Cognitive Status of Man
According to Siddhānta

3.1 Epistemology and Ontology

Epistemology as a theory of knowledge attempts to answer the question; “How one knows and what one knows”, it is as well an enquiry into the one “who knows”. Thus, every epistemology presupposes an implicit ontology. Moreover, it is an ontological imperative that existence precedes knowledge. But is it our phenomenological experience that only through knowing we become aware of the being. (Cogito, ergo sum (Lt)... ‘I think, therefore I am”. This was stated by Descartes as the first certitude in resolving universal doubt). In other words, it is through knowledge we infer the existence. But ontologically, the existence of a self is a prerequisite for the act of knowing; it is only in and through the act of knowing that being is revealed or manifested. In this sense, though ontology should precede epistemology, it is only a genuine epistemology that prepares the ground for a sound ontology. We propose to deal with the ontological status of human according to Śāiva Siddhānta in the chapter that follows and give importance to the cognitive understanding of the self and its processes in this chapter.
3.1.1 Skepticism and Indian Philosophy

While discussing about the epistemological roots of *Siddhānta*, we cannot take the extreme position of the skeptics (as understood in the western philosophy) who say that we cannot really know anything about the world around us because it could all be an illusion.³ “Such (skeptical) problems have played a central role in epistemology. It is easy to become caught up in the task of refuting the skeptic, and at one time epistemologists took that to be their principal goal. Descartes was concerned with finding beliefs that he could not reasonably doubt and to which he could appeal in justifying all the rest of his beliefs, and Hume was nonplussed by his inability to answer his own skeptical dilemma about induction.” Even Kant wasn’t any exception to this. “It still remains a scandal to philosophy ... that the existence of things outside of us ... must be accepted merely on faith, and that, if anyone thinks it good to doubt their existence, we are unable to counter his doubts by any satisfactory proof.”³¹ Though a typical skeptical argument is best viewed as *reductio ad absurdum* of its premises, rather than as a proof of its conclusion, we don’t deny that skeptical problems are still important to epistemology. For, “They are important for what they show about knowledge rather than because they make us doubt that we have knowledge.”³⁴ For, the task of the contemporary epistemologist is to understand knowledge and the ontological nature of the knower rather than refuting the skeptics. So the contemporary epistemology takes a different attitude towards skepticism and understands the skeptics better.

The skeptic is not just questing our beliefs. He is also questioning the cognitive processes by which we arrive at our beliefs, and if we start all over again we will still be employing the same cognitive processes. We cannot dispense with both the beliefs and the cognitive processes, because then we would have nothing with which to begin again.⁵
Hence, according to the datum of our experience, presuppositionless knowledge in whatsoever field seems to be an epistemological impossibility. So we need to begin our enquiry somewhere which is more probable and reasonable. Moreover, Indian philosophical schools (including the cārvākas who only rely on perception as the only means of valid knowledge) accept the possibility of human mind and its ability to distinguish truth from error. So in the true sense of the term there are no Indian skeptics as in the sense we have narrated. They deal more with the reality of knowledge than with the possibility of knowledge. Therefore, it is legitimate for any genuine epistemological enquiry to begin with whatever beliefs we have already towards the reality of our cognition according to Siddhānta tradition. Gadamer is of the opinion that while interpreting the text, tradition has its own legitimate value to offer and hence in reflecting on what is truth the human sciences must,

...For its own method of working, endeavour to acquire as much historical self-transparency as possible. In its concern to understand the universe of understanding better than seems possible under the modern scientific notion of cognition, it has to try to establish a new relation to the concepts which it uses. It must be aware of the fact that its own understanding and interpretation is not a construction out of principles, but the development of an event which goes back a long way. Hence it will not be able to use its concepts unquestioningly, but will have to take over whatever features of the original meaning of its concepts have come down to it.

Gadamer raises the question of the phenomenological condition of the possibility for knowing historicity, language and being. Being is understood through all these three. This is how it is constituted. Similarly, Indian philosophers accept the possibility of knowledge but they differ among themselves on the matter of how of knowledge. In the Siddhāntin’s case, it is of two types: one is podu and the other is cīrappu. Perception and inference are mediate. They fall under the realm of podu. Šabda too continues to be at the realm of podu until the sādhaka receives the divine grace. Only then it enters the realm of cīrappu.
3.1.2 Cognition and Liberation:

In fact, in Śaiva Siddhānta, a great significance is given to the source, nature, content of knowledge and the cognitive processes involved in knowing. According to the school, it is ignorance that has led the souls to bondage. It is the cause of the innumerable miseries of the world exist. More than that the self is unaware of its ultimate goal of enjoying the infinite bliss in the presence of Pati. Thus, Siddhānta’s liberative process has two purposes to achieve within a single goal. One is a liberation from the root-cause (āgava) of all sufferings and the other of attaining the ultimate mukti (or vidu pēru) of enjoying without any hindrance the eternal presence of Pati and His bliss. For this, true knowledge, is a must.⁸

If knowledge is to survive critical examination and if it is to take deep root in the mind, it should be examined in the light of reason, equally necessary is it to scrutinise the instruments of knowledge to ensure the attainment of truth and the exclusion of error. Thus, epistemology, which considers how we obtain knowledge, finds a place in the Siddhānta system against this background of religion, theology and metaphysics.⁹

3.2 Meaning of Pramāṇa according to Siddhānta

“The word Pramāṇa signifies the essential means of arriving at valid knowledge or prama. The object known is described as premēya; and the knower, pramāṇa.”⁰ Sundaram, while dealing with the doctrine of vṛtti¹¹ in advaita epistemology says succinctly the following:

... That aspect of intelligence which is defined by egoity (which is the internal organ defined by the body) is the knower (pramāṇa). That aspect of intelligence which is the object), is the means of cognition (Pramāṇa). That aspect of intelligence defined by the element of fitness for manifestation present in the object (which pervades the object, assumes the form of the object and invests it with the character of objectness), is the cognition or pramiti.¹²
According to Siddhānta, the knower is Jñātṛ or Jñāta, the known object is jñeyam and the knowledge is jñānam.¹³

3.2.1 Ānma-cit-sakti and Its Significance in Siddhānta:

Siddhāntin is, however, not satisfied with the expression of Pramāṇa as ‘means of knowledge’. The reason for his non-acceptance of such a wide definition as means of knowledge is that it “would include the sense organs and even outside accessories, such as light. This process could be extended to included a vast number of things. This unwieldy comprehensiveness makes for vagueness and lack of precision. And so, Siddhāntin propounds a more rigorous, stricter, unique definition or Pramāṇa as ‘that instrument without which knowledge is not possible.’¹⁴ For according to this system Pramāṇa is, “that instrument of knowledge in the absence of which no object of knowledge whatever becomes known”.

In the light of such precise definition, many element included in the previous definition will be excluded. The sense organs, for example, are ruled out because it is possible to have visual knowledge without the functioning of the eye (for example dreams), etc., Even an internal means of knowledge such as budhī is excluded as there are cognitions where budhī is not present as a means of knowledge, becomes an object of knowledge. According to Munivar a means of knowledge should not be an object of knowledge. While the eye is a means of knowledge, it is as well an object of knowledge. Whereas cit-sakti is the means and not an object of knowledge without which the other means of knowledge can not function. Therefore, in the ultimate sense, ānma-cit-sakti is the pramana, Siddhānta goes to the extent of saying that perception, inference and testimony are pramanas in the secondary (upacāra) sense only. In the true sense ānma-cit-sakti is alone is pramāṇa. Because that alone passes the criterion
of pramāṇa. So, the plea that a conjunction of all the karaṇās could constitute a pramāṇa, makes for confusion. Thus the criterion of being an indispensable means to knowledge in order to constitute a Pramāṇa has eliminated all the auxiliaries to knowledge that function sometimes in cognition, but are not essential to it.¹⁶

This sort of rigorous process of eliminating what is not essential to cognition has left us with none but one which the Siddhāntins call as ātma-cit-śakti (the intelligence of man).¹⁷ Paranjoti defines it in a nutshell:

*Cit-Śakti is the intelligence of which alone it can be said that it is that instrument of knowledge without which no object of knowledge can be known. The karaṇās that are mere auxiliaries find their place in the process of cognition because cit-śakti is beginninglessly associated with maalā. If this limitation did not exist for the intelligence, they would not be required. However, their office is but for a time. When cit-śakti is freed of impurities, these karaṇās withdraw.¹⁸

If cit-śakti then, is that instrument of knowledge without which no object of knowledge can be known, its corollary would be that a real instrument of knowledge can never become and object of knowledge at all. Over and above, an alert and careful reflection would reveal the fact that cit-śakti is not only an essential epistemological character of the self but it is, as well an ontological character (uyir iyalpu) itself. Siddhāntins, however, in understanding the relation between substance and attribute (gunā-guni-sambandha) (which will be dealt with in the chapter that follows) accept the theory that a substance is no more than the summation (samudāya) of the special qualities (Uṯma>i iyalpu)¹⁹ and hence any destruction done to any of its essential attribute will automatically lead to the destruction of the substance itself.²⁰

3.2.2 Ānma-cit-śakti : The Centre of Human Consciousness

What does Ānma-cit-śakti as an essential epistemological character mean? Does it mean that the self can have a knowledge of itself apart from the knowledge it has of
* The epistemological difference between Śvajñānamunivār and Śivāgrayōgin has been discussed in the thesis and it has been pointed out in the thesis that the epistemological presupposition of Śivāgrayōgin will result in monism like that of Śankara which implicitly answers the status of paṭi, paśu and paśa. The Siddhānata as represented by Śvajñānamunivār upholds pluralistic realism.
the object known? According to Siddhāntin the self is the centre of consciousness (cit-śakti). But it is equally true that this self does not know itself independent of the object which it knows. For, "the consciousness is thus conscious, it becomes conscious of itself. The object is always a correlate of consciousness. Therefore, the self knows itself, if and when it knows either sat or asat. Self’s knowledge of itself is intrinsic to the structure of the self’s knowledge of the object."31 Self as the centre of consciousness "includes not only cognition but also affection and volition (Jñāna, icchā, and kriyā). These qualities constitute the essence of the self which is no different from its qualities. These qualities are so organic that an expression of the one is the expression of the other".32 Cit-śakti is only a comprehensive term used by the Siddhāntin to refer to the organic nature of the self. It is Ānma-cit-śakti which in and through these qualities and means of knowledge obtains valid knowledge. "The validity of the knowledge is totally attributed to the self consciousness of the person - the knower".33 It is in fact true, in the ultimate sense, as affirmed by Śivajñānamunivar and other Siddhāntins, "that the Ānma-cit-śakti is guided by cit-śakti of Śiva Himself, thus this cit-śakti is considered," to be, the ground of knowledge and the means of knowledge.34 In this regard, there is a basic difference between Śivajñānamunivar and Śivāgrayogin which springs from their fundamental difference in understanding of the three ultimate categories of Pati-Paśu-Pāsa and their interrelatedness which falls beyond the scope of the thesis.

Still, there is an essential epistemological difference between the two. For Śivajñānamunivar, self is the knower (pramāta) though God helps the pramāta in knowing. Since God is anādīmuktan, there is no need to know. Whereas for Śivāgrayogin, God is the knower and the self is the known. The consequence of such a stand will result in monism like that of Śankara which is unacceptable to the Siddhāntins. According to Siddhānta, self is both sat and cit. Only that which is sat can be cit. And only the cit
can have self-consciousness. Existence, intelligence and love (asti, pâti, pryam) are only for the ātma.

3.2.3 The importance of Vidyātattva and the meaning of Jñāna-śakti

It is befitting the context here to explain in brief the meaning of pañcakañcuka and a bit elaborately though, the evolute of Vidyātattva. Pañcakañcuka are the series of five ontological categories and are the evolutes of impure māya: kalā, vidyā, rāga, kāla and niyati. The five categories of kalā, vidyā, rāga, kāla and niyati function is unison and, therefore, they are the a priori categories of experience, without which the self cannot attain the status of an experiencer (bhūkṛti). Their functioning is so indispensable for the self during the sakaia state of bondage that they are called the pañcakañcuka (sheath of five) of the self. The self aided by the pañcakañcuka attains the status of an experiencer of the objects of the world. Only after these function, purusa tattva manifests. Kāla, the first of the pañcakañcuka, “removes a part of the power of āpava the obscures the consciousness of the self and manifests the conative energy (kriyā - śakti) of the self to make the self experience ... only when the self manifests its conative power, it acquires karma that becomes instrumental for its status of existence. Hence kāla is the a priori condition of experience itself. This is neither positive nor negative. It only means there is a gradual awareness from subtle māyā to gross. This means that “Kāla is in inseparable togetherness with the individual self in all its experiential activities”. Vidyātattva evolves from kāla and it does the function of manifesting the cognitive energy (Jñāna-śakti) of the self. It is responsible for the determinate perception and indeterminate perception of the self. Determinate perception arises when the cognitive energy does not activate buddhi tattva and indeterminate perception arises. Vidyātattva is responsible for making the self know the functioning
of the mind, intellect and ego. It may be objected that, since the removal of maṣa by kala would itself manifest the cognitive energy along with the conative energy of the self, the functioning of Vidyātattva is unnecessary. The Siddhāntin replies that, though the cognitive energy is also manifested when kala removes partially the power of ānava, it will be puzzled and will not be able to perceive any object immediately after the removal of the cataract. Vidyātattva is necessary to overcome the puzzlement of the self and to direct the cognitive energy to activate the buddhi-tattva, so that the self can have determinate cognition. The Siddhāntin brings out the close relationship between volitional and cognitive energies of the self by emphasising the fact that Vidyā-tattva evolves from kala-tattva. The determinate knowledge of the object is, therefore, due to the functioning of Vidyā-tattva. But, if the self’s affective energy (icchā-śakti) is not manifested, the self will not have any inclination to enjoy or experience the object of knowledge. It is the rāga-tattva which manifests the self’s affective energy that gets reflected as likes and dislikes through the functioning of buddhi-tattva. Since whatever is known is either liked or disliked, it is proper that the Siddhāntin considers rāga-tattva as an evolute from the Vidyā-tattva, which manifests affective and cognitive energies of the self respectively. Thus, the freedom of the self is manifested by kala, vidyā and rāga-tattvās, which respectively manifest the conative, cognitive and affective energies of the self. The self thus becomes and experiencer by overcoming the powers of ānava.

Thus, the postulate of Anma-ot-śakti which we have so far dealt, is a distinctive feature of Śaiva Siddhānta system. This postulate unifies and coordinates all the epistemological activities of the person whether they be of internal or external faculties. All the operations in the field of gnoseology are controlled and governed by this śakti. Its operations are not isolated and compartmentalised but totally dependent on and coordinated by each other (ot-śakti and means of knowledge with all their corresponding faculties, internal and external organs).
3.3 Alavai-Iyai (Pramāṇa Śāstra)

Alavai-Iyai is equivalent to epistemology (Pramāṇa Śāstra) in Tamil. Śivajñāna Siddhiyār has a chapter on epistemology under the title of ‘Alavai’. Alavai as considered in the Śivajñāna Siddhiyār is constitutive of knowledge and not a mere instrument of knowledge. Thus the word Alavai, is therefore, taken in the broader sense of conscious power that underlies all the faculties of the knower that serve as means of knowledge.

3.3.1 The Sources of Cognition (Pratyakṣa, Anumāna & Śabda)

By sources of knowledge we do not mean the origins of knowledge. We do not look for that being which gives rise to the reality of knowledge. But, we mean the instruments of knowledge. We are interested to know those sources through which the self is able to collect the sum total of information of objects outside itself.

The means of knowledge are the instruments of knowledge, in the absence of which no object of knowledge is known to the self. There is no unanimity among the various schools of Indian philosophy with regard to the number of the means of cognition. The number of sources depends on the philosophical tenets that they profess. All the schools of Indian philosophy propose some or other means of valid knowledge. Perception (Pratyakṣa, kātāra) is one that is accepted by all the Indian philosophical systems as the means of valid knowledge.

There is difference in understanding the rest of the means of knowledge.

The Śivajñāna Siddhiyār in alavai iyai admits three sources of cognition although it mentions that many more means are admitted by other school of thought. According to the author of the Śivajñāna Siddhiyār all other means proposed by the other schools can be reduced to three main source namely kāntal, karutai and urai (Pratyakṣa,
Śvajñānamunivar has incorporated these details in the Māṇḍūkyam too.

3.3.1.1 Nature of Kāṭci (Pratyakṣa, Perception)

Perception is the source of knowledge by which an object is brought to the knowledge of the soul indeterminately, but gradually it arrives at a knowledge of things determinately. This determinate and clear perception is free from error and doubt.

3.3.1.1.1 Pratyakṣa (According to Jñeya (Pramēya))

From the point of the object perceived (Pramēya), perception can be classified into two types: Indeterminate and determinate. When the mind knows the bare existence of a thing without being aware of its features, we have indeterminate perception. Determinate perception is to know an object with its name, class to which it belongs, its properties functions and its worth. These two types of perceptions according to Śiddhiyār are divided into four-fold:

3.3.1.1.1. Vīkatpa kāṭci (Nirvikalpa kāṭci):

This consists of a knowledge of a thing as a matter or an object without knowing its particularities and features. Bare existence of an object is noted.

3.3.1.1.2. Aiyak kāṭci (Doubtful Perception):

On perceiving an object, the faculty of the soul begins to doubt what it is whether it is this or that. The mind is not sure whether the object in question is of this category or of another as many common elements of various categories are observed in it. Consequently, it is a difficult task for the mind to be definitive and conclusive about it. The mind lacks courage to pronounce a judgement on the object and it begins to entertain a doubt.
3.3.1.1.1.3. *Viparitak kātei* (Perceiving Differently or Mistaken Perception):

This is a kind of indeterminate perception of an object in which the mind takes one thing for another. This sort of identifying an object differently or mistakenly perceiving an object is caused by the existence of similarity in two objects as well by the confused state of mind.

3.3.1.1.1.4. *Savikatpa kātei* (Determinate Perception):

This is a perception by which an object is perceived well with all its characteristics. The particularities of an object such as name, species, its property, its function and its worth are perceived well and thus an object can be defined clearly. In this perception, it is not only the qualities of the objects which are perceived but its distinction from other objects is also clearly perceived. Consequently no room is left for any confusion. Actually speaking, the first three are three types of indeterminate perception only. The fourth one is the proper determinate perception.

3.3.1.1.2 Pratyakṣa according to *Jñāta* (*Pramāṇa*):

Apart from the object perceived, perception may, further, be distinguished into four from the point of the subject who perceives.

3.3.1.1.2.1. *Indriya kātei* (Sense Perception):

This consists of the perception of material things by the help of sense organs. Through sense organs material objects are perceived individually with their definite and particular characteristics.

3.3.1.1.2.2. *Manatāk kātei* (Mental Perception):

This takes place when the soul with the aid of its intellectual faculty of senses and establishes beyond the possibility of doubt. Here the objects are known with their
particular properties. This perception is achieved not by the sense organs but by the internal faculty of the mind.

3.3.1.1.2.3. Tānvētanaik kātcī (Self-consciousness):

This means self being conscious of itself as opposed to beings which are not so. This self-consciousness is realised when directed by the tattvās, namely rāga, niyati, kalā and the experience able pleasure and pain become objects of knowledge of the faculty of the soul.

3.3.1.1.2.4. Yōgakkātci (Meditative Intuition):

This is special intuitive knowledge of events (of past, present and future) and things, experienced by the self at the state of liberation. It is achieved through removal of the impurities which overshadow and impede the cit-śakti (power of human intelligence) of the self by performing the eightfold yōgic disciplinary actions. This knowledge transcends the limits of time and space. It is not confined to the realm of material things, but embraces super natural experiences possible to human beings. Thus yōgakkātci includes a broader horizon of knowledge.37

However, commenting on the central theme of the sight of Śiva (Śiva darśana) and referring back to the third illustrative verse of the fourth Sūtra (cf., App. I, q.18.13), “When this self sees itself different from the senses, it reaches the blessed feet of the Primal one”, Śivajñānamunivar expresses certain questions:

So the sight of the self itself leads to the final attainment; then why should the topic of purification of the self be taken? What is the use of this further action?38

By way of answering these questions, Śivajñānamunivar mentions the fact that the reality is perceived through three progressive steps. They are the indefinite perception
(tiriyakkāṇḍal), the doubtful perception (kāṣṭhurakkāṇḍal) and the clear perception (teṭṭyakkāṇḍal). But to others perfect understanding of the truth takes place in steps by the processes of listening, contemplation and clear vision. Though Śivājaśānamunivar is aware of Aruṇandi's division of kāici (pratyakṣa) into four, he reduces here its category into three only.³⁹

3.3.1.2 Meaning of Karutal (Anumāṇa, Inference)

Anumāṇa (Inference) is one of the three sources of knowledge by which the cognition of a mediate object is had through the ascertainment of concomitance. The syllogism in Indian philosophical system is of a combination of deductive and inductive forms. For example the inference employed in Sutra.1 of the Śivājaśānamāyudham is that of an inductive inference (and the argument is represented by two syllogistic forms called kēvalānwayi anumāṇa and anvayā vyatirēki anumāṇa).⁴⁰ The first syllogism (which has the standard five propositions of the Nyāya school of Indian philosophy) is represented in the Sūtra as follows:

1. Proposition (Pratijña).
   This Universe has a karta.

2. The Reason (Hētu).
   Because it has been evolved into forms such as he, she and it.

3. The Example (Udāraṇa)
   A pot is made by a potter.

4. The Assumption (Upanaya)
   The Universe is such a product as a pot.

5. The Deduction (Nigamaṇa)
   Therefore, the Universe has a Karta.

Indian syllogism has also three terms: Pakṣa (minor term), Sādhya (major term), and Hētu (middle term). Inference, in general, (as in Nyāya) can be for oneself (tarpupūrū anumāṇa) and for others (pirarpupūrū anumāṇa).⁴¹
3.3.1.2.1 *Tanporuṇanumāna* (Śvārtha)

Inference for oneself is the ascertainment of concomitance between the *hēlu* (*probans*) and *sādhyā* (*probandum*) by the agent himself. This ascertainment is not brought to one’s knowledge through someone else, but has come to the knowledge of oneself.

3.3.1.2.2 *Pirarpurāṇ Anumāna* (Parārtha)

Inference for others is the explicit statement of the *Pakṣa*, *hēlu* etc., so that others may come to the same conclusion as oneself. The knowledge of Śiva, souls and Pāśa received from the preceptors by the disciples is an inference for others. The teacher is making the inferences for the disciples.  

According to Munivar a means of knowledge should not be an object of knowledge. While the eye is a means of knowledge, it is as well an object of knowledge. Whereas *cit-śakti* is the means and not an object of knowledge without which the other means of knowledge can not function. Therefore, in the ultimate sense, *ānma-cit-śakti* is the *pramāṇa*. Siddhānta goes to the extent of saying that perception, inference and testimony are *pramāṇas* in the secondary (*upacāra*) sense only. In the true sense *ānma-cit-śakti* is alone is *pramāṇa*. Because that alone passes the criterion of *pramāṇa*.

3.3.1.3 Importance of *Śabda* (Verbal Testimony) : (Uraḷ) *Āgama pramāṇa*

*Āgama pramāṇa* is given an important place in the epistemology of Siddhānta. *Āgamas*, the scriptures of the saivites, are the ultimate authority for the knowledge concerning the entities of *Pati-Pāśu* and Pāśa. These scriptures are reliable because they are authored by none else but Śiva himself. The importance of verbal testimony (*Āgama pramāṇa*) rests on its usefulness in manifesting objects that do not fall within
the sphere of either perception or inference. It is accepted that there are things which
do not fall within the sphere of perception and inference.

When the religious teacher (ācārya) imparts the knowledge it is said that Śiva
himself (the Guru) imparts the knowledge through the ācārya. Siddhānta gives
great importance to acaryā so much so that the term ācārya and Śiva are often used
interchangeably. Does that mean that the mind loses its identity while accepting the
authority of the scriptures? On the contrary, the scriptures do not conflict with human
experiences. A further reason for accepting śabda pramāṇa is that it often gives the
accumulated wisdom of ages. No generation can afford to depend entirely on itself for
progress and enlightenment. It has often to build on the experience of the past; and
this can be passed on to succeeding generations only through verbal testimony. It is to
be noted that there is no cleavage between revelation and reason.

Śaiva Siddhānta does not pretend to be rationalistic in its theology. It does
not purport to be an empirically grounded theism thought it adduces a
posteriori proofs, and undertakes to argue from the known to the unknown.
The term Śaiva Siddhānta itself primarily stands for Śaivāgamas, the body
of revealed scripture which forms the original source of the knowledge of
the transcendent Reality. The system of Śaiva Siddhānta is only an exegetical
interpretation of the intuitions embodied in scriptural revelation. In this
respect it is similar to Vedānta; the Vedānta-Sūtra of Bādarāyaṇa, unlike
the Sūtras of Gautama or Kaṇāda, merely ‘threads together’ in an intelligible arrangement the different statements of the Vedānta, namely, the
Upanisads, and unfolds a coherent system within this framework. Likewise
one may say that it is the intuitions of the Śaivāgamas that set the philosophy of Śaiva Siddhānta on its feet.41

In accepting revelation, the faculty of the intellect is not subjugated but instead it
is used for the search of truth and the truth found in the revealed scriptures can stand
the light of reason. Doubt and criticism can be removed totally from one’s mind when
truth is brought to the test of reason. Reason according to Siddhānta
is the sustained reflection on the truth revealed by the scriptures. Therefore, whether or not the reason goes beyond or against the revealed truth does not arise in this case.

To admit revelation as the source of our knowledge (pramāṇa) of God implies two things. God is not a ‘wholly other’, utterly unlike anything known and experienced, because in that case revelation cannot intelligible ‘reveal’ Him. To reveal is indeed to communicate in the idiom intelligible to a person and in a manner assimilable by human reason. At the same time God cannot be also like any given object or fact knowable in the ordinary way by perception and reason, as in that case God does not also have to be ‘revealed’. Revelation as a significant means of knowledge does not duplicate the functions of other means of knowing. Admission of revelation as the means of our knowledge of God, therefore, demands both that God is not a remote being totally removed from the realm of experience and also that He is nevertheless beyond the evidences of sense and reason. 44

There are three varieties of āgama pramāṇa, (as found in the Mīmāṃsā and Vedānta division) which are as follows: 45

3.3.1.3.1. Karmakāṇḍa:

Karmakāṇḍa is action based. Not of any action of the human but that of ritual action only. Therefore karmakāṇḍa concentrates of ritual action and deals with the knowledge of ritual performances of the past and present.

3.3.1.3.2. Upāsanakāṇḍa:

It treats the area of worshiping of deities. Any person who worships a particular deity should know the details connected with the worship of that deity. To worship a deity, one is required to control the internal organs and thus the ānma-cit-śakti is in possession of the right cognition of the method of worship of the deity.

3.3.1.3.3. Jñānakāṇḍa:

It deals with the essential characteristics of Patri-Pāśu and Pāśa and it aims at true knowledge of these three ultimate padarthas. True knowledge is that which dis-
we deal with ‘the ontological and existential status of the self’ in the chapter that follows in our thesis, it would be advantageous and coherent to see the way Meykāṇḍār establishes the existence of the self in the third Sūtra itself (Śivājaṉanamunivar naturally follows the original scheme) before even establishing the essential characters of the self as cognitive and conscious being in the Sūtras that follow.

3.4.1 Śūnyavāda of the Mādhyamika is refuted

The first of the seven topics (Adhikarana) in the third Sūtra refutes the Mādhyamika school, one of the four classes of Buddhistic school of thought. According to the school the self is inexpressible (śūnya). While explaining the expression of the aphorism that ‘there is the self as it is said to be not,’ the author infers that there is a conscious principle which after eliminating the various parts of the organism concludes that there is no self. That eliminating consciousness itself is the self. According to Māpipadīya, the reason given in the aphorism is as follows: ‘There is a hare's horn because it is said to be not’. The intention behind the expression is to be made clear by the author by the explanation that follows.

Even the Mādhyamikas cannot say without any reason that there is no self. They point out that the objects of the senses, the sense organs etc., cannot be identified with the self. So it follows that the self is unidentifiable and hence it is a nonentity. The author's position is that while negating the existence of the self, the negation itself is the result of rational thinking. Hence that principle which thinks is the self. It must be noted that the argument employed by Meykāṇḍār in this topic is similar to the argument of Descartes in formulating his first proposition. His first proposition is: 'I am, because I think (Cogito ergo sum)'. The existence of the self had been established in the first topic of the second aphorism. The same thing has been established here by inferential reasoning.44
So goes the first illustrative verse that,

There is something which is in union with the body and sense organs and rejects each of them saying, that is not ‘I’. That something exists in the form of the five letters a, u, m, bindu and Nāda. That is you. You are not maya which assists you in the fettered state to know things even as a mirror assists the eye. You are not even the supreme Being which transcends maya. You are different from both of them.\(^9\)

### 3.4.2. Materialistic school of thought is refuted

This verse points to the consciousness which judges things through the internal organs. The existence of māyā and that of the supreme Being have been established in the previous aphorisms. So it is stated here that the conscious self is something other than those two entities. In the second topic, the materialists are refuted. According to this school of thought,

The consciousness is none other than the effect of the physical body even as the red colour makes its appearance when betel leaves, nuts and calcium chloride are properly mixed with saliva. When the four elements of the material world are properly mixed and organised, the quality of awareness makes its appearance. It is because of this the word ‘I’ refers to the physical organism in the expressions, ‘I am big’, ‘I am tall’ etc. So this awareness or consciousness need not be held to be a thing other than the physical organism.\(^10\)

This second topic refutes the materialists’ school of thought saying that people agree while referring to the physical body as something other than they themselves are. This is made clear in their expression ‘my body’, ‘my hand’, ‘my leg’, etc., so it should be understood that the consciousness which points to the self is some thing different from the body. In other words the second Adhikarana refutes the conclusion of the materialists who hold that the self is the physical organism or the gross body. It is well illustrated in the meaning of the following venba.
It is clear that your wealth is something different from your person. Yet you identify yourself with your wealth and say that it is your wealth. In other words, though your expression points out the separability of your wealth from you, yet you identify your self with your wealth and feel that it is your own self. In the same manner you are also using the expressions such as ‘my hand’ ‘my body’ and ‘my knowledge’. Yet if you discriminate the thing known from your consciousness, the objects well be seen to be different from yourself. So discriminate yourself from your body which is possessed by you as an instrument of manifestation. Discrimination may be made in the following way. ‘When your body is dead, it has no consciousness. So consciousness is different from the body’.

While commenting on the existence of the self Śvaṭṭānamunivar reasons this way.

3.4.3. Self is different from the Objects and Instruments of Cognition

When it is established in the second topic that the self is different from the physical body, the following consideration may occur: Because the body is insentient, it is proper that the sentient self should be held to be other than the physical body. But it is agreed by common consent that the five sense organs know the five objects namely sound, touch, colour, taste and smell. So it may be held true that the sense organs constitute the self. In order to refute this wrong notion, the following explanation of the third reason mentioned in the aphorism is given.

The five sense organs have their locus in the same body. But they cannot perceive the sense objects that are appropriate to the other senses. Each sense is limited in perception to its object alone. But the consciousness cognizes the function of each of these senses being impelled by the five letter sounds (a, u, m, bindu and nāda). So the consciousness which objectifies these functions must be different from the objects and the senses. In all cases it should be understood that which is conscious is different from those of which it is conscious. In other words, the subject is always different from the objects and the instruments of cognition.
3.4.4 Cognitive Self is different from the Cognised States of consciousness

In the foregoing topic (3.4.2) the materialists who hold the sense organs as the self were refuted. Then it may be said by the opponent that it is proper to hold the self as different from the sense organs as it knows their different functions and experiences the external world through them. But that they themselves hold that the subtle body is at the basis of the senses when they sense their objects.\(^{51}\) So it is proper to hold that the subtle body is the knower. Even though it cannot be seen, it will remain within and will impel the sense organs towards their objects. This school of thought which holds the view the subtle-body itself is the knower in the dream state is refuted by Meykāntār in the fourth topic which is explained further by Śivajñānamunivār so as to remove the doubt and reveal the intention of Meykāntār by saying, “In the waking state there is a consciousness which is doubtful whether it has had the dream experience or not: this consciousness is to be held as the self”.\(^{54}\) The fourth illustrative verse in the Sūtra strengthens this explanation by the analysis of how the individual self reaches the dream state, how the dream takes place there and how it goes back to the wakeful state from dream state.

When the five sense-organs which function in the (gross) body lie quiescent, all external activity being suppressed, you pass duly from that body and assume a different body which is similar (the subtle) and play. And then you change back again. So you are not the subtle-body either.\(^{55}\)

3.4.5 Self is different from the Vital air that One breathes

In the foregoing topic that the subtle body is the self was refuted. The opponent now agrees with the refutation for the reason that the subtle-body functions only upto the dream state. But the vital air functions even beyond that state. So he says it is proper to hold the vital air, the source of respiration, as being the agent of conscious-
ness by supposing and releasing the sense organs. The fifth adhikarana purports to refute that view.

3.4.6 Brahmanavādins are refuted

In the foregoing topics, the schools of thought upto that which holds the vital air as self are refuted. The opponent agrees that these refutations are correct inasmuch as they deny insentient things as self; there may be other reasons for their refutation. But the Absolute being is sentient. It is proper to hold that itself is the self. To suppose some other thing as the self lands one in excess. So argues the Brahmanavadin. The sixth topic purports to refute the school of thought of the Brahmanavadin.

What is that which knows one thing and proceeding to know something else forgets the former; and which subsiding ceases to know? It is not perfect Divine consciousness: nor is it insentient. If the seer of truth concentrates on this point, it is the self which knows a thing by identifying itself with the object.

Even in the state of wakefulness when the self is in association with all the instruments, the self does not know all at once. It knows one thing and begins to know some other thing. In the process it forgets a thing which has been well known already. Even in knowing things one after another, it has the knowing and forgetfulness alternately. If we carefully consider this centre of consciousness it is neither insentient, nor the perfect knowledge which knows all things at all times perfectly. This is the self, which identifies itself with the thing known.

The difference between the supreme and the individual self is that the former is conscious of all things immutably without getting itself attached to the thing known whereas the latter knows things getting itself attached to it. This dependence on the
thing known for its knowledge is explained at the end of the first section by the commentator.

It must be noted that the reasoning given in the aphorism itself argues from the point of view of the state of loneliness (Kāvala) of the self: the paraphrase argues from the point of view of the state of liberation (śuddha state) of the self. The illustrative verse argues form the state of impulsion in wakefulness (masakalam) of the self. This topic has explained the fact that the self is not the supreme being which transcends maya (tatparamum allai).

3.4.7 Self is different from the Aggregate of parts of Its body

Thus when self is established to be different from these various things, the opponent says that it is correct that the self is different from these particular things as there is no consciousness even if a single factors of these is absent. But as there is consciousness when all the factors are present, it should be concluded that the self is the collection or aggregate of these various factors. This view is held by the Sautrāntikas and the Vaibhashikas among the Buddhists. This is refuted in this topic.

In the foregoing first five topics the self is shown to be different from the particular things that were the objects of the self conscious self. In the sixth topic it is shown to be different from even the primal being as self becomes conscious only when it is induced to be conscious. Here in the seventh topic it is shown that it is different from the aggregate too of all the various things individually shown to be different.

The proposition is:

There is the self in the body composed of products of maya. The meaning is that as the constituent parts of the body are the products of maya they are short lived and
the self which is everlasting is certainly different from the products of māyā.

Here the Buddhists point out that their view is that the self is the aggregate of citta and its five subdivisions, rūpa, vedana, kurippu, bhavana and viññāna and that they are not in their opinion the products of māyā. So in order to refute their contention the author gives a different ground.

The ground is:

Those constituent parts are known by different names.

Even when you call the constituent parts citta and its subdivisions, they have different names and they are not called by the name self. So it is not proper to suppose that the aggregate is the self.

The contention of the Buddhist schools may be that even though they are named differently, in their aggregate they are named the self. To refute this contention the following illustrative verse is given. On examination, they are evolutes of māyā, beginning with kāla and ending with earth, and they are not lasting. If you first grasp the nature of knowledge that they yield and then inquire what their collections mean, you will find they are known as bodies, which manifest objects to the self even as lamp enables the eye to perceive its objects. So even as the lamp is different from the eye, these collection are different from the self, which is you.

Even when each constituent part is named, they are named as evolutes from kala to earth and not as indicated by the opponent. When they are considered as aggregates they are not called the self collectively as mentioned by the opponent, but they are called the gross body, the subtle body etc. which illumine the objects so that the self may perceive them.
This is how the existence of the self is established through inferential knowledge which of course falls under the category of \textit{pudtu} according to \textit{Siddhānta}. Over and above this topic also brought out the implication of the saying that the self is an entity different from either may and its products or the primal being but it is a separate entity (\textit{tani}). With this background in mind, we are now ready to look at how self is established as a cognitive being.\textsuperscript{56}

The existence of the self is sought to be proved through reasoning. Hence this falls under \textit{pudtu}.

3.5 Self as a Cognitive Being:

\textit{Śaiva Siddhānta}, as we’ve mentioned earlier is pluralistic in its outlook towards reality as opposed to the absolutistic schools and realistic (as opposed to the idealists) in its understanding towards the nature of reality. \textit{Pati} and \textit{Paśu} are sentient beings. \textit{Paśa} is insentient. Therefore ‘knowing’ is possible for both \textit{Pati} and \textit{Paśu}. But \textit{Pati} is an all-knowing (omniscient) being. Hence its knowing is qualitatively and totally different from the knowing of \textit{Paśu}. For \textit{Paśu} is not an all-knowing being. Then what sort of knowing is it? \textit{Paśu}, being a dependent being, its knowledge too depends on the reality to which it depends on (\textit{arivikka arivatu, cutarivu and cirraivu}). But it is the ‘sort of knowing’ that which distinguishes their beings. Hence it is an epistemological endeavor which is basically aimed at unraveling the ontological nuances of both the ‘all-knowing being’ and ‘the other sentient beings’ which are capable of knowing but are incapable of knowing all. Moreover unlike \textit{Pati}, pasu is capable of only a dependent knowledge. It ‘depends on’ and ‘capable of knowing both’ (\textit{irutiran arivulatu}) the \textit{Pati} and \textit{Paśu}. This is not in any way an ambivalent character which is essentially disadvantageous to the self but an essential mark of its existence and ultimately leads the self towards its goal.
3.5.1 Essential Character of Self (Iruṭiran Arivulatu) (Capable of Knowing both)

From the point of view of human knowledge, this phrase "Iruṭiran Arivulatu" in the seventh Sūtra of Śivajñānabodhami is very important. It is mentioned carefully in the first of the six Sūtras in the ṛṇmai adhikāram. Since it is placed in the ethical section (sādhana śāya), its importance could be assessed from the point of view of adopting proper means in realising the ultimate goal of human life and as well removing carefully that which is the source of suffering. This expression implies certain important ontological insights into the essential nature (sva-rūpa lakṣāṇa) of the self. What is adventitious and inherent to self? The true characteristics are the innate ones (sva-rūpa lakṣāṇa), whereas the adventitious ones are acquired ones as a result of the contact with the alien objects. It would be timely and appropriate to acquaint ourselves with some of the important understanding of the expression of Iruṭiran ariyum arivu (capacity of the self to know both).

3.5.1.1 Self knows both the Sat and Asat:

Iruṭiran arivulatu...ānma

First and foremost, it means that the self has the freedom and ability to know both sat (Pati) and asat (Pati) and asat (Pāṣa). If the self does not know sat and asat, then the existence of both sat and asat would be as good as nothing (śūnya); since sat and asat cannot know each other, they cannot serve any useful purpose. The Siddhāntin explains that just as the eye knows both the sun and the object. Which do not know each other, even so the self knows both sat and asat. This concept of the nature of the self incidentally refutes Śivāsvata, according to which the nature of the self is identical with the nature of Śiva; it refutes Śiva-saṅkrānta-vāda, according to which the self does not have any nature of its own. So Pati is knowable partly by the self in podu and fully in cirappu. Because God is the permanent revealer (upadesin) of the self.
3.5.1.2 Self is always known as Revealed

The second meaning of the expression is that the knowledge of the self is made manifest by either sat or asat. Hence, the self is known as the revealed (upadesin). The revealer (upadēstr) is either sat or asat. This concept of the self as upadesin refutes religions like Śivasamavāda and lōvaravikaravāda, which hold that the self can know independent of any revelation.

3.5.1.3 Self assumes the mode of that which it knows:

The third meaning of the expression is that the self assumes the mode of that which it knows. This quality of the self is known as “Cārtatanvanamamātāt”. It means the self has the quality of participating in the being of that which it knows. This kind of knowing by participation is known as “āguñṭiṣāṭiṭā”. Therefore, the Siddhāntin says that whatever is known is also experienced. It is only in this sense the Siddhāntin uses the word “anubhava”. The known that is experienced is other than the self which knows and experiences. This explains the Siddhāntic concept that God does not have anubhava, because God is the all-pervasive ground and hence, there is nothing outside him worth experiencing. Pāṇḍita cannot have any anubhava, because it is non-sentient. It is the self that has the ability to experience both Śiva and the world, for it is the one reality that has the ability to know both sat and asat. Hence in Śaiva Siddhānta the self is referred to as sadusat”.

3.5.1.4 Knowledge of the self is always a knowledge by Inference:

Ānma nādiḥ: It means inferring through rational enquiry certain nuances of the reality of ‘ānmas’. The word ānma (self) means both the supreme self (paramānma) and the individual self (jīvānma). Now are these supreme self and the individual self
same? Answer is both ‘yes and no’. ‘Yes’ in certain aspects differences of their being. Munivar says, “The supreme self makes the individual selves experience pleasures and pains through the instrumentality of the embodiment without Himself being soiled by these actions. He can neither be an object of ordinary knowledge nor be a completely unknown entity. He should be experienced in the supra-mental consciousness of the individual self”. This is the way in which inference is made from the known objects so as to be in accordance with the scriptural knowledge. 

3.5.2 The Logical conclusions inferred by Śivajñānamunivar

After careful considerations of the above mentioned characteristics of the self, Śivajñānamunivar infers the quality of knowledge the self can have in its cognition of itself and of the other realities too.

3.5.2.1 Knowledge by Experience or Experiential Cognition

Such knowledge by experience is possible on for the jīvanma (Aṣuṇti aṭitaḥ anubhavitā). According to Vajravel Mudaliar, “Experience is none other than cognitive ingress”. Cognition is the act or process of knowing or perceiving. It could as well mean something that is known or perceived. Cognition means knowledge (cognition is the range or scope of knowledge). To cognise is to become conscious of or to know. ‘Ingress’ means the act of going in or entering. Therefore the knowledge of jīvanma is known as ‘citrāṇivu or akadesa aṭivu’ as opposed to the pēraṇivu of paramāṇma.

3.5.2.2 Cognition without Experience: pēraṇivu (paramāṇma)

Experience cannot be attributed to the supreme being (no cognitive ingress) (Aṣuṇti ninḍu aṭivatu paramāṇma). Its knowledge is that which stands by itself (ninḍu
arīyum). In other words, it is an independent knowledge (cutantra arīvu). That means paramānma has no object (vyaṇjakam) to manifest itself. Therefore, there is no experience which can be attributed to the supreme being. It knows everything at a time (muzuvatum oruṅge arīvatu - not only knows all, independently of any object but also it enables the self to know the objects (muzuvatum tāne arīntum arīvittum nirkum pēraivu).

3.5.2.3 Cognition only with Experience: Cīraṇivi (Jīvānma)

Ānma is capable of knowing and experiencing both paramānma and Pāśā. Ānma cannot know or experience two things simultaneously (‘onin azuntunkal marjonnaiyum arīyumarinmai’). When it experiences one, it cannot simultaneously experience another. That is the reason the knowledge of the self is known as ‘cīrāṇivi’.63 The self knows when it is revealed and it experiences the object when it knows the object (āanti arital).

3.5.2.4 The Insentient Pāśā:

As opposed to both paramānma and jīvānma, Pāśā is insentient (jada). Therefore, it is impossible for Pāśā to know anything at all. As the individual self cognises things only by identifying itself with its object, it should be noted that it always depends upon a vyaṇjakar (manifestor) which causes to know. The cognitive potency of the supreme being does not identify itself with its objects, therefore it does not require any lighter for its manifestation. It is independent. It can know things by itself and cause the selves to know. It is omniscient. Therefore it can be attributed to the individual self, for it is only the individual self which can identify itself with the one or the other of the two remaining entities and cognise them. The upāgama Sarvajñanottara which is categorised under cirappu tells us that the individual self alone can have mystic experience.
Example:

Even as a cleansed cloth has the purity extended throughout its form, so the individual self which is free from the darkness has consciousness which is comparatively all pervasive. As its (self's) nature is to identify itself with the thing of its contact, it can be aware of only that thing alone, remaining oblivious to all other things. (In this sense, the realised soul, though considered to be omniscient in comparison with its state of bondage, yet is limited to the supreme being which it experiences). Just like the other orthodox systems of Indian philosophy, Siddhānta accepts Śabda Pramāṇa as the Pramāṇa par excellence. The other two Pramāṇas pratyakṣa and anumāṇa are validated or justified according to śabda only. But are not perception and inference are independent and self-justifying as pramanas? They are so; no doubt. But when compared to śabda pramāṇa, these two fall under the realm of podu and the latter falls under cirappu. In Siddhānta's case, unlike the other schools of thought, it is God (Śiva) who is the source of Śabda. This śabda is made manifest primarily in Āgamas which are special (cirappu) and secondarily through Vādās and Upanishads which are brought under the category of general (podu). It is the āgama-pramāṇa which reigns supreme in its epistemology and becomes the sole criterion of ascertaining true knowledge. "Reasoning plays the role of justifying the truths disclosed in the Āgamas, which are the original sources of knowledge of God".64 Āgama, literally means "what comes". When śabda means āgama-pramāṇa in Siddhānta, it doesn't simply signify tradition in general but 'systematised tradition'. Since śabda includes pratyakṣa and anumāṇa, the all important pramāṇa. Therefore, a systematic interpretation of the teaching of Āgamas is the essential aim of the Śaiva Siddhānta system of thought.65
3.6 Cognition in View of Liberation:

In fact, in Śaiva Siddhānta, a great significance is given to the source, nature, content of knowledge and the cognitive processes involved in knowing. According to the school, it is ignorance that has led the souls to bondage. It is to be the 'cause' of which the innumerable miseries of the world exist. True knowledge, then, is the only panacea for all miseries and sufferings of the world. Thus knowledge is essential to man, concerning the entire reality consisting of Pati, Paśu and Paśā. “Śaiva Siddhānta as a philosophical system tries to make intelligible the truths regarding the three realities revealed in the Āgamas.”

Of the various means of salvation, whose efficacy have been tested, the highest is knowledge. Hence, asceticism, torture, rituals, sacrifices, etc., are superseded by the highest means, jñāna. Knowledge dawns on man by degrees, the step by step progress in learning is conditioned by man’s finite mind. Accompanying this increase in knowledge there is spiritual enlightenment, ethical advancement and religious evolution. Knowledge opens the way to release. Thus knowledge plays a vital role in man’s life.

Thus, it is clear, that a sound epistemology is not only an imperative for a genuine ontology but even for a true soteriology. It is a sound pramāṇa (epistemology) that would reveal the real laksāṇa (nature) of the sentient (of both the paramāṇa and jivāṇma) and the insentient beings (Paśā, jada) and thus pave the way for a true śādhana (means) in order to attain the ultimate payan (goal) which is mukti (vidu - pāru) for which the Siddhānta strives for. ‘Uyar Śivajñānam’ is the only means of true salvation.
ONTOLOGICAL & EXISTENTIAL
STATUS OF MAN