter who asks for a demonstration. What a proof,
then, is that which takes our mind to accept a view with
satisfaction.

Generally we can give proofs for some principles
with the common notion of demonstrating its validity. But
what a proof can give is only a logical validity but not
the finality of the principles. Tests or experiments, to
give a direct result or finality, are possible only in
scientific principles. In metaphysical level, proofs do
not establish the principles but they could give only reason-
ableness about the principle. So, according to Saiva
Siddhānta, proofs are there only to give logical consistency.
Also, it is held that the proofs help one to remove the
doubts and paves the way for accepting the truth of reality.
Then we may say that proof stands between doubt and experience. Doubt arises whenever we could not use the method of
perception in acquiring a knowledge. Scriptures are useful
only to the believers. Thus proof comes under the method
of inference. Inference gives some logical consistency, as
it follows from the known to the unknown.
Thus, actually Śaiva Śidhānta does not give anything like arguments or proofs as such. But we could derive some form of arguments from the works of Śaiva Śidhānta. The primary usefulness of a proof is only to remove the doubts from the mind of the believers. And we could present the proofs only on the hypothetic level. But we can find some reasonableness in it which gives some satisfaction to our mind.

9.1 Logic and existence of God

When Śaiva Śidhānta had to face adversaries who denied the existence of God, it had recourse to certain methods of establishing God's existence for the sake of them. The development of these methods came to be known as advaita (epistemology). Indian schools of thought have accepted 10 pramāṇas ranging from one to ten. Whereas Śiddhāntins have accepted only three which they call auxiliary pramāṇas, since ultimately they reduce even these to one only viz., ātman.

Śaiva Śidhānta holds the view that the existence of God cannot be established through logic. We cannot prove the existence of God through the methods of perception, inference and āruti, since God is beyond all human comprehension. The
following lines illustrate this view:

"Kaṃmutā puḷaṇāır kāṭciyūmillān
   - Upāṭṭaṃparcoyir
Kollārum puṭān"

"Cintanaikariya āśavaḥ pūrī"

"Kṛṣṭariyōṃ unaikāntaṇāvārāi"

Proofs for the existence of God from verbal testimony will be acceptable only to those who accept the value of śrutī. For others it is of no use. Hence we can say that when perception is not possible and the verbal testimony fails to satisfy all we have to seek the help of inference. Inference involves the idea that one can explain an unknown thing from the known. But what it implies is that we have to know already the relation between these two things. If we try to use the method of inference to prove God’s existence, then we should have known or seen already the relation between God and the world. Thus this pramāṇa also ensues with the impossibility of proving the existence of God.

So we may say that if we try to establish the existence of God through logical analysis or reasoning, we meet only with doubts and counter arguments. As it has been said above that God is an object of experience, we can claim that
experience alone provides a strong evidence; and it does not have any criticism or doubt against it. That is why, Śaiva Siddhānta insists on the need for personal experience. Dean Ingó says, "Faith begins as an experiment and ends as an experience." Until it is tested by our experience any principle stands merely as theoretical.

9.2 Śiva is Beyond Reason and Logic

Thus it is held, in Śaiva Siddhānta, that through logical methods we cannot establish the existence of God. And according to it, Lord Śiva is there in all places as an effulgent light beyond reason and logic. Hence Tiruvṉānai-Sambandar has said in his debate with the Jains, the following words:

"Ndukkalālūṛ edutta mozhīyālum nikku
Cōṭikka vēntā cutarviṭṭulān enkai joti
Māndukkaṁ niṅkaluruvir manaspāṇi vāzhin
Cēndukkal mikkir ḫayīyē vantu cārminkate." 114

This can be paraphrased in the following way: "Don't investigate too much with reason and analogies our Lord, the all-pervasive splendour, for He makes Himself comprehensible, even as flame, to those who approach Him with devotion and
love. So, you who wish to be rid of the painful experiences of the world, approach Him with sincere devotion and lead a blissful life." Generally, it is said that Tiruvellaiya Nambi meant not to indulge too much in reasoning about God, but to approach Him with logic to some extent alone. This is a wrong interpretation of the above verse. The true meaning would be that God stands as self-luminous to all souls and He can be perceived as such without much reasoning. So, God is everywhere as an object of perception (katchiporul) and there is no need of making Him as an object of perception. This is why Sambandar said that we should not investigate God through examples and scriptural languages. As He is everywhere in effulgent light, it could be experienced by all. Thus we may say that in Saiva Siddhanta, logic only establishes what experience dictates.

F. On Existence

1 Meaning of the term 'exists'

'Does God exist?' The answer to this question depends partly on what we mean by the term 'God' and partly on the term 'exists'. We have been above different meanings of the term 'God'. Now we shall analyse the meaning of the term 'exists'. The verb 'to exist' has many meanings and not all of them are pertinent to our problems: the existence of God. The first meaning of 'to exist' is to be located within and
be a part of the spatio-temporal universe (sk-sister). In this sense, 'to exist'/to be a natural object, a creature. Hence it is clear that 'to exist' in this context means to be a perceptible object. We can also have a theological-semantic recommendation which refers to the view that 'to exist' could be applied only to entities within the created realm, and not to God, for God is "above existence" says P. Tillich.

In another sense, 'to exist' is to be a legitimate object of reference. 'To exist' in this sense is to have both denotation and connotation. With the rise of modern logic, 'existence' has come to mean occurrence which is either an object of verifiable sentence or has the value of a variable type.

Thus the term 'exists' plays an important role in answering the question is determined by (i) whether 'existence' is intended to refer to physical or meaningfulness in the given language system - or, (ii) whether the notion of existence in that language system has any limitations. And we could not dismiss the problem of the existence of God purely on linguistic grounds. We shall have to see the implications of this term 'existence' when we discuss the ontological argument in the next chapter.
2 Siddhāntin's View of Existence

Man's search for the meaning of existence and of his own existence reveals that man is different from other beings in this world. And his existence is termed in Śaiva Siddhānta as 'āṛuttal'. Here it function as a secondary verb (vunaiyinai). That is, it always depend upon the other for its meaning. For example, in 'uḍhārutiruntēn', 'ahun-tiruntēn', the secondary verb 'iruntēn' does not meaning of its own. But, to have meaning it depends on the primary verb (uḍkārtai, awbutal). From this illustration, it is clear that the existence of human beings is depend upon some other ultimate being. Without the dependence, our existence would mean not in. Arunāśirinathar explains this status as 'ṭumā aru'. Only God can give the meaning to our existence. In Tirukkārimputtirai, we have the following verse which explains this view:

"Uṟṟatē yūtam uṟṟākati unn - p
Puṟṟatē ni potuvē nirkil - uṟṟarvariya
Kāḷankaḷ cellāta kāthaluṇgan āṛutti
Kāḷankaḷ munrimaliyum kanḍu."

So according to Śaiva Siddhānta, 'existence' of human beings are simply meant an action, and it is not a quality. This concept of 'āṛuttal' does not denote the subordinate act
"Iru" which means 'to have existence'; and this 'existence' is to be given or to be acquired. It is in this sense of dependence that Kāṇikkavācagar says that the Lord has given him the true 'existence' or the He has made him to have 'existence'. He says, "annaiyum iruppattika akkkinan" God alone has eternal existence, which is independent of all; whereas our existences are dependent ones. Tiruvalluvar echoes this in his couplet:

"cārpu uṟamtu cārpu keṭa ozhukin marrathitu 120
cārtarā cārkaranōy".

Hence the existence of God is identified with 'ullatu' which means 'that which exists by itself or naturally.' The existence is for Him naturally; He is 'Sat', (ullatu). The two terms 'ullatu' and 'iruttal' are not so easy to be rendered into other languages. and we can say that the reality to which God refers is not merely one among others, not even the first or the highest, but rather the very source and ground of being.

I On questions

When we ask 'Does God exist?', before answering this question, we should know what kind of question we are asking. We have variety of questions in this world such as questions
questions about physical states of affairs, questions on reasons, questions concerned with the notion of existence and so on. All of these can be brought into two categories: (1) categorical questions, and (2) dialectical questions. We have to see to which kind this question 'Does God exist?' belongs.

1 Categorical questions

We ask many questions about the physical states of affairs. Thereby we ask about the qualities and properties of objects and also about their locations. Questions of this kind reflect in one way or other the categories of Aristotle and hence they are called categorical questions. This kind of question can also be asked in another level, that is other than a physical state of affairs, and R.A. Leonard calls these questions of 'indirect categories'. In asking about the physical state of affairs, we may ask, why certain things are there, and we are inquiring thereby not only about circumstances but also for reasons. Sometimes, we also ask why the things that are there or should be there at all or anywhere at all. If we ask like this, then it means that we are touching some ultimate or something religious.

2 Dialectical questions

Another sort of question referred to, by Aristotle was "dialectical". For example, 'Are the lights on?'
the 'yes' or 'no' are the answers. And in such basic dialectical questions these two are the only possible answers. To add either argument or further detailed reply would be either superfluous or redundant.

But, to some dialectical questions, because of the context or of the presupposition or of the wording of the questions, we are demanded to give a complete explanation or the descriptions, clarifications and arguments. Aristotle realized that question in did not begin always from clear premises and predictions. Therefore, we have three different sorts of dialectical questions: (i) the most basic type with only trivially expandable replies, (ii) those concerned primarily with explanations or arguments, and (iii) those which add the clarification of meanings.

3 The Question of God’s Existence

It is now to ask, what kind of question 'Does God exist?' is? as we have different opinions here. One group of people including John Hick hope that the answer to this question is empirically true or empirically false. That is, according to them, the question belongs to the nontrivially expandable, dialectical-existence questions. But the other group including John Baillie, have opted for arguments
for the existence of God with a descriptive role in religion and in belief. On this view the question is a dialectical-existence question but its answer provides clarification, argument, and explanation rather than a perceptual information.

It has also been held that the question about God is not itself a foundational but is a member of the subquestions. The relation of the question about God's existence to other foundational subquestions seems to be that we are not dealing with a dialectical question to which 'yes' and 'no' alone are adequate replies. Another important result is that it would be possible to distinguish the question about God's existence from the metaphysical questions. We could remove this question from the ranks of those questions which are considered to be unanswerable. And it is also held that the religious question of God, as existentially structured, is different from any theoretical question about an explanatory hypothesis.

Thus, the question about the existence of God is a serious one. Further, the meaning of the word 'question' had its own implications whenever we go deep into the problem of God. Jacques Maritain observes: "The question means that we are discussing a possible presence, neither attained nor dismissed; it means both absence of a presence and the presence
of an absence ... The question is serious because it touches the very core of my being..."