THE CONCEPT OF LIVING LIBERATION
IN THE TIRUMANTIRAM

by

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ABSTRACT

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This dissertation examines the concept of living liberation in the Tirumantiram, a work recognised as one of the Tamil Śaiva canonical texts composed around the ninth century. Modern scholarship has thus far attempted to comprehend the Tirumantiram in terms of the post-Tirumantiram traditions that developed after the thirteenth century: Tamil Śaiva Siddhānta and Tamil Siddha. Consequently, the unity and coherence of the text are subjected to question, and the dual literary and cultural roots of the Tirumantiram remain largely uninvestigated. Besides, the significance of the Tirumantiram as one of the earliest vernacular works directly dealing with the question of soteriology for Tamil speaking populace, most of whom are not qualified for liberation and preceptorhood according to the Śaivāgamas with which the text identifies itself, is not fully recognised. This dissertation argues that the concept of living liberation constitutes the unifying theme of the Tirumantiram, which is an outcome of the synthesis of Tamil and Sanskrit traditions, and demonstrates that the *Tirumantiram*-which does not apparently promote the ideology of temple cult around which the Tamil *bhakti* movement and *Śaivāgamas* of Southern Śaivism developed–exemplifies an alternative religious vision centred on the human body. This dissertation consists of four chapters. The first chapter examines the Tamil legacy to the concept of living liberation. The second examines the ambiguous relations between the Sanskrit traditions and the Tirumantiram. How the Tamil and Sanskrit traditions are fused together to produce a unique version of yoga, the means to attain

living liberation, is the concern of the third chapter. The final chapter establishes through an analysis of sexual symbolism expressed in connotative language that the Tirumantiratm is an esoteric text. Thus, the Tirumantiram reflects the blending of an esoteric tantric sect with the leading mainstream bhakti religion, probably to win approval of and recognition in the Tamil Śaiva community during the medieval period.

To

Chelva Kanaganayakam

viṇṇiṉṟiḻintu viṉaikkīṭāy meykoṇṭu
"Descending from Heaven clothed in body"

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ABBREVIATIONS

Aka.	Akanāṉūṟu
Aiṅk.	Aiṅkuṟunūṟu
Ciṟu.	Ciṟupāṇāṟṟuppaṭai
Kali.	Kalittokai
Kuṟi.	Kuṟiñcippāṭṭu
Kuṟu.	Kuṟuntokai
Ku.	Kulārṇavatantra
Maturai.	Maturaikkāñci
Malai.	Malaipaṭukaṭām
Makuta	Makutāgama
Manu	Manusmṛti
Naṟ.	Naṟṟiṇai
Pari.	Paripāṭal
Pati.	Patiṟṟuppattu
Perum.	Perumpāṇāṟṟuppaṭai
Puṟa.	Puṟanāṉūṟu
Tiru.	Tirumurukāṟṟuppaṭai
TM	Tirumantiram

A NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION

The names of figures, concepts, and places occurring exclusively in Tamil sources have been transliterated according to the scheme provided in the University of Madras Tamil Lexicon: e.g. aṉpu, Tirumūlaṉ, Tiruvāvaṭutuṟai. The standard transliteration for Sanskrit is mostly adopted for Sanskrit terms whenever they occur in Tamil sources: e.g. jñāna for ñāṉam, yoga for yōkam, guru for kuru, Śiva for Civa.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

This dissertation is directed towards a discussion of living liberation in the

Tirumantiram, one of the Tamil Śaiva canonical literature known as the *Tirumuṟai*.[1] The

concept of living liberation constitutes the central theme of the *Tirumantiram* which is the

outcome of the synthesis of Tamil and Sanskrit traditions. The analysis of the concept of

living liberation demonstrates that the *Tirumantiram* - which does not apparently promote

the ideology of temple cult around which the Tamil *bhakti* movement[2] and Śaiva

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All translations in this dissertation are mine unless stated otherwise.

[1] Though the term *muṟai* has several meanings in Tamil, it denotes, in this context, a body of religious texts arranged in a certain order or an individual text placed in that order. "*Tiru*" means divine, sacred or auspicious. Śaiva works are grouped into 12 classes known as *Tirumuṟai*. Though the whole Tamil Śaiva canon is in metrical form, a distinctive terminology is used for individual components of the canon. The first seven *Tirumuṟai* are known as *Tēvāram*, the eighth comprises *Tiruvācakam* and *Tirukkōvaiyār*. The ninth *Tirumuṟai* includes two texts *Tiruvicaippā* and *Tiruppallāṇṭu* and the *Tirumantiram* is known as the tenth *Tirumuṟai*. Whereas various compositions are included in the eleventh *Tirumuṟai*, a single text called *Periyapurāṇam* constitutes the twelfth *Tirumuṟai*. The Śaiva canonical works cover approximately a period of 700 years. See Kamil Zvelebil, *The Smile of Murugan: On Tamil Literature of South India* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1973), 185-87.

[2] The *Tirumantiram* belonged to the *bhakti* era that began in the Tamil linguistic –cultural area in the 6th century C.E. The region lying south of the Vēṅkaṭa hills was recognised as the Tamil country during the *bhakti* period, as in the Caṅkam age. Two or three centuries immediately following the Caṅkam period is designated as Kalabhra interregnum in the history of Tamil literature, during which "the zenith of Jaina and Buddhist influence in South India was achieved." Stein notes, "these cults [Jainism and Buddhism] co-existed peacefully with each other and with indigenous forms of religion." The late classical works *Paripāṭal*, and *Kalittokai*, several didactic works and the twin epics *Cilappatikāram* and *Maṇimēkalai* were composed during this period. This period of relative peace in the religious arena was followed by the *bhakti* period which was marked by religious acrimony and violence spurred by the conversion of kings to Śaivism by saints. The Tamil *bhakti* movement that was spearheaded by the three "*Tēvāram*" saints was centered on temple and pilgrimage, and Śiva, the presiding deity of the temple constituted the theme of devotional hymns. Poet-saints called upon all members of Tamil society to participate in the worship of Śiva envisioning the formation of devotional communities irrespective of gender and caste distinctions. Thus, the object of the movement was to unite the Tamil society under the banner of temple-based Śaivism, thereby to enervate Jainism and Buddhism that had wielded influence in the Tamil country from long before the Common Era. See *Peasant state and society in Medieval South India (Delhi :Oxford University Press, 1980),78;* Indira Peterson, *Poems to Śiva: The Hymns of the Tamil Saints* (Delhi:Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1991, 2001), 9-10.

Siddhānta *āgamas* of Southern Śaivism developed– exemplifies an alternative religious vision centred on the human body.[3]

Medieval Tamil Śaivism was shaped and nurtured by the synthesis and amalgamation of two literary cultures springing from separate language texts: Sanskrit and Tamil. It is generally argued that its ritual, theological or philosophical, and mythical content is derived from the Vedic, *āgamic/tantric* and *purāṇic* literature in Sanskrit whereas its emotive content can be traced to the Tamil Caṅkam literature. By creating an intimate link between these two distinct conceptual universes that are claimed by the text to be equal in value, the *Tirumantiram* emerges as a foundational treatise in Tamil dealing with the subject of soteriology. The primary concern of the dissertation is to illuminate the nature of the synthesis between the Sanskrit and Tamil traditions undertaken by the text, thereby demonstrating how the path to and nature of living liberation are influenced by it.

Living liberation, which is the ultimate goal of *sanmārga* path is characterized by the *turīya samādhi*, the fourth and the final stage of consciousness in which polarities are transcended. The highest state of *yoga* is interpreted both as self-realization and as non-dualistic union with Śiva (*śivayoga)* marked by both the blissful vision of the pervasiveness of Śiva, and the acquisition of power (*siddhi*). One who attains this state is known as a *cittar* (Siddha). Living liberation is intimately associated with the concept of bodily immortality or deathlessness, because the Siddha becomes free of change by transcending all elements (*tattva*s)[4] in the *turīya samādhi*. Thus, he succeeds in

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[3] "Realization emanates from [Tiru] mantiram that gives rise to the consciousness of the body." (TM 85).
[4] Reality comprises a number of principles or elements called *tattvas*. The *Tirumantiram* mentions five *Śiva-tattvas*, seven *vidyā-tattvas* and twenty-four *ātma-tattvas*. See verses 2190, 2191,1714, 1737. Another

conquering death, or in reversing the natural process of aging. Since a changeless state is sought in the world that perpetually changes, living liberation is described in paradoxical terms in the *Tirumantiram*.

Different Readings of the *Tirumantiram*:

The question of textual unity and coherence is, in general, disregarded or inadequately dealt with in commentaries and secondary works on the *Tirumantiram*. The Tamil Śaiva Siddhānta scholarship considers the *Tirumantiram* to be the earliest source of the tradition,[5] the canonical works of which are known as Meykaṇṭa Śāstras.[6] The

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verse (2179) states that *tattvas* are ninety-six in total. Śaivas reckon 36 *tattvas* whereas Vedāntins, and Māyāvādins recognize 28, 24, and 25 *tattvas* respectively.

[5] To understand the various dimensions of controversy surrounding the *Tirumantiram*, it is necessary to have a rudimentary knowledge of Śaiva Siddhānta, which is described "as the central tantric Śaiva tradition" enshrined in the corpus of revealed texts known as *āgamas* or tantras. The three entities-God, soul and bondage- are held to be true and eternal. Liberation is explained in terms of the soul being rid of its bonds. The Śaiva Siddhānta privileges ritual over knowledge and maintains the ontological distinction between the soul and God even in the state of release (dualism). The *āgamas* deal with the two types of ritual: ritual performed for the sake of others (*parārthapūjā*), the prime example of which is the *pūjā* held in public places like temples, and ritual performed for one's own benefit (*ātmārathapūjā*). See Gavin Flood, *The tantric body: the secret tradition of Hindu religion* (B. Tauris, 2006), 120; Helene Brunner, "Jñāna and Kriyā: Relation between Theory and Practice in the Śaivāgamas," in *Ritual and Speculation in Early Tantrism,* ed. Teun Goudriaan (New York: State University New York Press, 1992), 1-59.

A regional school called Tamil Śaiva Siddhānta emerged in the period spanning the 13-15th centuries, and its cardinal doctrines are found in the fourteen Meykaṇṭa cāttiraṅkaḷ (śāstras) composed by three of the four *cantāṉa kuravars* (*saṃtānācārya*) and two authors preceding them. Prentiss states that the endeavours by the Tamil Śaiva Siddhānta school to canonize the devotional literature and compose philosophical works in Tamil were motivated by the desire to create a Tamil lineage for the school and to distance itself from the Sanskrit Śaiva Siddhānta school that flourished in the Tamil country. The Sanskrit Śaiva Siddhānta school is a temple-based tradition that underscores the primacy of ritual (*kriyā*) for attainment of liberation. As opposed to the pan-Indic, ritualistic school of Śaiva Siddhānta, the Tamil Śaiva Siddhānta school developed as a regional tradition finding its inspiration in Tamil medieval *bhakti* literature and privileging knowledge (*jñāna*) over ritual as a means of liberation. Prentiss notes that by means of underplaying the role of ritual in the realm of soteriology, the Tamil Śaiva Siddhānta tradition is seen to be more on the path of identifying itself with *advaita* Vedānta. See Karen Prentiss, *The Embodiment of Bhakti* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 134-135. The Tamil Śaiva Siddhānta embraces the doctrine of *śuddhādvaita*, and thus distinguishes itself from the *advaita* Vedānta. The *śuddhādvaita mukti* is characterised by the union of the soul with God, which is beyond description. In the state of liberation the soul is indistinguishable from God; at the same time, the soul maintains its own identity. The merging of the soul with Śiva is compared to the coalescing of two words *tāḷ* and *talai* as *tāṭalai*. See *Tiruvaruṭpayaṉ* 8: 4-5. Indigenous scholars have Tamil Śaiva Siddhānta in their mind when they discuss the *Tirumantiram*.

origin of this perspective lies in political debates about the question of Tamil national identity held in Tamil Nadu during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The Tamil/Śaivite revivalist movement that emerged in the late nineteenth century was influenced by Dravidian ideology[7] advocated by the Madras school of Orientalist scholarship (anti-Brahman missionary Orientalism), which proposed a pristine Tamil past unsullied by Brāhmaṇical elements.[8] This regional movement was born of the fear of marginalization and of degradation harboured in the minds of elite non-Brahmans in relation to their political and social future in predominantly Aryan, Sanskritic and Brāhmaṇical Hindu India. The fear was created by colonialists who disparaged Dravidian beliefs, and by neo-Hindu writings that "reduced 'India' to a Hinduism whose pure and authentic manifestations were limited to the Sanskritic scriptural tradition characterized as "Aryan"…."[9] The Tamil Śaiva Siddhānta was identified as the original religion of Tamils and was used to combat the growing influence of Neo-Vedānta which was "considered by many Christian missionaries and Dravidian ideologues as the new liberal face of a resurgent Brahmanism in India."[10] Non-Brahman scholars constructed a purely Tamil lineage for Śaivism and Śaiva Siddhānta in their writings and celebrated the *Tirumantiram* as the earliest Tamil work embodying the Tamil Śaiva Siddhānta

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[6] T.B. Siddalingaiah goes as far as to say that almost all concepts found in Tamil Śaiva Siddhānta literature could be traced to the *Tirumantiram*. See *Origin and Development of* Śaiva *Siddhānta up to 14th century* (Madurai:Madurai Kamaraj University, 1979), 70.

[7] The foundation of Dravidian ideology was laid by R. Caldwell's in his monumental work, *A Ccomparative Grammar of the Dravidian or South Indian Family of Languages.* Caldwell uses the term Dravidian to denote south Indian languages and the speakers of these languages, who are non-Brahman people of South India.

[8] R. Vaitheespara, "Caste, Hybridity, and the Construction of Cultural Identity in Colonial India: Maraimalai Adigal and the Intellectual Genealogy of Dravidian Nationalism 1800-1950*"* (PhD diss., University of Toronto, 1999, 28-29.)

[9] Sumathi Ramaswamy, *Passions of the Tongue* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 25-27.

[10] V. Ravindiran [R. Vaitheespara], "Discourses of Empowerment : Missionary Orientalism in the Development of Dravidian Nationalism," in *Nation Work: Asian Elites and National Identities, ed.* Timothy Brook and Andre Schmid (Ann Arbour : University of Michigan Press, 2000), 54.

doctrines.[11] Writings on the *Tirumantiram* were inspired by this perspective during this period. The fundamental principles underlying living liberation were conveniently overlooked or misconstrued.[12]

The view that gained momentum since the late 1960s holds that the *Tirumantiram* constitutes the fountainhead of Tamil Śaiva Siddhānta as well as Tamil Siddha tradition.[13] Two seminal works on Tamil Siddhas, one by A.V. Subramanya Aiyar (1969) and one by Kamil Zvelebil (1973) were responsible for setting a new direction in the studies of *Tirumantiram*.[14] Aiyar underlines both the Siddha nature of the author Tirumūlar and the

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[11] R. Vaitheespara, "Caste, Hybridity, and the construction of Cultural Identity in Colonial India," 118.

[12] Scholars have shown at the expense of fundamental esoteric principles how the *Tirumantiram* has influenced the Meykaṇṭa śāstras of the 12-14th century. Their writings identify the following doctrines common to both the *Tirumantiram* and Meykaṇṭa śāstras: nature of the eternal entities -God, the soul and bondage, the role of grace and guru in the soul's pursuit of liberation, significance of the *pañcākṣara* mantra and the four-fold hierarchized paths: *caryā, kriyā, yoga* and *jñāna*. Nonetheless, they usually ignore or do not adequately explain the following aspects of Śaivism professed by the *Tirumantiram*: the human body being privileged in the text, twin goals of immortality and liberation, the interrelationship of yoga and *jñāna* or attainment of *jñāna* through yoga, temple worship being relegated to the margin of religious life, and recognition of sexual intercourse without emission as a means to living liberation. See K. Veḷḷaivāraṇaṉ, P*aṉṉiru Tirumuṟai varalāṟu,* Part II (Cidambaram, Tamil Nadu: Aṇṇāmalai University,1997), The *Tirumantiram* edited and commented by P. Irāmanāta piḷḷai (Tirunelvēli Caiva Cittānta Nūrpatippuk Kaḻakam , 2007 [1942]).

[13] Tamil Śaivism consists of two streams: one is Tamil Śaiva Siddhānta and other is Tamil Siddhism, also known as Tamil Siddha tradition or Tamil Siddha cult. Zvelebil regards Tamil Siddhas "as an integral part of a pan-Indian movement and tradition." See *The Siddha Quest for Immortality* (Oxford: Mandrake of Oxford, 2003), 6. However, R. Venkataraman recognizes the contribution of indigenous culture to the origin of the Tamil Siddha cult.

> The Tamil Siddha cult, like any other, is the product of an evolution and a fruit deriving from different roots. The period of evolution would go back to Tamil proto-historic times. The roots are diverse and belong to different soils, and so, the nourishment has been qualitatively different, producing what has cropped up as the sanmārga siddha school in the 10th -11th centuries, and after a pause, settled down as the Tamil Siddha cult around the 15th-16th centuries.[13] Of these different roots, four are important and identifiable (a) The proto-historic native beginnings (b) the kāpālika cult (3) the Tantric Buddhism (4) the Nātha siddha cult. See *A History of the Tamil Siddha Cult* (Madurai: N Ennes Publications, 1990),23.

The highest goals of siddhas are "freedom, perfect health and immortality-all gained in this life." (Kamil Zvelebil, *The Poets of the Powers,* 9.) The Tamil Siddhas have authored works on yoga, medicine, alchemy and astrology. They observe various types of yoga and meditational practices and tantric ritualism. Most of their poetry contains symbolism which is comprehensible only to the initiated.

[14] The interest in Tamil Siddhas was kindled in Tamil Nadu following the emergence of two movements focussing on the task of creating a new Tamil identity bereft of Brahmanical elements. Both E.V.R Periyār who headed the self-respect movement, and Maṟaimalai Aṭikaḷ of the Tamil revivalist movement regarded rationality to be the central quality of Tamils and attributed the downfall of "rational" Tamil culture to

differences between the *Tirumantiram* and other devotional poetry included in the Śaiva canon. According to Aiyar, Tirumūlar, along with Civavākkiyar and Paṭṭiṇattār, form "the great Siddha triad of the hymnal period."[15] Zvelebil who appears to be the first scholar to employ the term tradition[16] in connection with Tamil Siddhas, considers it as an offshoot of the pan-Indian tantric-*yoga* movement[17] inspired by the new revelation that emerged between the seventh and the eleventh centuries by way of re-interpreting and synthesizing "the elements of Vajrayāna and Śivaist tantrism, magic, alchemy, and *haṭha* yoga."[18] The aforementioned period coincided with the development of Siddha tradition in South India with Tirumūlar being the first Tamil preceptor of "that new

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Brahmans and Sanskrit. However, their ideological differences lie in their views about religion. While Periyār thought ancient Tamils to be atheists, Aṭikaḷ projected them to be followers of the strictly monotheistic religion of Śaiva Siddhānta. Tamil Siddha poetry and the Tamil Siddha medical system were celebrated as the creations of the Tamil rationalist mind and attempts were made to find modern scientific facts in Tamil Siddha writings. The *Tirumantiram* is considered one of the earliest Tamil Siddha works. See Richard Weiss, "The Reformulation of a Holy Science: Siddha Medicine and Tradition in South India" (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2003), 124-165.

[15] *Poetry and Philosophy of the Tamil Siddhars: An Essay in Criticism* (Cidambaram: Manivasakar Noolakam, 1969),7.

[16] I agree with the use of the term "tradition" in regard to Tamil Siddhas. By tradition is meant *paramparā* in Sanskrit or *paramparai in* Tamil. The Tamil Siddha tradition lacked a strong institutional basis in the formal sense. However, its teachings were handed down from guru to disciple in informal settings. Hence it is through and through a guru-centered tradition. Without the intervention of the guru, one cannot be enlightened. Initiation by the guru is followed by a rigorous spiritual practice or *sādhanā* as directed by him. Paṭṭiṇattār distinguishes other religious paths from that of the Siddhas in terms of the spiritual preceptor, guru.

> I identified myself with the blind
> whose path was not guru-centred
> Following the path leading to birth
> I was ruined; my intent was defeated (Aruḷ Pulampal)

See A. Ramanathan, ed., *Cittar Pāṭalkaḷ* (Chennai: Prēmā piracuram, 2005 [1959]), 95.

Almost all Siddhas have referred to a guru, either by name or by title**.** Jñānasiddhas do not mention their guru by name. But with regard to kāyasiddhas, Venkataraman has constructed a genealogy based on their writings. According to the *Tirumantiram*, Nandi had eight disciples including Tirumūlar who in turn, had seven students. Though individual variations among Siddhas are discernible in Siddha poetry, three elements - common goals, means to achieve them and the mediatory role played by the guru - enable us to speak of Siddhas as belonging to a single tradition. See R. Venkataraman, A *History of the Tamil Siddha Cult,* 42-165.

[17] *The Poets of the Powers*, 16.

[18] M.Eliade, *Yoga: Immortality and Freedom (* Princeton: University of Princeton Press, 1969), 304.

revelation reinterpreting the timeless doctrines within the framework of Tamil language, culture and literature." [19] Zvelebil describes the author of the text, Tirumūlar, "as the true forerunner of the Tamil Siddhas" and his work "contains …. all or almost all the typical features of the Tamil Siddha movement".[20] At the same time he acknowledges that "the Śaiva Siddhānta philosophy springs from this marvellous text as from its direct source."[21]

The survey of secondary literature on the *Tirumantiram* since the publication of Zvelebil's work shows that even those who wanted to examine the text from the perspective of later Tamil Siddha tradition have conceded that it is basically a Tamil Śaiva Siddhānta classic.[22] More than half of the work (5-9 Tantras) is proclaimed to be dealing with Tamil Śaiva Siddhānta philosophy whereas the first four Tantras are linked to the Tamil Siddha tradition.[23]

These studies are based on the premise that Tamil Śaiva Siddhānta and Tamil Siddha doctrines are incompatible with each other. Yet, they do not propose an explanation as to how the text came to reflect two divergent religious traditions. Besides, they tacitly imply that the *Tirumantiram* lacks fundamental unity and coherence in its structure and content. Some scholars are critical and outspoken in their comments. Aiyar argues that the *Tirumantiram* does not have "cogent reasoning for the development of a theme, creed or philosophy." Rather, he suggests that it is "a compilation of certain

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[19] *The Poets of the Powers,*73.
[20] Ibid.*,* 74
[21] Ibid., 73.
[22] "Though the Tirumandiram is treated basically a Śaiva Siddhānta classic, i.e. a classic of Tamil Śaiva philosophical tradition, it has the unique privilege of being called a pioneer work on the Tamil Siddha tradition as well." See T.N Ganapathy and K.R. Arumugam, *The Yoga of Siddha Tirumūlar: Essays on the Tirumandiram* (Quebec: Babaji's Kriya Yoga Publications, 2006), xvi-xvii.
[23] R. Māṇikkavācakam,, *Tirumantira ārāycci* (Chennai: Apirāmi Aruḷ, 1982), 35.

prevailing ideas" about ethics, doctrines of *Śaivāgamas*, and yoga.[24]   Zvelebil concurs

with this view by describing the *Tirumantiram* as an "encyclopaedia of authentic spiritual

experience on almost all levels."[25] However, he observes that three integrated paths to

liberation (knowledge, *yoga* and *bhakti*) yield a fundamental unity in the otherwise

loosely connected work.[26] Judith Martin counters Zvelebil's suggestion that the

Tirumantiram is a "mere compilation of solitary verses", stating that Tirumūlar's efforts

to mediate between the Sanskrit Vedic and *āgamic* traditions, and the Tamil *bhakti*

tradition, shape the unified vision of the text.[27]

    Martin's excellent study on the *Tirumantiram* does not find the co-existence in a

single text of seemingly contradictory Tamil Śaiva Siddhānta and Tamil Siddha

ideologies problematic, or as one that needs further consideration.   Nonetheless, it has

been an important issue to indigenous scholars because the *Tirumantiram* does not fully

conform to the characteristic worldview of Tamil Siddhas represented in Tamil Siddha

poetry that emerged from after the 15th century onwards. Since the Tamil Siddhas are

portrayed as opposed to scriptures[28] and *bhakti mārga*,[29] the presence of these elements in

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[24] *Poetry and Philosophy of the Tamil Siddhars: An Essay in Criticism*, 11.

[25] *Lexicon of Tamil Literature,* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995), 675.

[26] *The Poets of the Powers*, 74.

[27] "The function of mythic figures in *Tirumantiram*" (PhD diss., McMaster University, 1983).

[28]   The four Vedas, the six Vedāṅgas,
    Numerous tantras the purāṇas, the āgamas
    And various kinds of other works –
    They are all vain treatises indeed, dance O snake! (Pāmpāṭṭic cittar, 98)
    The one who consigns the scriptures to flame is a real Siddha
    cāttirattaic cuṭṭu eṟintāl avaṉē cittaṉ (Akattiyar ñāṉam 2:5)
See A. Ramanathan, ed., C*ittar Pāṭalkaḷ,* 226, 343.

[29] "In the history of Indian thought there has always been a tension among the adherents of the path of devotion (*bhakti*), those of the path of knowledge (*jñāna*), and those of *yoga*. The Siddhas are antagonistic towards *bhakti;* they accept *yoga* as the only method of final realization. The Tamil Siddhas have developed an openly iconoclastic attitude toward the worship of divine images (*arcā*), which is important to the path of devotion (*bhakti*). This naturally makes them critical of *bhakti* as a mode of final realization."

the *Tirumantiram* is uncharacteristic of the Siddha tradition.[30]   Karu. Ārumukattamiḻaṉ's

work grapples with the issue of the identity of the author of *Tirumantiram*:

> " The question is if Tirumūlar was a Siddha or a Śaiva Siddhāntin. The Siddhas are negatively defined as those who condemned and denounced scriptures, religion and *bhakti*. However, it appears that Tirumūlar who is acknowledged to be a Siddha does not conform to these definitions…[31]

To resolve the issue pertaining to the nature of the *Tirumantiram*, it is imperative

to recognize the textual unity of the *Tirumantiram*, to be cognizant of the complex

cultural process involved in the making of the text and to appreciate the dichotomy of

esoteric/exoteric content embedded in the text. This is undertaken in the four chapters

that follow. The remainder of this chapter deals with authorship, structure, and general

content of the text.

Authorship:

According to autobiographical verses in the prologue (73-94), the *Tirumantiram* is

based on the spiritual experience of the Siddha Tirumūlar. He represents himself in these

verses as a yogi who has attained embodied liberation and as an ardent seeker of true

knowledge. He claimed to be conversant with the Sanskrit *āgamic* literature and the three

facets of Tamil: *iyal* (literary Tamil), *icai* (verses set to music) and *nāṭakam* (literature

pertaining to dances or to dramatic representation of stories). My reconstruction of the

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T.N. Ganapathy, "The Way of the Siddhas," in *Hindu Spirituality: Postclassical and Modern* ed. K. Sundararajan and Bithika Mukerji (New York : Crossroad Publishing, 1997),239. Also see T.N. Ganapathy, *The Philosophy of the Tamil Siddhas* (New Delhi: Indian Council of Philosophical Research, 1993), 69-70.

[30] The Tirumantiram does not reject religious scriptures: "The Vedas and the *āgamas* are revealed texts having general and special authority." (vētamōṭu ākamam meyyām iṟaivaṉ nūl ōtum potuvum ciṟappum eṉṟu uḷḷana 2397:1-2). Karu. Ārumukattamiḻaṉ shows in his work that *bhakti* (he interprets *bhakti* as *aṉpu*) is an integral aspect of *Tirumūlar's* religion. See *Kālattiṉ Kural* (Chennai: Tamiḻiṉi, 2004), 21-28.

[31] *Tirumūlar: Kālattiṉ Kural,* 112.

author's biography differs in certain details from the one found in the *Periyapurāṇam* of the twelfth century. (See fn. 56)

Two verses –one in the prologue and the other at the end of the text- apparently refer to the author as Mūlaṉ.[32] Two more verses in the text quote Mūlaṉ as the authority on the subject they deal with. [33] Mūlaṉ appears to be a popular name among Caṅkam poets.[34] According to the autobiographical verses, the author, who was born of the mind (*cittacaṉ*), was previously a religious personage called *civamuṉi* or *muṉivar* endowed with all-conquering wisdom; both terms are evocative of the body-enervating penance he had undertaken. To become a disciple of Nandi was a great turning point in his life. Being initiated into a tantric tradition, he was given the title of Nātha.[35] He received instructions in *āgamic* literature,[36] and through the practice of *yoga*[37] he became *catācivaṉ*[38] himself.[39] It was only then that he declared himself to have had attained true knowledge.[40] Having abandoned his previous all-conquering wisdom (*velkiṉra ñāṉam*), he resorted to true knowledge (*meyññāṉam*). His yogic experience is expressed in terms

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[32] mūlaṉ uraiceyta mūvāyirant tamiḻ (TM 99:1; 3046:1).

[33] atta ṉavatīrtta māṭum paricu kēḷ
otta meyñ ñāṉattuyarntār patattaic
cuttama tāka viḷakkit teḷikkavē
muttiyā meṉrunam mūlaṉ moḻintatē (TM 1829)

vittaka mākiya vēṭattar uṇṭavūṉ
attaṉ ayaṉmāl aruntiya vaṇṇamām
cittam teḷintavar cēṭam parukiṭiṉ
muttiyā meṉrunam mūlaṉ moḻintatē (TM 1866)

[34] The word *mūla* is found in the names of the following Caṅkam poets: Āvūr mūlaṅkiḻār (PN 38, 40, 166, 177,178,196,261,301), Aiyūr mūlaṅkiḻār (PN 21), Māmūlaṉār (PN 14, 75), Mūlaṅkīraṉār (Nat.73). According to *Periyapurāṇam*, an unnamed Śivayogi from the Kailāsa entered the body of the cowherd Mūlaṉ to redress the distress of the cows and assumed his name.

[35] nanti aruḷālē nātaṉām pērperrōm (68:1)

[36] TM 84.

[37] nanti aruḷālē mūlaṉai nāṭi (TM 92:1)

[38] Sadāśiva is worshipped in the form of linga. The significance of Sadāśiva is explained in chapter III.

[39] nanti aruḷālē catācivaṉāyiṉēṉ (TM 92:2)

[40] nantiaruḷāl meyññāṉattuḷ naṇṇiṉēṉ (TM 92:3)

of witnessing the dance of Śiva in the *sabhā*, after which he claims to have lived for millions of years.[41] He also indicates that this dance constitutes the theme of his work.[42] Several verses in the prologue capture his remorse for his misspent life. In verse 76, he regrets his dismal ignorance of *sadāśiva tattvam* (alternatively known as *linga tattvam*), and of the knowledge of the three types of Tamil (*muttamiḻ vētam*) at the time he tormented the body through fasting.[43] In Tantra one he repents the neglect of his physical body.[44] However, he takes comfort in the thought that he was liberated from that disillusioned life, and that he was able to appreciate the new knowledge he came to possess. This prompted him to embark on an evangelical mission of spreading the word about the teachings he received from Nandi.[45] Since Tirumūlar portrays himself as a *jīvanmukta*, his work probably came to be known as mantra (Tiru+ mantiram). The utterances of a *jīvanmukta* are generally deemed mantra. [46]

The Text

The *Tirumantiram* consists of a prologue and nine Tantras (Tantirams) of unequal length dealing with diverse subjects. Of the nine Tantras, the sixth Tantra is the shortest (131 verses), and the fourth Tantra is the longest (535 verses). The total number of verses, according to the text itself, is 3000.[47] The *Tirumantiram*, as it is available to us

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[41] tappillā maṉṟil taṉikkūttuk kaṇṭapiṉ
oppil ēḻukōṭi yukam iruntēṉē (TM 74: 3-4)
[42] TM 77.
[43] TM 76.
[44] uṭampiṉai muṉṉam iḻukkeṉṟiruntēṉ ....uṭampiṉai yāṉiruntōmpukiṉṟēṉē (TM 725:1-4)
[45] TM 85.
[46] Paul Muller-Ortego, "Aspects of Jīvanmukti in the Tantric Śaivism of Kashmir," in *Living Liberation in Hindu Thought*, ed. Andrew O Fort and Patricia Y Mumme (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), 196.
[47] mūlaṉ urai ceyta mūvāyirant tamiḻ (99:1; 3046:1)
mutti muṭivitu mūvāyirattilē (100:20)
Tantraoṉpatu cārpu mūvāyiram (101:3)

now, has a little more than three thousand verses composed in *kaliviruttam* metre. This study does not take up the question of whether the text exists in its original form or not.[48]

There are three identifiable stages in the textual history of the *Tirumantiram*:

(a) The period of composition:

The dating of the *Tirumantiram* is still a matter of unsettled controversy in scholarly writings. Most Indian scholars place the *Tirumantiram* after the Caṅkam age (after 300 A.D.), but prior to the saint Tiruñāṉacampantar, who is believed to have lived in the mid-7th century. One of the main reasons for this early dating by Indian scholars is the conviction that *Tēvāram* hymns were influenced by the *Tirumantiram*.[49] However, this has not been established beyond doubt.[50] Probably it was the author of the *Tirumantiram* who was conversant with *Tēvāram* hymns, as evidenced by his referring to them as the *muttamiḻ vētam*.[51] Zvelebil and Vaiyapuripillai date the work to the early seventh and the first quarter of the eighth century respectively. However, Venkataraman believes it to be of a much later date: a period after the 10th century but before the 12th century.

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[48] Indian scholarship is of the opinion that the text has come down to us in a very corrupt form and that a good number of *Tirumantiram* verses are interpolations. Several verses occur twice or thrice in the text verbatim. There are 52 such recurring verses. Recurrence of verses, according to Ñāṉacampantaṉ is a strange phenomenon that is not found in any other Tamil literary work. Secondly, there are broken links in the *antāti* structure of the text. The self-reference of the text as *Tirumantiram*ālai (TM 86:3) implies that it was composed in *antāti* style like a tightly-woven garland. In *antāti*, the last word or words of a verse constitute the first word or words of the subsequent verse. Nonetheless, only 590 out of the three thousand odd verses are found to be in antāti style. These verses are scattered among all Tantras except five and six. Thirdly, the text contains words of late origin. See A.S. Ñāṉacampantaṉ, *Tirumantiram* (Chennai: Kaṅkai puttaka nilaiyam, 2002), xx. *Vaiyapuripillai's History of Tamil language and literature : from the beginning to 1000 A.D.* (Madras : New Century Book House, 1988. 2nd rev. ed.), 77; Zvelebil, *The Smile of Murugan: On Tamil Literature of South India*, 74.

[49] Siddalingaiah, *Origin and Development of Śaiva Siddhānta up to 14th century,* 51. K. Veḷḷaivāraṇaṉ merely provides a list of common or similar phrases occurring in the *Tirumantiram* and other Tirumuṟai compositions including *Tēvāram*. See *Paṉṉiru tirumuṟai varalāṟu*, Volume II.

[50] J. Martin, "The Function of mythic figures in *Tirumantiram*," 25.

[51] TM 76.

The earliest possible date for the *Tirumantiram* may be the ninth century. Cuntarar, one of the *Tēvāram* saints who is placed in the ninth century, pays homage to one Mūlaṉ, saying "I am the slave of slaves of my master Tirumūlaṉ"[52] in the *Tiruttoṇṭattokai,* but fails to provide any hint of Mūlaṉ's authorship of *Tirumantiram.* Venkataraman is, therefore, of opinion that the saint mentioned in the hymn of Cuntarar is different from the purported author of the *Tirumantiram.*[53] This suggestion was also made previously by Vaiyapuripillai.[54] However, it does not constitute a cogent reason to place Mūlaṉ after the 9th century.

Mūlaṉ is again mentioned in a composition called *Tiruttoṇṭar Tiruvantāti*, composed by Nampiyāṇṭār Nampi of the tenth century. Nampi was the first to mythologize the life of Tirumūlaṉ, mentioned in Cuntarar`s *Tiruttoṇṭattokai.* Nampi's work represents an intermediary stage in the development of the Tamil hagiographical tradition which attains full maturity and perfection in Cēkkiḻār's *Periyapurāṇam.* His verse on Mūlaṉ reads:

> Having entered the body of the cow-herd
> Of *Cāttaṉūr* of good citizenry
> and extolled in pure Tamil
> the One bearing the crescent moon on his head
> in harmony with the eternal Vedas
> he who planted his feet on my head,
> was my master Mūlaṉ, who was gracious-eyed. (36)[55]

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[52] nampirāṉ tirumūlaṉ aṭiyārkkum aṭiyēṉ, 7:39:5.
The term *pirāṉ* usually refers to Śiva in Cuntarar`s *Tēvāram* : entai pirāṉ (7:21:1) ; eṅkaḷ pirāṉ (7:22:1); piramar kumpirāṉ maṟṟaimār kumpirāṉ (7:4:9). However, he makes an exception in the case of Campantaṉ and Tirumūlaṉ in his *Tiruttoṇṭattokai.*
[53] *History of Tamil Siddha Cult*, 47-48.
[54] *Vaiyapuripillai's history of Tamil language and literature: from the beginning to 1000 A.D.*, 103.
[55] kuṭimaṉṉu cāttaṉūrk kōkkula mēyppōṉ kurampai pukku
   muṭimaṉṉu kūṉar piṟaiyāḷaṉ taṉṉai muḻuttamiḻiṉ
   paṭimaṉṉu vētattiṉ coṟpaṭiyē paraviṭṭeṉucci
   aṭimaṉṉa vaitta pirāṉ mūlaṉākiya aṅkaṇaṉē (36)

The first work that explicitly links the *Tirumantiram* with Tirumūlaṉ is the *Tiruttoṇṭar purāṇam* (popularly known as *Periyapurāṇam*) composed by Cēkkiḻār of the twelfth century. Cēkkiḻār belonged to the *Vēḷāḷa* caste in Toṇṭai country and functioned as a minister in the court of Kulōttuṅkaṉ II (1130-1150). His hagiography is based on the works of two of his predecessors: Cuntarar and Nampi. Twenty-eight verses in the *Periyapurāṇam* provide a detailed hagiographical account of Tirumūlaṉ's life (3564-3591).[56]

(b) **The date of canonization:**

According to the *Tirumuṟaikaṇṭa purāṇam* of questionable date and authorship, Nampiyāṇṭār Nampi of the tenth century was responsible for compiling and classifying Tēvāram (1-7 Tirumuṟai) on the basis of melody (*paṇ*) and for adding four more books (8-11 Tirumuṟai) to it. The *Tirumuṟaikaṇṭa purāṇam* is attributed to Umāpati Śivācārya of the fourteenth century.[57] Karen Prentiss argues that the desire of Tamil Śaiva

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[56] Twenty-eight verses in Cēkkiḻār's *Periyapurāṇam* provide a detailed hagiographical account of Tirumūlaṉ's life. He is portrayed as an ambiguous figure, representative of both the hegemonic Brahman caste and the marginalised cowherd caste. The story begins with a description of a yogi who was one of the disciples of Nandi on the Mount *Kailāsa*. He was well-versed in the four Vedas and endowed with the eight types of *siddhi*. The *Periyapurāṇam* refrains from mentioning the yogi's name or caste. However, the caste of the yogi could be conjectured as that of the Brahman from the subtle allusion to the yogi's proficiency in the four Vedas. One day, this unnamed yogi wanted to pay a visit to his friend Agastya, supposedly a Brahman hermit and the father of Tamil grammar, who took up residence on the Potiyam mountain in the South. The yogi's journey to the south is described in the *Periyapurāṇam* as a pilgrimage in accordance with the Tamil *bhakti* tradition. Having visited several sacred places on his way, the yogi arrived at the banks of the river Kāviri and in the vicinity of Tiruvāvaṭutuṟai, his journey was interrupted as he witnessed in the nearby grove a herd of cows, grief-stricken due to the untimely demise of their master Mūlaṉ, a native of Cāttaṉūr. Mūlaṉ belonged to the family of cowherds. The yogi took compassion on the lamenting animals, and through his power/siddhi entered the dead body of Mūlaṉ and became Tirumūlar. Here Tiru is an honorific title and the proper noun Mūlaṉ has been changed to Mūlar. Mūlaṉ had been metamorphosed into a person of good standing. Seeing their master rising from the ground, the cows became jubilant. When Tirumūlar looked for the body he left, he found it missing. He realized it was God's intention that he be unable to recover his body. Thereafter, Tirumūlar practised Śivayoga at Tiruvāvaṭutuṟai and composed the *Tirumantiram* comprising 3000 verses at the rate of one verse per year. Thus, Tirumūlar is believed to have lived for three thousand years.

[57] The *Tirumuṟaikaṇṭapurāṇam* composed by Umāpati Śivācārya speaks about the canonization of the first eleven books. It narrates dramatically how *Tēvāram* was discovered, canonized and set to music. The *Periyapurāṇam* must have been added to the sacred canon later. Ñāṉacampantaṉ, however, doubts the

Siddhāntins to create a Tamil lineage for their philosophy had resulted in the canonization of Tamil devotional hymns. She is of the opinion that Umāpati Śivācārya assembled the entire Tamil *bhakti* canon as it exists today.[58] Hence, the *Tirumantiram* must have attained canonical status around the 14th century. Though the *Tirumantiram* contains theological expositions, it was made part of the *bhakti* canon *Tirumuṟai* and not of the Śaiva Siddhānta canon *Meykaṇṭa cāttiraṅkaḷ*. Also, the author Tirumūlar does not find a place in the preceptorial lineage (*cantāṉa kuravar*) established by the Tamil Śaiva Siddhāntins. These facts suggest that the medieval Tamil Śaiva Siddhāntins considered the *Tirumantiram* only as an exemplary work of *bhakti* towards Guru who is none other than Śiva himself.

(c) **Preparation of modern editions and commentaries:**

It is probable that Śaiva *Vēḷāḷa maṭhas* that were established since the 16th century, in particular, the Tiruvāvaṭuturai Ādhīṉam,[59] functioned as the custodians of the *Tirumantiram*.[60]Yet, there are no indications that these *maṭhas* were engaged in preparing exegesis on the *Tirumantiram*. Their interest primarily lay in *Meykaṇṭa cāttiraṅkaḷ* in Tamil and Śaivāgamic literature in Sanskrit.[61] It is not known as to what extent the *Tirumantiram* was held authoritative pertaining to religious matters. The study of the text seemed to have fallen into disuse long ago. No medieval exegetical literature was

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authorship of the Tirumuṟaikaṇṭapurāṇam. He believes that the anonymous works *Tirumuṟaikaṇṭapurāṇam* and *Cekkiḻār purāṇam* were ascribed to Umāpati by later editors of the *Periyapurāṇam*. Hence, he dismisses the discussion of *tirumurai* on the basis of the *Tirumuṟaikaṇṭapurāṇam*. See A.S. Ñāṉacampantaṉ, ed. *Tirumantiram,* i.

[58] *The Embodiment of Bhakti,* 1996, 231-257.

[59] Tirumūlar's camāti is found at Tiruvāvaṭuturai. It is a solitary structure located to the north-west of the Mācilāmaṇi temple. See Kathleen Koppedrayer, "The Sacred Presence of the Guru: The Velala Lineage of Tiruvavaduturai, Dharmapuram and Tiruppanantal," (PhD.diss., McMaster University, 1991).

[60] Iirāmanāta Piḷḷai blames the Tiruvāvaṭuturai Ādhīṉam for not taking interest in publishing the work which was in its custody. See his commentary on the Tirumantiram.

[61] Kathleen Koppedrayer, "The Sacred Presence of the Guru," 164.

available for the *Tirumantiram* save for the gloss written only for a hundred verses by Kaṇṇaṭiyar Kampaḷiccaṭṭai Kailāya Cittar sometime in the eighteenth century. Since the commentary was found unsatisfactory, Cērrur R. Cuppiramaṇiyak Kavirāyar[62] produced a new commentary for those hundred verses in 1913. A number of modern commentaries are available now.

The *Tirumantiram* was first published by Ṣaṇmuka Cuntara Mutaliyār in 1869 and subsequently in 1887. V. Vicuvanāta Piḷḷai [63] who allegedly embarked on the project due to the paucity of reliable versions of the text, published the *Tirumantiram* with short notes in 1912. Other authoritative editions are those published by Chennai Śaiva Siddhānta Mahāsamājam (1933),[64] Teṉṉintiya Caiva Cittānta Nūrpatippuk Kaḻakam, Tirunelvēli with commentatorial notes by Tuṭicaikiḻār A. Citamparaṉār (1942), and with a commentary of P. Irāmanāta Piḷḷai (1957), and Tiruppaṉantāḷ Kāci Maṭam with a commentary of Taṇikaimaṇi Rāvpakatūr va. cu. Ceṅkalvarāya piḷḷai (1951).

The following works were consulted for translation and interpretation of the *Tirumantiram* :

(a) The *Tirumantiram* edited by Professor A. S. Ñāṉacampantaṉ in 2002. It is based on the text published by Chennai Śaiva Siddhānta Mahāsamājam in 1933.

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[62] He was a Tamil Pandit at the Tiruvāvaṭutuṟai Ādhīṉam and an examiner of Śaiva works at Madurai Tamil Caṅkam.

[63] V. Vicuvanāta Piḷḷai was the disciple of Capāpati Nāvalar of Vaṭakōvai, Jaffna who was attached to the Tiruvāvaṭutuṟai Ādhīṉam.

[64] According to the secretary of Chennai Śaiva Siddhānta Mahāsamājam, five manuscripts were used for publishing the *Tirumantiram* in addition to five printed versions of *Tirumantiram*. These were a manuscript found in the Department of Government Archives and manuscripts sent by Āḻvār Kuṟicci M.P.S. Turaicāmi, BA, B.L., Late Tamil Professor Ti.Ta. Kaṉakacuntaram Piḷḷai and two manuscripts submitted by S. Aṉavaratam Piḷḷai. He mentions only the Vicuvanataha Pillai edition of the *Tirumantiram* in his foreword. (A.S. Ñāṉacampantaṉ, ed. *Tirumantiram,* xxvii-xxix).

(b) *Tirumantiram: A Tamil Scriptural Classic* translated into English by B.Natarajan (Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras, 1991).

(c) *The Tirumantiram* with a commentary by G. Varatarājaṉ (Three Volumes) (Palaniyappa Brothers, Chennai, 1978, 1983, 1985)

(d) The *Tirumantiram* edited by Tirunelvely Caiva Cittānta Nūṟpatippuk Kaḻakam with the commentary of P. Irāmanāta Piḷḷai and with notes by A. Citamparaṉār in 2007 [1957].

This edition differs from the preceding three works in respect of the total number of verses and of the re-ordering of stanzas in the preface. The reason for this is that the editor has attempted to solve two textual controversies surrounding the *Tirumantiram*. One is related to the number of verses it contains. Though the work references itself to have 3000 verses, a slightly larger number is available now. The other issue is related to the authenticity of the 112 verses in the preface. The idea for recovering the original text was first conceived by Ramana Sastri who claimed the *Tirumantiram* to be a translation of the Sanskrit text *Śrī Mantramālikā* and it was executed by his ideological opponent Irāmanāta Piḷḷai, a Tamil/ Śaiva Siddhānta revivalist.[65]

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[65] Dravidian ideology as well as an anti-Dravidian stance has an impact on the studies on the *Tirumantiram* in the first half of the twentieth century. In the preface to the *Tirumantiram* edited by V. Vicuvanāta Piḷḷai in 1911, R.Ramana Sastri asserts that the *Tirumantiram* is a translation of the Sanskrit work *Śrī Mantramālikā* and cites two verses from the *Tirumantiram* in evidence of his claim. He notes that according to these stanzas, theoretical works were not plentiful in Tamil at that time and this prompted Tirumūlar to translate the Sanskrit text into Tamil. Sastri, whose intent was to recover the original three thousand verses of the *Tirumantiram* out of 3047 in the edition of Vicuvanāta Piḷḷai, dismisses the verses including the ones that equate Tamil with Sanskrit in section *The Greatness of the Āgamas* and the verse that begins with the expression *muttamiḻ vētam* (the Vedas of the three-fold Tamil) in the preface (pāyiram) of the text, as interpolations. The reason for the suggestion to eliminate these verses is obvious; they do not corroborate his stance that Tamil was indebted to Sanskrit intellectualism.

We find a contrary position in the preface written by Irāmanāta Piḷḷai to his edition on the *Tirumantiram*. Irāmanāta Piḷḷai, who was also interested in finding the original three thousand verses like Sastri, deleted from his edition the same verses that speak of parity between Tamil and Sanskrit. He reduces the total number of verses to three thousand and re-arranges them according to logical sequence, and omits the same

The *Tirumantiram* - General Content

The classification of the text into nine Tantras and into further internal chapter sections is attributed to Tirumūlar's students.[66]   Each Tantra deals with a number of topics.[67] A summary of each Tantra is presented here:

Prologue: This section opens with an invocation to Śiva and is followed by descriptions of Vedas and *āgamas,* recognised by the *Tirumantiram* as general and special texts, respectfully, for *sanmārga* Śaivism. Then, the author recounts his autobiography, the preceptorial lineage to which he belongs and the establishment of seven *gurumaṭhas* including Mūlan̲ *maṭha.*

Tantra One: Since the *sanmārga* Śaiva tradition is a guru –centered tradition, the Tantra begins with section titled "Divine instruction" (113-142) which provides an elaborate description of *śivasiddhas* who have attained liberation while living in this

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three verses in his edition as interpolations among others. Irāmanāta Piḷḷai, who opposes the notions perpetuated by Brahman scholars that Tamil language was born of Sanskrit, that the Vedas exist only in Sanskrit and that Tamil Śaiva Siddhānta works are translations of Sanskrit texts, considers only Tamil as the sacred language. See J. Martin, "The Function of mythic figures in *Tirumantiram,*" 137-147; Irāmanāta Piḷḷai's commentary on the Tirumantiram.

[66] T.N. Ganapathy, and K.R. Arumugam, *The Yoga of Siddha Tirumūlar:Essays on the Tirumandiram,* 10-11.

[67]

Classification	Verses	No. of Verses	No. of themes discussed
Invocation to Ganeśa		01	
Prologue	1-112	112	09
Tantra I	113-336	224	24
Tantra II	337-548	212	25
Tantra III	549-883	335	21
Tantra IV	884-1418	535	13
Tantra V	1419-1572	154	20
Tantra VI	1573-1703	131	14
Tantra VII	1704-2121	418	38
Tantra VIII	2122-2648	527	43
Tantra IX	2649-3046	399	22
Total		3048	229

Source: The *Tirumantiram* edited by G. Varatarājan̲.

world and the role of *śivaguru* in the attainment of their spiritual goal. Verse 115 speaks of the three entities- *pati*, *paśu* and *pāśa*- and the succeeding verse identifies the preceptor as Śiva, who is a dweller in the body and a remover of bondage. The first step to siddhahood is to realize the fleeting nature of worldly life. Hence, sections dealing with the impermanence of body, wealth, youth and life are found in this Tantra. Fundamental ethical principles to be observed by aspirants of siddhahood are laid down next: non-violence, abstinence from eating meat and consuming intoxicating drinks, and not committing adultery. Highly cryptic verses reinterpret sacrificial act performed by Brahmans and the virtues such as *aṉpu, (*love), *aṟam* (dharma), *naṭuvunilaimai* (impartiality) and *kalvi* (learning).

Tantra Two: The first section of this Tantra is devoted to recounting Śaiva myths that extol the greatness of Śiva. These verses can also be subjected to esoteric interpretation. Having established the supremacy of Śiva, the text proceeds to expound the doctrine of *pañcakṛtya,* the five cosmic functions of Śiva: creation, maintenance, destruction, obscuration and granting salvation. This is followed by a description of how human embryo is formed. The remaining sections deal with the classification of souls into three groups based on the number of bonds they are bound with, identifying *śivajñāni* as eligible persons to receive gifts, denouncement of pilgrimage in favour of internal worship, the connection between the institution of temple and kingship, the vision of the downward-looking face of Śiva, condemnation of those who slight Śiva, guru and devotees, and reinterpretation of the virtue of patience, and the necessity to associate with the great who seek after god.

Tantra Three : This Tantra is solely devoted to the subject of *yoga*. Three types of yoga are elaborated in this chapter: (a) *aṣṭāṅga yoga* (eight limbs of yoga, the fruits of yoga, and the eight great *siddhis*) (b) *paryaṅga yoga* (sexual intercourse without emission), and (c) *candra yoga*, the purpose of which is to unite the *kalās* of the sun and fire with the *kalās* of the moon. Other subjects discussed include *Khecarī yoga,* the acme of the practice of yoga, *amuridhāraṇā*, a rejuvenating technique that involves imbibing semen or urine, benefits accruing to the body from the practice of *yoga,* how to conquer time (*kālacakra*), techniques relating to the reckoning of longevity and checking the movement of *prāṇa* within the body.

Tantra Four: This is the longest Tantra, mainly focussed on mantras, and *yantras* referred to as *cakras* in the text. It begins with an exposition of *ajapa* mantra (*haṃsa* mantra) which is followed by a description of a *yantr*a called *Tiru-ampala-cakra*. The term *ampalam* is a tamilicized form of the Sanskrit word *aṃbara* meaning sky (*ākāśa*) or ether. Mystical meaning of Sanskrit alphabets, *praṇava* mantra, *pañcākṣara* mantra and the six-lettered mantra *om -namaḥ-Śivāya* are elucidated. The next section privileges internal worship over external worship and relates sacrificial fire to the *kuṇḍalinī* within the body. In sections that follow, Śakti is worshipped as Tripurā, *pūrṇaśakti* and Śivaśakti. The Tantra ends with an account of various *yantras* with their *bīja* mantras: *ēr-oḷi- cakra, bhairava cakra, śāṃbhavī-maṇḍala -cakra, bhuvanpati cakra* (*puvaṉāpati cakkaram*) and *navakkari cakra* (the nine-lettered yantra). The worship of these *yantras* is undertaken to obtain *siddhis*.

Tantra Five: This Tantra, an exposé on Śaiva *sādhanā*, celebrates the path of *sanmārga*. It deals with the four types of Śaivism-*śuddha, aśuddha*, *mārga*, and *kaṭum*

śuddha, the four *pādas- caryā*, *kriyā*, *yoga* and *jñāna,* their corresponding *mārgas-sanmārga*, *sahamārga*, *satputramārga*, and *dāsamārga* - and the four types of release - *sāyujya*, *sārūpa*, *sāmīpa*, and *sāloka* - that result from adhering to them. It also discusses four types of descent of Śiva's grace: *manda*, *mandaratara*, *tīvra,* and *tīvratara*. The section ends with the condemnation of faiths that fail to realise God within the body.

Tantra Six: This Tantra mainly deals with monastic asceticism. Knowledge (*jñāna*) is attained through the grace of Guru, whose greatness is expressed in several verses. The one who is endowed with knowledge embraces renunciation and practises penance. The insignia of ascetics and *jñānis*, and the fit and unfit disciples for the receipt of knowledge, are discussed. Men of false robes are vehemently condemned.

Tantra Seven: This Tantra can be considered a continuation of the sixth Tantra, mostly focussing on the practical aspects of *sanmārga* Śaivism. After dwelling on the six *ādhāras*, six *lingas*, and Siva's grace, the Tantra discusses śivapūjā, gurupūjā, māheśvarapūjā to be held at *maṭhas* as well as *samādhi* rituals for yogis and *jñānis*. The Tantra ends with the description of true Guru, which is preceded by esoteric instructions on sublimation of semen and subduing of the senses.

Tantra Eight: This is the second longest Tantra providing theological support to the concept of liberation. The first two sections discuss the nature of human body: gross and subtle. This is followed by an exposition on various states of awareness (*avasthās).* In the *turīya* state, the soul becomes *civam* and is freed of the three impurities (*nirmala-avasthā*). By interpreting the nature of liberation through Upaniṣadic *mahāvākyas*, the differing Siddhānta and Vedānta doctrines are reconciled. The final sections of this Tantra stress the importance of *bhakti* and giving up attachment.

Tantra Nine: The mystical vision of God and the resultant bliss constitute the themes of this Tantra. The vision of God is experienced in two ways: in the form of light and in the form of sound. Several representations of visionary experience are mentioned: Guru, his monastery and *praṇava samādhi* are connected to the visualization of God in the form of light whereas the five lettered mantra and the dance of the Lord represent Śiva in the form of sound. These visionary experiences give rise to the dawn of *jñāna*, and to the state of *sat-cit- ānanda-* the realization of one's own blissful nature. This destroys fate and confers liberation. The section called *cūṉiya campāṣaṇai,* which may be considered key to the esoteric teachings of the *Tirumantiram* is found here.

Chapter Outline

The Tirumantiram is the earliest Tamil text that is concerned with both theoretical and practical aspects of living liberation, the theme that lends unity and coherence to the seemingly disparate topics addressed by the text in each of the Tantras. This dissertation is divided into four chapters, each of which deals with aspects of the central concern of the dissertation, living liberation. The notion of Tamil-Sanskrit opposition, an inalienable, integral aspect of Tamil thought, plays a key role in the conceptualization of the *Tirumantiram*.[68] This dissertation argues that the *Tirumantiram* is the outcome of the synthesis of Tamil and Sanskrit traditions. The text affirms the excellence of both languages by stating that the *āgamas* were also revealed in Tamil and that Tamil is also

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[68] "The contrast of the 'Northern speech' (*vaṭamoḻi*) as against the 'Southern speech' (*teṉmoḻi*) which can probably be basically reduced to [a contrast between Sanskrit and Tamil]…has indisputably been present in Tamil cultural consciousness since the earliest times; and, although not always antagonistic, it has always been an ever-present opposition, frequently explicitly formulated.." K. Zvelebil, *Companion studies*, (Leiden: E.J.Brill, 1992)), 255.

an excellent medium to realize God.[69]   However, the *Tirumantiram* displays a highly ambivalent attitude towards Sanskrit scriptures. Efficacy of ritualism and the hierarchical *varṇa* system are rejected and a Brahman is redefined as Siddha. Selective absorption and reinterpretation are the strategies the text adopts to deal with the Sanskrit texts.

The first chapter traces the antecedents of living liberation to the Tamil Caṅkam literature. The primary argument of this chapter is that the notion of the sacred and its relation to humanity as conceptualized by ancient Tamils, and their yearning for immortality in the form of fame contributed to the formulation of living liberation in the *Tirumantiram*. The earliest Tamil literary works known as Caṅkam corpus constitute the primary sources for this chapter. Though the Caṅkam works display the influence of Brahmanism, Jainism and Buddhism, autochthonous elements of Tamil thought are discernible in older layers of the corpus.

The second chapter explores the ambiguous relationship between the *Tirumantiram* and revealed texts. This chapter has three parts. The first part argues that the objective of the Tirumantiram was to challenge certain *āgamic* traditions[70] that do not consider the majority of indigenous Tamil-speaking populace, identified as *śūdras*, eligible for liberation, preceptorhood or standing in close proximity to God in temples. The second part analyzes the conceptual framework of the *Tirumantiram* that was borrowed from Sanskrit *āgamas.* Two significant concepts on which the *āgamas* stand

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[69] William Davis discusses three perceptions pertaining to the relationship between Tamil language and Tamil culture and Sanskrit and Sanskritic culture as reflected in the Agastya cycle of myths: (a) Affirmation of excellence of both Sanskrit and Tamil. Sanskrit functions here primarily "as a benchmark to measure the greatness of Tamil"(b) claim of superiority of Tamil (c) an outright rejection of the contribution of Sanskrit. See "Agastya:The Southern sage from the North" (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2000), 316.

[70] Each *āgama* should be treated as representing a distinct tradition. For instance, the *Kāmikāgama* warns against *tantra-saṃkara* (mixing different *āgamic* injunctions) which brings about ruin to the king and his country (1:113).

are a cycle of births and deaths (*saṃsāra*) and liberation *(mukti)*; both are conspicuously absent in the autochthonous layers of Caṅkam poetry. Living liberation is discussed within the parameters of Śaiva theology found in the *āgamas*. The final part of the chapter argues that the Vedic sacrificial theology is revised in the light of living liberation to conclude that the Vedic tradition differs little from the essence of the *Tirumantiram*.

The third chapter illustrates the synthesis of Tamil and Sanskrit cultural traditions, or more specifically the synthesis of a tantric sect with the *bhakti* tradition. This chapter is devoted to examining the underlying reasons for the Tirumantiram privileging *aṉpu* over bhakti in connection with yoga. It argues that despite the fact that the term *aṉpu* is an autonomous and a focal concept in Tamil culture, it is generally subsumed under *bhakti*. The chapter traces the origin of the themes of bhakti - pilgrimage, praise and service - to the puṟam literature, and points out that the relationship between Śiva/guru and devotee/disciple is modelled on the relationship between patron and bard in the Caṅkam literature. The second part of the chapter, which is an exposition of *aṉpu* as reflected in Caṅkam literature clarifies that *aṉpu* is an emotional disposition that exists only in a relationship and is common to both *akam* and *puṟam* genres. The final section elucidates the meaning of yoga in the Tirumantiram. It is argued that dualistic *bhakti* (Śiva/guru and devotee/disciple) does not accord with the theology of *yoga* that aims at non-dualistic union with God. Hence, "love in union" is chosen among many representations of *aṉpu*, and substituted for *bhakti* in the discourse connected to *yoga*. The chapter highlights the fact that the concept of *aṉpu* expands the parameters of *yoga*, which results in the transformation of the meaning of *civam*.

The final chapter argues that connotative language is a vehicle of esoteric knowledge, and deals with three concepts connected to esoteric knowledge: secrecy, symbolism and subversion.   Though connotative language is closely allied to *sandhābhāṣā* found in Sanskrit Tantras, this chapter also points out that the *Tirumantiram* is indebted to the classical Caṅkam literature in this respect.   Through the analysis of symbols, double entendres and extended metaphors drawn from Sanskrit myths and ordinary life scenarios in rural Tamil Nadu, the chapter argues that the essence of yoga is sublimation of semen, fundamental to living liberation.

CHAPTER ONE

LIVING LIBERATION–TAMIL LEGACY

Living liberation is the central doctrine of the *Tirumantiram* that emerged out of

the confluence of two different linguistic and literary traditions: Tamil and Sanskrit. This

chapter argues that the fundamental aspects of living liberation expounded by the

Tirumantiram could be traced to the notion of the sacred and its relation to humanity, and

the concept of immortality as conceptualised by ancient Tamils. The earliest Tamil

literary works designated as Caṅkam[1] corpus, alternatively called *cāṉṟōr ceyyuḷ* by

medieval commentators constitute the primary sources for this chapter. The Caṅkam

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[1] A detailed reference to the *caṅkam* is found in Nakkīrar`s commentary on the grammar of love before marriage known as *kaḷaviyal* eṉṟa *Iṟaiyaṉār Akapporuḷ*. According to the legend narrated by Nakkīrar of the ninth century, the three caṅkams were instituted by Pāṇṭiya kings: the premier (*mutal*) caṅkam, the middle *(iṭai)* caṅkam and the final *(kaṭai)* caṅkam. The premier caṅkam consisting of 549 members including sage Akattiyar, Śiva and Murukaṉ met for 4440 years at Maturai until the sea destroyed the city. *Akattiyam* was the reference work for the premier caṅkam. The middle caṅkam comprising 59 members including Akattiyar and Tolkāppiyar lasted for 3700 years. *Tolkāppiyam*, *Icainuṉukkam*, *Māpurāṇam* and *Pūta puraṇam* served as reference works for this caṅkam, in addition to *Akattiyam*. Kapāṭapuram where the middle caṅkam flourished was also claimed by the sea. The final caṅkam consisting of 49 members remained in session for 1850 years in the city of upper Maturai. *Tolkāppiyam* and *Akattiyam* were its reference works. Hart, however, dismisses the legend as devoid of any historical credibility citing reasons that none of the early literary works mentions the caṅkam or the large body of literature supposed to be composed there. He is of opinion that the legend was fabricated on the historical Jain caṅkam, established in Maturai in 604 A.D. Zvelebil states that the legend must have been based on some historical academy that existed at some point in time, probably in the pre-Pallavan era (before the sixth century). It could be the Tirāviṭa caṅkam founded by a Jain named by Vajranandi in the year 470 A.D. One of the Śaivite poet-saints Appar mentions Śiva as one of the Caṅkam poets: *naṉpāṭṭup pulavaṉāyc caṅkam ēṟi* (6:76:3). Vaiṣṇava saint Āṇṭāḷ also refers to her composition *Tiruppāvai* as a garland of *caṅkattamiḻ*: *paṭṭarpirāṉ kōtai coṉṉa caṅkattamiḻ mālai muppatum* (Tiruppāvai 30:4-5). A pāṇṭiya king is eulogised in the Ciṉṉamaṉūr plate of the 10 th century C.E. for setting up a caṅkam at Maturai and for getting the Makāpāratam translated into Tamil. The Caṅkam legend is now accepted by some scholars to be an allusion to the codification of Caṅkam poetry. Kailasapathy is of opinion that an academy of Tamil poets that existed under the royal patronage in Maturai, is responsible for the collection and compilation of earlier Caṅkam poetry. See David C. Buck and K. Paramasivam, trans. *The Study of Stolen Love* (Atlanta, Georgia: Scholar's Press, 1997), 4-6; George Hart, *The Poems of Ancient Tamil: Their Milieu and their Sanskrit Counterparts* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), 9-10; Kamil Zvelebil, *The Smile of Murugan: On Tamil Literature of South India,* 48; and *Tamil Literature*, (Leiden:E.J. Brill, 1975), 60 ; K. Kailasapathy, *Heroic Poetry (*Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1968), 3.

works are a "product of a mixed and composite culture," and bear unmistakable evidence of the influence of Brāḥmanical religion, Jainism and Buddhism; yet they do possess distinctive characteristics that could be reckoned as autochthonous.[2]   Zvelebil describes the earliest literature in Tamil as "a model unto itself-it is absolutely unique in the sense that, in subject-matter, thought-content, language and form, it is entirely and fully indigenous, that is, Tamil…."[3]

This Chapter is divided into three sections. The first contains a justification of the study of classical Tamil sources for the *Tirumantiram*, a text modelled on the Sanskrit *āgamic* literature, and a brief exposition of the concept of living liberation. The second part dealing with the issues of the identification of autochthonous layers and the presence of religious elements in the Caṅkam corpus, serves as a prelude to the final section. The final section considers the following elements of indigenous Tamil culture as possible antecedents to the concept of living liberation: this worldly orientation, the concept of immanence of the sacred, interpenetration of humanity and divinity, divinization of human priest, conception of the sacred as heat, and immortality conceptualised in the form of fame.

I

The magnitude of the Caṅkam Poetry for succeeding periods cannot be over-emphasised. Dubianski observes,

> The significance of the early Tamil poetry for the Tamil literature of later periods is enormous. Its canon of themes, its imagery, its style exercised a profound influence on medieval didactic poetry and contributed to develop in court poetry. Its ideas were later modified to be adopted by the

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[2] See Friedhelm Hardy, *Viraha-bhakti:The Early History of Kṛṣṇa Devotion in South India* (New Delhi:Oxford University Press, 1983), 120-121; Kamil Zvelebil, *The Smile of Murugan: On Tamil Literature of South India,* 1-22.
[3] Zvelebil, *The Smile of Murugan,* 4.

bhakta poets and strongly influenced the specific character of the devotional *bhakti* poetry. Thus, there are reasons to view ancient Tamil poetry as a cornerstone of Tamil verbal culture in general.[4]

Medieval Tamil devotionalism is described as the result of the marriage between the secular Tamil tradition and the Sanskritic religion and mythology. Scholars have made a note of how secular themes and motifs have been appropriated by poet-saints in their devotional poetry. Ramanujan acknowledges that the dual genre of Tamil poetry, *akam* (love poetry) and *puṟam* (heroic poetry) set precedence to the Vaiṣṇava *bhakti* literature of the medieval period.[5] He also notes that the munificence and heroism of warrior chiefs of the Caṅkam age were later attributed to Viṣṇu, and that their chaste wife came to be regarded as a personification of Viṣṇu's consort Lakṣmī. He points out the striking parallels between the poetic genre called *āṟṟuppaṭai*, and the Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava *bhakti* poems.

> It is significant that the first long *bhakti* poem is an *āṟṟuppaṭai*, a "guide poem." Just as the classical Tamil bard wandered, visited, and praised patrons, the saints, too, wandered to the holy places and sang of them and the gods there.[6]

The influence of the classical Tamil Tradition on the *Tirumantiram* is, however, not as evident and pronounced as that of Sanskrit traditions. The *Tirumantiram* is the first Śaiva theological work that was composed in Tamil. It is, therefore, a scripture (*śāstra*) rather than a devotional hymn meant to be recited at public worship.[7] In the

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[4] Alexander M. Dubianski, *Ritual and Mythological Sources of the Early Tamil Poetry* (the Netherlands: Egbert Forsten Groningen, 2000), xii.

[5] A.K. Ramanujan, *Hymns for the Drowning : Poems for Viṣṇu by N*ammāḻvār (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1981), 111-112.

[6] Ibid., 112.

[7] However, Śaiva Siddhānta scholar Civappirakāca Tēcikar remarks that the twelve *Tirumuṟai* which take the form of twelve mantras are recited at Śaiva temples on the occasions of daily and special worship. Of the twelve mantras, the *Tirumantiram* is an embodiment of the tenth mantra known as *the netra* mantra. The *netras* of Śiva which are three thousand in number, represent the omniscience of Śiva. Although all *Tirumuṟai* are in the form of mantra, only this particular work takes the *mantra* in its title, thus subtly indicating that what precedes and what follows in the sequential order of *Tirumuṟai* are mantras

preface (*cirappup pāyiram*), it designates itself as an *ākamam* (*āgama*)[8], *civākamam* (*Śivāgama*)[9], and *mantiramālai* (*mantramālā*/the garland of sacred syllables).[10] The nine internal divisions of the work are known as *tantra*, a synonym for *āgama*. These facts suggest that the work is emulative of Sanskrit *āgama*s in form, content and spirit. Hence, one is tempted to look for its precedence in Sanskrit *āgamic* literature, as opposed to Tamil Caṅkam literature. In other words, the possibility that the *Tirumantiram* looked for precedence in the classical Tamil literature seems rather remote and slender.

Nevertheless, the question of influence of the Caṅkam literature cannot be altogether dismissed as the *Tirumantiram* does make a serious effort to relate itself to the Tamil tradition. Tirumūlar,[11] the author of the text, declares that he was born to sing about God in Tamil,[12] which is glorified as *centtamil*[13] and *muttamil*[14] in the text. The

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themselves. See G. Varatarājaṉ, *Tirumantiram* Vol. I (Chennai: Palaniyappa Brothers, 2006 Seventh edition), viii-ix.

[8] cintaicey tākamañ ceppalur rēnē (TM 73:4)

[9] ceppuñ civākamam ennumap pērperrum (TM 74:1)

[10] marappilar neñciṉul mantira mālai (TM 86:3)

[11] The motif of transmigration plays a key role in ensuring an intimate relationship between Sanskrit and Tamil in the hagiographies of Tirumūlar found in *Tiruttoṇṭar Tiruvantāti* and *Periyapurāṇam*. In Periyapurāṇam the author of the *Tirumantiram* was originally a yogi from North proficient in the four Vedas. But his association with Northern India and Sanskrit is balanced by his act of transmigration into the body of indigenous Tamil personage called Mūlaṉ and of composing the garland of mantras in sweet Tamil. He is thus portrayed as a Vedic scholar and an expert in Tamil. The same notion was already expressed by Nampiyāṇṭār Nampi who states that Mūlaṉ, having transmigrated into the body of a cowherd of Cāttaṉūr composed Tamil poetry in praise of Śiva in consonance with the spirit of the Vedas. See "General Introduction."

[12] "God created me so that I could make exquisite works about him in Tamil." This is an approximate rendering of the following lines:

   eṉṉaiṉaṉ rāka iraivaṉ paṭaittaṉaṉ

   taṉṉaina nrākat tamilceyyu mārē (TM 81)

[13] centtamilāti (TM 1089)

The earliest occurrence of the term *centtamil* is found in *Tolkāppiyam*. *Centtamil* is the " the standard, 'correct', 'polished' language sanctioned by the norm of *ilakkaṇam* and used in *ilakkiyam* as the linguistic vehicle of high literary culture… in contrast to *koṭunttamil*. lit. 'crokked' (in contrast to 'straight') language, the unpolished, non-standard, non-literary language obviously exhibiting features of regional/local (horizontal) and social (vertical) dialects." See Kamil Zvelebil, *Companian Studies to the History of Tamil literature (*Leiden:E.J.Brill, 1992), 135.

[14] muttamil vētam (TM 76:1);   muttamil ōcaiyai (TM 2115:1)

Tirumantiram itself is styled as *mūvāyiram tamiḻ* (three thousand verses in Tamil).[15] It places Tamil on equal footing with *devavāṇi* Sanskrit. The divinity of Tamil is suggested by linking it to both Śiva and his consort. Śiva is the embodiment of the sound of the three-fold Tamil (*muttamiḻ*)[16] and the goddess is identified as the source of refined Tamil (*centtamiḻ*).[17] Besides, the text claims that God can be realised through both Tamil and Sanskrit.[18] It asserts that Tamil, too, is in possession of revealed texts. The prologue of the text contains a mythological allusion to the creation of *āgama*s by Śiva both in Sanskrit and Tamil.[19] Finally, the knowledge of the three -fold Tamil (*muttamiḻ*) is denoted by the term Veda, symbolic of sacred knowledge, and is juxtaposed with the theology of Sadāśiva: *catācivan tattuvam muttamiḻ vētam* (TM 76).[20] Similar utterances which are, of course, observable in *Tēvāram*[21] evidence the heightened Tamil

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[15] mūlaṉurai ceyta mūvāyiraṉ tamiḻ (TM 99:1, 3046:1); taṅkimikāmai vaittāṉ tamiḻccāttiram (TM 87:3)

[16] muttiyai ñāṉattai muttamiḻ ōcaiyai (TM 2115:1)
  He is emancipation, gnosis, and the sound of the three-fold Tamil.

[17] centamiḻāti teḻintu vaḻipaṭu (TM 1089:3)

[18] tamiḻccol vaṭacol eṉumiv viraṇtum
  uṇarttum avaṉai uṇaralu māmē (TM 66:3-4)

[19] āriya muntami ḻumuṭa ṉēcollik
  kārikai yārkkuk karuṇaicey tāṉē (TM 65:3-4)
  To date, however, we have no other *āgamas* in Tamil, save for the self-proclaimed Śivāgama.
'*Tirumantiram.*' The 12th century hagiographical work *Periyapurāṇam* also confirms the fact that not a single Tamil *āgama* existed prior to the *Tirumantiram*. According to the *Periyapurāṇam*, Śiva wanted Tirumūlar to systematically expound in Tamil the substance of *the āgamas*, revealed by Him.
  taṇṇilavār caṭaiyār tāmtanta ākamapporuḷai
  maṉṉiṉmicait tirumūlar vākkiṉāl tamiḻ vakuppa (3586)

[20] catācivan tattuvam muttamiḻ vētam (TM 76:1)
In this particular verse (76) the author regrets his ignorance of Sadāśiva theology and of the three-fold Tamil. However, the commentators assume that the above line refers to the three types of knowledge: theology of Sadāśiva, *muttamiḻ* and the Vedas. My reading differs from them on the following grounds: Verse 83 in the prologue portrays the author as a mind-born (parthenogenic) sage of all –conquering wisdom performing severe penance. Hence, it is unlikely that the author who describes himself as Śivamuni (TM 83) remained ignorant of the Vedas. Secondly, though the *muttamiḻ vētam* is a queer phrase, the expression *tamiḻ vētam* is found in the *Periyapurāṇam* denoting the *Tēvāram* hymns of Campantar (...tamiḻ vētam pāṭiṉār tāḷam peṟṟār 2158:4).

[21] āri yanttami ḻōṭicai yāṉavaṉ (5:18:3) ; āriyaṉ kaṇṭāy tamiḻaṉ kaṇṭāy(6:23:5) ; muttamiḻum nāṉmaṟaiyu māṉāṉ kaṇṭāy (6:23:9) ; centamiḻōṭāriyaṉaic cīriyāṉai (6:46.10) vaṭamoḻiyum teṉṟamiḻum maṟaikaḷ nāṉkum āṉavaṉ kāṇ (6:87:1).

consciousness that was the hallmark of the *Bhakti* era (6th -9th centuries C.E.).[22] I, however, contend that these statements also imply an underlying nexus between Tamil religious thought and the *Tirumantiram*, which constitutes the central theme of this chapter.

This chapter is based on the premise that the cardinal principles underlying the doctrine of living liberation are traceable to the classical Tamil tradition whereas Śaiva Siddhānta concepts expounded by the text are appropriated from Sanskrit *āgama*s. As we see shortly, esotericism in the *Tirumantiram* is a privileged form of practical knowledge whereas Śaiva Siddhānta theology constitutes exoteric knowledge. Two verses from the prologue of the text illustrates this point: In the first, Tirumūlar proclaims that the goal of his work is to enable the world to enjoy the bliss he has experienced. In the latter, he mentions the major theological concepts he has covered in the text.

> May the world attain the bliss I have experienced.
> Let me speak of the esoteric knowledge that leads to heaven/ambrosia.[23]
> If one steadfastly clings to [practises repeatedly]
> The mantra, tied to the consciousness of the body,
> It [knowledge] would gradually dawn.[24]
>
> I have explained in full what is to be known [the object of knowledge]
> Knowledge and the knower,
> Māyai[25], parai āyam [26]that arises from māmāyai[27],
> Śiva and akōcara vīyam[28] (TM 90) [29]

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[22] The Tamil *bhakti* movement is generally described as signifying "a revival , a reassertion of distinctively Tamil elements, which may have been suppressed during a period of Jain and Buddhist cultural and political hegemony.*"* See Glenn Yocum, "Buddhism through Hindu Eyes: Śaivas and Buddhists in Medieval Tamilnad," in *Traditions in Contact and Change,* ed. Peter Slater and Donald Wiebe (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1983), 157.

[23] The term *vāṉ* signifies both liberation and immortality. It also stands for the preceptor without whom living liberation cannot become a reality.

[24] yāṉpeṟṟa iṉpam peṟuka iv vaiy*akam*
vāṉpaṟṟi niṉṟa maṟaipporuḷ colliṭiṉ
ūṉpaṟṟi niṉṟa uṇarvuṟu mantiram
tāṉpaṟṟap paṟṟat talaippaṭuntāṉē (TM 85)

[25] Māyā is one of the three impurities (mala).

[26] Parai āyam (parāyaya) refers to the five evolutes from śuddhamāyā: parā, ādi, icchā, jñāna and kriyā.

[27] Māyā is of two kinds: śuddhamāyā and aśuddhamāyā. Māmāyai refers to śuddhamāyā.

[28] Agochara veeya stands for Siva's splendour.

[29] ñēyattai ñāṉattai ñāturu vattiṉai

The former verse could be taken as a direct reference to the personal experience of living liberation of the author, while the second represents his attempt to situate the theme within the theological framework of Śaiva Siddhānta. If the preceding verse is contrasted with the latter, the following would be evident. In the former, all the terms except one (*mantiram*, Skt. *mantra*) are Tamil whereas the latter contains only theological concepts found in Sanskrit *āgamas*. While the first verse mentions a hidden knowledge (*maṟaipporuḷ*), the second states that the knowledge has been made explicit (*muṟṟum viḷakkiyiṭṭēṉē*). Besides, the concepts occurring in the preceding verse cannot be said to be compatible with those specified in the latter. For instance, the body (*ūṉ*) cannot be equated to the knower (*ñāturu*). The term *ñāṉam* (Skt. *jñāna*-knowledge) in the second is rather vague; in the first it is clearly stated that knowledge is aimed at attaining heaven (immortality) and that it arises from the body (*ūṉpaṟṟi niṉṟa uṇarvu*). The preceding verse also emphasises that knowledge does not dawn all of a sudden, but emerges slowly and gradually depending on how resolute and determined a practitioner is, whereas the latter does not concern itself with practical aspects of religious instruction, and the concepts it mentions belong to the theoretical domain alone. Thus, the *Tirumantiram* deals with two types of knowledge: exoteric and esoteric, and prioritizes knowledge from the body (esoteric) over logical or rational knowledge. The rest of this chapter examines the doctrine of living liberation hinted at in the first verse and traces its fundamental elements to the Caṅkam literature.

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māyattai māmāyai taṉṉil varumparai
āyattai accivaṉ taṉṉai akōcara
vīyattai muṟṟum viḷakkiyiṭṭēṉē

Living Liberation

In *Tēvāram*[30] liberation is counted among the merits accruing from its recitation, as spelt out in its last verse.[31] It is spoken of in terms of the attainment of *Śivaloka* (the world of Śiva).[32]

> They [who recite the *patikam*] will attain civalōkam (*Śivaloka*).[33]
> They will reach *civalōkam*.[34]
> It is certain they will reside in *civalōkam*.[35]
> There is no misgiving for them to attain *civalōkam* in next life.[36]

Liberation is also described in terms of reaching the feet of God.[37] Since it is characterized by the absence of miseries,[38] cessation of birth and absolute bliss[39], Dorai Rangaswamy interprets it as the union with God.

> "It is clear that the final goal is in God being in final communion or attaining identity with him – "paraṉōṭu kūṭutal." It is also clear that this spiritual experience is spoken of in terms of a spatial simile as abode, or city or world. The idea of its being the supreme goal is expressed in terms of height or vertical ascension. [40]

No cogent reason however, exists to suppose that *Śivaloka* connotes living liberation in *Tēvāram*. The terms *immai* (this life or present birth) and *ammai* (future

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[30] The devotional hymns sung in praise of Śiva by Campantar, Appar and Cuntarar are collectively known as *Tēvāram*. A devotional hymn is usually made up of ten stanzas. Hence it is called *patikam*. Some *patikams* have eleven stanzas. The final stanza in a *patikam* is called *Tirukkaṭaikkāppu*, which mentions the rewards (*phalaśruti*) for reciting or listening to the *patikam*.

[31] Other merits from the recitation of *Tēvāram* include kingship over celestials (vāṉōrkkumōr kōvumāki ...viṇmuḻutāḷpavarē 7:2:11); cessation of confusion (taṭumāṟṟilarē 7:4:10); eradication of sins (paṟaiyum tām ceyta pāvantāṉē 7:5:10); attainment of heaven (vāṉuḷārē 7:6:10) severance of the bonds of karma (tamviṉai kaṭṭaṟumē 7:17:11) etc.

[32] *Tēvāram* also employs other terms to denote the highest state attainable from the worship of Śiva. *paralokam* (ēttuvār cērparalōkamē 7:12:11); *amaralōkam* (ārūraṉṉaṭi nāyurai vallār amara lōkattiruppavar tāmē 7:59:11); *parakati* (parakati tiṇṇam naṉṉuvar tāmē 7:54:10); *nanneri ulaku* (naṟṟamiḻivai īraintum vallār naṉṉeri ulakeytuvar tāmē 7:61: 11); *tavalōkam* (vāṉōr ulakiṟ cāla nal iṉpameytit tavalōkattiruppavarē 7:97:10); *mutti* (pattarāy mutti tām peṟuvārē 7:56:11).

[33] civalōkam eytupavarē ((7:9:11).

[34] civalōkam cērvārē (7:21:10).

[35] civalōkattiruppatu tiṇṇamaṉṟē (7:42:10).

[36] ammaiyē civalōkmāḷvataṟku yātumaiyuṟavillaiyē (7:34:1).

[37] pāṭal pattuṉṉi iṉṉicai pāṭuvār umaikēḷvaṉ cēvaṭi cērvārē (7:36:11).

[38] toṇṭaṉ ūraṉ collivai colluvārkkillai tuṉpamē (7:48:10).

[39] pōkkillai varavillai yāki iṉpa veḷḷattuḷ irupparkaḷ iṉitē (7:68:10).

[40] *The Religion and Philosophy of Tēvāram* (University of Madras, 1990, 2nd edition), 1256.

birth or heaven) occurring in *Tēvāram* that are antithetical in meaning, suggest that liberation is attainable only after the soul disengages itself from the body.

> One who confers heaven when (we) worship (Him) in this life.
> immai ētta ammai namakkaruḷum (7:7:6)

> (He) gives food and clothing. Let us praise. Distress will vanish.
> There is no misgiving about possessing the world of Śiva in the next birth.
> immaiyētarum cōṟumkūṟaiyum ēttalāmiṭar keṭalumām
> ammaiyēciva lōkamāḷvataṟ kiyātumaiyuṟa villaiyē (7:34:1)

In contrast, the *Tirumantiram* speaks of Siddhas,[41] who are also known as Śivayogi[42] and Śivasiddha,[43] perceive this very world as *Śivaloka*.

> Siddhas envision the *Śivaloka* here [on earth].
> cittar civalōkam iṅkē tericittōr (TM 125:1)

They do not seek liberation from the world; instead, they attain emancipation while living in the world.

> They attained the great salvation of non-separation from the world.
> peṟṟār ulakiṟ piriyāp peruneṟi [44] (TM 132:1)

Hence human birth is described as joyful.[45]   The Siddhas do not disparage the human body because it is the instrument through which they accomplish their goal, becoming immune to the debilitating, inevitable natural factors such as old age, disease, and death.

> They [Siddhas] are eternal, pure (rid of the triple impurities), diseaseless and liberated.
> nittar nimalar nirāmayar nīḷpara muttar (TM 125:3)

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[41] The term Siddha is derived from the Sanskrit root *sidh* to accomplish. Hence Siddha in Sanskrit or cittaṉ in Tamil means one who is accomplished, enlightened or perfected. Nevertheless, Tamil scholars interpret the term cittaṉ differently. They consider it as a derivative of the Sanskrit term *cit* meaning intellect or consciousness or *citta*, the heart or the mind. One of the medieval commentators translates the term as *aṟivar* (wise or knowledgeable). The mythical personage Agastya who is connected to both Tamil grammatical tradition and to Tamil Siddha tradition is considered an *aṟivar*. See R. Venkataraman, *A history of theTamil Siddha Cult*, 1-5.

[42] civayōki yārkaḷē (TM 121:4)

[43] civacittar (TM 124:4). Both civayōki and civacittar are used interchangeably in the text.

[44] One of the meanings of the term *neṟi* is salvation. See the University of Madras Tamil Lexicon.

[45] iṉpappiṟavi (TM 281;432) iṉpappiṟappu (TM 287; 1586; 1629)

The *Tirumantiram* is the first Tamil work that places a high premium on the human body. The supreme reality which the Siddhas yearn to identify with, does not lie outside the body, but within it. Hence the body should not be loathed, but treasured.

> If the body perishes, the soul will perish too.
> True knowledge cannot then be attained.
> I ascertained the technique of cherishing the body.
> I preserved the body, so the soul was preserved too. [46]
>
> Once I regarded the body with disfavour
> But I perceived the One within
> He has taken up residence in my body
> Hence, I keep preserving it with diligence.[47]

The discourse on liberation is characterized by paradoxes and contradictions in the text because Siddhahood is based on the principle of reversal of nature. Siddhahood symbolises an immutable body in the world governed by the law of change. The body becomes imperishable when the Siddhas effectively stop the outward flow of energy in the form of breath or semen and reverse their course upward in the body. This also enables them to enter the fourth and the highest state of consciousness called *turīya*[48] while they are in the first state of waking consciousness. The *turīya samādhi* leads to *Śivayoga* which is characterized by the transcendence of polarities and opposites[49] or by the union of Śiva and Śakti. The distinctions between *cit* and *acit* fade away, and the Siddhas see only *civam* –symbolic of the union of Śiva and Śakti- in the *turīya samādhi*,

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[46] uṭampār aḻiyil uyirār aḻivar
   tiṭampaṭa meyññāṉañ cēravu māṭṭār
   uṭampai vaḷarkkum upāyam aṟintē
   uṭampai vaḷarttēṉ uyir vaḷarttēṉē (TM 724)
[47] uṭampiṉai muṉṉam iḻukkeṉ ṟiruntēṉ
   uṭampiṉuk kuḷḷē uṟuporuḷ kaṇṭēṉ
   uṭampuḷē uttamaṉ kōyilkoṇ ṭāṉeṉṟu
   uṭampiṉai yāṉirun tōmpukiṉ ṟēṉē (TM 725)
[48] viyākkirattē mikac cuttat turiyam piṟantu" (TM 121:1-2).
[49] civayōkamāvatu cittacitteṉṟu (TM 122:1).

and in turn, become *civam* themselves, and envision *civam* everywhere.[50] The state of

jīvanmukti (identification with Śiva while living in this world) is characterized by both

the blissful vision of the pervasiveness of Śiva, and the acquisition of power (*siddhi*).[51]

> Everywhere is His sacred form, everywhere is Śiva-Śakti
> Everywhere is Cidambaram, everywhere is His sacred dance
> Everywhere is *civam*; hence, everywhere is present
> The sport of the grace [*aruḷ*] of Śiva.[52]

The Siddhas, despite their continued, ambiguous association with *śuddha* and

aśuddha māyās, are liberated, and partake of the nature of Sadāśiva. The thirty six *tattvas*

constitute a ladder which the Siddhas ascend in pursuit of their goal and at the end of the

upward ascension they see the light which is pure joy itself.[53]

> Siddhas are those who have seen *civam*.
> Though coming into contact with *śuddha –aśuddha* (*māyās*)
> They are not subjected to their influence.
> They are liberated; they are also the source of liberation
> They are an embodiment of energy residing in the *mūlādhāra*
> They partake of the nature of Sadāśiva. [54]

The transcendental state of consciousness is also referred to pure space (*cutta*

veḷi), characterised by inactivity. Siddhas, seated in pure space, experience neither day

nor night.[55] They merely look on the *pañcakṛtya* performed by Śiva, and thus become a

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[50] ceppariya civam kaṇṭu tāṉ teḷintu
 apparicāka amarntirunttārē (TM 126:3-4)
 iruntār civamāki eṅkum tāmāki (TM 127:1)
 eṅkum civamāy iruttalāl (TM 2722)
[51] TM 2722, TM 1584.
[52] eṅkum tirumēṉi eṅkum civacakti
  eṅkum citamparam eṅkum tirunaṭṭam
  eṅkum civamāy iruttalāl eṅku eṅkum
  taṅkum civaṉ aruḷ taṉ viḷaiyāṭṭu atē (TM 2722)
[53] muppattu āṟum paṭi mutti ēṉiyāy
oppillā āṉanttattu uḷḷoḷi pukku (TM 126:1-2)
[54] cittar civattaik kaṇṭavar cīrutaṉ
cuttācut tattuṭaṉ tōyntumtō yātavar
muttaram muttikku mūlattar mūlattuc
cattar catācivat taṉmaiyar tāmē. (TM 2526)
[55] irāppakal aṟṟa iṭam (TM 80:2).

witness to the happenings of the past, present and future.[56] Their inactivity is denoted by

the term *cōmpu*; hence, the Siddhas are called *cōmpa*r.[57] Abstinence from action (*ceyal*

aṟṟiruttal) leads to the bliss of Śiva.[58] There is a synchronous rhythm between the breath

and the functioning senses.[59] As the breath slows down, the senses loose contact with

their objects. Hence, Siddhas appear dead to the world while they are alive.[60] The

expression *tūṅkik kaṇṭār* (seeing while asleep) in verse 129 refers to yoga-*nidrā*.[61] In that

state, the Siddhas envision *Śivayoga*, *Śivabhoga* and and *Śivaloka* within themselves.

> While asleep, they (Siddhas) saw Śivaloka within themselves
> While asleep, they saw Śiva*yoga* within themselves
> While asleep they saw Śivabhoga within themselves
> How to describe the state of those who saw while asleep[62]

Several yogic techniques are discussed in the work. In the final limb of

Aṣṭāṅgayoga known as *samādhi,* the practitioner raises the *kuṇḍalinī śakti* dormant in his

mūlādhāra, and unites her with Śiva in the mystic sphere known as the *sahasrāra*.

Immortality is attained as he partakes of the ambrosia that flows from the *sahasrāra* by

means of *khecarī mudrā*. The second method called *paryaṅgayoga* refers to a passionate

sexual intercourse lasting for two and a half hours, in which seminal emission is retained

through breath control (825-844). The third method is called *candra yoga* in which the

kalās of the fire and the *kalās* of the sun merge with the *kalās* of the moon (851-883). By

means of yogic and meditational practices, and the initiation granted by Guru a

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[56] TM 127:2-3
[57] TM 127:4
[58] ceyal aṟṟirukkac civa āṉantam ākum (TM 219:1)
[59] ottup pulaṉuyir oṉṟāy (TM 121:3)
[60] uṭampoṭu cettittiruppar civayōkiyārkaḷē (TM 121:4).
[61] See Varatarājaṉ's commentary.
[62] tūṅkik kaṇṭār civalōkamum tammuḷḷē
  tūṅkik kaṇṭār civayōkamum tammuḷḷē
  tūṅkik kaṇṭār civapōkamum tammuḷḷē
  tūṅkik kaṇṭār nilai colvatevvāṟē (TM 129)

practitioner (*sādhaka*) becomes a Siddha, one who has attained freedom from bondage and realised union with Śiva, while alive.

> Jīva and Śiva are not separate
> Jīva does not know Śiva
> When Jīva knows Śiva
> He becomes Śiva himself (2017)

The *Tirumantiram* speaks of *jñāna*, but is rooted in the yogic realization of oneness with Śiva. This is also known as self-knowledge and *Śiva-jñāna*,[63] which is the key to eternal bliss. Tirumūlar who came to possess this knowledge through the grace of his Guru and the practice of yoga sings "I knew myself and bliss am I" (*eṉṉai aṟiyaluṟṟu iṉpuṟṟavāṟē* TM 2288:4). The emancipated Siddha is an embodiment of love because *civam* is understood as love (*aṉpu*).[64] Thus, the Tirumantiram manifests a religious tradition that is this worldly- oriented and body–centred.

From the above brief exposé of living liberation, the following become evident:

(a)   According to the ideology of the *Tirumantiram*, this world is the sole locus of experience.   The human and the divine occupy the same space.

(b)   Liberation does not involve abandoning the body, because the body is a medium through which the divine is experienced.

(c)   Since the divine is immanent in the body, it is vain to seek IT outside the body. This implies that external worship of images and other ritualistic practices are of little value as far as embodied liberation is concerned.

(d)   The highest state of realization proceeds from the mingling of two converse principles: the male principle of Śiva and the female principle of *kuṇḍalinī*

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[63] *cittar civañāṉam ceṉṟu eytuvōrkaḷē* (TM 1446:4)
[64] aṉpum civamum iraṇṭeṉpar aṟivilār
  aṉpē civamāvatu ārum aṟikilār
aṉpē civamāva tārum aṟintapiṉ
aṉpē civamāy amarntirun tārē (TM 270)

śakti. The union of the opposite principles based on love (*aṉpu*) result in an ecstatic state (*iṉpam*).

<center>II</center>

<center>**The Caṅkam Corpus**</center>

In the preceding section I argued that despite the fact that the *Tirumantiram* identifies itself with Sanskrit *āgamas*, its explicit references to Tamil can be construed as alluding to its indebtedness to indigenous Tamil worldview, as represented in the Caṅkam corpus. The significant difference between the Tamil sources and Sanskrit sources is that the former is generally considered secular literature whereas the latter is through and through religious in character. Besides, the classical Tamil texts are not independent of the influence of Sanskrit traditions. Hence, this section aims at clarifying two issues prior to discussing Tamil legacy to living liberation: the possibility of tracing autochthonous layers of the Caṅkam literary corpus and the presence of religious elements in the overtly secular literature.

The sources for this chapter belong to two literary collections known as *Eṭṭuttokai* (eight anthologies)[65] and Pattuppāṭṭu (ten different lays).[66] The internal chronology of these texts is far from settled. Various chronological levels are traceable in the Caṅkam poetry. For instance, Hardy detects four chronological strata in *Eṭṭuttokai* and *Pattuppāṭṭu.* According to the dates he proposed for various works, the classical Caṅkam poetry was composed between the period from the first century to the sixth century C.E. However, he assigns a much later date to *Paripāṭal* and *Kalittokai* (5th to 7th centuries),

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[65] The eight anthologies included *Naṟṟiṇai, Kuṟuntokai, Aiṅkuṟunūṟu, Patiṟṟuppattu, Paripāṭal, Kalittokai, Akanāṉūṟu, and Puṟanāṉūṟu.*

[66] The ten lays are *Murukāṟṟuppaṭai, Porunarāṟṟuppaṭai, Ciṟupāṇāṟṟuppaṭai, Perumpāṇāṟṟuppaṭai, Mullaippāṭṭu, Maturaikkāñci, Neṭunalvāṭai, Kuṟiñcippāṭṭu, Paṭṭiṉappālai and Malaipaṭukaṭām.*

and *Tirumurukāṟṟuppaṭai* (7th to 9th century).[67] He assumes that these later works belong

to a "renaissance" period of the Caṅkam poetry, associated with Maturai.[68]   Tieken who

establishes that the Caṅkam poetry is a 'relatively late offshoot of the Sanskrit Kāvya

tradition," dates the Caṅkam corpus in the 9th or 10th century.[69] Hart, however, repudiates

his arguments stating that none of his contentions with regard to the dating of the

classical texts can be corroborated.[70] The dating of Caṅkam texts is beyond the scope of

the dissertation. This dissertation rather follows the periodization of the Caṅkam corpus

suggested by Zvelebil who defines the classical period to range from 150 B.C. E. to 400

C.E.[71] Zvelebil's dating of the Caṅkam texts appears reasonable in terms of subject-

matter, language and spirit of the poetry. Three later works (*Paripāṭal*, *Kalittokai* and

Tirumurukāṟṟuppaṭai may be placed at the end of the classical Caṅkam period, as they

differ in content and form from the earlier Caṅkam works and also manifest signs of

Brāhmaṇical religious tradition.   Dating these texts beyond the fifth century is less

convincing in light of the fact that the native tradition always regards them as belonging

to the Caṅkam corpus. Zvelebil observes,

> It may ultimately appear that the indigenous tradition regarding the Par. [Paripāṭal] and the TMP
> [Tirumurukāṟṟuppaṭai] as genuinely belonging to the corpus of ancient bardic poetry will prove
> correct, and the positivistic, history-oriented, empirico-critical attitude will prove inappropriate.[72]

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It is inevitable that one has to draw on works on Tamil poetics as the Caṅkam

corpus cannot be understood on its own terms. It displays highly conventionalised poetic

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[67] Hardy, *Viraha-bhakti:The early history of Kṛṣṇa devotion in South India,* 125.
[68] Ibid. 124-25.
[69] Herman Tieken, *Kāvya in South India: Old Tamil Caṅkam Poetry* (Groningen : Egbert Forsten, 2001)**,**
235.
[70] George Hart, "Review on Kāvya in South India: Old Tamil Caṅkam Poetry by Herman Tieken", *Journal
of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 124, No. 1, (Jan. - Mar., 2004), 180 -184.
[71] Kamil Zvelebil, *Tamil Literature* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1975), 107.
[72] Ibid.

features that entail a de-personalized, formal literary style. Though the relationship between Caṅkam poetry and the works on Tamil poetics remains a complex issue, the classical poetry is mostly appreciated through the texts on Tamil poetics and commentaries written on them during the medieval period. Caṅkam poets were restricted in their choice of themes and imagery due to rigid poetic conventions; yet, inconsistencies between their literary compositions and the treatises on poetics heavily influenced by Sanskritic sources are discernible.[73] There are three fundamental works on Tamil poetics: *Iṟaiyaṉār Akapporuḷ* or *Kaḷaviyal, Puṟapporuḷ Veṇpāmālai* and the third part of *Tolkāppiyam* known as *Poruḷatikāram*. Though *Iṟaiyaṉār Akapporuḷ* is the first treatise on the grammar of Tamil love according to Nakkīrar`s commentary of the eighth century, *Tolkāppiyam* is celebrated as "the first literary expression of the indigenous, pre-Aryan Indian civilization" and "the essence and summary of classical Tamil literature."[74]

The question as to what extent highly conventionalized Caṅkam poetry would reflect socio-religious conditions seems fair and valid. It is assumed that the relation between literature and society is not totally imagined even in highly idealized literary forms. The Caṅkam corpus does not have anything that would disprove the data drawn from archaeological findings or ancient European writings.[75] Besides, the corpus appears to give a fair amount of material to reconstruct the past, despite the fact that certain concepts (war and love) are valorised in the poetry.

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[73] Dubianski, *Ritual and Mythological Sources of the Early Tamil Poetry,* xii.
[74] Zvelebil, *The Smile of Murugan,* 131.
[75] Dubianski, *Ritual and Mythological Sources of the Early Tamil Poetry,* 1.

Tracing autochthonous layers of Caṅkam corpus

The worldview of ancient Tamils represented by the classical literature was complex and multi-layered.[76] The Caṅkam works attest to the fact that the ritualistic Vedic tradition gained momentum in the Tamil region at a time Buddhism and Jainism had already taken roots in the soil.[77] In a poem addressed to Pāṇṭiyaṉ Neṭuñceḻiyaṉ, the poet Māṅkuṭi Marutaṉār makes reference to two types of sacrifice the king performs. The first is war sacrifice in which crowned head serves as a hearth; blood is poured into pots and the flesh of the warriors is stirred with ladles made of severed arms adorned with bracelets. Thereafter, the king performs a Vedic sacrifice surrounded by Brahmans well-versed in the four Vedas while his vassals wait on him.[78] Another poet Karuṅkuḻal Ātaṉār says that Coḻaṉ Karikārperuvaḻattāṉ successfully executed Vedic sacrifices involving sacrificial posts.[79] Two verses, classified as *pārppaṉa vākai*[80] in *Puṟanāṉūṟu* (166, 305) reflect the role played by Brahmans in the ancient Tamil society. Verse 166 is addressed to *pārppāṉ* called Viṇṇanttāyaṉ of Kauṇiya *gotra*, a resident of Pūñcāṟṟūr in the Cōḻa country, who is eulogised as a performer of countless sacrifices. His ancestors are credited with perfect execution of twenty-one sacrifices and with countering the influence

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[76] Ibid., 3.

[77] Thennilapuram Mahadevan discusses two waves of migration of Brahmans into the ancient Tamil country, belonging to separate *śrauta* traditions. The beginnings of the Christian era saw the first wave of Brahman migrants from North India, whose distinctive mark of appearance was the hair tuft worn in the front of the head (*pūrvaśikhā*). Subsequent migration of Brahmans with the hair tied at the back (*aparaśikhā*) took place around the 5th century and continued for several centuries. See "The Southern Recension of the Mahabharata: Brahman Migrations and Brāhmī Palaeography" *Electronic Journal of Vedic Studies,* Vol. 15:2 (July, 2008).

[78] muṭittalai aṭuppākap puṉal kuruti ulaik koḷī ik toṭittōḷ tuṭuppiṉ tuḻanta valciyiṉ aṭukaḷam vēṭṭa aṭupōrcceḻiya āṉṟa kēḷvi aṭaṅkiya koḷkai nāṉmaṟai mutalvar cuṟṟamāka maṉṉar ēval ceyya maṉṉiya vēḷvi muṟṟiya vāy vāḷ vēntē. (PN 9-15)

[79] yūpa neṭuntūṇ vēta vēḻvit toḻil muṭittatū um (PN 224: 8-9)

[80] *Pārppaṉavākai* refers to the theme describing the greatness of a learned Brahmin, attained through the performance of sacrifices (See University of Madras Tamil Lexicon).

of Buddhism and Jainism.[81] Verse 305 succinctly refers to the success of a Brahman youth in dissuading the king from undertaking a war against his enemy, through verbal means. All these show that the Brahmans exerted considerable influence on Tamil society during the classical period.

The influence of Jainism and Buddhism is also discernible in the Caṅkam literature despite the absence of explicit references to them. The Tamil Brahmi inscriptions evidence the penetration of these religions into the Tamil country by the second century B.C.E, probably before the Brāhmaṇical ideology took hold in *Tamiḻakam*. Zvelebil, therefore, considers the poems, demonstrative of the influence of Buddhism and Jainism as chronologically earlier than the ones influenced by Brāhmaṇical notions.[82] Verses classified under *kāñcittiṇai*, especially those under *peruṅkāñci* that discuss the ephemeral nature of worldly existence, seem to have been inspired by these religions. In short, the ancient Tamil society, mirrored in the literature was a complex society subjected to the influence of pan-indic religious ideologies, Brahmanism, Jainism and Buddhism.

Doubts are, therefore, expressed as to the possibility of tracing indigenous concepts in the Caṅkam literature as it already exhibits signs of heterogeneous culture. Nilakanta Sastri states, "the most striking feature in the pictures is its composite character; it is the unmistakable result of the blend of two originally distinct cultures, best described as Tamilian and the Aryan; but it is by no means easy to distinguish the

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[81] naṉru āynta nīḻ nimircaṭai mutumutalvaṉ vāy pōkātu oṉru purinta īr iraṇṭiṉ āṟu uṇarnta oru mutu nūl ikal kaṇṭōr mikal cāymār mey aṉṉa poy uṇarntu poy ōrātu mey koḷī i mū ēḻ tuṟaiyum muṭṭiṉṟu pōkiya uraicāl ciṟappiṉ uravōr maruka (PN 1-9)

[82] Zvelebil, *The Smile of Murugan,* 118.

original elements in their purity."[83] Burton Stein also declares that Tamil never represented a culture that was free of Sanskritic influence.

> "..the Sanskrit language and ideas derived from its texts were balanced by non-Sanskritic cultural elements in South India…To state the matter in this way is to suggest two independent traditions – Sanskrit and Dravidian-which is a false conception, for even in classical Tamil culture the two are so inextricably interwoven as to defy disaggrgation into autochthonous, interacting phenomena."[84]

I, however, agree with Hart's position that despite the fact that Northern elements found their way into the ancient classical Tamil literature, they could be still identified as alien elements and that the literature shows that the fusion of cultures is not yet complete.[85] Dubianski also concedes that the nucleus of the Tamil worldview as identified in the Caṅkam literature remains unaffected and untouched.[86] According to Zvelebil who traces the development of thought-content in the classical poetry, the poems that contain "straightforward descriptions of fighting, mating nature etc." are probably the oldest ones.[87] He is emphatic that diagnostic features of Tamil culture predate the advent of Sanskrit into the Tamil country:

> "… there are some sharply contrasting features which are typical for Tamil classical culture alone, for the Tamil cultural and literary traditions as opposed to the non-Tamil tradition-in this respect, the Tamil cultural tradition is independent, not derived, not imitative; it is pre-Sanskritic, and from this point of view Tamil alone stands apart when compared with all other major languages and literatures of India.[88]

It may be noted that politically, the ancient Tamil society retained a strong sense of Tamil identity in terms of language and the land in which it lived. The land where the

[83] *A History of South India from Prehistoric Times to the Fall of Vijayanagar,* 3rd.edition (London, 1966), 129.
[84] Burton Stein, *Peasant State and Society in Medieval South India* (Delhi:Oxford University Press, 1980), 51.
[85] Hart, *The Poems of Ancient Tamil:Their Milieu and their Sanskrit Counterparts,*12.
[86] Dubianski, *Ritual and Mythological Sources of the Early Tamil Poetry,* 4.
[87] *The Smile of Murugan:On Tamil Literature of South India*, 118.
[88] Ibid.,11.

Caṅkam corpus was composed was known as *Tamiḻakam* [89] or *taṇ tamiḻ varaippu akam*[90] bounded by Cape Comorin in the south, the Vēṅkaṭa hills in the north and the sea to its east and west.[91] Rulers of the three South Indian kingdoms -Cēra, Cōḻa, and Pāṇṭiya- are identified as speakers of Tamil language.[92] The capital of Pāṇṭiya kingdom Kūṭal (Maturai) and the river Vaiyai (Vaikai) are especially associated with Tamil.[93] Thus, a spirit of unity based on language, and the clearly demarcated region where Tamil reigned supreme possibly contributed to the cherishment of indigenous thought in the Tamil works, despite the continuing influx of alien cultural elements.

Presence of religious elements in Caṅkam poetry:

The other issue connected to the study is how religious notions could be traced to the Caṅkam corpus, which is regarded as the perfect "example of *Indian secular literature* dating from some ancient period."[94] In comparison to later Tamil literature, the Caṅkam literary works are described as devoid of religious sentiment. Zvelebil observes,

> Let me mention another and very typical and characteristic feature of the pre-Aryan Tamil literature –its predominantly secular inspiration, the absence of any "religious" sentiment. The earliest extant poetry is emphatically not ritualistic at all…..The original secularism and the absence of almost any religious inspiration is the one feature that later disappears from Tamil literature, and Tamil becomes what has been called "the language of devotion" and of religious philosophy.[95]

Both Western and indigenous scholars treat the Caṅkam literature as secular in character as it revolves around the thematic bifurcations of love and war. On one hand,

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[89] vaiyaka varaippil tamiḻ*akam* kēṭpa (PN 168:18)
[90] PN 198 : 12
[91] teṇkumari vaṭaperuṅkal kuṇa kuṭa kaṭalā vellai (PN 17:1-2) vaṭavayiṇ vēṅkaṭam (AN 6-7)
[92] tamiḻkeḻu mūvar (AN 31:14) taṇ tamiḻk kiḻavar (PN. 35:3)
[93] tamiḻkeḻu kūṭal (PN 58:13) tamiḻ vaiyai (Pari. 6:60)
[94] Zvelebil, *Tamil Literature*, 81-82. (Emphasis is his.)
[95] Zvelebil, *The Smile of Murugan,* 20-21.

Western scholars highlight the continuity of classical Tamil thought into the medieval *bhakti* poetry stating that the early medieval *bhakti* poetry drew inspiration from the secular Caṅkam literature. For instance, Karen Prentiss observes,

> The Caṅkam poems are fairly clear-cut examples of sources that the hymnists were likely to have quoted in their *bhakti* hymns. Their use by the *bhakti* poets is uncontroversial, not only because the connections between their structures and contents are a good match but also because the Caṅkam poems are not religious texts, and thus it is relatively straightforward to suggest that the *mūvar* contributed a religious perspective to known poetic conventions. The early Caṅkam poetry, like the early Tamil grammar, the *Tolkappiyam,* does mention gods, but it does not focus on them; the gods are part of a constellation of characteristics that signify particular landscapes.[96]

On the other, the majority of indigenous Tamil scholarship sees a rupture between classical Tamil anthologies and medieval bhakti literature dominated by Sanskritic religious notions and ideals. Ii is worthy of mention that a section of the indigenous Tamil scholars of the twentieth century attempted to demonstrate the superiority of Dravidian culture by interpreting secular conventions of the Caṅkam works in terms of anti-ritualism and rationalism as opposed to Aryan, Sanskritic sacerdotal religiosity. [97]

Only two works in the Caṅkam corpus, *Tirumurukāṟṟuppaṭai* and *Paripāṭal*, are recognized as religious poetry. *Tirumurukāṟṟuppaṭai* is a devotional poem composed by Nakkīrar. It is a guide-poem (*āṟṟuppaṭai*), directing the devotee to various shrines associated with Murukaṉ. It is one of the devotional works signifying the end of the

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[96] Karen Prentiss, *The Embodiment of Bhakti* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999),.54.

[97] It should also be mentioned that socio-political factors in the twentieth century did play a role in strengthening the notion that the Caṅkam literature is secular in character. Bishop R. Caldwell's *A comparative Grammar of the Dravidian or South Indian Family of Languages* marks a watershed in the history of South Indian Studies. His thesis that Dravidian languages constitute a distinct language group had momentous implications for Tamils politically, socially and culturally. The discovery of the caṅkam texts and their publication in the latter part of the nineteenth century as well as the emergence of the Tamil Resurgence Movement in the twentieth century gave impetus to Tamil nationalism. Subbiah notes that " a neat, but historically questionable set of equations gained currency among South Indian Academics: Brahman=Aryan=Sanskrit=North and Non-Brahman=Dravidian=Tamil=South." One of the consequences of the socio-political movements was that religion was narrowly interpreted as one, represented in Sanskrit sources. Since Brāhmaṇical influence is minimal in the Caṅkam corpus, it came to be opposed to Sanskrit texts as secular literature and was celebrated to be a representation of Tamil rationalist mind. See Subbiah, *Roots of Tamil Religious Thought* (Pondicherry: Institute of Linguistics and Culture, 1991), 13.

classical period and the beginning of the *bhakti* era. The other work *Paripāṭal* is considered "probably the earliest testimony of the *Bhakti* movement in south India."[98] Only 24 out of its seventy poems have survived and they are addressed to Tirumāl (6), Cevvēḷ (8) and Vaikai (8). They abound in mythological allusions and references to temples and shrines. The principal reason for *Tirumurukāṟṟuppaṭai* and *Paripāṭal* being recognised as religious poetry is that they represent the devotion to personal deity which is the dominant characteristic of medieval Tamil *bhakti* movement.

Though the Caṅkam literature is not outwardly as religious as medieval *bhakti* poetry, there is ample evidence to suggest that religious beliefs played a major role in the worldview of ancient Tamils. Foundational religious elements that are central to our understanding of Caṅkam poetry are discussed by Hart,[99] Dubianski[100] and Subbiah.[101] I summarize them as follows: The ancient Tamil religion was concerned with the supernatural, often considered malevolent, which I refer to as "the sacred." The sacred

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[98] Zvelebil, *Tamil Literature,* 101.

[99] According to George Hart, central to our understanding of the Caṅkam poetry is the concept of *aṇaṅku,* the sacred force. See *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 32, No. 2, (Feb., 1973). 233. V. S. Rajam who analysed the usage of the term *aṇaṅku* more extensively makes the following conclusions: "Aṇaṅku was not necessarily an inherent quality of entities, but could be acquired….. *Aṇaṅku* did not necessarily make an entity dangerous or sacred…chastity (karpu**)** was not mandatory for a woman to have aṇaṅku,," She reinterprets the term *aṇaṅku* as an "an anxiety producing source/agent." See "Aṇaṅku:A notion semantically reduced to signify female power," *Journal of the American Oriental Society,* Vol.106, No.2 (1986), 257-272.

[100] Alexander Dubianski attempts to link the genesis of ancient Tamil poetry to myth and ritual in his book *Ritual and Mythological Sources of the Early Tamil Poetry* (2000). He contends that despite the fact the Caṅkam literature is governed by a well –established system of conventions, "it is permeated with a deeply archaic and a very distinct ritual meaning that has not been eroded in the process of its use by professional or semi-professional performers." Dubianski, *Ritual and Mythological Sources of the Early Tamil Poetry,* xvi.

[101] Subbiah attempts to establish in his work *Roots of Ancient Tamil Religious Thought* that there was continuity between Classical Caṅkam literature and medieval bhakti works. He argues that the Caṅkam corpus is classified as secular literature since it demonstrates a positive attitude towards the world. However, this classification is based on the misconceived notion that the essence or norm of Indian religions lies in renunciation. He specifically criticises Louis Dumont, who contrasts in his classic essay "World Renunciation in Indian Religions (1957)" the two modes of life: man-in-the–world vs. renunciant. Subbiah attempts to establish that three inter-related themes - space and place, hero, and gift - constitute the foundation of religious life of ancient Tamils.

which was regarded dangerous had to be kept in control; otherwise, it would spell disaster to the holder and others. The sacred, well-guarded or propitiated, would render immense good. Though it was immanent in the universe, it was not equally concentrated in all places. Humans too possessed this sacred force. As the nature of the place had certain effects on its residents, the sacredness of the place enhanced when it became related to a hero or a king. The sacred immanent in the king was propitiated through panegyric performance that involved recitation of verses, music and dance. The dance was also an effective medium not only to placate but also to identify with the sacred force immanent in the cosmos.

III

Antecedents to the Concept of Living Liberation

Apart from identifying the textual sources for the study of Tamil religion during the pre-*bhakti* era, the preceding section conceded the possibility of detecting the autochothonous layers of the Caṅkam corpus, despite the penetration of alien religious and cultural elements into the Tamil country as early as the beginnings of the Common Era, and provided some indications of the religious nature of the classical poetry. This section is devoted to the discussion of the following indigenous religious aspects that could be considered as antecedents to the concept of living liberation in the *Tirumantiram*: (a) This worldly orientation (b) immanence of the sacred (c) interpenetration of divinity and humanity (d) identification with the divine through ritual dance (e) the sacred in the form of heat (f) immortality in the form of fame. The sacred

denotes in this context malevolent, supernatural powers immanent in nature as well as in humans, which ancient Tamils sought to placate or keep under check.[102]

The concept of transcendental, distant deity is almost absent in the indigenous layers of the corpus. Two allied notions, namely, the immanence of the sacred and its close physical relation with humanity establish the fundamental character of the classical Tamil religion. A strong relationship existed among the sacred, space and humanity in ancient Tamil religion. The *Tirumantiram* relies on this classical model to describe the relationship between the deity, the body and the Siddha. The first element I discuss is "This worldly orientation of the literary corpus". As I indicated earlier, the classical literature is interpreted through the works on Tamil poetics and this sub-section embodies the literary conventions laid down in them.

This worldly orientation of Caṅkam Poetry:

Ancient Tamil culture and ethos were oriented towards this world alone. According to the classical theory of literary discourse the ancient Tamil society was intently focussed on two worldly functions, war and love. The functional space is divided into five physiographic regions: *kuṟiñci* (hills), *neytal* (the seacoast), *mullai* (forests), *marutam* (cultivated lands) and *pālai* (wastelands) and the human life is classified into *akam* and *puṟam*. According to the Dravidian etymological dictionary, *akam* means inside, house, place, agricultural tract, breast, mind. But, in the context of classical Tamil literature it encompasses all aspects of love between a man and a woman. *Akam* divides into *kaḷavu* and *kaṟpu*. *Kaḷavu* denotes premarital love and *kaṟpu* deals

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[102] The terms "the sacred" and "the divine" are almost used interchangeably to denote abstract powers as well as anthropomorphic gods , eg. Murukaṉ.

with love situations within the institution of marriage. *Puṟam* means outside, exterior, or that which is foreign. *Puṟam* poetry is mainly concerned with life outside home and deals with the themes of war and bounty.

The following table shows that *akam* and *puṟam* have seven poetic situations each; of them, five correspond to landscape. The association of human feelings and heroic action to different landscapes led to the both being dubbed as *tiṇai*. Thus, *tiṇai* that originally meant land or region came to denote conventional rules of conduct associated with a particular landscape. Three elements integral to love poetry (*akam*) are: *mutal* (first things: region and time), *karu* (native things), *uri* (human situations and feelings). They differ according to the *tiṇai* of the poetry.

The sacred plays a minor role in the classification of the subject-matter. Specific manifestations of the sacred allocated to each region are as follows:

Tiṇai	Deity
kuṟiñci	Murukaṉ
neytal	Varuṇaṉ
marutam	Intiraṉ
mullai	Māyōṉ
pālai	Koṟṟavai

Table I

Correspondence of Akam- *Puṟam* to various landscapes of Tamil country

Landscape	*Akam* : phases in love correspondence to the landscape	*Puṟam*
Kuṟiñci (hills)	puṇartal (union of lovers)	veṭci (cattle –lifting, prelude to war)
Neytal (The sea coast)	iraṅkal (A woman bemoans separation from her lover.)	tumpai (battle)
Mullai (forests)	iruttal (patient waiting-A woman bears patiently separation from her husband.)	vañci (preparation for war)
Marutam (cultivated lands)	ūṭal (sulking- quarrel between husband and wife, mainly arising from husband's infidelity and wife's jealousy)	uḻiñai (siege)
Pālai (wasteland)	piraital (elopement, separation from lover, lady –love or parents)	vākai (victory)
No landscape assigned	peruntiṇai (mismatched love)	Kāñci (struggle for excellence and endurance)
No landscape assigned	kaikkiḷai (unrequited love)	pāṭāṇ (elegy, asking for gifts, praise)

The above classification of *tiṇai* exemplifies the fundamental worldview of Tamils who maintained close connection with the land they lived in. Self-identity of a person was intertwined with the place he or she resided in and the space/land determined the conduct and types of activities one could engage in, whereas in a migrant Brāhmaṇical society the *varṇa* in which one was born determined one's *svadharma*. The concepts of bondage and liberation found in Sanskrit Tantric literature are contrary to the spirit of ancient Tamil society which was grounded in the positive worldview that valorized violence and liberality as the means to remain immortal on earth. Only later

layers of the classical literature contain poetry dealing with the ephemeral nature of worldly life that is evidently influenced by Buddhism and Jainism.

The basic binary classification of *akam* and *puṟam* reflect the two incompatible worlds the hero has to mediate.[103] Abandoning one or the other realm is never a possibility. One is obligated to find a fine balance between his duties outside home and conjugal, marital duties at home.[104] In a similar strain, the *Tirumantiram* mediates through the concept of living liberation the two mutually exclusive notions: being in the world (*saṃsāra*) and being outside of it (*mukti*). Impartiality (*naṭuvu nilai*/the middle path) is consequently celebrated as the foremost of virtues in the text that confers knowledge (*jñāna*)[105] and immortality.[106]

Unlike the devotional lyrics of *Tēvāram* that reflect the pain of separation,[107] the *Tirumantiram* gives expression to the unbounded joy resulting from the union with God, founded on love (*aṉpu*). Hence, it is said that "in bhakti the heart weeps for what is lost whereas in *jñāna* the spirit delights in what it has found." [108] The concept of *puṇarcci* (union) related to the landscape of *kuṟiñci* is used to describe the theistic *yoga* advocated by the text. This theme is extensively dealt with in Chapter III of the dissertation.

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[103] Kailasapathy states that *akam* and *puṟam* " were not mutually exclusive. For heroic poetry is normally 'concerned with persons of princely rank-their exploits, adventure and experiences.' ….the love situations and themes in the Anthology poems, too, concerns the heroes and heroines of that age, thus dealing with the experiences of the persons of princely rank. That this was felt by some at least of the medieval glossators is evidenced by an analogy they used of their inner palm of the hand and its back, namely that these are two but two sides of the same coin." (*Tamil Heroic Poetry* , 5).

[104] Equity (*naṭuvunilai*) is one of the virtues celebrated in the classical Tamil literature. The explicit reference to equity is found in *Paripāṭal* in which Tirumāl is depicted as being partial to *devas* when allocating *amṛta*: "naṭuvunilai tiṟampiya nayamil oru kai" (3:34)

[105] naṭuvu niṉṟārkkaṉṟi ñāṉamum illai (TM 320:1)

[106] naṭuvu niṉṟār nalla tēvarumāvar (TM 320:3)
   See also Appar Tēvāram 4:30:7 *ñāṉamum naṭuvum vaittār*

[107] See the hymns composed in the *akam* tradition: caṭaiyāy eṉumāl (2:18:1), ciṟaiyārum maṭakkiḷiyē (1:60:10).

[108] T.N. Ganapathy and K.R. Arumugam, *The Yoga of Siddha Tirumular,* 148.

Immanence of the sacred:

The concept of immanence of the sacred connotes that the same space is shared by divinity and humanity. Of several terms denoting the divine in the Caṅkam literature, *kaṭavuḷ* and *aṇaṅku* are important as they signify immanent sacred powers. There is little consensus among scholars about the exact meaning and nature of these concepts. Hardy rightly points out that they "appear to be generic, denoting a category, not an individual."[109] Murukaṉ, Koṟṟavai and Māyōṉ are specific individual manifestations of the sacred, celebrated in the Caṅkam corpus.

Kaṭavuḷ is represented as inhabiting the mountain, water reservoirs and trees in the Tamil country.[110] It is not clear about the identity of the god referred to in fn. 108. When *kaṭavuḷ* is related to the mountain, it might be taken as a reference to Murukaṉ. However, it is certain that these examples illustrate the concept of "the localised conception of the supernatural."[111] The sacred was felt to be manifest and present in particular areas and natural phenomena in ancient Tamiḻakam.

There are several interpretations regarding the etymology of the term *kaṭavuḷ*. *Kaṭa* is a verbal root meaning to traverse, or to transcend. *Uḷ* is a base of the verb meaning to be inside, interior of a place. Hence, the roots *kaṭa* (to transcend) + *uḷ* (to be inside of a place) signify the paradoxical qualities of immanence and transcendence of

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[109] Hardy, *Viraha-bhakti:The Early History of Kṛṣṇa Devotion in South India,*.133.
[110] kaṭavuḷ oṅku varaikku ōkki (Aka. 348:8) kaṭavuḷ ōṅku varai (Naṟ. 165:4):
Making oblations to the mountain in which resides the kaṭavuḷ
nilaittuṟaikkaṭavuḷ (Aka. 156:15) : kaṭavuḷ established in a reservoir of water
kaṭavuḷ mutumarattu (Naṟ.83:2): An old tree where kaṭavuḷ dwells
vēṅkaik kaṭavuḷ (Naṟ.216:6): kaṭavuḷ who resides in the Venkai tree
toṉṟuṟai kaṭavuḷ cērnta parārai maṉṟap peṇṇai (Naṟ. 303:3): The old kaṭavuḷ who lies in the large trunk of the Palmyrah palm.
neṭuvīl viṭṭa kaṭavuḷ ālattu (Naṟ. 343:4): kaṭavuḷ who is located in the banyan tree with aerial roots
ālamar kaṭavuḷ (Puṟa. 198:9): kaṭavuḷ who rests on the banyan tree
kaḷḷi nīḻar kaṭavuḷ (Puṟa. PN 260:5): kaṭavuḷ who is in the shadow of a prickly pear
illuṟai kaṭavuḷ (Aka. 282:18): kaṭavuḷ who resides in the house
[111] Hardy, *Viraha-bhakti:The Early History of Kṛṣṇa Devotion in South India,* 135.

God.[112]   According to another explanation noted by Hart, *kaṭavuḷ* is interpreted as "that which transcends mind."[113]   When considering the evidence provided by the Caṅkam corpus, Hart is right in his assertion that the term *kaṭavuḷ* does not denote a transcendent deity, comparable to Śiva and Viṣṇu of the medieval *Bhakti* literature. He, therefore, offers a new interpretation of the term citing a reference from Kuṟun. 218 in which *kaṭaṉ* is used in the sense of sacrifice:[114] "*Kaṭavuḷ* would mean that to which sacrifice or debt pertains, a meaning well in accord with the character of the ancient Tamil deities"[115] Thus, *kaṭavuḷ* is made up of the noun *kaṭaṉ* followed by the suffix *uḷ*, which is often used to make a noun from a root. [116]   But Dubianski points out the grammatical flaw in the coalescence of the words, *kaṭaṉ* and *uḷ*.   They would be conjoined as *kaṭaṉuḷ*, not as *kaṭavuḷ*, as Hart claims.   Hence, he suggests that *kaṭavuḷ* denotes the dual nature of Tamil divinities and spirits: staying within a circumscribed place (*uḷ*); and leaving the designated boundaries of the place (*kaṭa*).[117]

However, I contend that the term *kaṭavuḷ* signifies an immanent deity.   Since *kaṭavu* means a path or a way, *kaṭavuḷ* may be interpreted as something one encounters on the road.   Thus, the term *kaṭavuḷ* denotes a sacred force confined to a particular space, which people encounter when they move about in their daily activities. The same thing could be said of the term *iyavuḷ* meaning God. *Iyavu* also means a path or a road.[118]

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[112] This type of construction expressing paradoxical qualities is rather common in Tamil. For instance, *cuṭu taṇṇīr,* warm (cold) water; *aṟituyil*, conscious sleep (a state of sleep in which the person is conscious of outer world).

[113] *The Poems of Ancient Tamil:Their Milieu and their Sanskrit Counterparts,* 26-27.

[114] …..viṟalkeḻu cūlikkuk
    kaṭaṉum pūṇātu (Kuṟu. 218:1-2)

[115] Hart, *The Poems of Ancient Tamil:Their Milieu and their Sanskrit Counterparts,* 27.

[116] He cites two examples: ār (to be full) + uḷ = aruḷ ; poru (to put together) + uḷ = poruḷ. See *The Poems of Ancient Tamil:Their Milieu and their Sanskrit Counterparts,* 27.

[117] Dubianski, *Ritual and Mythological Sources of the Early Tamil Poetry,* 8-9.

[118] Aka. 218:10, Pari. 6:37, Malai. 20: 323.

(*kaṭavu + uḷ* and *iyavu + uḷ*). These two are related to the expression *vaḻipaṭal* that stems from the compound noun *vaḻipāṭu* meaning 'worship'.[119] *Vaḻi* has the same meaning as that of *kaṭavu* and *iyavu*. Hence *vaḻipāṭu* means paying obeisance to the sacred that one happens to experience on his way.   Hence, the Tamil terms - *kaṭavuḷ* and *iyavuḷ* - denote sacred powers immanent in natural habitat, frequently encountered on the way.

Thus, the literary genre *āṟṟuppaṭai* is connected to the Tamil ideology of *kaṭavuḷ* and *vaḻipaṭal*. *Āṟu* means a path. In *āṟṟuppaṭai* the bard directs a fellow bard to a generous patron from whom he received gifts. The *Tirumurukāṟṟuppaṭai,* one of the latest of the Caṅkam corpus, reveals "the intimate connection between particular place of worship and the god's "local" manifestation."[120] The work has six parts of disproportionate lengths dealing with six places of worship: Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam (1-77), Tiruccūr (78- 125), Tiruvāviṉaṉkuṭi (126-176), Tiruvē*rakam* (177-189), Kuṉṟutōrāṭal (190-217) and Paḻamutirccōlai (218-317).[121]

It may be noted that Sanskrit terms are also used to denote an immanent sacred force in the classical Tamil texts. The term *teivam,* derived from the Sanskrit term *deva* (from *div* to shine),[122] does not refer to a resplendent or transcendent god in the Caṅkam literature.[123] Instead, it signifies a god located in a natural habitat. For instance, Verse 309 in *Akanāṉūṟu* describes an animal sacrifice being performed to a *teivam* inhabiting the neem tree:

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[119] Subbiah, *Roots of Tamil Religious Thought,* 70
[120] Zvelebil, *The Smile of Murugaṉ*,125.
[121] Ganapathy is of opinion that the *Āṟṟuppaṭai* concept possibly inspired the composition of the *Tirumantiram.* The author of *Tirumantiram* who reveals to Tamil audience for the first time the means of realization of god within one's own body, claims that his object is to enable the world to enjoy the bliss he has experienced. See *The Philosophy of the Tamil Siddhas* (New Delhi: Indian Council of Philosophical Research, 1993), 190.
[122] Hart, *The Poems of Ancient Tamil: Their Milieu and their Sanskrit Counterparts,*.26.
[123] Hence the term might have derived from the verbal root *tikai* to be taken aback, confused, perplexed, bewildered, be astonished, amazed or the noun tikil, tikir fright, terror

The dwellers of the Pālai region sacrificed a corpulent cow to the *teivam* occupying the neem tree with a large trunk, worshipped it sprinkling the blood and ate the raw meat scorched in the fire.[124]

Another term denoting the sacred is *aṇaṅku* which is highly polysemous.[125] It also denotes an indwelling power in consonance with the Tamil conceptualization of the sacred. It is mentioned in connection with the bodies of water and mountains. For instance, in *Aiṅkuṟunūṟu* (28), mother considers *aṇaṅku* presiding over springs or streams from which people take their drinking water, as the cause of her daughter's affliction.[126] Verse 241 in *Akanāṉūṟu* refers to the mother and female attendants paying obeisance to *aṇaṅku* located at a body of water.[127] The hero asks the bashful beloved who waits for him in the grove on the sea-shore if she were the *aṇaṅku* who overlords the great sea.[128] The mountains are also controlled by *aṇaṅku*, as the bodies of water. That "the mountain in which *aṇaṅku* is domiciled" is a recurrent phrase in several Caṅkam works.[129] *Aṇaṅku* is also inherent in heroine's breasts[130] and shoulders,[131] warrior's big

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[124] ……maṟavar

……………..

teyvañ cērnta parārai vēmpiṟ

koḷuppā eṟintu kuruti tūuyp

pulavup puḻukkuṇṭa (Aka. 309:2-6)

[125] The University of Madras Tamil Lexicon provides fifteen meanings for the term aṇaṅku: (1) Pain, affliction, suffering (2) disease (3) fear (4) lust (5) killing (6) deity (7) celestial damsel (8) demoness that takes away one's life by awakening lust or by other means (9) beautiful woman as resembling a celestial damsel (10) devil (11) dancing under religious excitement, esp. possession by Skanda (12) Low-caste person (13) beauty (14) form (15) young offspring.

[126] uṇ tuṟai aṇaṅku ivaḷ uṟai nōyāyiṉ (Aiṅk. 28:1)

[127] aṇaṅkuṭaip paṇittuṟai kaitoḻutu ētti yāyum āyamoṭu ayarum (Aka. 240:8-9)

[128] teṉ tiraip peruṅkaṭaṟ parappiṉ amarntuṟai aṇaṅkō (Naṟ.155: 5-6)

aṇaṅkuṭai munnīr (Aka. 207:1)

[129] aṇaṅkuṭai neṭuṅkōṭṭu (Naṟ 288:1; Aka. 272 :3; Puṟa.52:1)

aṇaṅkuṭai neṭuvarai ucciyiṉ (Aka. 22:1-2)

aṇaṅkuṭaik kavāṉ (Aka. 72:11)

aṇaṅkuṭai uyar nilaip poṟuppiṉ kavāṉ (Aka. 338: 6)

aṇaṅkuṭaic cilampil (Aka. 198:14)

aṇaṅkuṭai varaipp*akam* (Aka. 266: 19)

aṇaṅkuṭai varaippil (Aka. 372:3)

aṇaṅkucāl aṭukkam (Puṟa.151:11)

[130] aṇaṅkuṭai vaṉamulai (Aka. 177:19)

[131] karumpuṭait tōḷum uṭaiyavāḷ aṇaṅkē (Naṟ. 39:11)

hands (Pati 62:11), gods Murukaṉ (Puṟa. 299:6), and Indra (Kali.105:15), elephant's head (Kuṟu. 308:2), snake's hood (Aka 108:13), and strong bow (Aka. 159:6).

Zvelebil sums up the notion of *aṇaṅku* thus:

> The sacred was thought of as a force immanent in certain places, objects and beings, and not as the property of well-defined transcendent gods. The term used for the sacred was *aṇaṅku*, originally conceived of as an impersonal, anonymous power, an awe-inspiring supernatural force inherent in a number of phenomena but not identified or confused with any one of them in particular. The sacred power was so completely independent of particular objects and persons in which it was believed to dwell or inhere that it might have preceded or survived them. It was impersonal, capricious, dangerous, neither auspicious or inauspicious in itself; among the various places, it was found to inhere in awe-inspiring localities-mountain tops , the sea, the battlefield, the threshing floor used as the place where orgiastic and sacred dances were performed; among objects, it was thought to dwell in dangerous and exceptional things like weapons and musical instruments; it also inhered in certain fear-inspiring animals (lion, tiger, snake), and in certain (probably totemic, sacred) trees. Among the early gods, it was connected most frequently with Murukaṉ; also with Māl and Indra. [132]

The important characteristic of *aṇaṅku* noted by Dubianski is that that it could move in space. For instance, in *Naṟṟiṇai* midnight is represented as a time of distressing darkness during which *aṇaṅku* wanders.[133] The power of mobility is attributed to *kaṭavuḷ* as well: "*kaṭavuḷ* leaving the pillars"[134] "a gloomy night when *kaṭavuḷ* is abroad." [135] Dubianski states that in these instances, *kaṭavuḷ* could be considered a synonym for *aṇaṅku.*[136] The notion of mobility of the divine is also found in the *Tirumantiram*: "If they know the art of fixing breath below the navel region the lord enters the body shouting in joy."[137] "As one entered the mother's home, he entered my body"[138] (TM 1728).

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[132] Zvelebil, *Literary conventions in Akam Poetry* (Madras : Institute of Asian Studies, 1986), 190.
[133] aṇaṅkukāl kiḷarum mayaṅkiru naṭunāḷ (Naṟ. 319:6)
[134] kaṭavuṭ pōkiya karuntāṭ kantattu (Aka. 307:12)
[135] Malai. 651.
[136] Dubianski*, Ritual and Mythological Sources of the Early Tamil Poetry, 9.*
[137] tāpikku mantirant taṉṉai aṟintapiṉ
    kūvikkoṉ ṭīcaṉ kuṭiyirun tāṉē (TM 579:3-4).
[138] tāyil koṇṭārpōl talaivaṉ eṉṉuṭpuka (TM 1728:3).

The dichotomy of localization vs. movement is central to the understanding of the sacred in the *Tirumantiram*. The localization of god in a particular space is a distinctively Tamil notion. Comparing Vedic divinities with ancient Tamil gods, Hart observes,

> …the gods of the ancient Tamils were not transcendent beings, but rather immanent powers, present in objects encountered everyday and involved in every aspect of ordinary life. They are to be distinguished from the gods of the early Aryans in that their potential danger was stressed more than their benevolent aspect, and their transcendent character is far less important.[139]

Hardy too agrees that the Caṅkam sources do not attest to a fully developed concept of transcendence of the divine. [140]

On the contrary, Vedic sacrifice and transcendence are strongly inter-related and the object of sacrifice is "to mediate between the human and the transcendent world."[141] Brain explains how this transcendental sacred realm is constructed in the Vedic sacrificial system:

> According to the Veda, the ritual realm is to be spatially and conceptually set apart from the nonritual realm. Spatially, this is achieved by the de-marcation of a distinct space for the ritual (a science that was developed in those appendices to the Veda called the Śulba Sūtras), thereby creating a visually recognizable enclosure for the ritual activity. The ritual arena is thus made to be a world unto itself, a delimited realm where activities are focused and controlled. [142]

Everything to be used in the sacred realm has to be separated from the profane world and the human is transformed into the divine to take part in ritual functions.

> Conceptually, the ritual is distinguished from the sphere of ordinary activity by a series of acts also designed to mark the yajña, or sacrifice-and all the things and beings that participate in the yajña- as clearly distinguished from the extraritual sphere. Participants undergo preparatory consecration rites that bestow special standing on them. …………………………Most important, the sacrificer is said to take on a new identity as a divine rather than human being: He passes from

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[139] George L. Hart, *The Poems of Ancient Tamil:Their milieu and their Sanskrit*, 26.
[140] Hardy, *Viraha-bhakti:The Early History of Kṛṣṇa Devotion in South India,*135.
[141] J.C. Heesteman, *The inner conflict of tradition (*Chicago:The University of Chicago Press, 1985), 81.
[142] Brian K Smith, "Ritual Perfection and Ritual Sabotage in the Veda", *History of Religions*, Vol. 35, No. 4, (May, 1996), 287.

the world of men to the world of gods" when he is consecrated for his ritual duties (SA 1.1.1.4).
[143]

Besides, there is no idea of a fixed sacred site in the Vedic ideology. Every time *śrauta* ritual is performed, a new sacred space is constructed and demolished at the conclusion of the ritual. Hence, the Tamil conception of the relatively permanent abode of the divine is antithetical to the Vedic notion of constantly changing sacred realms.[144] Ramanujan links the concept of immanence of god to the development of temples: "the Tamil sense of the sacred, immanent in particular things and places, led soon to the building of temples."[145] However, in the *Tirumantiram*, the body is treated as the temple, the abode of god.

> The heart is the sanctum sanctorum; the fleshy body is the temple
> The mouth is the tower- door to the bountiful god.
> To those who have understood very clearly, the soul represents Śivalinga
> The delusive five senses are lovely lamps [studded with] precious stones.[146]

The *Tirumantiram* critiques the six faiths "as a pit of illusion" (*māyakkuḻi*) for their failure to get a glimpse of the god[147] who dwells in the body –temple, like the rising spark that stays within a bamboo.[148] Tirumūlar claims that he caught sight of the god in the shining body-land.[149] Another verse designates the divine as the ruler of the body-land –"kāyanaṉṉāṭaṉ" (2550/2071), as a hero in the *akam* poetry is spoken of as kuṉṟa

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[143] Ibid.
[144] David Shulman, *Tamil Temple Myths: Sacrifice and Marriage in South Indian Śaivism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 48.
[145] Ramanujan, A.K., *Poems of Love and War from Eight Anthologies and Ten Long Poems of Classical Tamil* (New York: Columbia Press, 1985), 295.
[146] uḷḷam peruṅ kōyil ūṉuṭampu ālayam
vaḷḷal pirāṉārkku vāy kōpuravācal
teḷḷat teḷintārkkuc cīvaṉ civaliṅkam
kaḷḷap pulaṉ aintum kāḷāmaṇi viḷakkē (TM 1823)
[147] āyattuḷ niṉṟa aṟucamayaṅkaḷum
kāyattuḷ niṉṟa kaṭavuḷaik kāṅkilar
māyakkuḻiyil vīḻvar (TM 1530:1-3)
[148] vēyiṉ eḻumkaṉal pōlēim meyyeṉum
kōyil iruntu kuṭikoṇṭa kōṉ nanti (TM 116:1-2)
[149] ……eṅkaḷ celvaṉaik
kāyamiṉṉāṭṭiṭaik kaṇṭukoṇṭēṉē (TM 2982:3-4)

nāṭaṉ (36:2, 38:3, 74:2 90:6, 241:7), ōṅkumalai nāṭaṉ (88:1, 217:5), cūrmalai nāṭaṉ (105:5), malaikeḻu nāṭaṉ (170:4), and peruṅkal nāṭaṉ (288:2) in Kuṟuntokai.

In the Tamil worldview, space does not have an intrinsic value of its own. It becomes hallowed and worthy of worship as a result of its identification with the divine. The *Tirumantiram* illustrates the idea when it says:

Once I regarded the body with disfavour
But I perceived the One within
The supreme being made my body his temple
Hence, I keep preserving it with diligence. [150]

Thus, the indigenous conception of immanence of the sacred is one of the fundamental principles on which the doctrine of liberation is based. I show below how the poetic expression "kaṭavuḷ domiciled in the house" *illuṟai kaṭavuḷ* (Aka. 282:18) is appropriated by the *Tirumantiram* to communicate this notion. *Il* and *illam* are synonyms meaning domicile in classical Tamil as well as in medieval Tamil.

That One does not have another abode there except This One's [body]
Let [them] ascertain if That One has any other abode.
Even after [they] determine that This One's [body] is That One's abode
They keep on blabbering "That One is extrinsic [to This One's body]"[151]

In this verse, demonstrative, proximate/remote masculine pronouns avaṉ (that one) and ivaṉ (this one) are used to indicate Śiva and the soul respectively. I interpret the term *illam* (abode) as the human body, in keeping with the fundamentals on which living liberation is founded. However, Varatarājan takes it to mean the heart or the mind, which is evocative of bhakti ideology.

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[150] uṭampiṉai muṉṉam iḻukkeṉ ṟiruntēṉ
  uṭampiṉu kkuḻē uṟuporuḷ kaṇṭēṉ
  uṭampulē uttamaṉ kōyil koṇṭāṉ
  uṭampiṉai yāṉirun tōmpukiṉ ṟēṉē (TM 725)
[151] ivaṉilla malla tavaṉukkaṅ killai
  avaṉukkum vēṟillam uṇṭā aṟiyiṉ
  avaṉuk kivaṉilla meṉṟeṉ ṟaṟintum
  avaṉaip puṟampeṉ ṟaṟaṟṟu kiṉṟārē (TM 2650)

The *Tirumantiram* reflects the centrality of the human body in the conceptual scheme of ancient Tamils. The significance of the body cannot be overemphasised in ancient Tamil society that valorized the ideals of love and war. The body is variously referred to as *uṭampu*, *uṭal*, *mey* and *yākkai* in the texts. It is perceived as the primary medium for expressing emotions. In *Akam* poetry the tight embrace of the lovers is often mentioned: "They embraced each other as if their bodies would enter each other's." *meypukuvaṉṉa kaikavar muyakkam* (Aka. 11:10; 305:6; 379:15). Sensual pleasure is referred to as *meyvāḻ uppu* (Aka. 390-11). Emotions are linked to the body: Joy pervades the body: *meymmalintu āṉā uvakaiyēm āyiṉem* (Aka. 262:12), *meymmali uvakai (*Aka. 56:13); anger that fills the frame *uṭarciṉam* (Kuṟi. 159). When there is a conflict between the heart and intellect, the body that is caught between the two suffers. (Naṟ. 284:11). Classical Tamil poetics discusses an element of poetry *meyppāṭu* (physical manifestation of emotions)[152] and the legend in *Iṟaiyaṉār Akapporuḷ Urai* shows that the body plays a vital role in determining the quality of poetry.[153]

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[152] See Martha Ann Selby, "Rasa and Mey-P-Pātu in Sanskrit and Tamil Poetics" *Journal of Oriental Research*, LXVIII (1998):15-40. Norman Cutler, *Songs of Experience: The Poetics of Tamil Devotion* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987).

[153] There was a famine in the Pāṇṭiya kingdom for twelve years. The king summoned the poets and said that he was no longer able to support them and asked them to go somewhere else and return to the country when it is fertile again. When the rains fell, the country flourished once again and the scholars returned. But the king was saddened to find no scholar among those returnees, who was versed in the field of subject-matter (poruḷ). The God at the Maturai decided to remove the distress of the king by composing the work called *Kaḷaviyal.* The jubilant king appealed to the scholars in his court to comment on the work. But the scholars could not find consensus on the interpretation of the work. Again the God at the Maturai temple helped the scholars find an arbitrator who would decide on the best commentary. They heard a voice saying: "In this city there lives a five –year-old boy with innocent eyes and thin hair; he is Uruttiracaṉmaṉ, the son of Uppūri Kuṭi Kiḻār, and he is a mute. Do not deprecate him for that, but bring him here and cause him to sit upon this seat. Then, when beneath him you utter the true meaning of a verse, tears will come to his eyes, and his body hair will bristle; when he hears a commentary that is not the true meaning, he will simply sit quietly. He is really the God Kumāraṉ, who has been made to appear here through a curse." (David C. Buck and K. Paramasivam, trans. *The Study of Stolen Love,* 8*).* Accordingly, Uruttiracaṉmaṉ was brought and seated on the dais. The boy sat unmoved as scholars read their commentaries. When Maturai Marutaṉiḷa Nākaṉār gave his interpretation of the work, at certain points the boy showed some bodily changes. But when Kaṇakkāyaṉār's son Nakkīraṉār started his interpretation of

Interpenetration of Divinity and Humanity: The King and God

The notion that the king and woman are considered as bearers of the sacred in the classical Tamil literature exemplifies the close connection between humanity and divinity. Let me focus on the king first. The following verse illustrates the predominant position occupied by the king in Tamil society.

> Neither paddy nor water
> But the king is the life of vast earth
> Hence, to understand that "I am the life"
> Is the duty of the king, possessor of spear-wielding army
> nellum uyir anṟē nīrum uyir anṟē
> mannan uyirttē malartalai ulakam
> atanāl yān uyir enpatu arikai
> vēnmiku tānai vēntaṟkuk kaṭanē (PN 186)

Dubianksi points out the differences in the conceptualisation of kingship in Vedic tradition and Tamil tradition, despite the fact that in both traditions the king is bearer of the sacred force.[154] The king derives his sacred force from the boundless energies of the cosmos in the Vedic tradition; thus, he is a representation of cosmic power, that is, the cosmic overlord (Prajāpati), and accordingly, the ritual symbolism of the *rājasūya* sacrifice is cosmic in character. The king's relation with the cosmic force is mediated by the Brahman. On the contrary, the king in the Tamil tradition draws his sacred force from within:

> For an ancient Tamil the sacred force *aṇaṅku* is devoid of a cosmic dimension; it is close at hand, is inherent in humans and in certain objects surrounding them and can be perceived by the senses as something very domestic. Hence concrete and down-to-earth symbolism employed in the ritual. A Tamil king is very much alive, too: a character who represents the sacred force directly and personally. He somehow embodies this sacred force, personifies it thus becoming an active participant in the ritual, for example, by performing a victory dance with his warriors. At the same time –it should be borne in mind- his status, in accordance with the ancient Tamil concept of the sacred , is not essentially different from the status of the divinity[Hart 1975:12].[155]

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the work, his eyes watered throughout the session and his body hair stood on end. Thus the scholars readily accepted Nakkīranār's commentary as the one that carries true meaning of the work.

[154] Dubianski, *Ritual and Mythological Sources of the Early Tamil Poetry,* 60.

[155] Ibid*.,* 61.

As *kaṭavuḷ* and *aṇaṅku,* the king embodying the sacred force is also linked to a place or a landscape. For instance, the heroine expresses her mental anguish due to separation from her lover whom she refers to as chief of the four types of landscape:

> O evening that breaks heart!
> You appear with more intense heat than before
> As the lover
> -whose land abounds in forests streaked with a host of streams
> -Whose land is dotted with small hills
> -Whose land is surrounded by paddy fields
> -Whose land borders on the sea
> Has separated from us. [156]

In one of the *Puṟanāṉūṟu* poems, the bard wonders how he would sing his patron. All epithets that figure in the poem relate the king to various landscapes.

> Will I address *Kothai* as chief of hilly tract
> Or the head of agricultural tract
> Or the maritime tract
> pāṭimiḻ paṉikkaṭaṟ cērppaṉ eṉkō
> yāṅkaṉam moḻikō ōṅkuvāḷ kōtaiyai[157]

The expressions frequently occurring in the *akam* poetry-as *malaikeḻu nāṭaṉ* (Puṟa.135:13) *naḷimalai nāṭaṉ* (Puṟa.150:28) *peruṅkal nāṭaṉ* (Puṟa.157:13) *vaṉpulanāṭaṉ* (Puṟa.172:8) *vaḷamalai nāṭaṉ* (Naṟ. 25:5)- suggest that as the divine, the king is always seen in relation to the region he rules.

The identity between divinity and humanity is enhanced by human ideals being projected on to the divine plane. Murukaṉ is represented as *cāṉṟōṉ* (the best of men, the

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[156] kaṇaṅkoḻ aruvik kāṉkeḻu nāṭaṉ
   kuṟumpoṟai nāṭaṉ nalvayal ūraṉ
   taṉkaṭaṟ cērppaṉ pirinteṉap paṇṭaiyiṟ
   kaṭumpakal varuti kaiyaṟu mālai
   koṭuṅkaḻi neytalum kūmpak
   kālai variṉum kaḷaiñarō ilarē
   (Aiṅk. 183)
[157] nāṭaṉ eṉkō ūraṉ eṉkō
   pāṭimiḻ paṉikkaṭaṟ cērppaṉ eṉkō
   yāṅkaṉam moḻikō ōṅkuvāḷ kōtaiyai (Puṟa. 49)

hero or *talaivaṉ*) in the Caṅkam literature.[158] The abstract generic concepts occurring in the texts–youth, beauty, love, vigour, and heroism -are applicable to both Murukaṉ and *cāṉṟōṉ*. Murukaṉ is also depicted as having embraced the Tamil ideal of premarital union (*kaḷavu maṇam*). One of the *Paripāṭal* verses (9) speaks of his marriage with Vaḷḷi as superior to his marriage with Devasenā.

> …and it is no exaggeration to speak of him as the Tamil "god" *par excellence*, in whom the Tamils of the classical Caṅkam age envisaged the divine in a personalised form, and who at the same time represented their human ideals on a divine plane. Thus it would not seem to be correct to label Caṅkam society secular; awareness of supernatural forces may have been more typical of the common people, while the *cāṉṟōṉ* would add a humanistic accent to those forces, but a certain interpenetration (particularly in the figure of Murukaṉ) can be detected.[159]

Subbiah claims that no other notion reflects the interpenetration of humanity and divinity than the notion of *talaivaṉ* that is expounded in the works on Tamil poetics.[160] "In a sense, the notion of *talaivaṉ* was a point of convergence that enabled the Tamils to identify and define the intersecting dimensions of the divine and the human.…it was (and is) a notion that remained the bedrock for expressing the experiential relationship with the "other" in Tamil culture."[161] That *talaivaṉ* (patron of bards) could be human as in *Perumpāṇāṟṟuppaṭai* or divine as in *Tirumurukāṟṟuppaṭai*, reflects the deep-lying belief of early Tamils that dimensions of humanity and divinity are interconnected. Subbiah notes that "it is one of those seminal notions in which the Tamils sought and achieved a synthesis of particular (*puṟam* hero), the universal (*akam* hero), and that which is neither or both (the divine)."[162]

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[158] The term *cāṉṟōr* (plural of *cāṉṟōṉ*) originally referred to warriors and heroes. The primary sense of the term is "capability, endurance and sufficiency." There was a shift in the meaning of the word during the medieval period. It came to denote the learned and the noble. The poets of the Caṅkam anthologies are called *cāṉṟōr*. See K. Kailasapathy, *Tamil Heroic Poetry,* 229-230.
[159] Hardy, *Viraha-bhakti:The Early History of Kṛṣṇa Devotion in South India,* 134.
[160] Subbiah, *Roots of Tamil Religious Thought,* 111.
[161] Ibid.
[162] Ibid.

The interpenetration of humanity and divinity may also be observed in the following verses: Referring to *Kalittokai* verses 103-106, Hardy points out that *kuravai* is performed in praise of the god and the king at the end of the ceremony of bull-fight.[163] Subbiah provides an example of *vaḷḷaippāṭṭu* (pestle song) from Kalittokai (43) in which the heroine and her friend praise the hero on the pretext of extolling Murukaṉ.[164] He explains how humanity and divinity converge in the concept of *talaivaṉ* in the multi-layered classical poetry.

> It is noteworthy, however, that it is the colophon that suggests the narrative frame and turns it into a love poem. Concurrently, it is a religious poem too, and, as the girl friend says, it is meant to be a poem in praise of Murukaṉ to the unsuspecting listeners. The poem could well have been rendered a *puṟam* one if the hero had been identified in the colophon, if not in the poem itself. What is more significant from our point of view is that the poem not only affords a good example of the multivalent character of the poem itself as it puts 'frame within frame', but also shows how the concept of *talaivaṉ* was a multi-layered one that encompassed both the human and the divine.[165]

The concept of interpenetration of humanity and divinity suggests a fundamental unity between the two, which is one of the central presuppositions of the *Tirumantiram* and which is expressed in several ways. On one hand, the divine Śiva is considered as indwelling in the human body. On the other, the human who experiences the truth (Siddha) attains the state of divinity (*civam*) and is worshipped as the divine. [166] Besides, the human preceptor who confers knowledge is none other than Śiva who is immanent in the body. At times, this identification is very confusing to a point at which one cannot recognize if reference is made to the deity or the preceptor. Tirumūlar uses the same term Nandi to refer both to his preceptor and Śiva.

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[163] Hardy, *Viraha-bhakti:The Early History of Kṛṣṇa Devotion in South India,*188.
[164] Subbiah, *Roots of Tamil Religious Thought,* 112-114.
[165] Ibid.,114.
[166] pōyvaṇaṅkum poruḷāyiruntaṉamē (TM 2674).

Identification with the Divine

Another concept that explains the close relation between the human and the divine is *veri*.[167] Ramanujan defines *veri* as a frenzied mood that characterised Tamil war poems and *bhakti* poems.[168] Yet, *veri* has several connotations in the Caṅkam literature; of them two are significant to our discussion. One is possession and the other is frenzied dance of Vēlaṉ. In the following examples, the term *veri* is used in the sense of possession. Vēlaṉ (mis)diagnoses the lovesickness of the heroine as the state of being spirit-possessed: *veriyeṉa vēlaṉ uraikkum* (Naṟ. 273:4) *veriyeṉa uṇarnta vēlaṉ nōy maruntu aṟiyāṉ* (Kuṟu..360:1-2). In order to cure her of possession, Vēlaṉ performs a dance called *veri*. Thus, the malady and remedy are denoted by the same term (*veri)*.

The events that lead to Vēlaṉ's dance is vividly described in the Caṅkam works. Following separation from her lover, there appear visible changes in the body of the heroine. The love-sickness called *pacalai* destroys the beauty of her forehead.[169] Bracelets slip from her arms; the eyes lose their lustre.[170] Malicious tongued women utter slander about the physical state of the heroine.[171] The heroine's mother is perturbed over the emaciated body of her daughter.[172] Unfortunately she is not aware that the

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[167] The University of Madras Tamil Lexicon attributes eighteen meanings to this term: toddy, intoxication, giddiness, bewilderment, insanity, frenzy, anger, hastiness, fragrance, dance of a priest possessed by god Murukaṉ, song sung in *veri-y-āṭṭu*, wildness, devil, deity, sheep, ignorance, fear, and disease.

[168] A.K. Ramanujan, *Hymns for the Drowning: Poems for Viṣṇu* by *Nammāḻvār,* 117.

[169] nutaṟkaviṉ aḻikkum pacalai (Naṟ. 73:10)

[170] tōḻē toṭikoṭpu āṉā kaṇṇē
vāḻīr vaṭiyiṉ vaṭiviḻantaṉavē (Naṟ. 133:1-2)

[171] vevvāyp peṇṭir kavvai tūṟṟa (Naṟ. 133:6)

[172] …vārkōl
ceṟintilaṅku elvaḷai nekiḻntamai nōkkik
kaiyaṟu neñciṉaḷ ….. (Aka. 98:6-8)

disease was caused by the lover[173] and that the union with him would bring an end to her daughter's suffering.[174] She therefore, consults female soothsayers:

> The women of traditional wisdom
> Adept in lying
> Shake the rice and divine
> "This disease is caused by Murukaṉ"[175]

Sometimes the mother would invite a male priest and a diviner Vēlaṉ to diagnose as to what ails her daughter. He uses kaḷaṅku (Molucca beans) to diagnose the distress of the girl.[176] He tells the mother that the disease has been caused by the deity and he knows the cure for it. [177] Then, the place for Vēlaṉ's dance (kaḷam) is prepared; a large *pantal* is constructed where the frenzied dance (veṟi) takes place.[178] The mother worships the arena where Vēlaṉ's dance takes place by sacrificing a lamb;[179] the millet mixed with blood is strewn across the sacrificial ground. Vēlaṉ wears the garland of *kadampu* and dances to the beat of drums reciting the names of Murukaṉ. [180]

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[173] ….aru nōy
kātalaṉ tantamai aṟiyātu (Naṟ.3-4)
[174] muṉitaka niṟutta nalkal evvam
cūruṟai veṟpaṉ mārpuṟat taṇital
aṟintaṉaḷ allaḷ aṉṉai …..   (Aka. 98:5-6)
[175] …..mutuvāyp
  poyval peṇṭir pirappuuḷarpu irī i
   murukaṉ ār aṉaṅku eṉṟaliṉ   (Aka. 98:9-10)
[176] aṇaṅkuṟu kaḷaṅkiṉ mutuvāy vēlaṉ (Naṟ. 282:5)
[177] emmiṟai aṇaṅkaliṉ vantaṉṟu iṉṉōy
   taṉimaruntu aṟival (Aka. 388:20-21)
[178] veṟi ayar viyaṉkaḷam (Aka. 98: 19; 182 :17; 242:11)
   vēlaṉ veṟi ayar kaḷattu (Aka. 114:2)
   vēlaṉ puṉainta veṟiyayar kaḷantoṟum (Kuṟu. 53:3)
   veṟiyayar kaḷattiṉil tōṉṟum (Kuṟu..318:3)
   vēlaṉ taiiya veṟiyayar kaḷaṉum (Tiru. 222)
[179] ….aṉṉai
veṟiyayar viyaṉkaḷam poliya ētti
maṟiyuyir vaḷaṅkā aḷavai (Aka. 242: 10-12)
….tōḷi vēṟuṇarntu
  aṇaṅkaṟi kaḷaṅkiṉ kōṭṭam kāṭṭi
  veṟiyeṉa uṇarnta uḷḷamoṭu maṟiyaṟuttup   (Naṟ. 47:9)
[180] veṟipuri ētil vēlaṉ (Aka. 292:4-5)

Both in possession and dance, the human comes into contact with the divine. The heroine's misdiagnosed state of sickness known as *veṟi* is rooted in the belief that young girls are susceptible to the influence of malevolent gods or spirits and that the involuntary possession by these spirits produces symptoms in the girls' body. On the other hand, the priest Vēlaṉ voluntarily decides to deal with the spirit/god in order to remove the suffering of the girl.   Dressed like Murukaṉ who is supposed to have caused the disease, he performs *veṟi*. In that frenzied state the deity is deemed to have descended on him. (*vēlaṉ vēṇṭa veṟi maṉai vantōy* - Naṟ. 37:9). The priest V*ēlaṉ* is supposed to have the power to cure the disease in the state of possession. It is notable that the one who causes the disease and the one who seeks to cure it bear the same name V*ēlaṉ*.

Possession is related to the indigenous cult and worship of Murukaṉ. Ramanujan explains the state of the priest being possessed by Murukaṉ as depicted in lines 190-209 of the late classical poem *T*irumurukāṟṟuppaṭai (A Guide to Lord Murukaṉ).   In the section *kuṉṟutōṟāṭal* (dancing on each and every hill) from *Tirumurukāṟṟuppaṭai*, the priest Vēlaṉ is first described.

> The One with a spear (Vēlaṉ**)**
> wears a chaplet made of
> a beautiful cluster of tailed pepper,
> fragrant wild jasmine, and
> white three-lobed nightshade,
> strung on the tender creeper
> interspersed with nutmegs (190-192)

 Ramanujan introduces him as a possessed shaman who bears the name of his deity (Vēlaṉ).   The initial ambiguity that originates from the name pervades the remaining section of the poem.   Following the descriptions of tribal men drinking toddy and

performing *kuravai,* and of women dancing in leaf-skirt,[181] a meticulous portrayal of the deity is given. Here Ramanujan brings out the notion of identification of the priest with the deity, which is latent in the poem.

> the shaman
> is the Red One himself,
> is in red robes;[182]

The section ends with a reference to the women with whom the god/priest dances embracing their tender shoulders on the hills.

> He dances the god`s dance, he wears the Red One`s robes and insignia, carries His lance (vēl) imitating the god till he becomes Him, simulating him until he is assimilated. The words of Murukan̲ and Vēlan̲ (the one with the lance) mean both the god and the shamanic priest who is his devotee.[183]

As Ramanujan observes, "when the poem ends, the chief dancer and the god have become one. The dancer does not simply worship or adore the god; he invokes the god by representing him."[184]   Thus, the ritual dance of Vēlan̲ reflects the religious experience in which the priest totally identifies himself with the deity.   This is not much different from the ultimate goal sought by Siddhas in the *Tirumantiram* through the practice of yoga.

Nature of the sacred : Heat

Ancient Tamils conceived the sacred as a malevolent power inherent in various objects found in Tamil country. Since it was dangerous, it had to be kept under control ; otherwise it would bring about disaster. Objects and persons, invested with *an̲an̲ku* were

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[181] The hill-tribe men
   of brightly-hued chests smeared with fragrant sandal,
   given to the cruel practice of hunting with strong bows.
   drink the sweet, clarified toddy fermented in long bamboos
   in the company of their kindred from a hilly hamlet
   And perform kuravai to the beat of small drum ton̲ṭakam (193-197)
[182] Ramanujan's translation.
[183] A.K. Ramanujan, *Hymns for the Drowning: Poems for Viṣṇu* by *Nammāl̲vrā,* 115.
[184] Ibid.

regarded spiritually significant. Certain categories of persons imbued with *aṇaṅku* had the ability to manipulate it. The two most concentrations of *aṇaṅku* were the king and woman. Low caste bards played a key role in controlling the sacred powers of the king. Except the king, other persons and objects infused with *aṇaṅku* were considered dangerous to anyone above their status. Hart compares this sacred power to Polynesian *mana* –a sacred impersonal force concentrated in persons, animals and inanimate objects. However, Dubianski treats *aṇaṅku* as a natural power rather than a supernatural force. He interprets *aṇaṅku* as natural heat and links it to fire and fiery nature. Thus, dry land (*pālai*), sexual passion, death, blood, and suffering are associated with *aṇaṅku*.[185] Dubianski finds support for his theory in Brenda Beck's anthropological research on South Indian ritual.

According to Brenda Beck, "Heat is associated with life and fertility. The energy that can both activate and nullify life is a kind of heat. The heat, when taken alone, however, can be highly dangerous. It must be focussed and controlled in order to become a source of power which humans and superhumans can utilize."[186] Heat is also related to illness, suffering and sexual passion. Whereas impurity is related to heat, for instance, menses and child-birth, recovering from pain or impure state is interpreted as channelling and controlling heat. Thus, sexual intercourse is deemed cooling as it controls the passions of fire.[187] Beck also points out that a colour scheme is used for a symbolic expression of heat related conditions: fire is associated with the colour red, while coolness –with the white colour. Accordingly, the structure of a typical ritual may be

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[185] George L. Hart, III, Some Related Literary Conventions in Tamil and Indo-Aryan and Their Significance Author(s), *Journal of the American Oriental Society,* Vol. 94, No. 2, (Apr. - Jun., 1974), 157-167; Dubianski, *Ritual and Mythological Sources of the Early Tamil Poetry,* 10-11.
[186] Brenda Beck, "Colour and Heat in South Indian Ritual" *Man* 4 (1969), 553.
[187] Ibid, 562.

presented as "the progression from an inferior condition (white) through a point of transition (red) to a new superior condition also white."[188]

The Tirumaniram often refers to the power of fiery nature inherent in the body: "the red flame emerging from below the navel."[189] This power is denoted as *kaṉal* –fire (1949), *mūlattu aḻal* "the fire at the base" (1962). Though this fiery power could be identified as *kuṇḍalinī*, it is not mentioned by name in the text. The term *kuṇṭali* occurs in verse 580, pointing to the seat of the fiery power.

As we see in the *Tirumantiram*, the Siddha is the one who has complete mastery over this fiery power in the body. As the king's sacred power is tended by panegyric performance accompanied by music and dance, or as the woman's sexual power is regulated within marriage, this fiery power is brought under control by uniting it with Śiva in the head. This is compared to sexual union (*puṇarcci*) between man and woman based on love (*aṉpu*).

Becoming immortal: conquering time

The singlemost phenomenon that defines and distinguishes divinity from humanity is deathlessness. In this section I argue that the concept of immortality forms part of the worldview of the ancient Tamil society. I define the term immortality as "unending life on earth", which is an integral aspect of the doctrine of living liberation. Primary objectives of *yoga* enunciated in the *Tirumantiram* include immortality which is highlighted in the third *Tantra*: Those who practise *yoga* will spurn the God of death,[190]

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[188] Ibid, 557.
[189] kōlitta kuṇṭaliyuḷḷē eḻum ceñcuṭar (TM 580)
[190]   kūṟṟai utaikkum kuṟiyatu vāmē. (TM 571:4)

vanquish death,[191] exist in eternity (they will experience neither day nor night),[192] conquer time,[193] stay young forever,[194] and live for an aeon.[195] Their body will be imperishable.[196] They will not hear the word *death* even in their dream. [197]

Desire for unending life on earth is quite strong among Tamils as evidenced by the Caṅkam literature and is expressed in three ways. Firstly, the Caṅkam works contain mythological references to *amṛta*, the nectar of immortality that was churned out of the milky ocean by gods. For instance, *Paripāṭal* (2:69-71) mentions Tirumāl as the bestower of immortality to gods. By means of *amṛta,* the gods attained non-senility, eternal vigour and the state of immortality.

Six different forms of the term *amṛta* are found in the classical literature without a pronounced change in their meaning: *amirtam*,[198] *amirtu*,[199] *amiḻtam*,[200] *amiḻtu*,[201] *amutam*,[202] and *amutu* [203]   They are mostly used in connection with sweetness or longevity in the Caṅkam works. Usage of the term does not seem to differ from that of *amṛta* in Sanskrit. Since it is connected to Sanskrit mythology, it falls outside the purview of the indigenous notion of immortality.

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[191] namaṉillaittāṉē (TM 574:4)
[192] pakaliravillaiyē (TM 577:4)
[193] kālattai vellum karuttitu tāṉē (TM 583:4)
[194] pālaṉum āvāṉ (TM 590:4)
[195] ūḻi irukkalumāmē (TM 591:4)
[196] tēkattukkeṉṟum citaivillaiyāmē (TM 581: 4)
[197] mēlai vācal veḷiyuṟak kaṇṭapiṉ
  kālaṉ vārttai kaṉāvilum illaiyē (TM 622)
[198] Pari. 8:120; 2:69
[199] Pari. 3:33; 8:121; 12;57; Maturai.532; Pati. 16:12
[200] Aka. 207:2; 332:13; 335:25; Kali. 81:14; Kuṟu.83:1;201:1; 206:1; 286:2; Puṟa. 182:2; 392:20
[201]Aka. 169:6; 170:5; 213:18; Kali. 4:13; 20:11; Kuṟu. 14:1; Ciṟu. 101,227; Naṟ. 230:3; Pati. 17:11; 51:21; Pari. 3:15; Puṟa. 10:7; 125:8; 150:14; 361:19; 390:17; Maturai. 197.
[202] Naṟ.65:1; 88:4 ;Maturai.601
[203] Puṟa.399:21; Perum.475

Secondly, it was believed that certain edibles would confer immortality. For instance, Auvaiyār praises her patron Atiyamāṉ Neṭumāṉ Añci for being unselfish in gifting her a myrobolan fruit that might rescue her from death.

> In the fissure of the ancient great mountain
> Grew a small-leaved myrobolan plant, hard to reach
> Without thinking to eat its delicious fruit yourself
> And suppressing the desire in your heart
> You gave it to us so that we might conquer death (Puṟa.91:7-11)

Thirdly, immortality is sought by heroes (*talaivaṉ*) in the form of fame. This subject needs to be discussed within the framework of the relations between patron and bard as immortality could be found only in the words of bards. The panegyric poetry constitutes the bardic function of regulating the sacred powers of the king. Immortality is interpreted as acquisition of fame which is highly valued by heroes. Though fame is one of the highly desirable qualities in many societies, the degree of importance placed on this concept by ancient Tamils made it a distinctive mark of their culture.[204]

Puṟanāṉūṟu attributes two types of existence to heroes: one is physical or material existence, and the other is conceptual existence, rooted in fame. Several words connote fame in Caṅkam corpus: *pukaḻ, icai*, *urai*, *perumpeya*r, and *cīrtti*. The term pukaḻ stems from the root *pukaḻ* meaning to state or to sound. Hence, *pukaḻ* connotes an existence in the laudatory words of bards. The poet Peruṅkaṭuṅkō speaks about a warrior thus:

> If you ask
> Where is the one of great deeds,
> Who fulfilled his duty towards his country?
> ………………………………………….
> ………………………………………….
> He has established his good fame in all directions
> He is alive in the words of oral bards[205]

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[204] Hart, *The Poems of Ancient Tamil: Their Milieu and their Sanskrit Counterparts,* 67.
[205] cēṉ viḷaṅku nallicai niṟīi
nāṉavil pulavar vāy uḷḷāṉē (Puṟa.282:12-13).

Pukaḻ is achieved through deeds difficult to accomplish, specifically through unregrettable acts,[206] valour,[207] wealth,[208] magnanimity,[209] vanquishing enemies,[210] fulfilling one's arduous duty[211] and victory.[212] The heroes establish their fame on earth by means of these feats.[213]

Fame is eternal and everlasting. It defies the limitations of space and time. The fame of the valiant ruler of *Vañci* reaches the heavens (*viṇ poru pukaḻ viṟal vañci* Puṟa. 11: 6). It is spread far and wide on earth (*cēṇ viḷaṅku pukaḻ* Puṟa.10:11). Thus, it transcends all limitations of physical world and is linked to natural phenomena: the sun and the earth. (Puṟa.6). Poetess Auvaiyār grieves over the death of her friend Atiyamāṉ Neṭumāṉ Añci in Verse 231 in which she acknowledges inevitability of death, and at the same time asserts that his fame defies death.

> The fame of the one who is analogous to the bright Sun, will not die. [214]

The conceptual existence of heroes has a religious dimension that often gets overlooked. The reason for the words of a bard being highly valued is that he is also a possessor of the sacred. The poets are described as those who possess lofty words,[215] true words,[216]and subtle wisdom to choose beautiful words.[217] The poet Kapilan who orally

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[206] Puṟa.10-11
[207] Puṟa.:32
[208] Puṟa.47:9
[209] Puṟa.39:4;127:9; 151:5; 159:20.
[210] Puṟa.39:7
[211] Puṟa.282: 2
[212] PN.63:3;159:26
[213] tam pukaḻ niṟīi, Puṟa.18:3
[214] oṇ ñāyiṟu aṉṉōṉ pukaḻ māyalavē (Puṟa. 231:6)
āṇṭu nī peyarnta piṉṉum īṇṭu nīṭu viḷaṅkum nī eytiya pukaḻē (Puṟa.359: 17-18)
oru tām ākiya perumaiyōrum tam pukaḻ niṟīic ceṉṟu māyntaṉarē (Puṟa.366:4-5).
[215] uyar moḻip pulavīr (Puṟa.394:5)
[216] vāymoḻippulavīr (Puṟa.221:10)
[217] añcol nuṇ tērccip pulavar nā (Puṟa.235:13)

composes poetry on many subjects and who possesses abundant knowledge[218] is celebrated as the one whose tongue never lies.[219] In this context, another epithet *mutuvāy*[220] (possessor of ancient wisdom) is significant as it links the bards with the power of divination. The term *mutuvāy* is used as an adjective of elderly women priestess, Vēlaṉ priest, and a lizard to denote possession and prophesy. When the same epithet is used for bards, it can be construed that bards are also considered prophetic and possessed.[221] Kailasapathy rightly points out that the bards were engaged in some mantic activity that conferred them a state of divinity.

> We have seen that the epithet 'ancient wisdom' is used for bards and minstrels. ….The natural and perhaps the obvious inference one can make is that a poetic tradition with a pre-dominant or very considerable mantic element stood behind the usage of the epithet. This association of possession and prophesy with the bards, which thereby ascribed a touch of divinity to them, vestigial though it might be in later times as in the Heroic Age, had still enough sanction to make them considered sacred.[222]

Because of the state of divinity inhered in them, the bards were able to channel the sacred force of the king through their panegyric performance and also to curse and caste spells. For instance, for gifting her a myrobolan fruit Auvaiyār glorifies Atiyamāṉ Neṭumāṉ Añci as a hero who garners victory by destroying his enemies with his sword on the battle field and blesses him with long life : "May you live as long as He who has the resplendent crescent moon on his head lives."[223] On the other hand, the poet Kapilar indirectly curses king Iruṅkōvēḷ for his failure in meeting the obligations towards him by reminding him of the calamity that befell on the long-established city Araiyam because one of his ancestors offended the bard Kaḻāttalai, author of renowned poetry.[224] The poet

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[218] ceṟutta ceyyuḷ ceycen nāviṉ veṟutta kēḷvi viḷaṅkupukaḻk kapilaṉ (Puṟa.53: 11-12)
[219] poyyā nāviṟ kapilaṉ (Puṟa.174:10)
[220] mutuvāy iravala (Puṟa.48:6; 70:5; 180:9)
[221] Kailasapathy, *Tamil Heroic Poetry,* 63-65.
[222] Ibid.,67.
[223] Puṟa.91: 5-7.
[224] nīṭunilai araiyattuk kēṭum kēḷ

concludes his statement requesting the king `Mind not my statement; let your lance be victorious.' [225] But the poet means the opposite of what is said. Kailasapathy points out that the medieval commentators have identified the statement as satire.[226] Satire is a figure of speech known as kuṟippumoḻi which is treated in the *Tolkāppiyam* along with compositions of charms and spells. Satire is dreaded as it is intended to bring upon ruin on the person about whom the poet composes his poetry. On the other hand eulogy is desired as its central aim is to "render support to the king's vital breaths of life."[227] Thus, the bards who were of sacred nature were capable of immortalizing the king, granting him longevity by keeping the sacred force of the king under check and also brining misfortune to their benefactor if he failed in *pāṇkaṭaṉ*.

The primary objective of this chapter was to highlight the Tamil legacy to the concept of living liberation in the *Tirumantiram*, which is regarded as the outcome of the synthesis of Tamil and Sanskrit traditions. It was demonstrated that the interrelationships between divinity, humanity and space as reflected in the Caṅkam literature appeared to have played a vital role in shaping the doctrine of living liberation. The notion of the sacred cannot be considered in isolation, but within the broad framework of literary conventions governing themes and motifs, oriented towards this world. The influence of Tamil notions on the *Tirumantiram* were examined under the following sub-titles: this worldly orientation, immanence of the sacred, interpenetration of divinity and humanity, identification with the divine through ritual dance, and immortality in the form of fame.

………………………………..
numpōl aṟiviṉ numaruḷ oruvaṉ
 pukaḻnta ceyyuḷ kaḻāttalaiyai ikaḻnttataṉ payaṉē (Puṟa. 202: 8, 11-13)
[225] Kailasapathy, *Tamil heroic poetry, 69.*
[226] Ibid.
[227] Dubianski, *Ritual and Mythological Sources of the Early Tamil Poetry,* 61.

The next chapter evaluates the contribution of Sanskrit traditions to the making of the *Tirumantiram* and locates living liberation in the overall conceptual framework borrowed from *āgamic* texts.

CHAPTER TWO

THE TIRUMANTIRAM AND REVEALED TRADITIONS

This chapter analyzes the relationship between Sanskrit traditions[1] and the
Tirumantiram,[2] which has not been hitherto dealt with adequately in secondary literature.[3] By
Sanskrit traditions, I refer primarily to the revealed textual traditions in Sanskrit. Kullūkabhatta
of the fifteenth century states in his commentary on *Manusmṛti* 2:1 that there are two types of
revelation (*śruti*): *vedic* and *tantric*.[4] The Vedic tradition is centred on sacrificial ritual, the
ideologies of which are embedded in the orally transmitted repositories of mantras or liturgical
formulae (*saṃhitās*), ritual instructions and expositions (brāhmaṇas), and esoteric sections
explicating hidden meanings of liturgical acts and terms, and philosophical speculations
(*āraṇyakas* and *upaniṣads*). On the other hand, the Hindu *Tantra* is a theistic tradition which is

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[1] Sanskrit represents a spectrum of pan-indic traditions such as the Vedic, purāṇic, tantric and yogic. Sanskrit traditions came under the influence of indigenous cultures since very early times. "Whatever tradition one studies in the classical Sanskrit sources, almost always there are indications of popular cults, local usages, and little traditions." (J.F. Frits Staal, "Sanskrit and Sanskritization" *The Journal of Asian Studies* 22, No. 3, (1963): 268). Hence, the composite character of Sanskrit traditions is an indisputable fact. Sanskritization is now explained as a two-way process in which there has been a continual interaction between indigenous and Sanskrit elements. One cannot, therefore, speak of a transcendental, elitistic Sanskrit cultural register unaffected by vernacular traditions. (V. Raghavan "Variety and integration in the pattern of Indian culture" *The Far Eastern Quarterly* 15 (1956) : 497-505).

[2] It is not that all scholars acknowledge the role played by Sanskrit in the conceptualization and presentation of the *Tirumantiram*. For instance, in the commentary of Irāmanāta Piḷḷai, one of the ardent advocates of Neo-Śaivism, who subscribed to the vision of a glorious and independent Tamil past, all references to the Vedas and *āgamas* occurring in the Tirumantiram are taken to denote those composed in Tamil.

[3] Only brief statements about the relationship between the *Tirumantiram* and the *āgamas* are found in secondary works. Narayana Ayyar states, "What Tirumūlar did was to render into Tamil the Śaiva doctrines as they were found in the Sanskrit Śaiva *āgamas* which were current both in Northern and Southern India for several centuries past." See *Origin and Early History of Śaivism in South India (*University of Madras, 1974), 205. The view that the nine Tantras of the *Tirumantiram* represent the nine *āgamas* mentioned in Verse 63 is not based on any concrete evidence. Hence, Veḷḷaivāraṇaṉ suggests that the *Tirumantiram* be considered as the essence of the *āgamas* in general. He treats the *Tirumantiram* as a primary text that was composed to convey the subject-matter of the *āgamas* in Tamil. See P*aṉṉiru Tirumuṟai varalāṟu,* Part II, 553-559. Three types of treatises are mentioned in Tamil: original treatise (*mutal nūl*), secondary treatise (*vaḻi nūl*) and *cārpu nūl* (supportive treatise). Arumugam considers the *Tirumantiram* an original/primary work, "very much influenced by the *āgamas.*" See "Introduction" in *Yoga of Siddha Tirumūlar* (Quebec: Babaji's Kriya Yoga and Publications, Inc., 2004), 17. None of the scholars has, however, examined in detail how the Tirumantiram was influenced by the *āgamic* tradition.

[4] vaidikī tāntrikī caiva dvividhā kīrtitā śrutiḥ.
A *tāntrika* (a follower of the tantric tradition) is distinct from a follower of the Vedas who is known as a *vaidika*.

mainly focused on the cult of deities and is categorised into three groups: Śaiva, Vaiṣṇava and Śākta. While Śākta *tantras* retain the generic title *tantra* for their scriptures, Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava *tantra*s are known as *āgamas*[5] and *saṃhitās* respectively. Though the term Śaiva means 'relating to the deity Śiva', it does not preclude the worship of Goddess (Śakti), who is regarded as an inherent power of Śiva. *Tantra* and *āgama* are held synonyms[6]; however, the *āgamas* relating to Southern Śaivism[7] are rarely called a *tantra*.[8]

This chapter is confined to the revealed textual traditions which exist only in Sanskrit. Tamil has divinely inspired poetic compositions,[9] and legends that ascribe the authorship of certain literary/grammatical works to Śiva.[10] Yet, it never claims to possess a religious tradition that developed from the textual sources, which are believed to be revealed. [11]

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[5] The term *āgama* is explained in several ways: *āgama* means "something that has come forth." Since it emanates from Śiva, it is called an *agama*. A Sanskrit verse explains the meaning of the term *āgama* as follows: "The *āgama*s originated from the faces of Śiva, fell on the ears of Parāśakti, and spread in the world as the *mata* (religion) of the Śivabhaktas."

> āgatam śivavaktrebhyaḥ gatam ca girijāmukhe
>
> matam ca śivabhaktānām āgamam ceti kathyate ∥

See M. Arunachalam, *The Śaivāgamas* (Mayuram, Tamil Nadu: Gandhi Vidyalayam, 1983), 12.

[6] *Tantra* and *āgama* are used interchangeably in this dissertation.

[7] I borrow this term from Brunner who mentions the two branches of Āgamic Śaivism : Southern Śaivism and Northern Śaivism. ''These convenient appellations do not indicate the birthplace of the two schools, but the country where they finally took root.'' See "Jñāna and Kriyā: Relation between Theory and Practice in the Śaiv*āgamas*" in *Ritual and Speculation in Early Tantrism*, ed. Teun Goudriaan (New York: State University New York Press, 1992), 38.

[8] Hélène Brunner, "Importance de la literature āgamique pour l'ètude des religions vivantes de l'Inde." *Indologica Taurinensia* Vols.3-4 (1975-76):108.

[9] The devotional hymns are generally believed to have been inspired by Śiva or Murukaṉ, creators of the Tamil language. (Kamil Zvelebil, *Companion Studies to the Tamil Literature,*251) For instance, one of the *Tēvāram* saints Cuntarar is dumbfounded when he is commanded by Śiva to sing to him. Śiva, then suggests that he begin the composition with a word *pittā* (the insane) as Cuntarar has berated him as *pittā* at the time Śiva intervened at his wedding. Thus, Cuntarar`s first hymn is *pittā piraicūṭī* (O the insane! One who wears the moon on his head!). See *Periyapurāṇam*, Verses 216-220.

[10] For instance, according to Nakkīrar`s commentary on the *Iṟaiyaṉār`s Kaḷaviyal*, the Lord of Ālavāy himself composed the treatise on the subject matter of *Akattiṇai* (Tamil love-poetry). In addition, three metrical compositions are attributed to Śiva: (a) a verse beginning with *koṅkutērvāḻkkai* in *Kuṟuntokai* (b) Tiruvālavāy uṭaiyār aruḷic ceyta *Tirumukap pācuram* incorporated in the eleventh *tirumuṟai*. (c) A solitary stanza *aṭiyārkku eḷiyaṉ* commanding Umāpati, the last of the *cantāṉa kuravar*, to perform *nirvāṇadīkṣā* on Peṟṟāṉ Cāmpāṉ.

[11] Āriya mumtami ḻumuṭa ṉēcollik

kārikai yārkkuk karuṇaicey tāṉē (TM 65:1-2)

The above lines from the *Tirumantiram* claim that the *āgamas* were also revealed in Tamil. However, we do not have any evidence to substantiate it.

The *Tirumantiram* is a medieval Tamil text that explicitly identifies with the *āgamic* tradition by designating itself as an *āgama,* and its internal divisions as *tantra*. In one of the autobiographical verses found in the prologue of the text, Tirumūlar states that having daily contemplated Śiva wearing a crescent moon, he began to compose the *āgama*.[12] He also maintains that he was renowned for his capabilities for enunciating a *Śivāgama*.[13] This is supported by Verse 101 which states that Mūlan delivered a beautiful (Ta. *cuntara*, Skt.*sundara*) *āgamic* discourse in three thousand verses, grouped into nine *tantras*.[14] However, the text distances itself from the establishment of temple and temple ritual, the focal points of the *āgamas* of Southern Śaivism.

In this chapter, I argue that the *Tirumantiram* betrays an ambiguous attitude towards the *āgamas* by recognizing their authority and appropriating their conceptual framework for the exposition of living liberation on one hand, and challenging the fundamental presuppositions of Śaivāgamic culture on the other: the primacy of ritual, unequal access to God and liberation dictated by class/caste (*varṇa/jāti*) considerations. According to the *āgamas* of Southern Śaivism, *kriyā* constitutes the primary means of liberation after death.[15] Though ordinary initiation (*dīkṣā*)

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[12] tanti matipuṉai araṉaṭi nāṭorum
cintaicey tākamam ceppaluṟ ṟēṉē (TM 73:3-4)

[13] ceppum civākamam eṉumap pērpeṟṟum (TM 74:1)

[14] …..mūlaṉ...
tantiram oṉpatu cārvu āyiram
cuntara ākamac col moḻintāṉē (TM 101:2-4)
Nonetheless, the *Tirumantiram* seems to suggest in the following lines that the *Vedāgamas* are the primary texts and any work that emerges to interpret them is a *tantra.*   Hench, each Tantra of the Tirumantiram may be considered an illumination of the primary text. The Vedas and the *āgamas* are spoken of together because the Tirumantiram maintains that there exists no distinction between them.
ākum aṉāti kalaiyā kamavētam
ākumat tantira mannūl vaḻiniṟṟal (TM 2379: 1-2)
Beginngless are the treatises the *āgamas* and the Vedas
Tantra is to act in accordance with them.

[15] *Kriyā* is privileged in *āgamic* Śaivism whereas *jñāna* is celebrated by the Tamil school of Śaiva Siddhānta. A more balanced view is observable in the Kashmir Śaivism "which, although giving Jñāna a certain superiority over Kriyā at Śiva's level, sees no divorce between reflection and action, and whose highest speculations were always

is granted to all four *varṇas*, and mixed castes, the *āgamas* are divided on the issue of accessibility of liberation to the majority of non-*dvijas*, who are debarred from the *nirvāṇadīkṣā* and the *ācāryābhiṣeka*. Besides, public worship done in temples (*parārthakriyā*) is the exclusive domain of Śivabrāhmaṇas or Ādiśaivas and the rules regarding proximity to God are governed by class/caste considerations. By foregrounding the classical Tamil concept of immanence of the sacred in the body-space and by establishing the dual path of yoga and *jñāna* to realize the divine within and become divine, the *Tirumantiram* sets forth a new theory of liberation that eliminates caste elitism and that shatters the primacy of ritual in the soteriological domain.

Another important aspect connected to its ideology of liberation is the propagation of monastic Śaivism. Richard Davis observes, "Emission and reabsorption are ubiquitous principles of the manifest cosmos and so may be observed in many different domains."[16] In the ritual domain, he continues, "the householder and the renouncer mirror, by their own actions and the purposes with which they undertake them, Śiva's activities of emission and reabsorption, respectively."[17] The *Tirumantiram* identifies yoga with the path of reabsorption, and lays down ascetic values as a pre-requisite to the attainment of living liberation. By inculcating the ideals of renunciation and penance in the indigenous population of Tamil Nadu, generally classified as *śūdras* whose intent is enjoyment (*bhoga*) alone, the *Tirumantiram* paved a way for non-Brahman (Vēḷāḷa) dominated Śaiva monasteries (*maṭhas*) to emerge later in the Tamil country.

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nourished by a sustained practice." See Helene Brunner, "Jñana and Kriyā: Relation between Theory and Practice in the Śaiv*āgamas*", 38.

[16] "Becoming a Śiva, an Acting as One in Śaiva worship" in *Ritual and Speculation in Early Tantrism,* ed. Teun Goudriaan (Albany:State University of New York Press, 1992), 109.

[17] *Ritual in an Oscillating Universe: Worshipping Śiva in Medieval India* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 47.

At the same time, *Śivayoga* (one of the terms in the text denoting liberation), as conceptualized by the *Tirumantiram* is not at all devoid of *bhoga*.[18]

The *Tirumantiram*'s relationship with Vedic revelation is also highly complex and ambiguous. The text does not reject Vedic revelation, but assigns a lower position to it. It reconceptualises Vedic sacrificial liturgy, intended to sustain the universe, as a yogic means to personal salvation, and interprets liberation in terms of its own *Vedānta-Siddhānta* doctrine. This is generally interpreted as an attempt by the text to reconcile the differing Vedic and āgamic traditions by introducing a fresh soteriological exposition *"Vedānta-Siddhānta"* in Tamil. However, by adopting the basic stance of inclusivism, the *Tirumantiram* asserts the superiority of the *āgamas*, with which it identifies itself, over the Vedas. The *Tirumantiram*'s efforts in this direction have to be understood in the background of a far more complex relationship between the *āgamas* and the Vedas. The *tantric* revelation is seen "in contrast to the ancient, orthodox Brahmanical revelation of the Veda that the Tantras reject completely or accept as a lower level of scriptural authority."[19] For instance, the *Mṛgendrāgama* begins with a discussion of "how the old Vedic forms of worship became superseded by the Śaiva cult."[20] The more esoteric a cult is, less it sees itself in line with the Vedic revelation. The purity rules of Brahmans are contravened

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[18] The monastic life envisaged by the *Tirumantiram* is not devoid of sexual elements as *paryaṅgayoga* is recognized as one of the primary forms of yoga. This antinomian practice might have been one of the reasons for "Siddha"Tirumūlar or his colleagues not being accorded recognition in the preceptorial lineage of orthodox Śaiva Vēḷāḷa maṭhas that were established in the sixteenth century or later. Though Tiruvāvaṭuturai and Dharmapuram *ādhīnams* (Ta. *ātīṉam*) claim to be belonging to the Kailāsa lineage as Tirumūlar does, and trace their preceptorial line to Nandi, the guru of Tirumūlar, they do not include Tirumūlar in their spiritual lineage. This is in spite of the strong connections Tirumūlar has with Tiruvāvaṭuturai where he is said to have performed yoga according to the *Periyapurāṇam*. His *samādhi* is also located at Tiruvāvaṭuturai. "They know [those at the Tiruvāvaṭuturai ādhīnam] the present institution was founded by the sixteenth century Namacicivaya, and they are willing to take his lineage back through the legends of the earlier lineage preceptors (santanacarya) to Parmaesvara Himself, but when it comes to historical or quasi-historical figures, they draw the line at Meykantar …" The Tiruvāvaṭuturai *ādhīnam* betrays the same kind of ambiguity towards another Śaiva saint Tirumāḷikaittēvar, connected to the the *ādhīnam*, who was also recognized as one of the Siddhas. See Kathleen Koppedrayer, "The Sacred Presence of the Guru: The Velala Lineage of Tiruvavaduturai, Dharmapuram and Tiruppanantal," 167-68, 157-208.

[19] Gavin Flood, *The Tantric Body*, 8.

[20] Surendranath Dasgupta, *A History of Indian Philosophy* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1954), 21.

in some of the *tantric* cults. Sometimes the Vedas are condemned as false teachings.[21] In contrast, the Saiddhāntika *tantras* proclaim that they are the essence of the Vedas.[22]

This chapter is divided into three sections: In the first I demonstrate that the *Tirumantiram* differs in content and form from temple –centered *āgamas* of Southern Śaivism,[23] that are generally deemed to have been divided into the four *pādas*. This is followed by a discussion in which I suggest that the concept of living liberation, as articulated by the *Tirumantiram*, can be considered a reaction to the application of the Vedic system of social hierarchy (*varṇa*) by the *āgamas* to determine the eligibility for having access to God in the temple, and for liberation and preceptorhood. In the second, I explain the four elements that constitute the *āgamic* conceptual framework adopted by the Tirumantiarm. The final section is devoted to the discussion on the treatment of Vedic revelation in the *Tirumantiram*. Through the strategy of reinterpretation, the text illustrates that no fundamental differences exist between the two divine revelations, the Vedic and *āgamic*.

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[21] For instance, see the following excerpts from the Kulārṇavatantra:
vedaśāstrārṇave ghore tāḍyamānā itastataḥ
kālormigrāhagrastāśca tiṣṭhanti hi kutārkikāḥ (Ku.1:88)
vedādyanekaśāstrāṇi svalpāyurvighnakoṭaya (1:102a)
na vedādhyayanānmuktirna śāstrapaṭhanādapi (1:104a)

[22] vedasāramidaṃ tantraṃ tasmād vaidika ācaret |
Vedāntāryamidaṃ jñānaṃ siddhāntaṃ paramaṃ śubham ||Makuṭa 1-22 ||
ūrdhvaśrodbhavaṃ śreṣṭhamaṣṭāvimśati tantrakam |
vedasārārthadaṃ jñeyam......   Makuṭa || 1-23 ||

[23] The primary ritualistic form of āgamic worship is *pūjā*, which is of two types*: ātmārthapūjā* (worship undertaken to attain personal ends) *parārtha pūjā* (worship done for the benefits of others). Brunner defines them as follows: "The *ātmārthapūjā* is the cult one performs in private, on one's personal image of Śiva, which is usually the moveable linga one has received from the guru on the day of the *dīkṣā*; *parārthapūjā* is the cult performed in a temple, on the steady image of Śiva sheltered in the inner sanctuary, by an officiating priest (gurukkal in Tamil Nadu)." Though Brunner points to the difficulties in classifying *pūjā* on the basis of moveable and immoveable images, she agrees that *ātmārthapūjā* and *parārthapūjā* largely correspond to private worship and temple worship respectively. See Helene Brunner, "*Ātmārthapūjā* versus *parārthapūjā* in the Śaiva Tradition" in *The Sanskrit Tradition and Tantrism,* ed. Teun Gaudriaan (Leiden:E.J. Brill, 1990),.6-7. The expression "temple-centered" *āgamas* of Southern Śaivism refer to those that deal with *parārthapūjā*.

I

The Tirumantiram and the Śaivāgamas

This section explores the relation between the *Tirumantiram* and the Śaivāgamas. Hence, the structure and the content of the text are the foci of discussion. Though the *āgamas* and the *Tirumantiram* were composed for different categories of audience, both of them share a common conceptual framework. I shall first show by undertaking a comparative study of the text with the *Suprabheda-* one of the nine *āgama*s mentioned in the prologue of the text- that the *Tirumantiram* differs in structure, content and spirit from the temple-centred *āgamas* of Southern Śaivism and that the Tirumantiram shifts focus away from temple and ritual to the human body, *yoga* and *jñāna*. Secondly, whereas the Sanskrit *āgamas* adopt the *varṇa* classification of the Vedic tradition to decide which categories are eligible for liberation and preceptorhood, and contain contradictory statements on the eligibility of the indigenous Tamil populace for liberation and preceptorhood, the vernacular *āgama Tirumantiram* pronounces that its message is for all who inhabit the five Tamil *maṇṭalams* or regions.[24] Thus, the Tirumantiram embraces the whole Tamil community disregarding the concept of *varṇa* in its discussion on liberation and preceptorhood.

The *Tirumantiram* emerged during the period in which the Śaivāgamic culture had taken roots in Tamil soil. It is evident that the *āgamas* had existed before the Tirumanitiam was composed. Dasgupta is of the opinion that most of the *āgamas* were completed around the ninth century,[25] though they cannot be dated before the sixth century C.E. Brunner endorses this view by stating that the *āgamas* of Śaiva Siddhānta School were redacted between the 6th or 7th and the

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[24] Tirumūlar states " Let this world enjoy the bliss I attained" (*nāṉ peṟṟa iṉpam peṟuka iv vaiyakam* TM 85:1) I take the expression *iv vaiyakam* (this world) as referring to the five Tamil *maṇṭalams* (tamiḻ maṇṭalam aintum tāviya ñāṉam 1646:1). According to Narayana Ayyar, they are Cēra maṇṭalam, Cōḻa maṇṭalam, Pāṇṭiya maṇṭalam Toṇṭai maṇṭalam (Pallava) and Koṅku maṇṭalam (Origin and Early History of Śaivism in South India, 218).

[25] Dasgupta, *A History of Indian Philosophy,* 16.

9th centuries.[26] Epigraphic evidence suggests that many *āgamas* existed as early as 700 C.E.[27] The inscription on the Kailāsanātha temple at Kanchipuram refers to the Pallava king Mahendravarman II (695-728) as the one who got rid of all his impurities abiding by the path of Śaiva Siddhānta. The king calls himself as an adherent of Śaiva Siddhānta and the one who is knowledgeable in the *āgamas*. Rajasimha Pallava (686- 705 A.D.) refers to himself as *āgamapriya*.[28] A proliferation of the ā*gama*s by the tenth century is attested by a wealth of references drawn from the *āgamic* corpus, found in the works of Abhinavagupta.

The *Tirumantiram* contains direct references to the *āgamas*.[29] It regards them as revealed texts[30] that deal with the three eternal entities: God, the bound soul, and bondage.[31] Sadāśiva is held to be the provenance of these texts.[32] The expression *añcāmukam*[33] occurring in verse 57 identifies the fifth face *īśāna* of the Śivalinga as the source of the *āgamas*. The total number of

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[26] Helene Brunner, *"Ātmārthapūjā versus Parārthapūjā in the Śaiva Tradition"*, 5.

[27] Richard Davis, *Ritual in an Oscillating Universe,* 12.

[28] M. Arunachalam, *The* Saivāgamas, 5.

[29] Tēvāram attests to the fact that the *āgamas* were in vogue even before the period of the *Tirumantiram* . Śiva created both the Vedas and the *āgama*s: *tokuttavaṉ arumaṟai aṅkam ākamam vakuttavaṉ* (3: 23:6) . In this hymn the verbs *toku* and *vaku* occur in the sense of making or creating. Śiva taught the *āgamas* to Umā: *iṉaiyilā iṭai māmarutilleḻu paṇaiyilākamam colluntaṉ pāṅkikkē* (5: 15:4). Śiva favours *ākamacīlar* (*āgamaśīla*) with his grace*: ammāṉē ākamacīlark karuḷ nalkum pemmāṉē* (7:96:6). The Vedic recitation is mingled with the singing of devotional hymns by those who are knowledgeable in *āgamas*: ākamaṅkaḷari vārari tōttiraṅkaḷ viraviya vētaoli (7:100:8).

[30] attaṉ civaṉcoṉṉa ākama nūlneṟi (TM 247:2)
 aṇṇal aruḷāl aruḷum civākamam (58:1; 64:1)
 aṇṇal aruḷāl aruḷum tivyākamam (60:1)
cf. "śāstram śivamukhodgatam" (Kāmikāgama. 1:10); ajitam nāma yattantram śivātprāptam (Ajitāgama 1:11)

[31] patipacu pācaṅkaḷ ākamam (TM 895)

[32] vāṟē catāciva māṟilā ākamam (TM 894)

[33] There is little consensus among the *āgamas* as to which *āgama*s were emitted from which face of Sadāśiva. Usually the commentators of the *Tirumantiram* interpret the *añcāmukam* as Īśāna from which the *āgama*s originated. This reading accords with the information found in the Kāmikāgama :
 īśānavaktrādūrdhvasthājjñānaṃ yatkāmikādikam | (Tantrāvatara Paṭala, 1:22:1).
However, according to the Ajitāgama, the Vedas and the *āgamas* were emitted from the five faces of Sadāśiva (a) Īśāna : Kāmikam, Yogajam, Cintyam, kāraṇam. Ajitam, Dīptam, Sūkṣmam, Sahasrākhyam, Aṁśumat, Suprabhedakam and the four Vedas with their aṅgas
   (b) Sadyojāta: Vijayam, Pārameśam, Niśvāsam, Prodgītam, and Mukhabimbam
   (c) Vāmadeva: Siddham, Santānam, Nnṛsiṁham, Candrabhāsakam, and Vimalam
   (d) Aghora : Svāyaṁbhuvam, Vīram, Rauravam, Makuṭam, and Kiraṇam
   (e) Tatpuruṣa : Lalitam, Āgneyam, and Vātulam
 (Ajitāgama, 1:106-113).

āgamas known to the *Tirumantiram* is twenty-eight. [34] A gradual development of the *āgamic* tradition is suggested in verse 1429 of Tantra five, which states that the primary *āgamas* were nine in number and they expanded into twenty-eight over the course of time.[35] The nine *āgamas* mentioned in the *Tirumantiram* (*Kāraṇa, Kāmika, Vīra, Cintya, Vātula, Yāmala* (Ta.*Vyāmalam*), *Kālottara, Suprabheda*, and *Makuṭa*)[36] are considered the basic texts of Śuddha Śaivism, the religion represented in the T*irumantiram* that envisions the unity of the Vedānta and Siddhānta.[37]

The Structure of Śaivāgamas

The Periyapurāṇam identifies the subject-matter of the *Tirumantiram* to be related to the four-fold structural classifications of the *āgamas*.[38] Richard Davis states, "A proper Śaivāgama should stand on four feet (*pāda*): the feet of knowledge (*jñāna*), ritual action (*kriyā*), proper conduct (*caryā*), and disciplinary practice (*yoga*)."[39] Nevertheless, the statement that the *āgamas* are made up of four sections is not always true or valid. Among the Śaiv*āgamas* available to us

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[34] añcaṉamēṉi arivaiyōr pākattaṉ
   añco ṭirupattu mūṉṟuḷa ākamam
   añcali kūppi aṟupat taṟuvarum
   añcā mukattil arumporuḷ kēṭṭatē (TM 57)

[35] In addition to the number of *āgama*s, the *Tirumantiram* also speaks of the total number of letters inscribed in the *āgamic* corpus.
aṇṇal aruḷāl aruḷum civākamam
eṇṇil irupatteṉ kōṭi nūṟāyiram (TM 58:1-2)
aṇṇal aruḷāl aruḷum tivyākamam
viṇṇil amarar tamakkum viḷaṅkaritu
eṇṇil eḻupatu kōṭi nūṟāyiram (TM 60:1-3)
This aspect is also found in Sanskrit *āgama*s. For instance, the *Ajitāgama* (1:61-105) speaks of a total number of letters contained (*granthasaṁkyā*) in each of the *āgama*s.

[36] peṟṟaṉal ākamaṉ kāraṇaṉ kāmikam
   uṟṟaṉal vīram uyarcintam vātuḷam
   maṟṟav viyāmaḷa mākuṅkā lōttaran
   tuṟṟaṉaṟ cuppiraṉ collu makuṭamē (TM 63)

[37] TM 1429

[38] ñāṉam mutal nāṉku malar nal tirumantira mālai (3589:2)
nalam ciṟanta ñāṉa yōkak kiriyā cariyai yelām
malarnta moḻit tirumūlat tēvar kaḻal vaṇaṅki (3589:2)

[39] "Becoming a Śiva, and Acting as One, in Śaiva worship" in Teun Gaudrian, ed. *Ritual and Speculation in early Tantrism* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1992), 107.
The Āgamas also speak of the four-fold knowledge: *kriyācaryāsamopetaṃ yogajñānānvitaṃ param* (Kāmikāgama 1:13)

now, only two *mūlāgamas* (primary *āgamas*), the *Kiraṇa* and the *Suprabheda*, and two *upāgamas* (subsidiary *āgamas*), the *Mṛgendra* and the *Mataṅgapārameśvara*, have all four sections intact. This quadripartition of text is absent even in unpublished primary or subsidiary *āgamas*.[40] Brunner is, therefore, of the opinion that the majority of the *āgamas* dealing with temple Śaivism had only sections called *paṭalas* of ritualistic material interspersed with sections, mainly concerned with knowledge.[41]

That the *Tirumantiram* differs from the temple-centred *āgamas* will be evident if we compare the text with one of them, the Suprabheda, mentioned in the prologue of the *Tirumantiram*. The *Tirumantiram* is divided into nine *tantra*s whereas the Suprabheda is classified into the four *pādas*. The largest section in the Suprabheda is the *kriyāpāda* containing 54 *paṭalas*. It is mainly concerned with temple ritual, that can be classified into three groups: (a) rituals relating to the construction of temples and consecration of images, dealt with in the following *paṭalas*: *grāmādi lakṣaṇa, kārṣaṇa* (ploughing the site), *prāsāda-vāstu lakṣaṇa, ādyeṣṭaka, garbhanyāsa, prāsāda lakṣaṇa, linga lakṣaṇa, sakala lakṣaṇa, aṅkurārpaṇa, linga pratiṣṭhā, sakala pratiṣṭhā, śakti pratiṣṭhā*. (b) daily rites: After the installation and consecration of deities, daily *pūjā* is performed according to the rules laid down in Section 13 titled *nitya-utsava vidhi* (c) Annual festivals: *Śiva utsavavidhi, Kṛttikādīpavidhi, āṣāḍhapūrakarmavidhi* deal with special festivals. On the other hand, the *Tirumantiram* does not discuss *parārthapūjā* though it is not antagonistic to it.[42]

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[40] Helene Brunner, "The Four pādas of Saivāgamas," 262.
[41] Ibid., 273-74.
[42] Five verses in Tantra Two (515-519) discuss temple worship. Verse 515 speaks about the dangers of uprooting the permanent *linga* in the shrine. The next says that removal of even a stone from the temple wall will spell disaster to the kingdom. Verses 517 and 518 warn of dire consequences (famine, epidemic, loss of king's valour) of the failure to perform *pūjas* regularly or abandoning them in entirety. The last verse alerts to the dangers of unqualified Brahmins as priests in the temple .

The *caryāpāda* is a less clearly defined section in the Suprabheda. It more or less resembles the *kriyā* section in content and contains descriptions of rituals such as *dīkṣā*, *ṣoḍaśakriyā*, *vratācāra*, and *pavitrārohaṇa*, and funerary rites such as *pitṛyajña* and *sapiṇḍīkaraṇa*. However, these rituals are not always found in the *caryā* section of *āgamas*. Brunner points out that though the *Kiraṇāgama* includes *dīkṣā* and related rituals in the *kriyāpāda,* it describes rituals connected to the establishment of images *(pratiṣṭhā)* in the *caryāpāda*. She also notes that the *yogapāda* of the Kiraṇa incorporates mortuary rites as well as *liṅgoddhāra* rites that allow a non-Śaiva entry into the sect, along with *dīkṣā*. Variability of content in the *kriyā* section is one of the grounds on which she decides that the four-fold division of the *āgamas* was a late innovation. Considering the fact that eighty percent of extant *āgamas,* both published and unpublished, deal with ritual, she arrives at a conclusion that the *āgamas* were, in the first instance, composed to lay down rules relating to ritual, both private and temple.[43]

However, this cannot be true of the *Tirumantiram*, which may be aptly described as a text, primarily composed to elucidate the concept of living liberation and the means to attain it. The fourth *Tantra*, despite the fact that it mainly deals with *kriyā* in the form of *cakrapūjā* reveals that *kriyā* alone would not lead to liberation unless it is associated with yoga and *jñāna*.[44] It may be noted that yoga and *jñāna pādas* in the Suprabheda are very small and insignificant compared to its bulky *kriyā pāda*.

The absence of material on *parārthakriyā* in the *Tirumantiram* is very conspicuous when considering the power and influence wielded by temples in the early medieval period between 700-1200 A.D. "Pallava, Calukya, Rāṣṭrakuta, Paramara, Kalacuri, Candella, and Cōḻa kings all

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[43] Helene Brunner, "The Four pādas of Saivāgamas," 260-78.
[44] TM 1008-1014.

constructed imperial-scale temples for the worship of Śiva, under the guidance of Śaiva rājagurus" and the Śaiv*āgamas* "articulated detailed, complex systems of ritual centered around pūjā offerings made in their grandest forms in temples."[45]   The temple remained to be the expression of the divine power with which the king was invested. Karen Prentiss states, "There was a presumed homology between the king and God. Just as the imperial temple system manifested the overlordhip of the king, the defined space of the temple itself manifested the overlordship of God."[46] Though the *Tirumantiram* acknowledges the relation between the temple and kingship and stresses the importance of performance of *pūjā* without interruption, it does not advocate temple worship as Tēvāram saints do. This may be interpreted that in the Śaiva religion envisioned by the *Tirumantiram*, the Śivabrāhmaṇa looses his privileged position conferred by the *āgama*s and is replaced by the *jñānācārya* (the preceptor who confers knowledge), probably presiding a *maṭha*.[47]

The Śivabrāhmaṇas became a prominent religious category in the medieval period due to the emergence of public worship held in temples in accordance with Śaiva Siddhānta principles. They were brought into the Tamil country from various parts of India. The *āgamas* distinguish them from other Brahmans and categorically state that only the Śivabrāhmaṇas[48] could perform

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[45] Richard Davis, "Cremation and Liberation" in *History of Religions* Vol. 28, No. 1 (Aug., 1988), 40-41.

[46] *The Embodiment of bhakti,* 120.

[47] The *āgama*s speak of two types of *ācārya*. The description of the first category is usually found at the end of the chapter on *ācāryābhiṣeka* in the *āgama*s that are concerned with *ātmārthapūjā*. *Dīkṣā* (granting initiation), *pratiṣṭhā* (installation of the image of Śiva for those who seek it and *vyākhyāna* (interpretation of Scriptures- *āgama*s) constitute his three primary duties. Brunner identifies him as "the guru of a limited community of disciples centered round a *maṭha*, each occupied with his or her own *sādhanā*. Often likened to a king, whose majesty and authority he must have had, the *ācārya* is nevertheless, above all, a highly respectable spiritual and religious teacher, into whom Śiva descends at the time of giving *dīkṣā*." The second category of *ācāryas* are those who perform *parārthapūjā* in temples and they must be Ādiśaiva brāhmaṇas by birth. (See "Ātmārthapūjā versus parārthapūjā in the Śaiva tradition," 15-16).

[48] ādau śivastavamastīti ādiśaiva udīritaḥ
   śivena dīkṣitāścaite te śivabrāhmaṇā smṛtāḥ (Suprabhedāgama, caryāpāda 1:43)

public worship in temples. Prentiss explains their prominence in reference to liturgical service of

the temple:

> The *ādiśaivas* are a privileged group, for they are the ones who are pure enough to be priests by virtue of their birth in one of five *gotras* (lineages). As priests, they have the authority and capacity to perform *āgamic* rituals in temples for the benefit of all other categories of Śaivas. The *āgamas* make the specific point that this category ritually encompasses all other categories of Śaiva worshippers: "Worship on behalf of others must always be done by a Śaivabrāḥmaṇa. A pious *ādiśaiva*, best among the brahmans, does worship regularly, but if others should perform worship other than for their own behalf alone, the worshippers will be destroyed." Thus, the Śaivāgamas invest a certain category of brahmans with the pre-eminent role of worship in the temple, where they perform pūjā to Śiva on behalf of a public audience.[49]

Prentiss also notes that proximity to God in the temple is determined by the factor of

*varṇ*a/caste. Śaivas are classified into five groups in the *āgamas*: *anādiśaiva* (Śiva), *ādiśaiva*,

mahāśaiva (Vedic brahmans), *anuśaiva* (kṣatriyas and vaiśyas) and *antara śaiva* (śūdras). Only

the *ādiśaivas* have access to the *garbhagṛha*, the most sacred part of the temple. Other categories

of Śaivas take their place away from the sanctum sanctorum in the less sacred parts of the temple.

> In āgamic understanding, the closer one is to Śiva, the source of emission, the closer one is to salvation. The ādiśaivas are with Śiva in the sanctum, and they recite *āgamic* mantras. The *mahāśaivas*, "who have gone on the other hand [of the ocean] of the Vedas, must praise and make a mental representation of the God, avid for a view of Him." The *anuśaivas* stand out at the forefront of the mahāmaṇḍapa, able to view the lingam directly. And the *śūdras*, who sing the Tamil hymns (*draviḍastotra*), stand at the back of the *mahāmaṇḍapa*, able to view Śambhu (the source of happiness, a name for Śiva) : "In the mahāmaṇḍapa, in the farthest region up to Nandi, the *avantara sat-śūdras* [the highest category of śūdras] are able to sing the Tamil hymns while looking at Śambhu, consistent with good practice.[50]

Those who transgress the rules related to spatial hierarchy in temple are threatened with

serious consequences. "The one who, out of perversity, leaves his own place and goes [too far

into the temple], although he has been told not to, will certainly go to hell, tossed there by Śiva.

And even if one goes too far out of ignorance, there will nevertheless be some disturbance in the

kingdom."[51]

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[49] *The Embodiment of bhakti,* 123.
[50] Ibid.,124.
[51] Richard Davis, *Worshipping Śiva in Medieval India,* 70.

However, the *Tirumantiram*'s restrained approach towards the institution of temple and the absence of material pertaining to *parārthakriyā* mask an opposition to the centrality given to the temple and to the privileged position enjoyed by the Śivabrāhmaṇas or *ādiśaiva*s who claim ownership to the revealed knowledge enshrined in the *āgamas*. The *Tirumantiram* implicitly questions the fundamental criterion of a Śaiva priest that he should be born of one of the *ādiśaiva* lineages.

> This is what the great Nandi declared:
> Epidemics multiply in the war-torn country
> Famine stalks the land
> If the Brahman only in name [devoid of any other qualities]
> Worships the Lord [in the temple] [52]

Furthermore, the *Tirumantiram* does not endorse the view of Śaiva Siddhānta that the human body "represents that which is farthest from the true and pure nature of Śiva."[53] The two principles - emission (creation) and absorption (destruction) - represent converse paths of movement: Emission denotes the path from unity and purity to differentiation and impurity, whereas re-absorption represents the inverse. According to the principle of emission, the human body remains at the farthest end of impurity on the purity-impurity continuum. However, the *Tirumantiram* disagrees stating that by realizing God's presence within the body, one could attain embodied liberation.

> He who mingles in the body
> Lord of the excellent country called the body
> He who emits fragrance within the body
> He, the Nandi,
> They seek him in land all
> Not knowing the truth that he is within the body.[54]

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[52] pērkoṇṭa pārppāṉ pirāṉ taṉṉai arccittāl
  pērkoṇṭa nāṭṭukkup pollā viyātiyām
  pārkoṇṭa nāṭṭukkup pañcamumām eṉṟē
cīrkoṇṭa nanti terintu uraittāṉē (TM 519).
[53] Karen Prentiss, *The Embodiment of Bhakti* "121.
[54] kāyak kuḷappaṉaik kāyaṉaṉ nāṭaṉaik
  kāyattiṉuḷḷē kamaḻkiṉṟa nantiyait
  tēyattuḷē eṅkum tēṭittirivarkaḷ

The *Tirumantiram* categorically states that only the ignorant talk about impurity (*ācūcam*)[55], and that there is no point in categorizing people as pure and impure because human birth itself is impure. [56] The concept of *ācūcam* is not applicable to those who observe the paths of *caryā*, *kriyā*, *yoga* and *jñāna*.[57]

Social categories and Liberation

Class/caste (*varṇa/jāti*) considerations remain so influential in the *āgamic* religion[58] that social classification of four *varṇas*, initially mentioned in the Vedas is used to frame the discourse on initiation, preceptorhood and spatial hierarchy in temples. According to the *puruṣasūkta of the* Ṛg Veda (10:90), various elements of the universe, including the four *varṇas* emerged from the dismembered body of the *puruṣa* who was sacrificed by devas. This is reproduced in the *jātibhedavidhi* section of the *Suprabheda*.[59] The duties (dharma) of each *varṇa* are also enumerated in the *Āgama* in conformity with the Dharmaśāstras.[60]

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kāyattuḷ niṉṟa karutta ṟiyārē (TM 2550, 2071)

[55] TM 2551.

[56] TM 2551.

[57] TM 2552. The four categories mentioned in the verses -*niyamattaṉ, araṉai arccippavaṉ, aṅki vaḷarppōr, ñāṉi*- are interpreted as the followers of *caryā, kriyā, yoga and jñāna* respectively.

[58] Even in the bhakti religion of Tēvāram separate modes of worship are adopted by people of different classes: Brahmans worship Śiva with milk, curd, and ghee $(3:1:1)$ whereas non-brahman Tamil bhaktas adore him with water and flower $(1:5:7)$. Everyone is invited to venerate Śiva, but in keeping with their social stations. However, liberation after death is guaranteed to Tamil devotees in Tēvāram.
Clear you mind of all doubts
If you strew the blossom of devotion to Śiva at Ārūr
It will result in liberation.
cittam teḷivīrkāḷ attaṉ ārūraip
patti malar tūva mutti yākumē (1:91:1)

[59] mukheṣu brāhmaṇājātāstat bāhvoḥ kṣatriyāstathā || 2-2 ||
  vaiśyā ūruśca vijñeyāḥ pādayoḥ śūdrajātayaḥ |
  caturvarṇasya saṃyogāt pratilomānulomataḥ || 2-3 ||

[60] …………………………………………………………
laukikācāramārgeṇa sarveṣāṃ vartanaṃ śṛṇu || 2-8 ||
addhyanañcāddhyāpanaṃ yajanaṃyājanaṃ tathā |
dānaṃ pratigrahañcaiva teṣāṃ karmāṇi cocyate || 2-9 ||

It should be mentioned that the tantric tradition, in general, confers the right to study the Scriptures and to execute ritual to all, irrespective of class or caste distinctions.

> One's secular social standing is of no consequence whatsoever within the sphere of truly spiritual hierarchy. Moreover, women as well as men are eligible not only to receive the highest initiation but also to confer it in the role of guru. …In striking contrast to the Vedic texts, wherein even the hearing of the Veda is forbidden to a Śūdra, and wherein women are consigned to a secondary (though highly praised and sentimentalized) sphere of spiritual competency and aspiration, the Tantras transcend the limits of social and biological differentiation.[61]

The *Kulārṇava Tantra* categorically states that initiation destroys caste identities, and hence, caste distinctions do not exist among the initiated.[62] The *Kāmikāgama* too agrees that the initiated, irrespective of caste, have access to *āgamic* knowledge.

> dīkṣāvihīnaviprādyāstrivarṇāśśūdrajātayaḥ
> savarṇādyanlomāśca śilpinaḥ kārukādayaḥ
> paṭhanti śivaśāstrañcettatpāpānnṛparāṣṭrayoḥ
> acireṇa vināśaḥ syāttasmādrājā nivārayet (kāmikāgama 1.111-112)

> The king and his country will be quickly destroyed because of the sin resulting from the study of Śaiva scriptures by uninitiated members of the first three classes starting with Brahman, śūdras, people born of mixed parentage, architects and carpenters and the like. Hence, the king must forbid them [from reading the scriptures].

Initiation is the most important religious act as far as liberation is concerned. Surdam Wayne thus explains:

> It is not an exaggeration to describe the *dīkṣā* as the central religious act in the life of a Śaivasiddhāntin. All of a devotee's religious actions make sense in terms of his initiation, since it is through the initiation that he gains the potential for liberation. All of his devotion, all his rites of worship have as their goal the fruition of the process of liberation set in motion by the *dīkṣā*. Without initiation, liberation is impossible."[63]

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jāyante brahmabāhvośca kṣatriyāstu mahāmate |
……………………………………………………..|| 2-10 ||
……………………………………………… |
jagataḥ pālananteṣāṃ svadharmaparipālanam || 2-11 ||
brahmāṇa ūrvorvaiśyānāñjananantu vidhīyate |
……………………………………………….. || 2-12 ||
……………………………………………..|
……………………………………………... || 2-13
pādayostvaṃ sṛjat śūdrān strīvarṇānāmupāsakān |
śuśrūṣāntu dvijānāñca śūdrāṇāṃ vṛttirucyate || 2-14 ||

[61] Heinrich Robert Zimmer, *Philosophies of India,* ed. Joseph Campbell (572-73.

[62] gataṃ śūdrasya śūdratvaṃ viprasyāpi ca vipratā |
  dīkṣāsaṃskārasampanne jātibhedo na vidyate || 14:91

[63] *South Indian Śaiva Rites of Initiation: The Dīkṣāvidhi of Aghoraśivācārya's Kriyākramadyotikā* (PhD diss., University of California, 1984), Lxviii-lxix.

Since śūdras are eligible for initiation, they are entitled to perform *ātmārthapūjā* and to study Śaiva Siddhānta.

> Unlike the Vedas, which exclude *śūdras* from learning or participating in the sacrificial program, the *āgamas* insist that *śūdras* also are eligible to receive initiation and thereby become "twice-borns" according to Śaiva reckoning. As such, they may-indeed, must-study the *śivajñāna* and perform the round of daily rituals prescribed as the common code of conduct for initiated Śaivas. [64]

Three categories of initiation are mentioned in the *āgamas*: *samayadīkṣā, viśeṣadīkṣā* and *nirvāṇadīkṣā*,[65] and the first two could be conferred to all without consideration of social classes. *Samyadīkṣā* is a general initiation into the sect and the initiate is given a new name and the right to perform *ātmārthapūjā* except *agnikārya*.[66] *Viśeṣadīkṣā* is a continuation of the ordinary initiation and the initiate who is reborn "from the womb of Śakti established in the fire" is entitled to execute *agnikārya*, but not *parārthapūjā*.[67] *Samyadīkṣā* and *viśeṣadīkṣā* are seen "as preparatory to *nirvāṇdīkṣā*," and one who undergoes it is designated as *dīkṣita* or *putraka* (Śiva's son).[68] In *nirvāṇdīkṣā*, the bonds of the initiated are severed with the power of mantras and the soul, cleansed of its impurities, is elevated to the realm of Śiva.[69] The *nirvāṇdīkṣā* is followed by *ācāryābhiṣeka*, which grants one the right to perform *parārthapūjā* and to grant initiation to others.

The *āgamas* hold divergent views on the eligibility of the śūdras for the third level initiation called *nirvāṇadīkṣā* and for the *ācāryābhiṣeka*.[70] The *Kāmikāgama* categorically states that only the first three castes can undergo *nirvāṇadīkṣā* and that the Brahman who extends it to a

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[64] Richard Davis, *Ritual in an Oscillating Universe*, 41.

[65] "The use of the term *nirvāṇa* alongside of its equivalent, *mokṣa*, or *mukti*, is suggestive of a Buddhist or more precisely the *Vajrayāna* context and its impact on the Śaivaite tantric literature." V.N. Drabu, Śaivagāmas, A study in the socio-economic ideas and institutions of Kashmir (200 B.C. to A.D. 700) (New Delhi : Indus Pub. Co., 1990), 70-71.

[66] Surdam Wayne, *South Indian Śaiva Rites of Initiation,* lxvii.

[67] Ibid, lxvii-viii.

[68] Ibid., lxviii.

[69] Ibid.

[70] Koppedryer notes "Not all Agamic texts raise the question, and not all texts agree on the sudra's rights" (See *The Sacred Presence of the Guru,* 313). The āgamic texts *Kāmika* and *Suprabheda* I take up for discussion are mentioned in the Tirumantiram (TM 63).

śūdra degenerates into the *śūdra* varṇa.[71] The Suprabheda permits only *satśūdras* to undergo *nirvāṇadīkṣā*. A *Satśūdra* is defined as one who is not a drunkard (*amadyapa*) and who is born of good family (*kulīna*) and is deemed equal to a vaiśya.[72] The śūdra who is denied *nirvāṇadīkṣā* is not qualified to receive *ācāryābhiṣeka* and become a preceptor.[73] The fact that the *Kāmikāgama* does not envisage a śūdra as preceptor is clear when it debars him from taking the *gotra* of his guru at the time of initiation.[74] One of the main considerations for the eligibility of a guru is the lineage to which he is attached. The *Kulārṇavatantra* states that lineage is received at the time of initiation and that no preceptorial lineage could exist without initiation. Deities too favour the preceptor coming in a succession of teachers (*pārampariyapravarttakam*).[75]

The unsettled position of the Śaivāgamas on the eligibility of *śūdras* for the *nirvāṇadīkṣā* violates the general spirit of the Tantric tradition. Wayne remarks that no levels existed in *dīkṣā* initially. Had that been the case, the *nirvānadīkṣā* must have become the prerogative of *dvija*s only at some later period. Yet, it continued to be a controversial issue in later medieval period.[76]

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[71] tato nirvāṇadīkṣāyāmadhikāri bhaveddvijaḥ
śūdraṃ hi dīkṣayitvā tu vidhānevāgrajanmanaḥ
so'pi śudratvamāpnoti dīkṣādānānna saṃśayaḥ (20:91)|

[72] caryāpāde,
kathitaścāthaśūdrastu satśūdraṃ vaiśyavat smaret |
amadyapāḥ kulīnāstu satśūdrāste prakīrtitāḥ || 2-16 ||

[73] "More importantly, the *nirvāṇadīkṣā* qualifies the initiate to undergo either the *ācārya* or *sādhaka* abhiṣeka, special ceremonies that confer the status of *ācārya* or *sādhaka* upon the initiate." (Surdam Wayne, South *Indian Śaiva Rites of Initiation,* lxxiv).

[74] kṣatriyāṇāṃ tu vaiśyāṇāṃ gotramācāryajam tu vā
naiva śūdrasya gotraṃ syādevaṃ gotravidhau matam (25:6)

[75] vinā dīkṣām na mokṣaḥ syāttaduktam śivaśāsane
sā ca na syādvināçāryamityācāryaparamparā (14:3)
devāstameva śaṃsanti pārampariyapravarttakam
gurum….. (14:5)

[76] Even in the bhakti tradition the concept of universal liberation has been a contentious issue in the Tamil country. In the Periyapurāṇam, Śiva himself finds a solution for the issue of caste that prevents his devotee Nantaṉ, pulaiyaṉ (outcaste), from entering the sacred city of Cidambaram, where Śiva is worshipped by Brahmans (dīkṣita) instead of ādiśaiva brahmans. Śiva wants his devotee Nantaṉ to visit him at the temple; at the same time, He does not want him to break the rules relating to purity-pollution, strictly adhered to by Brahmans. Hence, his proposal that Nantaṉ should sanctify himself in the fire prior to the entry into the sacred city is accepted by both Brahmans and Nantaṉ. Accordingly, the outcaste Nantaṉ enters the fire made by Brahmans and emerges as a Brahman sage. Thereafter, the re-born Nantaṉ enters the temple and mingles with God. (See Periyapurāṇam, 1046-1082)

According to a legend connected to Umāpati Śivācārya of the 14ᵗʰ century- the fourth and the last

of the Tamil Śaiva Siddhanta preceptors (*cantāna kuravar*), a person of lower birth named Perrān

Cāmpān, was given the *nirvāṇadīkṣā* at the behest of Śiva himself. Śiva is said to have

dispatched a letter through Perrān Cāmpān directing Umāpati, the fallen Brahman who accepted

the Vēḷāḷa Maraiñāṇacampantar as his preceptor, to confer liberation to bearer, a letter to which

Umāpati complied. The letter written by Śiva reads thus:

> [This is] the letter written to [Umāpati] of Korraṅkuṭi by Cittambalavan who is easily accessible to
> devotees. It is in order on earth to confer liberation on Perrān Cāmpān by performing initiation on him that
> would remove all differences.[77]

Besides, the text *Varṇāśramacandrikā* of the eighteenth century which argues for the eligibility

of śūdras for all levels of initiations reveal that liberation and preceptorhood for non-*dvijas*

remained as unsettled issues in the Tamil country even after the emergence Śaiva *vēḷāḷa* maṭhas

in the sixteenth century.[78]

There is hardly any evidence to suggest that the Tirumantiram too espouses the category

of *varṇa* as a criterion of eligibility for liberation.[79] On the contrary, it may be concluded that the

Tirumantiram advanced the concept of living liberation to counter the *āgamic* injunctions that

deny *śūdras* the *nirvāṇadīkṣā* and preceptorhood. Hence, the object of the presentation of this

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[77] aṭiyārkku eliyan cirrampalavan korraṅ
kuṭiyārkku elutiya kaiccīṭṭu-paṭiyin micaip
perrān cāmpānukku pētamarat tīkkai ceytu
mutti koṭukka murai.

[78] Kathleen Koppedrayer, "The 'Varṇāśramacandrikā' and the Śūdra's' Right to Preceptorhood:The Social Background of a Philosophical Debate in Late Medieval South India," *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, 19:3 (1991:Sept.):297-314.

[79] Though verse 1721 in the text mentions different types of linga for private worship of the four varṇas, it is immediately followed by an esoteric verse that speaks of Śiva taking up abode in the body of the author. The homology between the body and the universe is stressed. "Having identified the eight worlds with my body, HE took up abode there." (….puvaṇaṅkaḷ eṭṭum itu uṇarntu eṇṇuṭal kōyil koṇṭāṇē 1722:3-4). The verse also suggests that God is inscrutable to those who seek him only through external worship of linga. (atu uṇarntōn oru taṇmaiyai nāṭi etu uṇarāvakai ninraṇan īcan 1722:1-2).

doctrine was to remove the inequities and biases created by certain *āgamas* in the religious sphere of the indigenous population through *jñānadīkṣā* in place of *kriyādīkṣā*.

Asceticism and *Maṭha* (monastery)

In the Tirumantiram that glorifies the guru-centered *sanmārga* tradition, temple is replaced by *maṭha* and Śivacārya by *jñānacārya*. In other words, *maṭha* emerges as an important institution that enables the indigenous population to make liberation the final goal, work for it, and instruct others on it. It was previously noted that the entitlement of *śūdras* to these activities is severely restricted by the Śaivāgamas.

The Tirumantiram discusses the establishment of *maṭha*s, lineage, and renunciation in the prologue and sixth Tantra. The expression *Mūlaṉ maṭam* (Skt. *maṭha*) in Verse 101 could be taken as a reference to the ancient monastery headed by Mūlaṉ.[80] Verse 102 mentions the following as heads of seven *maṭhas*: Kālāṅkar, Akōrar, Tirumāḷikait Tēvar, Nātāntar, Paramāṉantar, Pōkatēvar, and Mūlar. The *maṭha* in this instance should be interpreted as an institution "based on a teacher-disciple relationship whose tradition can be traced back several centuries, and whose lineage defines the authority that governs the institution."[81] Tirumūlar refers to his lineage as Kailāsa paramparā.[82] His guru Nandi, who received instructions in nine *Āgamas* had eight students including Tirumūlar,[83] who in turn, had seven disciples.[84] Since preceptorial lineages are connected to particular sites, *Mūlaṉ maṭam* might have been located at

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[80] vanta maṭamēḻum maṉṉuñcaṉ mārkkattiṉ
  munti utikkiṉra mūlaṉ maṭavarai
  tantiram oṉpatu cārvu āyiram
  cuntara ākamac colmoḻintāṉē (TM 102)
[81] Koppedreyer, *The Sacred Presence of the Guru*, 2.
[82] vaḷappil kayilai vaḻiyil vantēṉē (TM 91:4)
[83] The eight disciples of Nandi are Sanantikaḷ nālvar (Caṉakar, Caṉantaṉar, Caṉātaṉar, Caṉarkumārar), Civayōka māmuṉi, maṉru toḷuta Patañcali, Viyākramar and Mular. (TM 67)
[84] Tirumūlar's seven disciples are Mālāṅkaṉ, Intiraṉ, Cōmaṉ, Piramaṉ, Uruttiraṉ, Kanturuk Kālāṅki, and Kañcamalaiyaṉ (TM 69).

Tiruvāvaṭutuṟai where Tirumūlar's *camāti* is now found.[85] There exists no indication in the text that the *maṭhas* maintained strong links with temples, though this had been the case in the medieval period.

The *Tirumantiram* lays down *tuṟavu* (renunciation) as fundamental to the pursuit of liberation.[86] The text reminds that Śiva himself exemplifies the concept of renunciation:

> He is virtuous, unborn, and an orphan
> He resides in burial ground and lives by alms.
> Know him to be a renunciant himself,
> Know him also as demented
> who sunders the bonds of
> those who thus renounce.[87]

The expression *tuṟakkum tavam* in Verse 1614 identifies renunciation with penance, which is a pre-requisite to acquisition of knowledge.[88] When Śivajñāna dispels the darkness of *māyā*, the renuncinat becomes a *jīvanmukta*, who is described as "uṭaluṟu ñāṉat tuṟaviyaṉ " (Living renunciant -jñānin).[89]

The notion of renunciation found in the Tirumantiram is significant in two ways. Firstly, the renunciation of *śūdras* is generally considered an illegitimate act by Dharmaśāstras, and the epics. Śūdra renunciants are coupled together with monks belonging to heretical sects, and both groups are deemed to have acted in violation of śāstric injunctions.[90] Secondly, renunciation in the Tirumantiram is a highly ambivalent topic. Though the text advocates renunciation and non–

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[85] The Tirumantiram spells out in 13 verses (1910-1922) the rules relating to where and how the body of a jnani should be buried and how his camāti should be maintained and worshipped.

[86] iṟappum piṟappum irumaiyum nīṅkic
   tuṟakkum tavam kaṇṭa cōtippirāṉ (TM 1614: 1-2)
The luminous lord who revealed the penance of renunciation in order to transcend death, birth, and twofold karma [merit and sin, consequences of good and bad karma].

[87] aṟavaṉ piṟappili yārumilātāṉ
 uṟaivatu kāṭṭakam uṇpatu piccai
 tuṟavaṉuṅ kaṇṭīr tuṟantavar tammaip
 piṟaviyaṟuttiṭum pittaṉ kaṇṭīrē (TM 1616)

[88] tavam vēṇṭum ñāṉam talaippaṭa vēṇṭil (TM 1632)

[89] TM 2694.

[90] Patrick Olivelle, *Collected Essays II: Ascetics and Brahmins: Studies in Ideologies and Institutions* (Firenze: Firenze University Press, 2008), 277-278.

attachment (*paṟṟuviṭal*, *ācai aṟuttal*), it should not be interpreted as saying that the senses and their objects should be abandoned completely. This aspect is discussed in detail in chapter three.

> [Only] the ignorant say "Curb, curb the five senses."
> No immortals are to be found there [in heaven] who have their senses in restraint
> One becomes only insentient if the senses are reined in
> I came to possess the knowledge of how not to control the senses.[91]

The Tirumantiram also reveals that conflict, competition and rivalry marked its relations with other religious renunciant groups, in particular, with Brahmans. The text directs its criticism at those who are devoid of the liberating knowledge the *Tirumantiram* speaks of, but wear the insignia of renunciation to delude the world. Their purpose of donning ascetic garb, the *Tirumantiram* says, is to fill the belly.[92] Their false ways of living harm others. The *Tirumantiram* warns that the pretentious behaviour of pseudo-ascetics bring upon ruin to the entire country. Dearth of rain and drought experienced by the country are direct results of the ascetics who falsely claim higher knowledge. Hence, the *Tirumantiram* is persistent in its call that these pseudo-renunciants be de-robed.[93] Not all groups of pseudo-ascetics are mentioned by

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[91] añcum aṭakku aṭakku eṉpar aṟivilār
  añcum aṭakkum amararum aṅkillai
  añcum aṭakkil acētaṉamām eṉṟiṭṭu
  añcum aṭakkā aṟivu aṟintēṉē (TM 2033).
[92] poyvēṭam pūṇpar pocittal payaṉāka (TM 1659:1)
āṭamparam koṇṭu aṭicil uṇpāṉ payaṉ
vēṭaṅkaḷ koṇṭu veruṭṭiṭum pēṭaikāḷ (TM 1655:1-2)
[93] TM 1656

name except that of Brahmans.[94] One of the foremost duties of a king, according to the text, is to

punish the hypocritical ascetics.[95]

The text's seemingly harsh attitude towards other renunciants stem from the conviction

that redemption is only possible through unflinching adherence to the divine Śaivite path

enunciated by Nandi.[96]   The text proclaims ''There exists nothing except Śiva and there is no

tapas except that is for him."[97] It also declares that even if you search, there is no deity that

proves a match for Śiva and there is none at all here to equal him.[98] It dismisses other religions as

inadequate and ineffective. The text in particular mentions the six religions (*āṟu camayam*) as a

group and states that they would not lead to the goals they boast of[99] as they are nothing but a

waste.[100] These six religions might be a reference to six systems of philosophy: *sāṃkya, yoga,*

nyāya, vaiśeṣika, pūrvamīmāṃsā and uttaramīmāṃsā. The text also berates the learned, devoid

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[94] If Brahmins, from folly unredeemed, flaunt the tuft and thread
That land drops and fades, its ruler's glory runs to waste
So, scanning deep in wisdom's light, the king shall clip
The thread and tuft for empty show kept and possessed (TM 241)
The senseless fools donning sacred thread and matted locks
And with chanting phrases pretend to wisdom unprocessed
Them the ruler of state shall, with wise men's help take and test
And, for the country's good, impart words in wisdom rest. (TM 242)
(Translated by Natarajan)
[95] TM 247.
[96] The peerless master Nandi
Of Saivam honoured high
He showed us a holy path
For souls` redemption true
It is Śiva`s divine path, Sanmarga`s path
For all world to tread
And for ever be free (TM 1478)
Do seek Nandi of mighty penance
You shall indeed be redeemed truly. (TM 1534:4)
(translated by B. Natarajan)
[97] civamallatillai aṟaiyē civamān
  tavamallatillai talaippaṭuvārkkiṅku (TM 1534:1-2)
[98] civaṉoṭokkum teyvam tēṭiṉumillai
  avaṉoṭoppār iṅku yāvarumillai (TM 5:1-2)
[99] TM 1537
[100] avamallatillai aṟucamayaṅkaḷ (TM 1534:3)

of *śivajñāna* as scoundrels: *karrum civañāṉamillāk kalatikaḷ*.[101] The *Tirumantiram* believes in the possibility of transferring the divine knowledge through the medium of guru and in the necessity of replacing inferior knowledge produced by other religions. Thus, it denies the proposition, vital to a thriving pluralistic religious environment, that knowledge is diverse in character.

> The mighty live in pursuit of the one only path
> Others say knowledge is diverse.[102]

The *Tirumantiram* also claims sustenance for Śivajñāni or Śivayogi from lay householders, pronouncing that those who have realised the divine within their body are worthy of veneration; they, not gods, are an object of worship.[103]

> If one donates to the deity in the storied temple with a banner
> It does not benefit the perfect souls [Siddhas] who are walking-temples.
> If one offers to the perfect souls [Siddhas] who are walking-temples
> It is fit to be an offering to the deity in the storied temple with a banner. [104]

The text, therefore, urges the householders not to perform separate sacrifices to gods and ancestors because whatever is offered to the śivajñāni is counted as an oblation to the above two categories.[105] Thus, the act of feeding devotees of Śiva (*māheśvara pūjā*) is deemed higher than

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[101] TM 318:1
[102] vallārkaḷ eṉrum valiyoṉri vāḻkiṉrār
   allātavarkaḷ arivu palaeṉpār (TM 311:1-2)
[103] kōvaṇaṅ kumpaṭi kōvaṇa mākippiṉ
   nāvaṇaṅ kumpaṭi nanti aruḷ ceytāṉ
   tēvaṇaṅkōm iṉic cittam teḷintaṉam
   pōyvaṇaṅ kumporu ḷāyirun tōmē (TM 2674)
[104] paṭamāṭak kōyil pakavarku oṉru īyil
   naṭamāṭak kōyil namparkku aṅku ākā
   naṭamāṭak kōyil namparkku oṉru īyil
   paṭamāṭak kōyil pakavarku atu āmē (TM 1857)
[105] TM 1858, 1859

devayajña, pitṛyajña or *śrāddha*[106] prescribed by Brahmans for householders. The text also deprecates making donations to temples and Brahmans, and constructing temples.[107]

> Of what use is to gift Brahmans abodes in thousands
> Of what use is to erect towering temples in thousands
> It is beyond doubt these [acts] do not equal
> The merits of feeding a *jñāni* at noon. [108]

The Tirumantiram claims that feeding the devotees of Śiva and partaking of left-overs of their meals would result in liberation and elimination of sins.[109] The section titled *māheśvara pūjā* , as a whole, constitutes an appeal to the indigenous population to abandon Brahmanical religious practices and support the activities of vernacular *maṭha,* instead.

It is therefore reasonable to conclude that the religious tradition represented in the *Tirumantiram* was a monastic tradition that sought protection from the kings and received maintenance from the laity. The treatise was probably in circulation within a monastic community for their own use. As we see later, the text deals with only personal sādhanā, privileging yoga. Brunner mentions some texts that arose around the eighth century within monastic communities, having yoga as an element of ritual.[110] This is clearly seen in the fourth Tantra, concerned with the worship of Śakti, which combines ritual with yoga. However, in the overall conceptual structure, yoga is given pre-eminence as a means of liberation whereas ritual is relegated to a subordinate position. The *Tirumantiram* might have been used as an instructional manual at *maṭhas* as the object of the treatise is professed to share the author's experiential knowledge of liberation with others.

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[106] It is a religious ceremony observed for the benefit of dead relatives.
[107] TM 1857, 1860, 1861.
[108] akaram āyiram antaṇarkku īyil eṉ
  cikaram āyiram ceytu muṭikkil eṉ
  pakaru ñāṉi pakal ūṇ palattukku
  nikarilai eṉpatu niccayam tāṉē (TM 1860)
[109] TM 1866
[110] Helene Brunner, "The Four pādas of Saivāgamas", 274.

II
Conceptual framework of the Tirumantiram

Despite the fact that the *Tirumantiram* does not follow the four-fold *āgami*c structure, it subscribes to their general conceptual framework which is rooted in the concepts of bondage and liberation, concepts that are uncharacteristic of indigenous Tamil thought. The four elements of the conceptual framework are identified as follows: (a) A pessimistic outlook on worldly life (b) bondage (c) liberation (d) paths leading to liberation. While they are reminiscent of the four Great Truths of Buddhism, the text also shows evidence of influence of Buddhism, which may be summed up as follows: As Siddhārtha Gautama attained enlightenment under the bodhi (fig) tree, Tirumūlar claims to have achieved the highest state of consciousness under the Śivabodhi.[111] Nirvāṇa is used to denote liberation in one of the esoteric verses of the text.[112] As in Tantric Buddhism,[113] the male and female principles are sometimes identified with the dynamic and static aspects respectively.[114] A section in *Tantra* Two called *adhomukhadarśana* refers to the

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[111] cērntiruntēṉ civapōtiyiṉ nīḻalil (TM 79:3).

[112] TM 2864

[113] "…the Hindus assigned the static aspect to the male principle, the dynamic aspect to the male female principle….The Indian and Tibetan Buddhists did the opposite of the Brahman panditas: they assigned the dynamic aspect to the male, the static to the female principle." See Agehananda Bharati, *The Tantric Tradition,* pp.200-201.

[114] Though the term *kuṇḍalinī* does not figure in the text, reference is often made to the dynamic female energy in the *mūlādhāra*. At times, Śiva is connected to the *mūlādhāra*. For instance,

She belongs to the region of *sahasrāra*
 [She is] the damsel of refined gold
He awakes in the land of *mūlādhāra*.
Rouse him well and let him meet her
See [The aged] become young [again]
[I] avow on Nandi

mēlai nilattiṉāḷ vētakap peṇpiḷḷai
mūla nilattil eḻukiṉra mūrttiyai
ēla eḻuppi ivaḷutaṉ canttikkap
pālaṉum āvāṉ pār nanti āṉaiyē (TM 590)

downward-looking face of Śiva. Natarajan notes, "The term *adhomukha* corresponds in function and purpose to the Avalokiteśvara of Mahāyāna Buddhism where he is the Lord of Great Compassion."[115] The affinities between Avalokiteśvara and Śiva have been already noted by scholars.[116] Besides, the Periyapurāṇam claims that the cowherd Mūlaṉ in whose body the Śivayogi from the North entered hailed from Cāttaṉūr. Cāttaṉ is a Tamilicized form of the Sanskrit term *śāstā* (śāstṛ) meaning a teacher. Paul Dundas states that the word is of Jain and Buddhist origin.[117] It " has been a synonym of the Buddha from ever since its origin."[118] Later Cāttaṉūr came to be known as Tiruvāvaṭuturai (Tiru +ā (cow/soul)+ aṭu (to resort to) +turai (the place near a body of water which is frequented by cows) and as Navakoṭi Siddhapuram (the abode of ninety million Siddhas).

(a) A negative perspective on worldly life:

Fundamental to the teachings of *Tantra*s is the notion that the world is misery. In the *Kulārṇavatantra* Pārvatī deplores the inevitable fate of all living beings: birth and death in an unbroken succession.

> Taking various forms
> Innumerable clusters of living beings
> Are born and die.
> No path exists for them
> To secure release from this miserable state.

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[115] *Tirumantiram:A Tamil Scriptuaral Classic,* 81.

[116] "There is undoubtedly an iconographical and quite possibly an historical connection of Avalokiteśvara with the Hindu God Śiva. We have seen already that Avalokiteśvara bestows upon Śiva his place in the Hindu pantheon. Nevertheless, Avalokiteśvara himself is also called Maheśvara in the *Kāraṇḍavyūha*- Great Lord, a standard epithet of Śiva. He is described as a beautiful man 'wearing a diadem on his matted hair, his mind filled with the highest friendliness, and looking like a disc of gold.' This could be a description of Śiva, for whom the matted hair is a symbol of as Lord of the Yogins. In a lovely Kashmiri brass sculpture from c.1000 CE, Avalokiteśvara is shown seated on Potalaka, his mountain home, with matted hair and deer. Behind is what initially looks very much like Śiva's trident. Śiva too dwells in the mountains as a *yogin*, and is associated with animals in his role of Lord of the Animals. Elsewhere Avalokiteśvara is described as 'blue-throated', a term for Śiva embedded in Śaivaite mythology. Śiva too could find himself worshipped as a Bodhisattva as indeed can Viṣṇu.... " See Paul Williams, *Mahāyāna Buddhism:The doctrinal foundations* (London: Routledge, 1989), 222.

[117] *The Jains* (London: Routledge, 1992), 126.

[118] S.N. Sadasivan, *A Social History of India* (New Delhi : APH Pub. Corp., 2000), 121.

O God!
They are always afflicted with sorrow
Nowhere is seen a happy soul among them
O lord of gods! My master!
Tell me by what means
They may be liberated [119]

The cycle of births is referred to as *saṃsāra,[120]* which is said to be the source of sorrow (*duḥkhamūlo hi saṃsāraḥ*). One who clings to the *saṃsāra* becomes dejected; but the one who abandons it finds happiness.[121]

Saṃsāra
The source of all misery
The seat of all misfortunes
The receptacle of all sins
Hence, saṃsāra should be abandoned, my dear! (KU.1 :60)

The Tirumantimam that identifies itself with the *āgamic* tradition also holds a gloomy outlook on worldly life. Fifty- four verses in the first Tantra (143-196) deal with the ephemeral nature of the body, wealth, youth, and the life. The body is compared to a fragile clay vessel,[122] a rotten roof,[123] a temple with strong compound walls,[124] a leather bag,[125] and a mud drum.[126] These verses discuss the inevitability of death, indifference to the memory of the dead, the solitary journey of the soul after death, the necessity to undertake acts that would be helpful in the next life, and the disintegration of bodily elements at death.

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[119] nānāvidhaśarīrasthā anantā jīvarāśayaḥ l
jāyante ca mriyante ca teṣāṃ mokṣo na vidyate ll (KU.1:4)
sadā duḥkhāturā deva na sukhī vidyate kvacit l
kenopāyena deveśa mucyate vada me prabho ll (KU. 1:5)
[120] tasys śravaṇamātreṇa saṃsārāt mucyate naraḥ ll (KU. 1:6)
[121] duḥkhamūlo hi saṃsāraḥ sa yasyāsti sa duḥkhitaḥ l
tasya tyāgaḥ kṛto yena sa sukhī nāparaḥ priye ll (Ku. 1:60)
[122] maṇṇoṉṟu kaṇṭīr iruvakaippāttiram
The body is a clay pot made up of good and bad karma. (TM 143:1)
[123] kūrai paḻaki viḻuntakkāl
 When the roof falls to pieces (TM 144:1)
  kūrai piriyum
The roof gives way (TM 146:3)
[124] ceppa matiḻuṭaik kōyil (TM 154:2, 3)
[125] tōṟ pai (TM 167:3)
[126] mattaḷi (TM 189:4)

The whole village came together wailing aloud
Denied his name, called him corpse
Carried him to the burning ground and cremated him
After taking a ritual bath they ceased thinking of him[127]

They made refreshments, ate the cooked food
Had secret [dalliance] with beautiful creeper-like maidens
Said "The left side aches a little"
Spread the bedding to lie down and lay for ever[128]

The thirty and thirty and thirty six [ninety -six tattvas)
Dwelt within a temple of sturdy compound walls
When the temple with strong compound walls crumbled
All of them took to their heels [the *tattvas* left the body] [129]

One's own shadow is of no use to the self
Still knowing that, the ignorant claim "The wealth is mine"
The soul leaves the body in which it was born.
Perceive the light by which the eye sees.[130]

The sun that rises in the east sets in the west
Even though the unwise see it, they do not understand
The young calf matures into a bull and dies in a few days
Though men on the vast earth see it, they do not understand [the truth][131]

Doubts have been expressed as to whether the verses dealing with the impermanence of

worldly life originally formed part of the text.[132] In fact, these verses resonate with the general

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[127] ūr elām kūṭi olikka aḻutiṭṭu
   pēriṉai nīkkip piṇam eṉru pēriṭṭu
   cūrai aṅkāṭṭiṭaik koṇṭu pōyc cuṭṭiṭṭu
   nīriṉil mūḻki niṉaippu oḻintārkaḷē (TM 145)
[128] aṭappaṇṇi vaittār aṭicilai uṇṭār
    maṭakkoṭiyāroṭu mantaṉam koṇṭār
    iṭappakkamē irai nontatē eṉrār
    kiṭakkap paṭuttār kiṭantu oḻintārē (TM 148)
[129] muppatum muppatum muppattu aṟuvarum
   ceppa matiḻ uṭaik kōyiluḷ vāḻpavar
   ceppa matiḻ uṭaik kōyil citaintapiṉ
   oppa aṉaivarum ōṭṭeṭuttārkaḷē (TM 154)
[130] taṉṉatu cāyai taṉakku utavātu kaṇṭu
    eṉṉatu māṭu eṉru irupparkaḷ ēḻaikaḷ
    uṉ uyir pōm uṭal okkap piṟantatu
    kaṇṇatu kāṇ oḷi kaṇṭu koḷḷīrē (TM 170)
[131] kiḻakku eḻuntu ōṭiya ñāyiṟu mēṟkē
   viḷak kaṇṭum tēṟār viḻi ilā māntar
   kuḻakkaṉṟu mūttu erutāyc cila nāḷil
   viḷak kaṇṭum tēṟār viyaṉ ulakōrē (TM 177)
[132] A.S. Ñāṉacampantaṉ *Tirumantiram,* xxii.

spirit of the *āgamas* that were revealed by Śiva "for the sake of suffering souls."[133]   The *Tirumantiram* often mentions that those who do not know the correct path undergo untold agony.[134] The text was composed to relieve the human suffering by sharing the knowledge of the means to attain eternal bliss: *yāṉ peṟṟa iṉpam peṟuka ivvaiyakam*.[135] Hence, it is appropriate that the text incorporate the sections that speak of impermanence and misery of earthly life.

(b) The causes of human misery

The *Tirumantiram* conceives reality in terms of the three distinct, permanent entities: pati (god), pacu /paśu (bound soul) and pācam/pāśa (bondage). [136]

> Three entities *pati, pacu* and *pācam are* spoken of.
> Of them, *pacu* and *pācam* are beginningless like *pati*
> *Pati* is separate from *pacu* and *pācam*
> If *pati* approaches [*pacu*], *pācam* cannot stay [with pacu]. [137]

The cause for a miserable existence of souls is identified as *pāśa* in Śaiva Siddhānta.[138] The commentary on the Mṛgendrāgama refers to the bondage of the soul as *pāśajāla* (a snare of cords).[139] The term *pāśa* has several meanings in Sanskrit: cord, fetters, snare, noose, trap, net,

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[133] Gavin Flood, *The Tantric Body,* 64.
[134] [The adherents of] the six faiths, rooted in suffering,
Do not see God immanent in the body.
[Consequently] they fall into the pit of illusion.
Fettered by the attachment to wife and children
They suffer intensely.

āyattuḷ niṉṟa aṟu camayaṅkaḷum
kāyattuḷ niṉṟa kaṭavuḷaik kāṇkilar
māyak kuḻiyil viḻuvar maṉaimakkaḷ
pācattil uṟṟup pataikkiṉṟa vāṟē   (TM 1530)
[135] TM 85:1
[136] The theology of the Tirumantiram is deemed pluralistic by Indian scholars whose commentaries I follow in this dissertation, whereas Kauvai Hindu monastery in Hawaii established in 1970 by Satguru Sivaya Subramaiyaswami, a disciple of Jaffna Yogar swami assumes it to be monistic.
[137] patipacu pācam eṉappakar mūṉṟir
   patiyiṉaip pōṟpacu pācam aṉāti
   patiyiṉaic ceṉṟaṉu kāppacu pācam
   patiyaṇu kiṟpacu pācanil lāvē (TM 114).
[138] The term *siddhānta* refers to the school represented by Śaiv*āgamas*.
[139] "pāśajālamapohati " Mrgendrāgama,.198.
   Pāśabandha Makuṭāgama 1:75

the edge and the border of anything woven.[140] It is generally translated to bondage in English and is used in two senses in the *Tirumantiram*: one is fetters and the other is devotion.[141] *Pācam* (*pāśa*) is also known as *malam* (impurity),[142] and *kaḷimpu*.[143] The *Tirumantiram* also attributes the cause of misery to *pāśa* (bondage).[144] The body is referred to as the sorrow –house of vexing *pāśa*.[145] The three impurities[146] mentioned in the text are: *karma* or *viṉai*,[147] *āṇavam*[148] or *mūlamalam* and *māyāmalam.*[149] Sometimes impurities are counted as five in the *Tirumantiram*.[150] Commentators add māyēyam and tirōtāyi to the existing three impurities. The *Tirumantiram* classifies souls into the three classes, viññāṉar, piraḷayākalar and cakalar, based on their association with the impurities.[151]

(c) Liberation (mokṣa)

The supreme goal of the *āgamic* tradition is *mokṣa* or *mukti* (liberation from bondage), the concept which is entirely absent in classical Tamil literature.[152] Of the two types of release

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[140] See Vaman Śivaram Apte, *The Student's Sanskrit –English Dictionary.*

[141] īcaṉ aṟiyum irāppaka luntaṉṉaip
pācattuḷ vaittup parivucey vārkaḷai (TM 288:1-2)

[142] TM 117, 118, 1432 (paḻamala), 1598, 1817, 1985, 2052, 2053, 2062, 2066, 2192, 2241 (The impurities are named), 2230, 2233,2234, 2244, 2245, 2247, 2254,2259, 2262

[143] TM 113-115.

[144] pantañcey pācattu (354:3)
māyañcey pācattum (405:2)
tuṉpañcey pācattuyar (432: 2)
paḻipala ceykiṉṟa pācakkaruvai (463;3)
oṭṭiya pāca uṇarveṉṉuṅ kāyappai (473:2)
tuṉpuṟu pācattil (487:2)
pācac cuṭarppāmpu (908:3)
tuṉpak kuḻampil tuyaruṟum pāca (1128:3)

[145] tuṉpuṟu pācattuyar maṉai (TM 453:2) maṉ tuṉpak kalacam (TM 468:1-2)

[146] TM 116, 496, 930, 1527 (tirimalam),1907 (tirimalam), 2054 (tirimalam), mummalam māṟṟi (TM 116: 3)

[147] TM 113.

[148] TM 2183

[149] TM 2007

[150] TM 118, 1481, 1689, 2021, 2059, 2060, 2160, 2166, 2177, 2182, 2183, 2207, 2211, 2213, 2236, 2253, 2257, 2293, 2710.

[151] TM 498

[152] The classical Tamil literature mentions Heroes' heaven (Valhalla) which is the final destination of warriors who die in battle. It was also believed that the spirits of departed warriors reside in the memorial stone built in their memory. The Brhamanical tradition also initially recognised only three ideals of life, dharma, *artha* and *kāma* (*trivarga*). The final goal of liberation was added to it later.

available to souls, *videhamukti* is deemed higher than *jīvanmukti* except in a few tantric traditions. André Padoux explains,

> .. liberation in a Tantric context is not necessarily *jīvanmukti*. Even in such a completely Tantric work as Abhinavagupta's *Tantrāloka,* the best and highest adept, who benefits from the most intense grace of Śiva (*tīvraśaktipāta*), is instantly liberated and dies: a condition higher than *jīvanmukti*. The typical Tantric *jīvanmukta*, totally free of a world he dominates and transcends, is to be found in some tantras only-for example, in the Bhairava or Kālī Tantras, in Sahajīya Vaiṣṇavism or in Buddhism too- that can be viewed as "hardcore"Tantrism. In the more staid Saiddhāntika Āgamas where the term *jīvanmukti* seldom occurs, the liberated adept acquires *śivatva,* the condition of Śiva, a condition of similarity (*sāmantā[153]*) *with Śiva,* not one of total fusion *(ekatva)* [154]

On the other hand, the *Tirumantiram* is concerned with living liberation alone and does not discuss *videhamukti*. Two significant factors that could have influenced the *Tirumantiram*'s preference of *jīvanmukti* over *videhamukti* are this worldly orientation of classical Tamil thought, and the immanence of the sacred in the world and the human body. As explained in the previous section, the concept of living liberation was introduced by the text to serve the stereological needs of indigenous population, most of whom were not qualified for liberation in terms of the criteria determined by the *āgamas*.

Freedom from bondage (*pāśa*) and suffering is called *mokṣa*. Richard Davis notes that not all humans aspire to *mokṣa* in this life time. Accordingly, Śaiva ritualists are divided into *bubhukṣu* (seeker of earthly pleasures) and *mumukṣu* (seeker of liberation). [155] In contrast, a *jīvanmukta* in the *Tirumantiram*, who is liberated while living in this world, does not shun *bhoga*. He experiences Śivaloka, Śivayoga and Śivabhoga within himself in the state of *turīya samādhi* (TM 128).

In order to attain liberation, it is necessary that a living being is human. Only after human birth is the soul aware of its bondage and capable of making efforts to sunder the bonds.

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[153] I am unable to trace the term *sāmantā* in the Sanskrit dictionaries. I assume that this is a typographical error and the correct term is *sāmyatā*.
[154] The Roots of Tantra, 20.
[155] *Ritual in an Oscillating Universe,* 170.

Fourteen ślokas in the first *ullāsa* of the *Kulārṇava Tantra* speak about the significance of the human body in relation to liberation. The human birth is highly valued among eighty-four lakhs of births,[156] as it is deemed a ladder to liberation.[157] The *Tirumantiram* refers to human birth as "joyous birth" (*iṉpap piṟavi,*TM 281;*iṉpap piṟappu* TM 287). Liberation becomes a reality only if one realises God residing in the human body. It, therefore, devotes a separate section to the creation of body in *Tantra* two (451-491), which follows the delineation of macrocosmic creation.

The expression "becoming civam" (*civamātal)* refers to the soul in a state of being rid of the three impurities by means of *dīkṣā* or initiation. However, the state of 'becoming civam" through initiation is short-lived. The sādhaka permanently attains that state only through the practice of yoga. Hence, the expression "becoming civam" denotes the process as well as the final goal of liberation. This final state is also known as *cāyucciyam* (Skt. *sāyujya*). The text asserts, "*cāyucciyam* is to become civam" (*cāyucciyam civamātal*, TM 1513:3).

The ultimate end as conceptualised by the *Tirumantiram* – "to become *civam"*[158] -should be distinguished from the final goal of the Śaiva ritualistic tradition enshrined in the *āgamas*, "to become a Śiva."

> The Śaivas define mokṣa precisely as the process by which the soul is released from its bondage and becomes a Śiva. When one attains liberation, they say, the soul becomes completely equal to Śiva. It acquires a form identical to that of Śiva. A liberated soul does not merge into the divinity or become united with him, as some other systems of Hindu philosophy assert. Nor does it enter again into the manifest

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[156] Ku. 1:14
[157] Sopānabhūtam mokṣasya (Ku.1:16)
[158] tirimalam tīrntu civaṉavaṉāmē (2659:4)
   tēṭṭamum illai civaṉavaṉāmē (604:4)
   cittant tirintu civamayamākiyē (652:1)
   teruḷ vanta cīvaṉār ceṉru ivaṟṟālē
   aruḷ taṅki accivamam āvatu vīṭē. (979:3-4)
   pavamatu akaṉru paracivaṉāmē 2711 :4
   pettamarac civamāki 2833 :3
   civāmāy avamāṉa mummalam tīra 2834:1
   tāṉē civamāṉa taṉmai talaippaṭa2314:1
   tāṉ avaṉākum camāti kaikūṭiṉāl 2320:1

cosmos. Rather, it remains as an autonomous theomorphic entity, separate from Śiva but with all his powers and qualities. In this senses, the end point of the soul`s 'career', its final and most desirable destination, is to become a Śiva.[159]

The Tirumantiram itself explains the difference between the two goals: "to become a Śiva" and "to become civam."

> There are dual realities- the Self and the other (He)
> Having perceived both of them in your own self
> If [you] offer the flower of yourself to Him
> [Then] it is not correct to speak "you" and "He." [160]

The concept of "becoming civam" is likened to space intermingling with space, nectar drowning in nectar, and light dissolving in light. This doctrine of liberation is designated as Vedānta-Siddhānta in the text. The following verses speak of the merging of the soul into cosmic consciousness. One of the synonyms of the soul is *aṟivu*.

> Space intermingles with space
> Nectar drowns in nectar
> Light dissolves in light
> The Śiva-Siddhas are those who
> Perceives the highest state as such.[161]

> The fierce rays of the Sun beating upon the water
> The dissolved salt does in crystal shape emerge
> That salt in the water dissolved becomes liquid again
> So does Jīva in Śiva get dissolved.[162]

> I did not know that my form is *aṟivu* (consciousness or knowledge)
> Compassionate Nandi taught me that my [natural] form is none other than *aṟivu* itself
> I realized through His grace that my true form is *aṟivu*
> Then I remained established in *aṟivu,* my own true form. [163]

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[159] Richard Davis, *Worshipping* Śiva in Medieval India, 83.

[160] tāṉ eṉṟu avaṉ eṉṟu iraṇṭākum tattuvam
tāṉ eṉṟu avaṉ eṉṟu iraṇṭum taṉiṟ kaṇṭu
tāṉ eṉṟa pūvai avaṉaṭi cāttiṉāl
tāṉ eṉṟu avaṉ eṉkai nallatu oṉṟu aṉṟē (TM 1607)

[161] veḷiyiṉ veḷi pōy viraviya vāṟum
aḷiyiṉ aḷi pōy aṭaṅkiya vāṟum
oḷiyiṉ oḷi pōy oṭuṅkiya vāṟum
teḷiyum avarē civa cittar tāmē. (TM 124)

[162] TM 136 –the translation by Natarjan

[163] aṟivu vaṭivu eṉṟu aṟiyāta eṉṉai
aṟivu vaṭivu eṉṟu aruḷ ceytāṉ nanti
aṟivu vaṭivu eṉṟu aruḷāl aṟintē
aṟivu vaṭivu eṉṟu aṟintu iruntēṉē (TM 2357)

Arivu (consciousness) is neither destroyed nor created
Arivu [the soul] has no other mainstay but *arivu*
Arivu itself [the soul] knows *arivu*
Thus say the Upaniṣads. [164]

According to the āgamic tradition, *dīkṣā* or initiation plays a key role in liberation as it unveils the true nature of the soul. The soul's failure to realise its innate omniscience and omnipotence is caused by an imperceptible impurity *āṇava,* which is a substance (*dravya*). Hence action alone in the form initiation will eliminate it. As the power of poison is destroyed either through mantra or drugs, the bonds are instantly shattered by a guru who is knowledgeable in mantra.[165] Hence the *Kulārṇava Tantra* proclaims that there is no liberation without initiation.[166] The one who receives initiation becomes united with Śiva; nonetheless his liberation occurs only after death.[167]

The *Tirumantiram,* however, prescribes *jñāna dīkṣā* in place of *kriyā dīkṣā.* The first verse in the first *Tantra* discusses the removal of bondage (*kaḷimp*u) by God who descends to earth taking human form.[168] Knowledge which is bestowed through *dīkṣā* is often compared to the light of the Sun.[169] The *Tirumantiram* also agrees that in order for the bonds to be sundered, Śiva's Śakti should be first established (*śaktinipāta /sattinipātam*).[170] *Śaktinipāta* is homologised

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[164] aṟivukku aḻivillai ākkamum illai
aṟivukku aṟivu allatu ātāramum illai
aṟivē aṟivai aṟikiṉratu eṉṟiṭṭu
aṟaikiṉraṉa maṟai īṟukaḷ tāmē (TM 2358)
[165] mantrauṣdhairyathā hanyādviṣaśaktim kuleśvari
paśupāśam tathā chindyāddīkṣayā mantravit kṣaṇāt (Ku. 14:83)
[166] vinā dīkṣāṁ na mokṣaḥ syāttaduktaṁ śivaśāsane (Ku. 14:3:1)
[167] tasyārpitādhikārasya yogaḥ sākṣāt pare śive
dehānte śāśvatī muktiriti śaṅkarabhāṣitam (Ku. 14: 7)
[168] TM 113
[169] Śiva is also compared to the Sun. Nandi is described as the Sun rising from the sea of compassion or love: tayāeṉṉum tōyama tāyeḻum cūriyaṉāmē (TM 116: 3-4). Hence it is apposite to compare the knowledge of Śiva to the Sun.
[170] kaḷimpaṟuttāṉ aruṭkaṉ viḷippittu (TM 114:2)

to a marriage between an old blind man (the soul) and a young maiden (Śakti),[171] which destroys karma and *āṇava* malas and grants pleasure and knowledge.[172] At times, the guru who grants initiation is identified with Śakti. Equanimity towards meritorious and sinful deeds is a prerequisite to *śaktinipāta* in its highest form.

> When one is neutral to good and bad karmas
> The sweet Śakti of compassion
> Comes in the form of Guru,
> Eliminates many a quality, [which are an impediment to salvation]
> And bestows knowledge.
> [Because of that knowledge,] if one abandons egoistic deeds
> He will be Śiva, being rid of the three impurities. [173]

The initiation is said to be leading to a transformation of the self. It may be recalled that the womb and gestation symbolism employed in Vedic initiation, denotes a new birth for the initiate. The preceptor symbolically carries the disciple in his womb for three days and gives a new birth to him. In contrast, the Tirumantiram states that the soul approached by Guru attains *śivatvam* as iron that comes into contact with mercury becomes gold.[174]

> All that the alchemist touches
> Turns into gold, likewise
> The whole world, touched [blessed] by guru
> Attains the state of Śiva [śivatvam or śivagati]
> Being rid of the triple impurities.[175]

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[171] TM 1514

[172] TM 1518

[173] iruviṉai nēr oppil iṉ aruḷ cakti
kuruveṉa vantu kuṇam pala nīkkit
tarum eṉu ñāṉattāl taṉ ceyal aṟṟāl
tirimalam tīrntu civaṉ avaṉāmē (TM 1527).

[174] rasendreṇa yathā viddhamayaḥ suvarṇatāṁ vrajet
dīkṣāviddhastathā hyātmā śivatvaṁ labhate priye (Ku. 14:89)

[175] paricaṉa vēti paricitta tellām
varicai tarum poṉ vakaiyākumāpōr
kuruparicitta kuvalayamellām
tirimalam tīrntu civakatiyāmē (TM 2054)

(d) Paths leading to the removal of human misery

Ritual and knowledge are recognised as the twin paths to liberation in the *āgamas*. Dualistic Śaiva Siddhāntins hold that liberation is not attainable without recourse to ritual. Kashmir Śaivism "which, although giving Jñāna a certain superiority over Kriyā at Śiva's level, sees no divorce between reflection and action, and whose highest speculations were always nourished by a sustained practice."[176] Though the Tirumantiram discusses the four paths- *caryā* (dāsamārga), *kriyā* (satputramārga), yoga (sakhamārga), and *jñāna* (sanmārga), only the last two are acknowledged to be leading to living liberation. Yoga and *jñāna* are often mentioned together and at times, the path of *jñāna* is evidently identified with that of yoga. Also the last of the eight –limbed yoga, *samādhi*, leads to knowledge:

> Sanmārga [*jñāna*] itself is Sakhamārga [yoga].[177]
>
> The clear vision of truth in Sanmārga [*jñāna*]is
> Is to be united with Śakti [kuṇḍalinī] in Sakhamārga [yoga].[178]
>
> *sārupa* goal [related to yoga] is achievable in the eighth step of *samādhi*
> But it cannot be attained except by those who stand on the path of *jñāna*.[179]
>
> Without vacillating between this way or that way
> Proceed on the path of eight-limbed yoga and remain in *samādhi*
> This is the good path that leads to knowledge [*jñāna*][180]

The role of *caryā* and *kriyā* in the spiritual practice towards liberation is not quite clear in the *āgamas*. According to Brunner, the *āgamas* are primarily ritualistic manuals. Discipline, yoga and meditation and theology hold a subordinate position to ritual. In other words, they form

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[176] Helene Brunner, "Jñana and Kriyā: Relation between Theory and Practice in the Śaiv*āgamas*", 38
[177] caṉmārkkantāṉē cakamārkka māṉatu (TM 1488:1)
[178] …………cakamārkkat
   tēviyōṭoṉṟal caṉmārkkat teḷivatē (TM 1495: 3-4)
[179] TM 1510.
[180] anneṟi inneṟi eṉṉātaṭ ṭāṅkat
   tanneṟi ceṉṟu camātiyi lēniṉmiṉ
   nanneṟi celvārkku ñāṉatti lēkalām (TM 551:1-3)

part of the elaborate ritualistic system elucidated in the *āgamas*. They are meaningful only if they are perceived in relation to ritual. In contrast, the four *pādas* are clearly defined and hierarchized in the fifth *Tantra* of the *Tirumantiram*. The bhakta begins with the practice of caryā and kriyā and through Śiva's grace, embarks on the path of yoga and in the end attains unity with Śiva.[181] The notion that these four *pādas* are graded steps is absent in the Śaiv*āgamas*.[182] This is an attempt made by the text to bring devotees and ritualists into the fold of Śuddha Śaivism, a new religion formulated by the Tirumantiram.

The four paths are thus defined in the text: Those who follow the path of *caryā* are called bhaktas.[183] They adore Śiva in love[184] and undertake pilgrimage. It is declared as the most fundamental to Śuddha Śaiva.[185] *Kriyā* is characterised by activities like investing an image with spirituality,[186] and worshipping an image of Śiva.[187] It is a path of filial piety[188] Yogis are those who practise *kuṇḍalinī* yoga with single mindedness and sit immobile like a wooden stake.[189] *Jñāna* is the realization that "I am Śiva"; thus a *jñāni* becomes Śiva, i.e united with Śiva.[190] Transcending the polarities is characteristic of *jñāna*,[191] which is alternatively known as *sanmārga* and *gurumārga*.[192] Jñānis are practitioners of Śivayoga and known as Siddhas.[193] Devotion to guru is characteristic of this path.[194]

> One becomes Śiva, gets rid of the five impurities
> Becomes liberated observing silence

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[181] TM 1448, 1455, 1469.
[182] Karen Prentiss, *The Embodiment of Bhakti*, 134.
[183] TM 1446:1
[184] TM 1444:2; TM 1448:4
[185] TM 1443
[186] TM 1444:3
[187] TM 1448:1
[188] TM 1445:1
[189] TM 1457
[190] TM 1469
[191] TM 1474:2
[192] TM 1478
[193] TM 1477
[194] TM 1479

Bliss in the experience of knowledge blemishless
This is the *sanmārga* in which one is completely identified with Śiva.[195]

The Tirumantiram expounds the concepts, generally considered as the four types of release - sāloka, sāmīpa, sārūpa and sājujya- attainable from observance of the four paths, in terms of the transformation of knowledge: In sāloka, *pāśajñāna* becomes *paśujñāna*, which turns into *aruljñāna* in sāmīpa. This is transformed into *patijñāna* in sārūpa, and in *sājujya* it becomes dissolved in Śiva.[196] The final *mukti* is celebrated in the *Tirumantiram* as living liberation and is inseparably linked to the concept of immortality.

As noted earlier, the one who is a follower of caryā path is called bhakta, whereas the one who adopts the paths of kriyā and yoga are known as sādhaka. The one who has attained jñāna is called a Siddha. The term *sādhaka,* especially, denotes the one who has undergone *sādhakābhiṣeka*. The *āgamas* dealing with *parārthapūjā* are temple liturgical texts, primarily meant for temple ritualists Śivācāryas, whereas the *āgamas* that focus on private worship offer guidance to *sādhakas*.[197] Brunner furnishes an elaborate description of the *sādhaka*, his goal and his activities.

> …on this particular initiate, the sādhaka,… He is the one who, after his dīkṣā, attaches himself to a definitive divinity (his "chosen deity", iṣṭadevatā), devoting all his time and energy to win over this God or Goddess, by means of meditation (dhyāna), cults (pūjās), fire sacrifices (homas), and especially lengthy recitations of His or Her mantras (japas). This practice (sādhana) sometimes of a kind better known from extreme marginal sects, often implies severe asceticism. It is done in a secluded place and must be pursued up to the advent of what is called success (siddhi or mantrasiddhi), which consists in the complete mastering of the mass of Energy represented by the chosen deity. The *sādhaka,* henceforth is to free to make use of his power at will, but the kind of siddhi thus acquired varies according to the intensity of the sādhana and the nature of the divinity involved, ranging from the possession of some supernatural powers to a total divinization. [198]

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[195] TM 1481
[196] TM 1509
[197] Brunner, "Jñana and Kriyā: Relation between Theory and Practice in the Śaiv*āgamas,*" 28.
[198] Ibid.

The vernacular *āgama Tirumantiram* was composed for the sake of Tamil *sādhakas* who inhabited the five Tamil *maṇṭalam*s or regions.[199] In the *Tirumantiram* the *sādhaka* (*cātakaṉ*) is connected to *kriyā*, and *yoga*. The above description of *sādhaka* almost perfectly fits the *kriyāsādhaka* who is chiefly a worshipper of Śakti in the fourth *Tantra* of the *Tirumantiram*, which is described as "a practical exposition of the Mantra Śāstra or the Upāsanā Mārga."[200] Venkataraman is of the opinion that the origin of Tamil *kāyasiddha* school of later period that deals with mantras and yantras could be traced to this tantra.[201] Though Śakti is praised as supreme Goddess in her own right, the text emphasizes that she be perceived as consort of Śiva, sharing half his body (*pākam parācatti* TM 1217:1). Moreover, the path of *kriyā* is deemed inferior to that of yoga and *aṉpu* in the text.

> Those who have becomes slaves
> of the One who is [eternally] devoid of the impurities
> Do not seek *kriyā*
> Those who are not [naturally] inclined towards [kriyā]
> Do not seek *kriyā*
> They who are great Śiva Yogis
> Do not seek *kriyā*
> Those who have great aṉpu for Śiva
> Do not seek *kriyā.*[202]

The *sādhaka* in the *Tirumantiram* is more interested in becoming *civam* than in attaining worldly powers. Having his bonds burnt through initiation by the preceptor, the *sādhaka* works towards becoming *civam* through a sustained practice of yoga.[203] He is explicitly connected with

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[199] According to Narayana Ayyar, they are Cēra maṇṭalam, Cōla maṇṭalam, Pāṇṭiya maṇṭalam Toṇṭai maṇṭalam (Pallava) and Koṅku maṇṭalam.

[200] C. V. Narayana Ayyar, *Origin and early history of Śaivism in South India,* 231

[201] *A History of the Tamil Siddha Cult,* 90-93.

[202] vēṇṭārkaḷ kaṉmam vimalaṉukku āṭpaṭṭōr
   vēṇṭārkaḷ kaṉmam atil iccai aṟṟa pēr
   vēṇṭārkaḷ kaṉmam miku caiva yōkikaḷ
   vēṇṭārkaḷ kaṉmam mikutiyōr āytaṉpē (TM 1008)

[203] taṟpara mēvuvōr cātakarāmē (TM 2059:4)

the practice of the eight-fold yoga and *haṭha* yoga in the text.[204] Another verse defines *sādhaka* as the one who stays in *samādhi*:

> He is not conscious of the times that pass by
> He [merely] looks at [sits through]
> Great [the timeless] moments that continue to expand
> He directs the breath
> Through the channel suṣumnā
> To the space in cranium
> He is the sādhaka who
> Remains there absorbed with his ego destroyed. [205]

Religion of the Tirumantiram:

We have thus far noted that though the concept of Living liberation is expounded within the *āgamic* conceptual framework, it is greatly influenced by Upaniṣads called Vedanta. The religion of the *Tirumantiram* is known as Śuddha Śaivism which is explained in terms of the four pādas. Based on the sub-headings found in Tantra Five, it is argued that verses 1420-1442 deal with the four forms of Śaivism: Śuddha Śaivism, Aśuddha Śaivism, Mārga Śaivism and Rigorous (kaṭum) Śuddha Śaivism. [206] However, the descriptions in respect of these forms of Śaivism, especially those in respect of Mārga Śaivism and Rigorous (kaṭum) Śuddha Śaivism are vague and incomplete. Of the twenty three verses dealing with the four-fold Śaivism, only one verse mentions Rigorous Śuddha Śaivism (1425). Of the eleven verses given under the title of Mārga Śaivism, the term mārga appears only in verse 1427; one verse describes Aśuddha Śaivism (1435) and the rest is concerned with Śuddha Śaivism. Only Aśuddha Śaivism and Śuddha Śaivism are clearly presented in the text.

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[204] cutta viyamāti cātakar tūyōkar (TM 1446:3); TM 1140.

[205] irukkiṉṟa kālaṅkaḷ ētum aṟiyār
  perukkiṉṟa kālap perumaiyai nōkki
  orukkiṉṟavāyu oḷi peṟa niṟkat
  tarukkoṉṟi niṉṟiṭum cātakaṉāmē (TM 716)

[206] The expression "nālvakaic caivamumāmē" (TM 1419:4) does not mention the four types of cults by name.

According to verses 1423 and 1424, followers of Aśuddha Śaivism adopt the paths of caryā and kriyā. The text identifies them as devotees and ritualists respectively,[207] who give prominence to religious insignia. They wear twin golden ear rings, ornaments, twin colourful garlands, and a double string of rudrākṣa. In addition, they have a rudrākṣa on the heads and holy ashes besmeared on their bodies. Upon initiation, they recite sacred scriptures. Their Siddhānta (philosophy) does not show any sign of influence by Vedānta.[208] Hence, they are considered inferior to adherents of Śuddha Śaivism and are also referred to as ordinary Śaivas:

vētāntamallāta cittāntam kaṇṭuḷōr cātāraṇamaṉṉa caivar upāyamē (TM 1435:3-4).

In contrast, Śuddha Śaivism is associated with the paths of yoga and jñāna. Its philosophy is called Śuddha Siddhānta which is heavily influenced by Vedānta. Followers of Śuddha Śaivism seek the transcendental state of Śivoham in which distinctions of polarities disappear.

> Śuddha Śaivas distinguish between *cat*, *acat* and *catacat*
> They transcend the binaries of *cit* and *acit*
> Though living in the world they are not associated with *śuddha* and *aśuddha* māyā
> Eternal Para is dear to them. (1420)

The Tirumantiram also reinterprets the means and the goal of āgamic Śaiva Siddhānta. Ritual is replaced by yoga and *jñāna* and the goal of 'becoming a Śiva' is substituted with that of 'becoming civam.' Besides, the philosophy of Śuddha Siddhānta is claimed to be Vedanta itself.

> Adherents of Śaiva Siddhānta,
> Having studied all that must be learnt,
> practised Śivayoga that deals with the kalās of the moon,
> secured the knowledge of *bindu* and *nāda* in due manner,
> reached the *kalā* made known by *praṇava*,
> and got rid of impurities,
> Realise the state of *civam* (1421)
>
> Vedanta is Śuddha Siddhānta itself
> Those who adopt this path are those who
> Have a vision of *civam*, that is *nādānta*. (1422)

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[207] TM 1446; TM 1444 and TM 1448
[208] The term *vedānta* refers to the Upaniṣads here, in particular, the *mahāvākyas*.

Both *caryā* and *kriyā* are connected to temple worship which is not held in high esteem by the text. In this classificatory system, Aśuddha Śaivas practising *caryā* and *kriyā* are opposed to Śuddha Śaivas who are practitioners of yoga and seekers of knowledge. The Siddhānta of Aśuddha Śaivas is dualistic whereas Śuddha Śaiva description could be considered as non-dualism. In the verses under consideration, liberation is denoted by different expressions: *taṟparam kāṇal* (1421:3), *civōkam* (1431), *civamātal* (1434,1437, 1440), *cāyucciyam* (1442). All may be taken to denote the identical goal of Śuddha Śaivism.

III

The Tirumantiram and Vedic Revelation

The Vedas and the *āgamas* are referred to as *Vētākamam* in the text[209]. Only in one instance are the *āgamas* placed before the Vedas.[210] The path shown by these two revelations is known as *Vētākama neṟi*.[211] Their divine origin is affirmed by the *Tirumantiram*.[212] These scriptures are held authoritative as they are revealed by Śiva. Compared to the Vedas, the *āgamas,* however, exercise a far greater authority in Śuddha Śaivism. It is decreed that the Vedas and the *āgamas* have general and special authority respectively in the religious domain.[213] The text considers the *āgamic* revelation exhaustive, perfect, and superior to Vedic revelation. While

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[209] vētākamam (TM 2755) pāṭi eḻukiṉṟa vētākamaṅkaḷum (TM 2317) vētākamam kūṟum (TM 2057) vētamey ākamam ellām (TM 1335:2)

[210] ākama vētam (TM 2379:1)

[211] TM 2044:2.

[212] mutalākum vēta muḻutā kamamap
  patiyāṉa īcaṉ pakarnta tiraṇṭu (TM 2404:1-2)
The primal Vedas and the perfect *āgama*s
The texts revealed by the lord of souls are, thus two.
vētamōṭākamam meyyām iṟaivaṉ nūl (TM 2397a)
Both the Vedas and the *āgama*s are deemed divine revelations. However, in Tantra four Parāśakti is referred to as the creator of the Vedas and Vedāṅgas: vaittaṉaḷ āraṅka nāluṭaṉ tāṉvētam (TM 1180:2). Parāśakti, the mother of tattvas (tattuva nāyaki ,TM 679:1), shares Śiva's form (TM 1217:1) and renders support to those who seek knowledge (TM 1057). She is capable of leading devotees to the state of Śivatvam (TM 1066). She comes in the form of guru (kurācatti kōlam TM 1169:4). She dispels the darkness of the mind caused by āṇavam (TM 1246), and confers mukti and siddhi (TM 1309:2)

[213] vētamōṭu ākamam meyyām iṟaivaṉnūl ōtum potuvum ciṟappumeṉṟu uḷḷaṉa (TM 2397:1-2)

attaching a lower position to the Vedas, the *Tirumantiram* claims that the Vedas are not contrary to the general spirit and tenor of the text. By interpreting the Vedas in the light of its own doctrines, it shows that its conclusions are those of the Vedas.

In order to bridge the doctrinal gap between the Vedas[214] and the *Tirumantiram*, the following notions are declared common to both texts: (a) Śiva constitutes the epitome of the Vedas (b) The Vedas confer liberation (c) Vedic sacrifice is identified with yoga (d) The path to liberation elucidated by the *Tirumantiram* is none other than the one expounded by Upaniṣads (Vedānta). Thus, the Vedas are reinterpreted as soteriological texts.

The Vedas and Śiva

The *Tirumantiram* declares that Vedic revelation has dual purposes. One is a practical purpose to be used in sacrifices; the ultimate purpose, however, is to unveil the true essence (*meypporuḷ*).[215] The expression *meypporuḷ* refers to Śiva in verse 52.[216] The Vedas are represented as a sectarian literature having Śiva as the supreme deity. Śiva has stable links with the Vedic tradition.[217] He is the creator as well as the reciter of the Vedas.[218] Sometimes his consort is associated with the Vedas.[219] Since Śiva is consciousness itself, the Vedas are nothing other than the expression of this consciousness in the form of *nāda*.

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[214] The Vedic literature can be classified into karmakāṇḍa and jñānakāṇḍa. The karmakāṇḍa is concerned with sacrificial ritual and the Upaniṣads are known as jñānakāṇḍa. The *Tirumantiram* refers to the Upaniṣads as Vedānta.

[215] vētam uraittāṉum vētiyar vēḷvikkāy   vētam uraittāṉum meypporuḷ kāṭṭavē (TM 52 :3-4)

[216] The expression *meypporuḷ* appears in verses 52, 675, 676, 689, 952, 1354, 160, and 1822. In most instances, it denotes Śiva, but in 1360 it refers to Śakti.

[217] vētattil āṭi (TM 2756:2) Śiva dances in the Vedas.
vētattiṉ antamum ...civanaṭamāmē (TM 2792) The end of the Vedas signifies the dance of Śiva.
vētakkaṇ ṉāṭiyil vērē veḷippaṭu (TM 2986) Śiva appears in the glass of Vedic knowledge.
vēta mutalvaṉ (TM 2604:2; 2994) Śiva is the primal one of the Vedas.
vētappakavaṉ (TM 2447:3) The Lord of the Vedas.
civa vētattiri (TM 2578:2-3) the Vedic torch of Śiva.

[218] āraṅka māyvaru māmaṟai ōtiyai (TM 55a).

[219] vēta mutalvi (TM 1161:3) Śakti is also referred to as chief of the Vedas kūttaṉaik kaṇṭa ak kōmaḷak kaṇṇiṉaḷ ...pārttaṉaḷ vētaṅkaḷ pāṭiṉaḷ tāṉē (TM 2800) Śiva dances while his consort sings the Vedas.

> In the beautiful Vedas of metrical form
> The three-eyed god rises
> As melting Consciousness.
> He is the essence embodied
> In the mantras chanted by the Brahmans.
> His form instills awe.[220]

By establishing the links between the Vedas and Śiva, the text emphasizes the fact the

Brahmans whose prerogative is the study of the Vedas are not extraneous to the path of Śaivism.

However, the author deplores the fact that the Brahmans are apathetic to the concepts embodied

in Śiva's *ardhanārīśvara* form or the aniconic form of *linga*.[221] Both are symbolic of the highest

state of consciousness the Siddha attains in yoga.

The Vedas and Liberation:

Having established Śiva as the true object of the Vedas, the text reinterprets them as

Scriptures of liberation. The following verse distinguishes Vedic religion from other creeds that

place an emphasis on logical reasoning, and declares that liberation is attainable through the

study of the Vedas.

> There is no higher wisdom (*aṟam*) than the Vedas
> The Vedas contain all knowledge (*aṟam)* that should be recited
> Turning away from the science of reasoning
> The wise secured release through the recitation of the Vedas [222]

The term *aṟam* has several meanings including wisdom or knowledge according to the University

of Madras Tamil Lexicon.[223] Both Natarajan and Varatarājaṉ interpret the term as *dharma* and

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[220] irukkuru vāyeḻil vētatti nuḷḷē
  urukkuṉar vāyuṉar vētattuḷ ōṅki
  verukkuru vākiya vētiyar collum
   karukkuru vāyniṉra kaṇṇaṉumāmē (TM 53)
The inner or esoteric meaning of the Vedas is denoted by the term *marai* (the hidden) in the poem addressed to Tirumāl: vētattu maṟai nī –You are the essence or the hidden meaning of the Vedas (Pari.3:66).
[221] āṟaṅka māyvaru māmaṟai ōtiyaik
  kūṟaṅka mākak kuṇampayil vārillai (TM 55:1-2)
[222] vētattai viṭṭa aṟamillai vētattiṉ
  ōtat takumaṟam ellam uḷa tarkka
  vātattai viṭṭu matiñar vaḷamuṟṟa
  vētattai ōtiyē vīṭu peṟṟārkaḷē (TM 51)

nīti respectively.[224] Thus, they seem to suggest that the verse is evocative of the classical notion "*The root of the whole of dharma is the Vedas*" found in the *Manusmṛti* 2:6. Yet, a*ṟam* in this instance needs to be reinterpreted as knowledge or wisdom revealed by Śiva, through which alone liberation is attainable.

Reconceptualization of Vedic Sacrifice as Yoga:

As pointed out earlier, one of the purposes of the Vedas is to be used in sacrifice. The *Tirumantiram* acknowledges the fundamental belief underlying the sacrificial ritual, i.e. the cosmos is upheld by Vedic sacrifice. [225]

> The sky and the earth
> all directions and
> the gods who hold sway there
> will flourish
> if sinless Brahmans offer oblations into the fire
> as per the Vedas, the flawless sublime truth.[226]

Nonetheless, the limitation of the Vedic sacrificial tradition is that it is not concerned with liberation from *saṃsāra*. The one who executes the sacrifice is elevated to heaven through the merit acquired from the sacrifice. However, he is constrained to descend back to earth upon the exhaustion of his merits. Performance of sacrifice cannot secure the performer release from *saṃsāra*. The only way for an individual to determine his own fate is to seek self-knowledge, and thereby extricate him from the web of rites. The text states,

> The Brahmans proficient in the Vedas
> offer oblations and give others before they eat[227]

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[223] Moral or religious duty, virtue, performance of good works according to the Śāstras, duties to be practised by each caste, merit, that which is fitting, excellent, religious faith, wisdom, feeding house, fasting, letters or words in a verse which cause harm, Goddess of virtue, and Yama.

[224] See Natarajan's translation on p. 9 and Varatarājaṉ's commentary on p.27.

[225] My interpretation of verses 214 and 215 are based on Varatarājaṉ's commentary.

[226] vacaiyil viḻupporuḷ vāṉum nilaṉum
  ticaiyum ticaipeṟu tēvar kuḻāmum
  vicaiyam perukiya vēta mutalām
  acaivilā antaṇar ākuti vēṭkilē (TM 214)

[227] *puṟam koṭuttu uṇṇal* is interpreted by Varatarājaṉ as making *dāna* before eating. I suppose that this phrase is connected to the concept of pañcayajña: brahmayajña (Study and teaching of the Vedas), pitṛyajña (offering of oblations to the manes, daivayajña (fire ritual), bhūta*yajña* (offering of food to beast and birds) and nṛyajña

in pursuit of heaven (where the stay is transitory).
Yet, the true path that determines their own fate
Is achieved only through knowledge [228]

The above verse speaks of the inadequacy of *pañcayajña*[229] for the attainment of liberation. The expressions *ākuti vēṭkum* and *arumaṟai antaṇar* refer to daivayajña (fire ritual) and brahmayajña (Study and teaching of the Vedas) respectively. The phrase *puṟam koṭuttu uṇṇal* is interpreted by Varatarājaṉ as making *dāna* before eating. However, it can also be taken to refer to the remaining three *yajñas: pitṛyajña* (offering of oblations to the manes), *bhūtayajña* (offering of food to beast and birds) and *nṛyajña* (hospitality). One cannot attain release through the performance of the five sacrifices, the goal of which is heaven. Hence, the text advocates self-knowledge as the means to liberation.

If one knows himself, no evil befalls him
But one is ruined without self-knowledge
Once self-knowledge dawns on him
He remains venerated by himself [230]

Yoga is the only true and correct path that confers self-knowledge. One of the esoteric verses containing the theme of fire-ritual is interpreted by Varatarājaṉ as advocating paryaṅga yoga:[231] "The Brahmans who are house-holders, having realized the principle of external fire worship, engage in the ritual of sexual intercourse at night treating their wives as the consort of Śiva."[232] Though sexual intercourse (*maithuna)* is one of the *pañcamakāras* in left-handed tantra, it is designated as one of the yogas (*paryaṅga yoga)* in the *Tirumantiram*, in which sexual

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(hospitality) Manu III:67, 70; V.169. Accordingly, the phrase may be taken as a reference to *bhūtayajña and nṛyajña.*
[228]ākuti vēṭkum arumaṟai antaṇar
 pōkati nāṭip puṟam koṭuttu uṇṇuvar
 tām viti vēṇṭit talaippaṭu meynneṟi
 tāmaṟivālē talaippaṭṭa vāṟē (TM 215)
[229] Manu III:67, 70, V.169.
[230] taṉṉai aṟiyat taṉakkoru kēṭillai
 taṉṉai aṟiyāmal tāṉē keṭukiṉṟāṉ
 taṉṉai aṟiyum aṟivai aṟintapiṉ
 taṉṉaiyē arccikkat tāṉiruntāṉē (TM 2355)
[231] Paryaṅga means bed.
[232] See Varatarājaṉ's commentary in Book I, p.114.

emission is suspended. Thus, the notion of fire ritual is redefined as one in which the person

kindles the fire of *mūlādhāra* in his body by engaging in sexual coitus with his spouse. [233]

Gurumārga is Vedic

The term Vedānta refers to the Upaniṣads that are placed at the end of the Vedic books[234]

and the school of Vedānta[235] (the last of the six darśanas or systems of philosophy). Firstly, the

Tirumantiram declares that the *upaniṣads* recognize only one path that leads to liberation. It is the

Great Śaiva path identified as the Gurumārga (kuruneṟi) .

> [Let me explain] what the divine path is.
> Having transcended [the dualities] of *cit* and *acit*
> Contemplating the Lord who is great salvation itself[236]
> [one] follows the Great *Śaiva* path called Guru-*mārga* (*kuruneṟi*)
> This is the one and only path recognised by the Vedānta.[237]

Secondly, the Tirumantiram asserts that doctrinal differences do not exist between

Vedānta and Siddhānta (conclusions of *āgamas*) because their goals are identical, that is, to

become *civam*.[238]   In the following verse, the text ascribes to the *upaniṣads* its own formulation

of the doctrine of liberation.

> The beginning-less soul,
> Rid of the five impurities
> Transcends the knowledge of *māyā,*
> Realises Itself, and
> Becomes Śiva,
> When the eternal impurity, *āṇava,*
> Becomes [completely] extinct, and
> When tattvas are transcended.
> The water [the ātman) mixed with milk (brahman) becomes milk[239]
> This is the truth of the Vedānta.[240]

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[233] TM 216

[234] The *Tirumantiram* denotes the *upaniṣads* by the term Vedānta, but does not mention any of them by name.

[235] TM 2172, 2179

[236] Neṟi also means salvation. Hence *peruneṟi* is translated as great salvation.

[237] tiruneṟi yāvatu cittacit taṉṟip
   peruneṟi yāya pirāṉai niṉaintu
   kuruneṟi yāmciva māneṟi kūṭum
   oruneṟi oṉṟāka vētāntam ōtumē (TM 54)

[238] civamātal vētānta cittāntamākum (TM 2393:1)
   cittānta vētāntam cemporuḷātalāṟ
   cittānta vētāntam kāṭṭum civaṉaiyē (TM2394:3-4)

[239] See Varadarajan's commentary.

The ideological consonance between Vedānta and Siddhānta is further suggested by alluding to the "Great Statements" found in the Upaniṣads: *tat tvaṁ asi* (*tont tat taci*) and *so`ham* (*cōkam*). The Śivayoga (becoming *civam*) is said to have been originally conceived by great Vedic Brahmans who intone *Ì am He*.

> This is Śivayoga
> The pre-eminent [principle of]
> Those who follow the established Great Vedas
> That intone "soham"
> Such [principle] is the Great secret of the Siddhānta,
> That appears in the āgamic scriptures laden with [Vedic] meaning.[241]

Thus, the text is emphatic that the unequal status assigned to the Vedic and *ā*gamic revelations should not be construed that they are of separate goals.

> Those who examine the scriptures revealed by the Lord say
> that the ends of these works are diverse.
> Yet the truly learned see no difference between them.[242]

Conclusion: The objective of this Chapter was to evaluate the influence of the Sanskrit traditions on the *Tirumantiram*. The study was confined to the Vedic and the āgamic traditions. It was first shown that the *Tirumantiram* is not oriented towards public worship; but it provides instructions for one to realise the truth and become civam. Hence, its teachings are restricted to initiates alone, known as *sādhaka*. The *Tirumantiram* was composed for the benefit of *sādhakas* who were proficient only in Tamil. The text also amply suggests that that these *sādhakas* were attached to some monastery.

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[240] aṉāti cīvaṉ aimmalam aṟṟu appālāy
   aṉāti aṭakkit taṉaikkaṇṭu araṉāyt
   taṉ ātimalam keṭat tattuva atītam
   viṉāvu nīr pālātal vētānta uṇmaiyē (TM 2401)
[241] maṉṉiya cōkamā māmaṟaiyāḷartañ
   ceṉṉiyatāṉa civayōkamām īteṉṉa
   aṉṉatu cittānta māmaṟaiyāyp
   poruḷ tuṉṉiya ākama nūleṉat tōṉṟumē ((TM 2403)
[242] nātaṉ uraiyavai nāṭil iraṇṭantam
   pētamatu eṉpar periyōrkku apētamē (TM 2397 3-4)

It was also demonstrated that the *Tirumantiram*, which designates itself as an *āgama*, embraces the conceptual framework of the *āgamas*, but does not adopt its fourfold classification. The following fundamental distinctions are observed between the texts in terms of content. According to dualistic *āgamas*, the soul regains its original nature once it is rid of triple impurities, and becomes a Śiva. Even in the state of liberation, the soul does not lose its individuality, but maintains an identity separate from Śiva. This is achieved purely through ritual. The *Tirumantiram* conceptualizes liberation different from the *āgamic* videhamukti. The ultimate aim of the sādhaka is to transcend dualities and become *civam*. The knowledge the Tirumantiarm speaks of is self-knowledge that is derived from the practice of yoga and from the grace of Guru. Hence, yoga and *jñāna* are the inseparable means to liberation. However, the *Tirumantiram* admits that the soul can be freed of impurities by means of *dīkṣā*, though this confers only partial divinization. In order to attain full divinization and merge with Śiva, one needs to practice Śivayoga that will lead to liberating knowledge. Those who are united with Śiva are called Siddhas.

Another distinction between the *Tirumantiram* and the dualistic *āgamas* is that the four steps (caryā, kriyā, yoga and jñāna) are considered graded paths in the *Tirumantiram,* whereas in the *āgamas*, caryā, yoga and jñāna are integrated into the ritualistic path. By means of the notion of hierarchized religious paths, the *Tirumantiram* enhanced its ability to embrace almost all members of Tamil society, who possess differing psychological attitudes and capabilities for religious instructions. *Varṇa* or *jāti* is not considered a criterion to be admitted to higher paths or to become a preceptor.

The Vedas, especially the Upaniṣads, have contributed to the fine tuning of the doctrine of liberation in the *Tirumantiram*. The text does not accept the stance of the dualistic *āgamas*, that

in the state of liberation the soul and Śiva remain apart. It insists that there is a total identification of the soul with Śiva which is illustrated through the Upaniṣadic Great Statements *tat tvam asi* (You are That) and *so'ham asmi* (I am He). These Great Statements identify the Ātman with the Brahman, the ultimate essence of the universe. By designating the liberation as Vedānta-siddhānta, the *Tirumantiram* underscores the fundamental and common nature between Śiva and the soul, i.e. consciousness, and the nature of the soul's identification with Śiva. The term *advaita* is absent in the text, but several verses express the idea very clearly. The Vedānta–Siddhānta is a descriptive term of the state of liberation in which the soul losses its separate identity in Śiva.

Nonetheless, the text holds a disparaging attitude towards the Vedas, especially to the sacrificial portion. They are subordinated to the *āgamic* scriptures, and the Vedic prescriptions are superseded by āgamic injunctions. At the same time, the text also reinterprets the Vedic sacrificial system as Śivayoga, and attempts to show that the Vedas are a Śaivaite sectarian literature by identifying Śiva as the meaning and essence of Vedic revelation.

Yoga occupies an insignificant place in the overall conceptual scheme of liberation devised by Śaiv*āgamas*. Given the facts that yoga is an independent religious tradition capable of securing release for the souls, and that the *Tirumantiram* is a text dealing with various types of yoga, it is essential to look at fundamental principles governing yoga. Aṉpu constitutes the basis of yoga enunciated by the text. Thus, the next chapter is concerned with how Tamil and Sanskrit traditions interact with each other through emotional and sensual love during the bhakti era.

CHAPTER THREE

The Synthesis of Tamil and Sanskrit : Bhakti, Aṉpu and Yoga

This Chapter is devoted to defining and elucidating yoga, the sole means of attaining living liberation, and its relation to *bhakti* and *aṉpu* as represented in the *Tirumantiram*. Despite the fact that Tirumūlar seems to have based his exposition of yoga on Patañjali's Yogasūtras and other Sanskrit texts, his treatise was, to a greater extent, influenced by the Tamil literary tradition, notably by the notion of *aṉpu*. In other words, his work is not merely a translation of yogic techniques discussed in Sanskrit texts, but a sequel to the synthesis of two divergent traditions: Sanskrit and Tamil. Hence, Tirumūlar's conceptualization of yoga is, as he claims, fresh, new, and hitherto unheard of (*navayoga*). (In fact, he attributes it to his preceptor Nandi).[1] The question I examine in this chapter is why the concept of yoga is connected to the notion of *aṉpu* instead of that of bhakti, as evidenced by the text. In other words, why does the author privilege the use of the term *aṉpu* in connection with yoga? Does he imply that these two terms (bhakti and *aṉpu*) have different connotations as far as yoga is concerned?

Zvelebil is of the opinion that the *Tirumantiram* celebrates a triple path (knowledge, yoga and *bhakti*) to liberation, which confers the text fundamental unity in content.[2] *Bhakti* that embraces a dualistic theology is understood to be service to God or to take part in the experience of God through serving him.[3] It is rooted in the hierarchical patterns of relations between God and the devotee and is deemed a gratuitous gift of God.[4] Besides, one who

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[1] TM 122.

[2] Kamil V Zvelebil, *The Poets of the Powers,* 74.

[3] …………………….īcaṉ
patipaṇi ceyvatu pattimai kāṉē (TM 1454:3-4).

[4] pattiyum nātaṉ aruḷiṟ payilumē (TM 1575:4).

observes *bhakti*, said to be the chief characteristic of *caryā* path,[5] is not destined to attain union with Śiva, but only *sāloka* mukti.[6]   On the contrary, yoga is non-dualistic both in essence and in outlook. Its goal is to identify with Śiva, having risen above the polarities. In *bhakti* the object of focus is externalised and seen as different from the self, whereas in yoga the centre of focus is the self itself. Detachment from external stimuli is one of the integral elements of yoga. Thus, the fundamentals of yoga are at variance with those of *bhakti*. I, therefore, argue that in view of the incompatibility of ideologies of *bhakti* and yoga, the *Tirumantiram* chooses to associate yoga with a classical Tamil concept called *aṉpu,* the general meaning of which is love.   Hence, this Chapter examines how this secular concept of *aṉpu* is used and interpreted in the theistic text *Tirumantiram* and how it adds a new dimension to the ideology of yoga found in Sanskrit texts. I argue that the concept of yoga in the *Tirumantiram* should be interpreted as *uṇarcciyuḷ oṭukkam* (TM 283*)*, meaning to be absorbed in the emotion of *aṉpu*, and that the ultimate goal of yoga is to become *civam*, an embodiment of two contradictory principles: knowledge/aṟivu and emotion/*uṇarcci* (*aṉpu* or love).

Aṉpu and bhakti are intertwined concepts and it is not possible to discuss one without referring to the other. *Aṉpu* is an overarching secular concept that embraces both *akam* and *puṟam* poetry of the Caṅkam literature. It is erroneous to identify *aṉpu* with *akam* genre alone. Tamil Śiva bhakti that took definite shape in the medieval devotional poetry Tēvāram has its roots in *aṉpu,* which is represented in both classical *akam* and *puṟam* poetry. The hierarchical relationship between patron and bard based on *aṉpu* in the *puṟam* poetry, constitutes a model for the relationship between Śiva and his devotees in Tēvāram. Aṉpu in the public *puṟam*

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[5] pattar caritai paṭuvōr (TM 1446:1).
[6] cālōka māti cariyāti yiṟpeṟum (TM 1507:1).
Sāloka mukti is described in terms of the transformation of consciousness, that is, realizing that one is distinct from the material world and its objects with which one is in constant contact.

poetry assumes the appellation of *bhakti* in the religious setting of the early medieval period. Thus, the concept of *bhakti* in Tēvāram and the Tirumantiram may be interpreted as reverential devotion or affectionate regard expressed by a person of a lower rank (devotee/disciple) towards one of higher rank (Śiva/guru) in a hierarchical, formalistic relationship characterized by pilgrimage, praise, and service. It should not, however, be interpreted that *bhakti* in Tēvāram and the Tirumantiram lacks representations of *aṉpu* belonging to the *akam* genre. The feelings of love related to the five landscapes are dubbed as *aṉpiṉ aintiṇai* and may be subsumed under the two headings: love in separation and love in union. Whereas Tēvāram expresses the pain arising from separation in which lurks the desire to be united with Śiva, the Tirumantiram completely disregards this mode of love and speaks of the joy arising from the union with Śiva. Since love in union results in bliss, *aṉpu* is deemed appropriate to be associated with yoga. Thus, the yoga that is enunciated by the Tirumantiram is a theistic one steeped in *aṉpu*.

Bhakti (Tamilicized as patti), that appears for the first time in *Tēvāram,* is a very complex and ambiguous concept, despite the fact it has been subjected to scrutiny in Western scholarship since the latter part of the nineteenth century. The ambiguity of the term may be ascribed to the fact that it was influenced by a number of factors. As Ramanujan states, "Early *bhakti* movements, whether devoted to Śiva or Viṣṇu, used whatever they found at hand, and changed whatever they used. Vedic and Upaniṣadic notions, Buddhist and Jaina concepts, conventions of Tamil and Sanskrit poetry, early Tamil conceptions of love, service, women, and kings, mythology or folk religion and folksong, the play of contrasts between Sanskrit and the mother tongue: all these developments were reworked and transformed in *bhakti*."[7] While

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[7] A.K, Ramanujan, *Hymns for the Drowning,* 104.

not denying the influence of the diverse elements on bhakti, I trace its origin to the Tamil classical poetry.[8] In this chapter, my focus solely lies on the *Tirumantiram* and the Tamil sources preceding it, i.e. the classical Caṅkam works[9] and *Tēvāram*. Tamil works belonging to Jainism and Buddhism[10] are beyond the scope of this study.[11]

Most definitions of *bhakti* emphasize its emotional content. For instance, Krishna Sharma defines *bhakti* as "a generic term meaning loving devotion and attachment. It signifies a feeling and a sentiment, i.e., an emotive state of mind." [12] Zvelebil defines Tamil Śaiva *bhakti* of the medieval period in parallel terms: "*Bhakti* is a personal and emotional approach to God; the individual character of such contact with the Divine means that it occurs outside of any corporation which has a specialized and privileged knowledge of sacred texts and ritual."[13] Zvelebil thus distinguishes Tamil Śaiva *bhakti* from the ritualistic *bhakti* of Śivabrāhmaṇas who are entitled to perform *śivapūjā* in temples according to *āgamic* injunctions. Contrary to Zvelebil`s characterization of medieval Śaiva *bhakti* as an emotional approach to Śiva, François Gross conceives love in *Tēvāram* as service and respect. He states,

> "..the exegesis of bhakti lyricism, as well as its emotional content.. essentially rests on an analysis of Vaiṣṇavavite literature while the Śaivite texts are almost always victims of an analogical reading whose Vaiṣṇavavite presuppositions,.. referred to as .. "lyric temptation" are to be discounted….the most apposite example, the chapter entitled Bridal Mysticism" in Dorai Rangaswamy's thesis devoted to the work of Cuntarar, *The Religion and Philosophy of Tēvāram* of Cuntaramūrtti Nāyaṉār, a chapter built

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[8] See A.K. Ramanujan and Norman Cutler, "From Classism to Bhakti" in *The collected essays of AK Ramanujan,*232-259; Indira Peterson *Poems to Siva*, 33; Karen Prentice, *Embodiment of Bhakti,* 53; A.M. Dubianski, *Ritual and Mythological Sources of the Early Tamil Poetry,* Chapter II.

[9] The traces of heterodox religions can be found in the classical Caṅkam works. However, I take into account the poems that reflect the Tamil ideals: love, heroism and liberality.

[10] Tirukkuṟaḷ, Cilappatikāram, Maṇimēkalai etc.

[11] In Tirukkuṟaḷ that was composed around the 4th century, the eighth chapter is completely devoted to *aṉpu,* one of the virtues laid down for the householder who is the mainstay of renunciants, the indigent and the dead (42). *Aṉpu* is prerequisite to practice *pāttūṇ (*sharing one's food/fruits of one's labour with others), the notion on which the householder ethics is based in Tirukkuṟaḷ.

[12] *Bhakti and the Bhakti Movement: A Study in the History of Ideas* (New Delhi:Munshiram Manoharlal, 1987), 5-6.

[13] *The Smile of Murugan,* 195.

entirely upon Vaiṣṇavavite quotations….we should not lose sight of the specificity of Tamil lyricism in which love is service and respect rather than the mystic union of being…. [14].

I accord with the observations made by Gross and emphasize that we should not lose sight of the particularities of Tamil Śaiva *bhakti* in order to make it conform to its general definition.

In this Chapter, I treat *bhakti* and *aṉpu* as separate, but inter-related concepts. I contend that the term *bhakti* found in *Tēvāram* and the *Tirumantiram* is a technical term that reflects a dualistic, hierarchical relationship between the deity (or any authority figure) and the devotee (or a dependent) in an institutionalized setting, characterized by panegyric, pilgrimage and service. At the same time I do not, however, deny that Tamil Śaiva *bhakti* reflects the fundamental principles of *aṉpu*.

I also trace the term *bhakti* to its origins in the classical Tamil literature. I presume that though *bhakti* is a loaned term from Sanskrit, usage and interpretation of the term were considerably influenced by the indigenous literary tradition. It is worthy of note that Hart maintains separate origins of Sanskrit and Tamil *bhakti*:

> An outstanding of the difference in meaning between Sanskrit bhakti (loving devotion or worship) and Tamil *aṉpu* (affectionate love for those with whom one is familiar) gives much insight into the different approach of the two traditions. A careful exegetical analysis would show that Tamil devotion to God was an extension of love within the family, which was for the early Tamil the chief locus of the sacred, while Sanskrit *bhakti* developed from an impersonal concept of participation, in keeping with the transcendent nature of the sacred in the Sanskrit tradition.[15]

While I endorse the role of *aṉpu* in the development of Tamil *bhakti*, I would highlight the contribution of bardic tradition to some of the formalistic aspects of *bhakti*.

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[14] T.V. Gopal Iyer (ed.) with an introduction by François Gross, *Tēvāram* (Pondichéry: Institut Français d' Indologie, 1984), xxxviii.

[15] "Love of God according to Śaiva Siddhānta : A Study in the Mysticism and Theology of Śaivism" by Mariasusai Dhavamony (Review) *The Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. 31 No.1 (Nov., 1971),211.

The fact that the common term *bhakti* is found in two different language texts does not mean that its representations are identical, because different languages texts emerge to fulfill different purposes in different cultures in different historical contexts. Though it seems paradoxical, one can bring more insight into the thesis of *bhakti* if indigenous literary texts are consulted. In other words, it is more appropriate to trace the origin of *bhakti* to classical Tamil literature, rather than to the Bhagavad-Gītā, as the central issue of the Gītā - the observance of *svadharma* - is not compatible with the spirit of the ancient Tamil culture.[16]

This Chapter is divided into three sections. The first section is devoted to the discussion of *bhakti* in *Tēvāram* and the *Tirumantiram*, which is preceded by a sketch of the contribution of Tamil bardic tradition to the emergence of Tamil *bhakti*. The second presents a brief analysis of *aṉpu* found in the Caṅkam literature, *Tēvāram* and the *Tirumantiram*, and the final section explores the relation between *aṉpu* and yoga.

I

Bhakti

Pāṭāṉ Poetry of the Caṅkam period:

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[16] Karen Prentiss explains that *bhakti* is presented in the saints' poetry Tēvāram, as a theology of embodiment, the essence of which is that "engagement with (or participation in) God should inform all of one's activities in worldly life." She traces the origin of the notion of embodiment in the Bhagavad-Gītā that defines *bhakti* "as a religious perspective that can inform all actions at any time and in any place." (*The Embodiment of Bhakti,* 5). My contention is that karma in the Gītā should be understood in its own context and in the light of the overall objective of the text. Karma does not mean any action in the Gītā; it has a very specific meaning of varṇadharma. Hence, the definition of *bhakti*, derived from the Gītā cannot be applicable to Tamil *bhakti* which is based on aṉpu. Bhakti is introduced into the Gītā to reconcile the mutually exclusive domains, pravṛtti (life as a member of society ruled by varṇa-āśrama-dharmas) and nivṛtti (ceasing to be part of the society renouncing varṇa-āśrama-dharmas in search of a higher goal of liberation from a cycle of birth and death). This dyadic perspective on life is quite foreign to the indigenous Tamil worldview. Nicholas Sutton explains, "By drawing the conflicting views of pravṛtti and nivṛtti into its own value system, *bhakti* places itself in a position from which a reconciliation of the two becomes possible, and the key passage in which this synthesis is attempted is the Bhagavad-Gītā. Actions based on sva-dharma are judged as non-binding in the sense of generating future karma so long as they are performed as without desire for material gain. Such actions are placed on the same footing as the Yoga techniques of mokṣa-dharma, for the acts demanded by *svadharma* are to be understood as expressions of devotion to the deity and hence a path towards ultimate salvation." (*Religious Doctrines in the Mahabharata* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2000), 14) .

Texts interpret *bhakti* in diverse ways and each text's interpretation needs to be considered a distinct representation of *bhakti*.[17]   However, the ideologies of *bhakti* represented in the medieval Tamil *bhakti* literature share some common elements, the root of which can be traced to the classical Caṅkam literature. I argue that the public poetry called *puṟam* of the Caṅkam literature serves as the primary model for the medieval devotional literature, and that the relationship between the devotee and Śiva in *Tēvāram* and in the *Tirumantiram* is modelled on a hierarchical relationship, one that existed between a bard and his patron-chieftain as represented in the Caṅkam literature. Thus I seek to distinguish Tamil *bhakti* from Sanskrit *bhakti*, which Biardeau claims to have emanated from the Yajur Vedic ritualistic tradition.[18]

My attempt to trace the model of Tamil Śaiva *bhakti* to the classical Tamil works is not intended to give the impression that it is free of the influence of Sanskrit tradition. *Bhakti* in the medieval Śaiva literature is directed towards the pan –Indic deity Śiva,[19] the descriptions of whose form and deed draw on a number of Sanskritic purāṇic legends.[20]   Nonetheless, knowledge of how the saints attempt to relate Śiva to Tamil cultural milieu can be gathered only through the study of Tamil literary sources.   It has been pointed out that Śiva is conceptualised as a local Tamil heroic chieftain who through his munificence, endears himself

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[17]   Karen Prentiss, *The Embodiment of Bhakti,* 4.

[18] According to Biardeau, *bhakti* structures are incomprehensible unless they are seen connected to Vedic revelation. She regards the Yajurveda as the fountainhead of *bhakti* (Hinduism : the Anthropology of a Civilization, Oxford University Press, 1989, 28).

[19]   A very few references to Śiva are found in the Caṅkam literature. All epithets attributed to Śiva save one, are based on Sanskrit purāṇic mythology.   However, the epithet *ālamar celvaṉ* stems from the Tamil concept of immanence of the sacred.   Cuntarar mentions a few Śiva temples of banyan tree : tirukkaccūr ālakkōyil (7:41) ālak kōyil ammāṉē tiruvālaṅkāṭu (7:52) ālan niḻalil amarntāy amarā (7:3:6).

[20]   A hermeneutical devised by A.M. Pyatigorsky is applied to Tamil Śaiva poetry by Zvelebil in his work *The Smile of Murugan* (199-206). Zvelebil shows that each stanza in a patikam contains the following classifiable information: S_1 –the interior state of the subject[saint]; S_2 the external actions of the subject; O_1 the object's reaction to the particular object [Śiva]; O_2 the state, qualities, or actions of the object irrespective of the relation to the object. O_2 is mainly derived from Sanskrit Purāṇas.

to loyal bands of bards, who are proficient in verse-making, singing and dancing.[21] Thus, the concept of *bhakti* is understood and applied by the saints in a way that is unique to Tamil culture, represented in the autochthonous layers of the Caṅkam literature. Hence, the classical Caṅkam literature holds as much importance for the understanding of medieval Tamil *bhakti* literature as Vedic revelation holds for the understanding of epics and purāṇas, which are considered *bhakti* works.

I do not look into the etymological meanings of the term *bhakti* because etymological exegesis[22] is of little help in comprehending the nature of Tamil *bhakti*. As John Cort observes, "*Bhakti* is a highly complex, multiform cultural category, which is differently understood and practised in different times, places and texts."[23] Thus, cultural variations account for the uniqueness of Tamil Śaiva *bhakti*.

I contend that the genesis of Tamil *bhakti* can be found in *Pāṭāṇ* poetry of the classical *Caṅkam* literature. The Caṅkam period covers roughly the first three centuries of the Common Era. The poetry that emerged during this period is classified into akam (inner) and *puṟam* (outer). These terms are defined by Iḷampūraṇar, a medieval commentator on *Tolkāppiyam,* as follows: "The author [Tolkāppiyar] called it Akam (the Inner) since its content is the enjoyment of sexual union, and its results realized by only two persons concerned; He called it *Puṟam* (the Outer) since its content is indulgence in acts of war and acts of virtue and its results

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[21] Indira Peterson, *Poems to Śiva:The Hymns of the Tamil Śaiva Saints,* 33 -36.
[22] The term *bhakti* is Tamilicized as *patti* or *pattimai* in the Tirumantiram. See verses 75 and 98. According to the University of Madras Tamil Lexicon the term *patti* means devotion to God, guru, king; service; worship; moral conduct.
√*bhaj* has a number of meanings according to the M.Monier Williams`Sanskrit –English Dictionary: to divide , distribute ; to grant , bestow; partake of , enjoy (also carnally); experience, undergo; to pursue, practise , cultivate; to fall to the lot or share of; to declare for , prefer , choose (e.g. as a servant) ; to serve, honour, revere, love , adore.
[23] John E. Cort, "*Bhakti* in the Early Jain Tradition: Understanding Devotional Religions in South Asia" in *History of Religions* 42:1 (Aug., 2002), 62.

comprehensible to the others."[24]   *Akam* poetry represents idealised characters in different landscape settings rather than historical personages in specific places.   No proper names are assigned to them. These idealised characters are only identified by their roles, i.e. *talaivi* (heroine), *talaivaṉ* (hero), *tōḻi* (female friend).   The speaker in *Akam* poetry is not the poet herself, but a character whose persona the poet assumes.   On the contrary, "*puṟam*, the so-called 'public poetry' is allowed names, places, expression of personal circumstances in a real society, a real history, and freedom from the necessities of poetic convention both in *uḷḷuṟai* (implicit metaphor) and in the landscapes.   Thus it is the 'public' *puṟam* poetry that becomes the vehicle of personal expression and celebration of historical personages."[25]

The classical poetry is highly structured and conventional in character. Its composition was based on pre-determined poetic themes. As Kailasapathy points out, "the entire corpus had come into being on the basis of definite themes. For in all the collections of bardic poems that have come down to us, each poem has a colophon which, among other information, gives the theme of the poem. This reinforces the contention that that they were originally composed on the basis of themes."[26]   Tolkāppiyam identifies the following poetic situations (*tiṇai*) and themes (*tuṟai*) in *puṟam* poetry. [27]

Poetic Situation (*tiṇai*)	Number of Themes (*tuṟai*)
veṭci (cattle-raid,	14
recovery of cattle)	21
vañci (invasion)	13
uḻiñai (siege,	08
defence of fort)	12
tumpai (pitched battle)	12
vākai (victory)	18

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[24] K. Kailasapathy, *Tamil Heroic Poetry* (London: Oxford University Press), 4.
[25] A.K. Ramanujan, "Form in Classical Tamil Poetry" in *Symposium on Dravidian Civilization,* ed. Andree F. Sjoberg (New York:Jenkins, 1971), 97.
[26] *Tamil Heroic Poetry,* 192.
[27] Ibid., 194.

kāñci (transience)	20
pāṭāṇ (praise)	20
Total	138

Of all the seven poetic situations mentioned above, the most relevant to our discussion and the most popular among classical poets is *pāṭāṇṭiṇa*i (praise poems). For instance, more than one-third (35 percent) of *Puṟanāṉūṟu* (four hundred poems in the *puṟam* genre) belongs to *pāṭāṇṭiṇai* and is devoted to the praise of a hero. *Āṟṟuppaṭai* is also one of the themes (*tuṟai)* of *pāṭāṇ* poetry. "*Āṟṟuppaṭai* is a guidance poem in which a bard directs his fellow professional to the generous patron from whom he had earlier received gifts."[28] There are altogether twenty-one *āṟṟuppaṭai* poems: fourteen in *Puṟanāṉūṟu*[29] and seven in *Patiṟṟuppattu*.[30] Apart from these individual short poems, there are five long poems belonging to the *āṟṟuppaṭai* genre in *Pattuppāṭṭu*.[31] Subbiah notes that the objective of *āṟṟuppaṭai* poetry is to extol the king or the hero in a ritualistic or a ceremonial setting.[32] To support this claim he reproduces the thematic situations suitable for *pāṭāṇ* poems from *Tolkāppiyam* (poruḷatikāram, puṟattiṇai nūṟpā 30:1-12).[33] Subbiah distinguishes *pāṭāṇṭiṇai* from the praise poetry found in other poetic situations in *Puṟam*, stating that *pāṭāṇṭiṇai* is concerned with the hero's entire personality, whereas other

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[28] G.Subbiah, *Roots of Tamil Religious Thought*, 34-5.
[29] Puṟanāṉūṟu contains three types of *āṟṟuppaṭai* poems: pāṇāṟṟuppaṭai (68,69,70,138,141,155,180) pulavarāṟṟuppaṭai (48,49,141), and viṟaliyāṟṟuppaṭai (64,103,105,133).
[30] *Patiṟṟuppattu* has only two āṟṟuppaṭai genres: pāṇāṟṟuppaṭai (67) and viṟaliyāṟṟuppaṭai (40,49,57,60,78,87).
[31] Tirumurukāṟṟuppaṭai or pulavarāṟṟuppaṭai, porunarāṟṟuppaṭai, perumpāṇāṟṟuppaṭai, ciṟupāṇāṟṟuppaṭai, malaipaṭukaṭām or kūttarāṟṟuppaṭai
[32] *Roots of Tamil Religious Thought,* 40.
[33]"Songs sung by *sūta*(s) to awaken sleeping kings, wishing them unblemished fame; situations when actors, bards, war-bards, or female dancers, while returning from a patron, meet fellow –professionals who suffer from poverty, and suggest to them how they may also obtain the riches as they themselves have; the occasion of the birthday of the king, festive days when avoids anger; the occasion of annual coronation ceremony; praising the protective powers of king's umbrella; praising the sword that is aimed at the enemies; the occasion of ritual bath that kings take after destroying the enemy's fort…52" (Subbiah, *Roots of Tamil Religious Thought,* 40).

praise poems discuss only a specific act of the hero.[34] "As the focus is on the total personality, it is not only a hero's physical prowess, but every quality that makes him special and marks him off from others can form the theme of *pāṭāṇ* poem."[35] This *pāṭāṇ* poetry appears to be a precedent to medieval devotional poetry. In the following pages, I will briefly discuss the main thematic elements of *pāṭāṇ* poetry- pilgrimage, praise, and mutual obligations- as they figure as prominent features of Tamil bhakti.[36]

It was noted in the first chapter that the sacred was considered immanent in ancient Tamilakam and not transcendent as in the case of Vedic divinities.[37] Gods and spirits haunted mountains, stones, bodies of water, trees, forests, battlefields and cemeteries. The concept of immanence of the sacred implies that places and objects are not inherently sacred; rather they become suffused with sacredness due to their association with some sacred power. The king is the "central embodiment of the sacred powers that had to be present under control for the proper functioning of the society".[38] The bards keep the sacred powers of the king in check. This leads Dubianski to consider the bards' acts of glorifying kings as being ritualistic, the aim of which is to "render support to the king's vital breath of life, or in other words, to cool or channel the king's sacred force."[39] Fertility and prosperity of the land are emblematic of the king's sacred powers.[40] Irrespective of the size of his kingdom, the king is deemed to be the

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[34] Ibid., 117.
[35] Ibid.
[36] A.M. Dubianski deals with these three aspects in detail in chapter II of his work *Ritual and Mythological Sources of the Early Tamil Poetry*
[37] George L. Hart III, *The Poems of Ancient Tamil :Their Milieu and their Sanskrit Counterparts,* 26.
[38] Ibid., 13.
[39] A.M. Dubianski, *Ritual and Mythological Sources of the Early Tamil Poetry*, 61.
[40] The following is a description of country ruled by Vāṭṭāṟṟu Eḻiṇi, a Tamil chieftain:
   Lord ! He rules vaṭṭāṟu
   Of the rich waters where they frighten the birds with drums
   Sharply beaten in the growing fields
   That are circled by the tidal pools
   Where the fish dart under the water

soul of the world as he is responsible for its prosperity. The earth under his rule is considered to be his body. [41] Another poem in the *Puṟanāṉūṟu* reiterates the notion that the fecundity of the country relies on her male inhabitants, or rather, her rulers. [42] The king is primarily identified with reference to the land under his dominion. [43]

The king belongs to the category called *cāṉṟōr* (the noble), [44] a politically, economically and socially powerful elite group, that was well-known for its magnanimity. Common epithets such as *kiḻavaṉ*, [45] *kiḻavōṉ*, [46] *kiḻāṉ*, [47] *kō*, [48] and *kōṉ* [49] are used to refer to him. He is addressed as

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[41] And the flowers blossom on the surface
Like so many eyes and from the sand
Heaped by the great waters, birds
Fly off on soft wings in cool wind.(Puṟa.396-translated by Hart)

[41] Food [rice] is not life; neither water is
This boundless world has king as its life
Hence, understand that I am the life
This is the duty of the king
Possessing men wielding spears (Puṟa.186)

[42] Let you be a country or a wild tract
Let you be a mound or a hollow
By which means men are good
You too become good by the same means
Long live the land! (Puṟa.187)

[43] yāṉar vaippiṉ naṉṉāṭṭup poruna (Puṟa. 2:11)
aṟu toḻil antaṇar aṟam purinteṭutta tīyoṭu viḷaṅkum nāṭaṉ (Puṟa.397:20-21)
kāviri aṇaiyum tāḻnīrp paṭappai
nel viḷai kaḻaṉi ampar kiḻavōṉ (Puṟa.385: 8-9)
karumpaṉ ūraṉ kiṇaiyēm (Puṟa. 384: 10)
kuṉṟu pala keḻīiya kāṉ keḻu nāṭaṉ kaṭunttēr aviyaṉ (Puṟa.383: 22-23)
oli veḷ aruvi vēṅkaṭa nāṭaṉ (Puṟa. 381: 22)
tīñ cuḷaip palaviṉ nāñcir porunaṉ Puṟa.380:9)

[44] The classical Caṅkam works are known as "*cāṉṟōr ceyyuḷ*" in medieval commentaries. Kailasapathy notes that the term "*cāṉṟōr*" came to denote the authors of the poems only in the post-heroic period (*Tamil Heroic Poetry*, 92, 229-30). In the Caṅkam corpus the term denotes valiant kings or chieftains. For instance,

All *Cāṉṟōr* who rode the chariot died
Their eyes were covered with shields
tēr tara vanta cāṉṟōrellām tōl kaṇ
maṟaippa oruṅku māyntaṉarē (Puṟa.63:5-6).

[45] koṉperuṅ kāṉattuk kiḻavaṉ (Puṟa.155:7)
[46] nāṭu kiḻavōṉē (Puṟa. 400:23)
[47] koṉkāṇaṅ kiḻāṉ (Puṟa. 155)
[48] tōṉṟik kōvē (PN 399:4) paṟai icai aruvip pāyal kōvē (Puṟa. 398:30)
[49] viruntu iṟai nalkum nāṭaṉ eṅkōṉ (Puṟa. 374:15)

entai,[50] *peruma,*[51] and *poruna.*[52] Munificence is the single most important act that distinguishes a *cānrōn* from others in society. Thus, he receives the epithet *puravalan.*[53]

In contrast to the prosperous patron who is inextricably associated with the land, the bard of no fixed abode[54] is represented as an impoverished wanderer who makes an arduous journey to the country of his patron in the hope of ending his misery.[55] The poet Muṭamōciyār says that he went in search of patrons inquiring :

> ….who were *cānrōr* who might
> be willing to take upon themselves the weight of supporting
> this miserable life I live of begging and of eating[56]

Dubianski observes that the humble status of the bard "is made of interwoven motifs of extreme poverty, misery, hunger, and exhaustion brought about by a long and tiresome journey.[57]

The mutual obligations of the king and the bard towards each other are denoted by the term *kaṭan.*[58] The king's duty towards the bard is known as *pāṇkaṭan.*[59] The king is supposed to fulfill the bard's plea to feed and clothe him and remove his poverty with generous gifts.[60] The bard is also conscious of his own obligation towards the patron.

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[50] Puṟa. 396:24, 400:8
[51] Puṟa. 393:19, 395:21, 396:4
[52] Puṟa. 375:10
[53] naṭukal āyinan puravalan (Puṟa. 221:13)
[54] Several types of bards are mentioned in the Caṅkam literature: pāṇan, viṟali, kōṭiyar, vayiriyar, kaṇṇular, akavunar,kiṇaiyar and tuṭiyar. The term porunan denotes the bard who has forged intimate ties with his patron. See A.M.Dubianski, *Ritual and Mythological Sources of the Early Tamil Poetry*, Chapter Two.
[55] Poverty is known as ilampāṭu uḻanta en irum pēr okkal (Puṟa.378:14)
[56] ūḷ irantu uṇṇum uyaval vāḻvaip puravu etirntu koḷḷum cānrōr yār (Puṟa.375:7-8)
[57] A.M. Dubianski, *Ritual and Mythological Sources of the Early Tamil Poetry*, 62
[58] Hart observes that *kaṭan*, the primary meaning of which is debt, denotes sacrifice in *Kuṟunttokai* 218. See *The Poems of Ancient Tamil: Their Milieu and their Sanskrit Counterparts,* 27.
[59] pāṇ kaṭan āṟṟiya oliyar kaṇṇip pulikaṭi mā al! Puṟa.201:14;
pāṇ kaṭan irukkum vaḷḷiyōy (Puṟa. 203:11) ; 106
[60] You should tear juicy, fat meat into pieces and offer them those chunks
White with fat like the cotton of summer carded and packed into dense
Bundles! And you strip me of my old ragged garments that is split
Like the tongue of a serpent that has laid its eggs at its time to breed
And you should clothe me then in a broad garment with folds like the petals
Of newly blossoming *pakannarai* flowers that have sprung upon their bids!
And you should give away wealth without holding anything back, (Puṟa.393:11-19, Hart's translation)

In the pond the flower bud bloomed
The bard, conscious of his duty, played
Lute called …with his hand [61]

In appreciation of the bounty made by the king, the bards bless him and sing his praise.[62] They affirm an emotional allegiance to the patron, proudly declaring that they belong to him.[63] They vow that they would neither forget their patron, nor seek refuge with other kings.

Having thought of Kiḷḷivaḷavaṉ of undying fame
The lord of Kāviri, [we] would resort to him.
[I] would not go to others.
[I] would not [even] look at their faces.[64]

Showing [me] to his wife,
the maiden resembling Lakṣmi
He told[her] "Treat him as she would me."
Hence [I] will not forget him
[I] will not also think of others [other patrons][65]

It is also noteworthy that in the Caṅkam poetry, the term *tāḷ* (feet) emerges as a striking symbol of protection offered by the king.[66]

May I gain a life shaded by his feet
May he receive, from my tongue, the accounting of his glory[67]

Giving abundantly to those who reach his feet[68]

Long live the feet [of the king] who knows what we need [without us telling him][69]

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[61] poykaip pūmukai malarap pāṇar kaival cīṟi yāḷ kaṭaṉ aṟintu iyakka (Puṟa. 398:4-5)
[62] "chant, "Long life to Vaḷavaṉ whose sword never fails"
And again and again we will sing of your great and strenuous achievements (Puṟa.393: 23-25)
[63] Lord ,We are Cāttaṉ's drummers.
He who is famous for righteousness hails
From Piṭavūr, ruled by his father. (Puṟa.395: 20-21)
[64] kāvirik kiḻavaṉ māyā nal icaik
kiḷḷi vaḷavaṉ uḷḷi avar paṭartum
cellēṉ cellēṉ piṟarmukam nōkkēṉ (Puṟa. 399:12-14)
[65] ……………… taṉmaṉaip
poṉpōl maṭantaiyaik kāṭṭi ivaṉai
eṉpōl pōṟṟu eṉṟōṉē ataṟkoṇṭu
avaṉ maṟavalēṉē piṟar uḷḷalēṉē (Puṟa.395: 29-32)
[66] We rest in the cool shade of his mighty feet with their handsome anklets. Long live his feet (Puṟa. 395:40; 386:25).
[67] Hart's translation of the lines *yāṉē peruka avaṉ tāḷ niḻal vāḻkkai avaṉē peruka eṉ nā icai nuvaṟal* (Puṟa. 379:1-2); mutual obligation is mentioned here.
[68] tāḷ cēṟunarkku iṉitu īttum (Puṟa. 362:10)
[69] yām vēṇṭiyatu uṇarntōṉ tāḷ vāḻiyavē (Puṟa. 386:24-25)

The term *tāḷ* also signals the end of wandering life for bards. For instance, the bard sings "We rest in the cool shade of his mighty feet with their handsome anklets."[70] Sometimes *tāḷ* is a metonym for the king: *Long live his feet.*[71] The bard would often indicate his carefree life enjoyed at the feet of his patron through a motif of his studied indifference to the movement of the planets or the Sun in the sky. [72]

Tēvāram[73]

After the Caṅkam age, the notion of the king invested with sacred powers was transferred to the deity in the temple, bringing forth a flood of devotional poetry called *Tēvāram*.[74] *Tēvāram* treats the pan-indic Śiva as a king celebrated in the classical *puṟam* poetry.[75] Hence the relations between Śiva and his devotees in *Tēvāram* mirror the hierarchical relations between the king and his bards. Like a heroic, magnanimous king of the *puṟam* poetry, Śiva is identified with the places in which he resides.[76] Descriptions of his sacred

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[70] avaṉ tiruntu kaḻal nōṉ tāḷ taṉṉiḻalēmē (Puṟa. 397:26-27)
[71] vāḻka avaṉ tāḷē (Puṟa. 395:40)
[72] Let the Silver Planet rise in the east and then move westward
Or let it rise in the west and then move toward the east
Or let it appear in the north and then move toward the south
Or let it rise in the south and remain there without moving
Let the Silver Planet stand anywhere it wishes! (Puṟa. 386:20-24, Hart's translation)

Even if the end should dawn of the great sea
Heaving with its waves or the sun of blazing rays appears in the sky
Of the south, we will not fear and wonder what to do! He has power
To win victories with his conquering spear in hard battle
We rest in the cool shade of his mighty feet with their handsome anklets (Puṟa. 397: 23-27, Hart's translation)

[73] The 1-7 *Tirumuṟai* called Tēvāram comprises a total of 796 hymns composed by Campantar (383 hymns), Appar (313) and Cuntarar (100).
[74] Hart notes, "Many Tamil terms for the North Indian god first meant king or still can mean either king or god; the temple is constructed like a palace; and the deity is treated like a king, being awakened in the morning by auspicious music, getting married, and receiving many of the same ceremonies as the human king." See "The Nature of Tamil Devotion," 13.
[75] Indira Peterson, *Poems to Śiva:The Hymns of the Tamil Śaiva Saints,* 33
[76] neyyāṭiya perumāṉiṭam neyttāṉam eṉiṉīrē 1.15.1
attaṉ namai yāḻvāṉiṭam ālantuṟai yatuvē 1.16.5
māṭa māmatil cūḻvaṉṉi yūrarē 5.26.1

localities constitute an integral part of *Tēvāram*. As the bard guides his colleague to the wealthy patron whose bounty he has already enjoyed, so the saint-poets direct fellow devotees to Śiva who has a number of abodes all over the Tamil country.[77] Hence, Śiva- *bhakti* in *Tēvāram* cannot be appreciated unless it is associated with the concept of temple. Saints publicly acknowledge their loyalty and allegiance to Śiva, as well as their commitment to and steadfastness in his worship, and discourse on where to find him, how to serve him, and how to remember him.

As the rendering of a panegyric by the bard is public performance, so too the eulogising of Śiva by saints constitutes a public act. Hence, "*Tēvāram* fulfills the specific function of praise, more ceremonial than doctrinaire."[78] Christian Novetzke argues that "all manifestations of *bhakti* are performances and, more to the point, public ones, that is, performances that are part of, or help form, publics of receptions."[79] Norman Cutler who acknowledges the public nature of the devotional poetry states, "The prevailing intent of many *bhakti* poems is to establish contact or "communion" between the poet and an addressee, who in many instances is the god who inspires the poet's devotion, but who may be also an audience of devotees or potential devotees."[80] He also explains the structure of *Tēvāram* in terms of a triangular communication linking the poet with the deity and the audience.[81] "The saint speaks not to a

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toṇṭark keḷiyar aiyāṟaṟē 5.27.5
tirupparāyttuṟai mēviya celvarē 5.30.1
aruḷkoṭuttiṭum āṉaikkā aṇṇalē 5.31.8
eṉṉārūr iṟaivaṉaiyē 7.51.1
āṉṭā ālaṅkāṭāvuṉ aṭiyārk kaṭiyēṉ āvēṉē 7.52.3
[77] Āri yanttamiḻ ōṭicai yāṉavaṉ
Kūri yakuṇat tārkuṟi niṉṟavaṉ
Kāri kaiyuṭai yāṉkaṭam pantuṟaic
Cīri yal attar ceṉṟaṭai miṉkaḷē (5.18.3)
[78] Gros, *Tēvāram*, xxxvii.
[79] "*Bhakti* and its Public", *International Journal of Hindu Studies*, Vol.11:3, December 2007, 255.
[80] *Songs of Experience: The Poetics of Tamil Devotion*, 19.
[81] Ibid.

fictive or implied listener but to a god and/or audience that inhabits the real world."[82] Cutler shows the following variations in the triangular communication[83]: (a) The poet speaks to the deity. In this variety, the audience is sidelined but overhears the poet's speech. (b) The poet speaks to the audience. Second person pronouns and verbs are used in this type of verse. (c) The poet speaks to his own heart. The deity and the audience overhear the words addressed to the heart of the poet. (d) The poet speaks to an unspecified addressee. (e) Neither the speaker nor the addressee is specified in the poem. Cutler's conclusion is that (a), (b) and (c), in which the audience is clearly identified, are used by Tamil Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava audiences "as a standard for interpretation of poems" because these three varieties "could be interpreted as a confessional document of the poet's quest to obtain the lord's grace or as a sermon in which the poet shows his audience the way to find the lord." [84]

The saints' poetry promotes pilgrimage. Appar underlines the importance of temple worship declaring that villages in which a Śiva temple is not found are veritable jungles.

The village that does not have a temple lacks in lustre
The village that does not wear holy ashes is lost on its beauty
The village does not sing out of deep devotion
The village that does not have many shrines
The village that does not blow the conch with affection
The village that has neither a canopy nor a white flag
The village that does not gather buds and flowers [for the worship of Śiva] before dining
They are not villages, but veritable jungles. (6.95.5)

The ultimate end of human birth is, according to Appar, to adore Śiva in the temple. He muses "Of what use is the body, if it does not circumambulate the temple of Śiva, shower flowers [at his feet] with hands and praise him?"[85] Two of his *Tiruttāṇṭakam* (sixth *Tirumuṟai*) are important in respect of pilgrimage and temple worship. Whereas *Tiruttāṇṭakam* (70) lists a

[82] Ibid., 21.
[83] Ibid., 22-27.
[84] Ibid., 27.
[85] 4:9:8.

number of sacred places in the Tamil country where one could see the Lord of Kailāsa,

Tiruttāṇṭakam (71) categorises them under various types of shrines and temples that existed at

that time: *paḷḷi, vīraṭṭāṉam, kuṭi, ūr, kōyil, kāṭu, vāyil, īccuram, malai, āṟu, kuḷam, kaḷam, kā,*

and *tuṟai.*[86]   Prentiss observes that many of the places visited by the saints were open,

unstructured.[87]   "Thus, both natural (yet social) and constructed places are included in the

poet's places of pilgrimage; only some are specifically religious buildings."[88]

 Śiva*bhakti* involves a contract of mutual obligations between Śiva and his devotees.

One of the *Tēvāram* saints Appar sings,

> Your duty is to sustain me, your slave
> My duty is to remain rendering service to you.[89]
>
> Our duty is to be a servant to the dancing lord[90]
>
> Your duty is to remove the distress of those who worship you.[91]
>
> He is there dispelling afflictions of slaves who render service through *patttimai.*[92]
> He removes the distress of the slaves who render service[93]

 Devotees are known as *toṇṭar,*[94] *aṭiyār,*[95] and *pattar.*[96]   Toṇṭar are an embodiment of

bhakti.[97]   Service performed by them in temples is called *toṇṭu*[98] or *paṇi,*[99] which is portrayed

as a meritorious act. The following hymn lists the tasks to be performed in temples:

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[86] 6:71:5.
[87] *The Embodiment of Bhakti,* 52.
[88] Ibid., 58.
[89] taṉkaṭaṉaṭi yēṉaiyum tāṅkutal eṉkaṭaṉ paṇi ceytu kiṭappatē (5:19:9).
[90] kūttaṉuk kāṭpaṭ ṭiruppataṉ ṟōnantaṅ kūḻaimaiyē (4:81:5).
[91] toḻuvār avar tuyar āyiṉa tīrttal uṇa toḻilē (7:1:9).
[92] pattimaiyāṟ paṇi ceyyum toṇṭar taṅkaḷ ētaṅkaḷ tīra iruntār pōlum (6:2:10).
[93] toṇṭupaṭu toṇṭar tuyar tīrppāṉ (6:65:8).
[94] 7:7:11.
[95] 7:53:10.
[96] All these terms refer to devotees. For instance, pattarāy vaṇaṅkum toṇṭar(6:68:7); Dorai Rangaswami states that these terms correspond to the following concepts:
aṭiyār - aṭimai -absolute self-surrender; *toṇṭar- toṇṭu* - service; *pattar -bhakti* –reverential love; *cittar-citti* (*siddhi*) – spiritual realization; *aṉpar - aṉpu*-love. (*The Religion and Philosophy of Tēvāram* (Madras: University of Madras, 1990),1087.
[97] pattākiya toṇṭar toḻu (7:80:1).

> O heart, come if you think of being firmly established [in God]
> Having entered the temple of our Lord daily
> Before the day-break sweep and smear ground with cow-dung
> Make a garland of flowers, extol, praise and sing
> Worship abundantly with the head and perform a dance
> And keep on shouting "hail to Cankara!
> To the Supreme Being with red matted locks,
> The receptacle of billowy Ganges
> And to the one who belongs to Ārūr" (6:31:3)

Śiva is said to be rejoicing in the menial service (*kurrēval*) of *toṇṭar*.[100] Dorai Rangaswami thus observes, "*Aṭiyārs* are the life of the *Bhakti* cult. From this point of view, Śaivism becomes a religion of service."[101] Unlike *antaṇar* (Brahmans) who perform *pūcai* (*pūjā*),[102] the devotees undertake a very simple form of worship, that is, adoration of Śiva with water and flowers. This is called true tapas.[103] Singing and dancing are also predominant forms of bhakti worship.[104] Patti is compared to a flower that confers *mutti* (*mukti*).[105]

Several terms meaning serfdom and tenancy occur in *Tēvāram*. They are *kuṭi*, *āḷ* and *aṭimai*. The term *kuṭi* is mainly used in three senses in *Tēvāram*. Several localities that are held to be the abode of śiva end with the term *kuṭi* meaning a village or a hamlet, e.g. Tiruccèṅkāṭṭaṅkuṭi, Tirumaṅkalakkuṭi, Tirunīlakkuṭi etc. Secondly, the term may also indicate the act of taking up residence. For instance, "[Śiva] who has taken up residence in the heart of the devotees (pattar maṉam kuṭi koṇṭāṉai, 6:68:4). Thirdly, *kuṭi* refers to a bonded slave living on the land owned by a person of higher social rank. The state of bondage which is called

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[98] toṇṭupaṭu toṇṭar (6:65:8).
[99] cōrrut turaiyarkkē patti yāyppaṇi ceymaṭa neñcamē (5:33:2).
[100] toṇṭar kurrēval tāmakiḻnta kuḻakar pōlum (6:21:1) toṇṭar toḷappaṭuvāy eṉrēṉ nāṉē (6:37:5)
[101] *The Religion and Philosophy of Tēvāram* (Madras: University of Madras, 1990), 1095.
[102] poyyāta vāymaiyār poṭippūcip pōrricaittup pūcai ceytu kaiyiṉāl eriyōmpi maraivaḷarkkum antaṇartaṅ karuppariyalūr (7:30:6)
[103] koytupattarmala rumpuṉaluṅkoṭu tūvittuti ceytu
    meytavattiṉ muyalvār (1:2:10)
    paththaroadupala rumpoliyammalar angkaippuṉal thoovi (1:3:1)
[104] pāṭiyāṭum pattarkkaṉpuṭaiyāṉai (6:67:2) pattarkaḷ pāṭiyāṭap parintu nalkiṉīr (7:88:5)
[105] attaṉ ārūraip pattimalar tūva mutti ākumē (1:91:1)

kuṭimai[106] is attested by a document called *otti* or *oṟṟi*.[107] Śiva is depicted as Chief of a local village, and his devotees as his subjects or tenants.[108] It may be noted that the expression *āṭci koḷ* is used in connection with Śiva's ownership of Tamil lands.[109]

Another term that is connected to *kuṭimai* is *āḷ* which, as a noun, simply means a person. However, in *Tēvāram* it indicates a person of inferior rank in a hierarchical relationship. Thus it denotes a servant or a slave of Śiva in *Tēvāram*.[110] The expressions *āṭkoḷ*[111] and *āṭcey*[112] connotes the process of becoming a servant of Śiva.[113] Similarly the terms *aṭimai* and *aṭiyar* or *aṭiyār* that are ingrained in the *bhakti* theology stem from the word *aṭi* (a foot, base or bottom) and denote a slave of Śiva.

The devotees form a cohesive community pledging allegiance to Śiva,[114] whom they reach after a long period of wandering.[115] They would not worship any deity except Śiva. Appar declares that "we will not resort to minor deities; we have reached the feet of Śiva."[116] Almost in all of his compositions Campantar refers to the myth that asserts the superiority of

[106] maṉṉilāvumaṭi yārkuṭimaittoḻil malkumpuka lūrē (1:2:3)
[107] aṭiyār tamakkōr kuṭiyē ottiyāl (7:4:4)
[108] kītattai mikappāṭum aṭiyārkaḷ kuṭiyāka (2:44:5)
  paṉṉoṉṟa icaipāṭum aṭiyārkaḷ kuṭiyāka (2:44:8)
  aṭiyār kuṭiyāvar (6:17:6)
  kuṭiyākap pāṭiṉiṉ rāṭaval lārkkillai kuṟṟamē (7:50:10)
[109] ariciṟ peruntuṟaiyē āṭci koṇṭa
  cittaṉ kāṉ (6:87:4)
  atikai vīraṭṭāṉam āṭci koṇṭār (6:96:1)
[110] teṉpāl veṇṇey nallūr aruṭṭuṟaiyuḷ attā uṉakkāḷāyiṉi alleṉ eṉalāmē (7:1:1)
[111] āṇṭāṉai aṭiyēṉai āḷāk koṇṭu(6:54:1)
[112] umakkāṭceya añcutumē (7:2)
[113] umakkāṭceya añcutumē (7:2)
[114] toṇṭar kuḻām toḻutētta aruḷ ceyvāṉai (6:90:3)
[115] pēyāyttirintteyttēṉ (7:1:2)
[116] ceṉṟu nām ciṟu teyvam cērvō mallōm
  civaperumāṉ tiruvaṭiyē cērap peṟṟōm (6.98.5).

Śiva over Brahmā and Viṣṇu. The *bhakta*s follow the path of *bhakti*[117] and Śiva bestows his grace on them amidst the slander and reproach made by Jains and Buddhists.[118]

The Tirumantiram:

The *Tirumantiram* differs from the redacted version of *Tēvāram* in form and content. *Tēvāram* is fundamentally a book of hymns composed on Śiva, and the recitation of which has been part of public worship in Śiva temples since the medieval period. In contrast, the *Tirumantiram*, as it is available now, appears to be a work meant for serious students of theology in a monastery. It sets forth Śaiva doctrines concerning God, the soul and the bondage that keeps the soul in *saṃsāra* eternally and the means of getting rid of it. Whereas *Tēvāram* is, in general, composed in a simple and lucid style, free of ambiguity, the intelligibility of the *Tirumantiram* is marred by abstruse symbolic expressions and unfamiliar terminology, mostly borrowed from Sanskrit tantric literature.

The fundamentals of *bhakti* presented in the *Tirumantiram* do not differ materially from those found in *Tēvāram*. Regular *bhakti* themes, i.e. pilgrimage, praise and service occur in the *Tirumantiram*. The text provides three versions of *bhakti*: temple-based *bhakti, Śiva-bhakti* and *guru-bhakti*. *Bhakti* is defined as performing service for the master (*pati*).[119] As in *Tēvāram*, *bhakti* in the *Tirumantiram* represents a formal, unequal relationship between Śiva/preceptor (*guru*) and a devotee/disciple. The devotee is exhorted to be meek and humble in heart.[120]

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[117] pattarkaḷ pattimai ceyya (1:42:5)
[118] ciṛutērarum cilcamaṇum puṛaṅkūṛa neṛiyē pala pattarkaḷ kaitoḻutētta (1:32:10)
   puttaroṭu pollāmaṇac camaṇarpuṛaṅ kūṛap pattarkkaruḷ ceytāṉavaṉ (1:14:10)
[119] itupaṇi māṉuṭar ceypaṇi īcaṉ
   patipaṇi ceyvatu pattimai kāṇē (TM 1454:3-4)
[120] pattikku vittu paṇinturṛap paṛṛalē (TM 2506:2)

Śiva- bhakti: Śiva is conceptualised as a king and called *kō*,[121] *kōṉ*,[122] *vēntaṉ*[123] and *maṉṉaṉ*.[124] He is also referred to as *aṇṇal*, *talaivaṉ*, *pirāṉ*, *iṟaivaṉ*, *iṟai*, *nāyakaṉ*, *īcaṉ* and *nātaṉ*. The *Tirumantiram* speaks of two strategies to become a devotee of Śiva. One should know him and think of him constantly. To know him means that one should acknowledge the three fundamental theological facts about Śiva. Firstly, Śiva holds supremacy over other deities. He is sovereign ruler of the universe.

> civaṉoṭok kuntteyvam tēṭiṉum illai
> avaṉoṭop pāriṅku yāvarum illai (TM 5:1-2)

> Even if you search there is no deity equal to Śiva
> None is on par with him here.

> No celestial stands above him
> No arduous penance is done if not for him
> Triple deities cannot achieve anything without him (TM 6:1-3)

Secondly, only Śiva is capable of granting liberation and bliss. Whereas the fifth Tantra informs us that only an inferior type of *sāloka mukti* is available to devotees, the devotional hymns in the text proclaim that the highest goal of liberation is attainable. The outcome of the acts of *bhakti* is liberation from *saṃsāra*,[125] purging of sins and removal of darkness of ignorance.[126] Thirdly, Śiva is accessible only to his devotees. The text says "God seeks those who seek their souls to save."[127]

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[121] TM 546 1314
[122] TM 21;112; 116; 277; 443; 917; 1055; 1426; 1453
[123] TM 1503
[124] TM 540; 1346
[125] tiraipacu pācac celuṅkaṭal nīnti
karai pacu pācam kaṭantteytalāmē (49:3-4)
[126] pakaliṭat tumira vumpaṇin tētti
ikaliṭat tēyiruḷ nīṅki niṉ ṟēṉē (TM 4:3-4)
[127] piḷaikka niṉṟār pakkam pēṇi niṉṟāṉē (Tm 22:4)

The second strategy to become a devotee of Śiva is to contemplate him. This is expressed by the verbs: *cintai ceytal* (46:2), *niṉaittal* (47:1), *uḷḷutal* (49:1), *uṇṇutal* (3:1), *muṉṉutal* (48:2). Eulogizing or singing of his praises also helps the devotee to remember Śiva. The following verbs are used to indicate this activity: *kūṟutal* (2:4), *pōṟṟi ceytal/pōṟṟutal* (2:1; 3:4; 41:4), *icaittal* (2;1) *ēttutal* (4:3; 36:3; 37:1), *pukaḻutal* (21:4, 34:4; 42: 1), *vāḻttutal* (39:1;40:3), *paravutal* (48;1) and *pāṭutal* (50:2). The act of eulogising may be accompanied by *malar tūvutal* (50:2) and *āṭutal* (50:3). In addition, the text employs several verbs in the sense of worship in general: *iṟaiñcutal* (39:3), *vaṇaṅkutal* (48:2), *cēvittal* (75:3), *paṇital* (50:2) and *toḻutal* (9:3).

Temple-based Śiva*bhakti* is theorised in Tantra five. Of the nine Tantras contained in the *Tirumantiram*, the fifth Tantra stands apart from the others as a systematic presentation of Śaiva *pādas*: *caryā*, *kriyā*, *yoga* and *jñāna*. According to that Tantra, *bhakti* is the foundation of the religious hierarchy envisaged by the *Tirumantiram*. Hence it follows that the fundamental quality one has to cultivate is *bhakti* that would enable one to attain the highest form of liberation –*sāyujya*.

> [When] the devotee, having practised *caryā* and *kriyā*,
> Through pure grace, having attained faultless yoga,
> The means that ensures salvation, realizes knowledge (*jñāna*)
> His mind would become *civam* through the grace of Guru. [128]

Caryā is characterised by *bhakti* and those who observe *caryā* are called bhaktas.[129] The *Tirumantiram* reiterates the fact that *bhaktas* consider themselves as slaves of Śiva,

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[128] pattaṉ cariyai kiriyai payilvuṟṟuc
cutta aruḷāl turicaṟṟa yōkattil
uytta neṟiyuṟṟu uṇarkiṉṟa ñāṉattāṟ
cittam kuruvaruḷāṟ civamākumē (1455)
[129] pattar caritai paṭuvōr (TM 1446:1)

engaged in temple service (*taḷitoḻil*).[130] Hence, *caryā* is known as *tācamārkkam* (*dāsamārga*, the path of the slave).

Two main activities of the *bhaktas* are pilgrimage and temple service.[131] Verse 1445 urges devotees to make pilgrimage to temples to secure the grace of Śiva.[132]

> Roam through village and town and beautiful temples
> Seeking him and sing "Śiva"
> Adore Him by singing, after the worship
> He will make your heart as his temple [133]

Temple service (*taḷitoḻil*), comprises several acts of devotion performed for Śiva.

> Lighting the lamp, simple and good, gathering flowers,
> Smearing [the floor] with mellow paste [of cow dung],
>   Sweeping the floor, praising,
> Kindling the camphor, [bringing water for performing] ablutions [of the deity]
> Thus Carrying out [various]deeds at temple constitutes *dāsamārga*[134]

However, temple- based *bhakti* defined by pilgrimage and service is relegated to the bottom of the hierarchical paths leading to liberation. *Caryā* is linked to a lesser soteriological goal of *sāloka mukti*,[135] in which *pāśajñāna* is transformed into *paśujñāna*;[136] but it does not

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[130] taḷitoḻil ceyvatu tāṉ tācamārkkamē (TM 1502:4)

[131] The last line in verse 1447 *nērnta cariyaiyōr nīḷ nilattōrē* is interpreted that pilgrimage constitutes the path *of caryā*: "*cariyai neṟiyil niṟpavar talayāttirai puripavar āvar.*" See Varatarājaṉ's commentary.

[132] The text also draws attention to the futility of pilgrimage motivated by *bhakti* for Śiva, in favour of the practice of yoga.
There is no point
in circumbulating the earth
girded by roaring ocean
With feet sore by walking
ōtam olikkum ulakai valamvantu
pātaṅkaḷ nōva naṭantum payaṉillai (TM 707:1-2)

[133] nāṭu nakaramum naṟ tiruk kōyilum
tēṭit tirintu civaperumāṉ eṉṟu
pāṭumiṉ pāṭip paṇimiṉ paṇintapiṉ
kūṭiya neñcattuk kōyilāyk koḷvaṉē (TM 1445)

[134] eḷiya nal tīpamiṭal malar koytal
aḷitiṉ meḻukal atu tūrttal vāḻttal
paḷimaṇi paṟṟal paṉmañcaṉamāti
taḷi toḻil ceyvatu tāṉ tāca mārkkamē (TM 1502)

[135] cālōka māti cariyāti yiṟperum (TM1507:1)

lead to *patijñāna* or *śivajñāna* which is the source of salvation. The other form of institutionalised *bhakti* is *gurubhakti* which is given a higher place than temple worship in the text.

Several reasons could be adduced for the *Tirumantiram* not valuing highly the popular mode of temple worship. The saints imagine Śiva as a deity present in various locations all over the Tamil country, and these sites, intimately associated with Śiva worship, are held sacrosanct. This constitutes the primary reason for pilgrimage to emerge as a key theme in the devotional genre, *Tēvāram*. On the contrary, the *Tirumantiram* treats the human body as the abode of Śiva[137] and this result in Śiva being addressed as *kāyakkulappaṉ*, *kāyanaṉṉāṭaṉ*, *kāyattiṉuḷḷē kamalkiṉra nanti* (2071) and *kāyaṉa nanti* (2658). The body-shrine concept enables the practitioner to withdraw from social space which is not conducive to the effective practice of yoga. Instead of undertaking pilgrimage, the text urges the practitioner to practise *prāṇāyāma* to reach the deepest state of consciousness, *samādhi*. The practice of *prāṇāyāma* may be compared to the act of pilgrimage. The verb *tiri* denotes both the movement of the air within the body[138] and pilgrimage to temples (*kōyil*).[139] It follows that *ādhāras* in the body constitute sacred shrines. The pilgrimage of the air begins in the *mūlādhāra* and ends in the highest plane, *sahasrāra*. Thus, the cult of body-shrine that has replaced the cult of sacred places diminishes the significance and validity of temple worship, celebrated in *Tēvāram*.[140]

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[136] pācam pacuvāṉa tākumic cālōkam (TM 1509:1)
[137] māṭattu ḷāṉalaṉ maṇṭapat tāṉalaṉ
   kūṭattu ḷāṉalaṉ kōyiluḷ ḷāṉavaṉ (TM 2614)
   uṭampuḷē uttamaṉ kōyil koṇṭāṉ (TM 725:3)
   eṉṉuṭal kōyil koṇṭāṉē (TM 1722:4)
[138] puṟappaṭṭup pukkut tirikiṉra vāyuvai neṟippaṭa vuḷḷē niṉmala mākkil (TM 575:1-2)
[139] nāṭu nakaramum naṟṟiruk kōyilunt tēṭit tirintu… (TM 1445:1-2)
[140] uḷḷattiṉuḷḷē uḷapala tīrttaṅkaḷ
  meḷḷak kuṭaintu niṉṟāṭār viṉaikeṭap
  paḷḷamum mēṭum parantu tirivarē
  kaḷḷamaṉamuṭaik kalviyilōrē (TM 509)

Secondly, temples are a symbol of royal power, which is inferior to the powers (*siddhi*) yogis attain through the practice of *aṣṭāṅga* yoga.[141] Verses 515-519 in Tantra Two reflect several of the popular beliefs regarding the link between temple and kingship. The *linga* in the main shrine of the Śiva temple represents king, and the temple represents his palace. The king in turn represents his subjects. *Pūjās* are performed in the temple to enhance or sustain the sacred powers of the king. Hence, the text warns of dangers that are likely to befall the king and his country in five worst case scenarios involving the *linga*, the temple, and *pūjā*.[142] However, the king is deemed inferior and lower to those who are walking –temples (*naṭamāṭak kōyil*).[143] In other words, it is the kings who give obeisance to yogis who are Śiva in mortal frame,[144] not vice-versa. Thus the *Tirumantiram* subtly asserts the superiority of yogic renouncers over kings by undervaluing the institution of temple that plays a key role in legitimizing the status of king.

Thirdly, around the fifth century the classical notion of the Tamil king imbued with sacred powers was transferred to the deity in the temple, that in turn was replaced by the *jñānācārya,* celebrated in the sixth Tantra. The guru represents both Śiva and king.[145]

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kāyakkuḷappaṉaik kāya naṉṉāṭaṉaik
kāyattiṉuḷḷē kamaḻkiṉṟa nantiyait
tēyattuḷē eṅkum tēṭit tirivarkaḷ
kāyattuḷ niṉṟa karuttaṟiyārē (TM 2071, 2550)

[141] Siddha who practise the eight –limbed *yoga* attain the eight types of *siddhi*: *aṇimā, ilakimā, makimā, pirātti, karimā, pirākāmiyam, īcattuvam,* and *vacittuvam* (TM 668-692).

[142] Transplanting the *linga,* established in a temple, is forbidden as it brings about disaster to the kingdom (*aracu*) (TM 515). The temple should be maintained properly. Even the removal of a stone from the temple wall spells disaster for the king (TM 516). *Pūjās* should be performed in the temple regularly; otherwise, the king would lose his powers, rains would fail, diseases would multiply, and theft and crime would proliferate (TM 517, 518). A knowledgeable Brahman should function as a temple priest, failing which famine would strike the land (TM 519).

[143] naṭamāṭak kōyil nampar (TM 1857:2, 3)

[144] kōvaṉaṅkumpaṭi kōvaṉamākippiṉ
nāvaṉaṅkumpaṭi nanti aruḷ ceytāṉ (TM 2674)

[145] kuruvē civaṉumāyk kōṉumāy niṟkum (TM 1581:3)

Tirumūlar refers to his own preceptor Nandi as *kōṉ* (king).[146] A Śaiva priest functions only as an intermediary between devotees and Śiva in a temple; but the human guru who is Śiva himself descends to earth for the benefit of those desirous of *mukti* and *siddhi*.

Gurubhakti: The *Tirumantiram* is premised on the notion that liberation is not attainable without the mediation of the liberated one.[147] The soul *(jīva)* does not know on its own as it is enveloped in ignorance. It will not realise its own true nature until its veil of ignorance is lifted by one who is knowledgeable. This gives rise to the concept of the *guru* who ensures the liberation of the soul. The following verse emphasizes that it is of no use if one worships Śiva on his own, that is, without the guidance of a guru.

The countless celestials worshipped Śiva
Having worshipped Him [thus], they gained nothing.
[They did not aware of the means of worshipping Śiva].
If one worships the preceptor who,
worshipped Him, [Śiva as shown by his Guru]
Reveals the path so that
One can be united with Śiva.[148]

The text is emphatic that the preceptor (guru) is none other than Śiva himself:

> kuruvē civameṉak kūṟiṉaṉ nanti (TM 1581:1)
> cittam iṟaiyē civakuru vāmē (TM 1573:4) .

Verse 113 describes Śiva who transcends all worlds[149] as descending from heaven in human form (viṇṇiṉṟilintu ..meykoṇṭu) to eradicate all impurities (kaḷimparuttāṉē). Whereas *Tēvāram* urges devotees to visit temples to have a vision of Śiva, the *Tirumantiram* proclaims

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[146] kōṉanti entail (TM 1583:2)
[147] kuruvaṉṟi yāvarkkum kūṭavoṉṉātē (TM 2840:4)
[148] civaṉai vaḻipaṭṭār eṇṇilāt tēvar
   avaṉai vaḻipaṭṭu aṅku āmāṟu oṉṟillai
   avaṉai vaḻipaṭṭu aṅku āmāṟu kāṭṭum
   kuruvai vaḻipaṭil kūṭalumāmē (TM 2119)
[149] ellā ulakiṟkum appālōṉ (TM 1576:1)

that Śiva takes the form of human guru to meet his devotees down on earth.[150]   Hence

Tirumūlar refers both to Śiva and his preceptor as Nandi.

He placed his holy feet on my head
Through his compassionate gaze
He gave me the great form
He was Lord Nandi, my king
I saw Him in the form of Guru
I found Him as the [means of] deliverance from birth [*saṃsāra*][151]

The text also remarks that the grace of Śiva comes in the form of *guru*.[152] Those who fail to

realize the divinity of the preceptor, which is often highlighted in the text, are condemned as

idiots of faulty vision.

The untainted Śiva comes taking the form of Guru
Purifies [the fit of triple impurities]
And grants his good grace in great measure.
The fools, without understanding that
 [comparing themselves to Him]
 say, " He has falsifiable knowledge as we do [He is not different from us]
Only those of great religious merit worship his feet
Saying "He is Śiva [himself].[153]

The identification of guru with Śiva stems from the fact that through the practice of

Śivayoga,[154] the guru has himself become *civam*. Only the one who transforms himself into

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[150] viṇṇiṉṟu iḷintu viṉaikku īṭāy meykoṇṭu ....kaḷimpu aṟuttāṉē (TM 113:1).
[151] tiruvaṭi vaittu eṉ cirattu aruḷ nōkkip
  peruvaṭivait tanta pēr nanti taṉṉaik
  kuruvaṭiviṟ kaṇṭa kōṉai em kōvaik
  karuvaḻivārriṭak kaṇṭu koṇṭēṉē (TM 1597)
[152] When the soul treats good deeds and bad deeds as equal, then Siva's grace descends in the form of the *guru* conferring knowledge. (iruviṉai nēroppil iṉṉaruṭ cakti kuruveṉa vantu kuṇam pala nīkkit tarumeṉu ñāṉattāl..TM 1527 1-3)
[153] cutta civaṉ kuruvāy vantu tūymai cey
tattaṉai nalku aruḷ kāṇā ati mūṭar
poyttaku kaṇṇāṉ namar eṉpar puṇṇiyar
attaṉ ivaṉ eṉṟu aṭi paṇivārē (TM 1578),
[154] The Guru is the one He is Guru Holy,
  Who, entranced in bliss
  The Vedas and Agamas speak of
  Enters into Siva yoga
  And all thoughts stilled,
  Removes the bondage of pasa
  Leads you to Lord. (TM 2057 translated by Natarajan)

civam could instruct others in the ways of becoming *civam*.[155] Since the knowledge of becoming *civam* is acquired from a guru, the path enunciated in the text is called *kuruneṟi*,[156] which is none other than *caṉmārkkam*, the path inaugurated by Nandi.[157]

As Thomas Thangaraj points out, the concept of *guru* is eminently a theological concept as it is spoken of in relation to the supreme deity Śiva; however, it is also a soteriological notion as the primary task of the *guru* is to confer the knowledge required for salvation and for purification of the self.[158] Thus the terms *kāṭṭutal* (revealing) and *māṟṟutal* (transforming) reflect the fundamental functions exercised by the *guru* in respect of the disciple. The guru reveals the distinctions between the three permanent entities- *cat* (God), *acat* (the impurities) and *catacat* (the soul)- [159] the doctrine of liberation,[160] and the ways to sunder the bonds of *pāśa*.[161] He also transforms *(māṟṟutal)* the souls into *civam*, liberating them from the triple impurities as an alchemist turns anything he touches into gold.[162]

Liberation is available to all irrespective of caste distinctions. Hence, the text declares "oṉṟē kulamum oruvaṉē tēvaṉum."[163] The guru is said to be working for the benefit of all souls, referred to as *nallār*.

> He is beyond all worlds. [Yet]
> He is here bestowing his grace in abundance to the good.
> Since he shows his favour to redeem all
> [The object of] praise is the good Guru who himself is pure Śiva. (TM 1576)[164]

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[155] cittaṅ kuruvaru ḷaṟciva mākumē (TM 1455:4)
[156] kuruneṟiyām civamām neṟi kūṭum (54;3)
[157] caivap perumait taṉiṉā yakaṉ nanti
uyya vakutta kuruneṟi oṉṟuṇṭu
teyvac civaneṟi caṉmārkkam (TM 1478:1-3)
[158] Thomas Thangaraj, "The Word Made Flesh: The Crucified Guru: An Indian Perspective," in *One Gospel, Many Cultures*: Case *Studies and Reflections on Cross-Cultural Theology,* ed. Mercy Amba Oduyoye and Hendrik M. Vroom (New York : Rodopi, 2003), 113.
[159] cattum acattum catacattum kāṭṭalāl (TM 1573:3)
[160] mēlaikkati (TM 2413:1-2) meyyaṭiyārkkup paṭiyatu kāṭṭum paramaṉ niṉṟāṉē (TM 710:3-4)
[161] pacupāca nīkkam (TM 2413:2); pativaḻi kāṭṭum pakalavaṉ (TM 45:4) nanti vaḻi kāṭṭa (TM 68:4)
[162] TM 2054
[163] One the family,
One the God (TM 2104:1)

Vision is an important element of *bhakti* in temple worship and guru worship. In *Tēvāram* it is centred on visual images of Śiva; in contrast, in the *Tirumantiram* it is focussed on the human form of guru. Seeing Guru's body, pronouncing his name, listening to his holy speech, and contemplating his form contribute to the dawning of wisdom.[165] The following are recognised as acts of piety: seeing the *guru,* adoring him, touching him, meditating on him, singing his praise, and bearing his holy feet on the head.[166]

II

Aṉpu

The emotional content of devotional literature is the result of the influence of the concept known as *aṉpu*. *Aṉpu* is a Dravidian term meaning love, which figures in Tamil, Kannada and Malayalam.[167] It is predominantly a term describing an emotional disposition towards others. The exact nature of *aṉpu* is disputed in South Asian religious scholarship. Bror Tiliander is of the view that *aṉpu* cannot be entirely free from an erotic touch, even if a

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[164] ellā ulakiṟkum appālōṉ ippālāy
nallār uḷḷattu mikku aruḷ nalkalāl
ellārum uyyak koṇṭu iṅkē aḷittalāl
collārnta naṟkuruc cutta civamē (TM 1576)
[165] teḷivu kuruviṉ tirumēṉi kāṇṭal
teḷivu kuruviṉ tirunāmam ceppal
teḷivu kuruviṉ tiruvārttai kēṭṭal
teḷivu kuruvuru cinttittal tāṉē (TM 139)
[166] tericikkap pūcikkac cintaṉai ceyyap
paricikkak kīrtikkap pātukam cūṭak
kurupatti ceyyum kuvalayattōrkkut
tarumūrttic cārpūṭṭum caṉmārkkantāṉē (TM 1479)
[167] Dravidian Etymological Dictionary:330 *Ta. aṉpu* love, attachment, friendship, benevolence, devotion, piety; *aṉpaṉ* friend, husband, lover, devotee; *aṇi* love; *āṉam* love, friendship, affection; *āṇu* attachment, affection. *Ma. anpu, ampu* love, affection, trust, devotion; *anpan* lover, friend, husband; *anpuka* to be fond of, connected with. *Ka. aṉpu, aṉpita* relationship, friendship; *ammu* to be willing, wish, desire; *n.* desire. DED 279.

sublime meaning is given to it.[168] Vamadeva, who challenges this proposition, asserts that *anpu*

is the idealistic love of Tamils, bereft of erotic connotations.[169] Neither position can be proved

wrong as more than one representation of *anpu* is found in classical and devotional literature.[170]

The term *anpu* is not confined to the *akam* genre alone, even though it is the genre in

which the term occurs the most. The term *anpu* signifies affection in *puram* works such as

Puranānūru, Patirruppattu, Maturaikkāñci, Tirumurukārruppaṭai and *Paripāṭal*. For instance,

the king's affection for the bard[171] is denoted by the term *anpu*.[172] The deity Murukan

addresses the devotee with words dipped in *anpu*.[173] Aruḷ and *anpu* are said to be two vital

attributes of the king in *Puranānūru*.[174]

As mentioned earlier, *anpu* is an emotional disposition that stems from a human desire

for warmth and intimacy. The Dravidian term *neñcam* or *neñcu* (the heart or the mind) is the

seat of emotion.[175] *Anpu* that arises in *neñcam* [176] is based on certain principles. The first

principle is proximity or closeness in physical space, which is a symbolic expression of

likeness, intimacy and kinship or relationship. One feels *anpu* for those who live in close

proximity to them.   In other words, sharing physical space and having face-to-face interaction

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[168] B.Tiliander, *Christian and Hindu Terminology :A Study in their mutual relations with special reference to the Tamil area* (Uppsala: Religionshistoriska Institutionen, 1974), 208.

[169] Chandraleka Vamadeva, *The Concept of vaṇṇaṇpu "Violent love" in Tamil Saivism with special reference to the Periyapuranam*, Uppsala: Uppsala Univeresity, 1995), 22.

[170] Modern interpretations of *anpu* can be found in the anthropological work *Notes on love in a Tamil family* by Margaret Trawick. See Chapter III, *The Ideology of Love,* 89-116.

[171] The term *kātal* is employed to denote the poet's love for the king: kātar kiḻamaiyum uṭaiyavan (PN 216:10).
   The bard tells his patron that he praises him out of love (*kātal*) for him, though his art has not reached perfection: muṟṟilen āyiṉum kātaliṉ ētti (Puṟa. 373:32)

[172] anpuṭaimaiyiṉ em pirivu añcit (Puṟa. 381:7)

[173] añcal ōmpumati aṟivaṉ niṉ varaveṉa
   anpuṭai naṉmoḻi aḻai i viḷivinṟu (Tiru.291-92)

[174] In this poem, the poet advises the king not to associate himself with those who are devoid of *aruḷ* and *anpu* as they are surely destined for hell, and to safeguard his subjects as the mother would protect her infant. (Puṟa. 5).

[175] neñcam perumalakkuṟumē (Kuṟu.194:5) allal neñcam alamalakkuṟumē (Kuṟu.43: 5) aḻuṅkal neñcam (Kuṟu. 307:8) nōm eṉ neñcē (Kuṟu. 202:1, 5) neñcam valippa (Kuṟu. 341:6)

[176] anpuṭai neñcam tām kalantaṉavē (Kuṟu.40:5)
   anpin neñcattu (Aka. 107:2)

play a crucial role in generating and sustaining *aṉpu*.   The bard says, "We spent our time happily eating and drinking as the guests of Karumpaṉūrk Kiḻāṉ. When we told him that we wanted to go to our country that was due to celebrate a festival, he who was affectionate to us, said thus in fear of separation."[177] Thus, being together is vital to a lasting relationship.

Physical presence of the loved one is emphasized in a relationship because *aṉpu* springs and grows from seeing and being seen.[178] *Aṉpu* cannot sustain itself if one withdraws from the physical space one shares with the other. This is perceived to be highly problematic for lovers, especially by women, because one who withdraws from the common physical space is believed to have lost feelings for the other.   For instance, in *akam* works the heroine assumes that her lover who has left her in search of wealth does not love her at all and calls him *aṉpilar* (loveless).[179] A female friend tells the hero to let the heroine accompany him on his mission to find riches abroad instead of leaving her behind as a loveless person would do.[180] In another verse, the female friend assures the heroine that though the lover went away in anticipation of rare wealth, he does hold great affection for her.[181] The poet calls his patron *aṉpilāḷa* (loveless) as the latter asked him to return to him only after his wife [poet's wife] gave birth to a son.[182]

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[177] aṉpuṭaimaiyiṉ em pirivu añci (Puṟa. 381:7).

[178] Tamil idealizes mutual love at first sight (e.g. Meeting of the eyes of Rāma and Sītā in Kamparāmāyaṇam). In contrast, love between man and woman stems from hearing about excellent qualities of each other in Sanskrit literature. (See Nalopākhyānam in the third book of the Mahābhārata.) The influence of Sanskrit convention can be seen in Appar's *Tiruttāṇṭakam* 6:25:7: *muṉṉam avaṉuṭaiya nāmam kēṭṭāḷ* (First, she heard about his name).

[179] Naṟ. 277:10; 281:11; Aka. 331:9

[180] ivaḷoṭum celiṉō naṉṟē ...aṉpilir akaṟir āyiṉ (Naṟ. 37: 4, 7)

[181] arumporuḷ vēṭkaiyiṉ akaṉṟaṉar āyiṉum perum pēr aṉpiṉar tōḻi (Aka. 91:8-9)

[182] After the glory for parents that is a son has been born to your beloved wife
she who never leaves the shade of your body and her body glows
with radiant ornaments burnished in fire, come back then"
you said and you were heartless to send me away from here! (eṉ ivaṉ oḻitta aṉpilāḷa)
You must know how much I feel for you!
You who long for renown! Where shall I take my place? (Puṟa. 222, Hart's translation)

Secondly, *aṉpu* that thrives on familiarity finds itself expressed in a relationship.[183] The relationships found in the Caṅkam poetry can be classified into four groups; three of these are from the *akam* tradition: (a) heterosexual relationship (b) parent-child relationship and (c) relationship between hero/heroine and their same- sex companion, and the last is from the *puṟam* tradition: patron/king -bard /subject relationship. Mutual love between a man and a woman is denoted by the term *aṉpu*: "Though the lover is away in a far away country, he has great *aṉpu* for you."[184] "This is the village in which she who contemplates me in her mind with loving fondness resides."[185] The daughter's love for her family is also denoted by the term *aṉpu* (Aka. 49:2). The patron is said to have made a donation to bards out of great affection: *āṭunarkku ītta pēraṉ piṉaṉē* (Puṟa. 221:2); *akavuṉarp puṟanta aṉpiṉ* (AN 97:11). Thus the term *aṉpu* refers to the love and affection between family members, lovers and friends in *akam* poetry, and to the love and affection between the patron and the bard in *puṟam* situations. .

Only *aṉpu* in heterosexual relationships has been subjected to scrutiny and theorised by Tamil grammarians who acknowledge the connection between *aṉpu* and physical space. Five basic love situations are connected to the five physiographic regions: union- *kuṟiñci* (mountainous region), pining in separation-*neytal* (sea-shore), patient waiting- *mullai* (forest), wife's sulking on the return of the husband -*marutam* (cultivated fields), and separation -*pālai* (dry land). They are known as *aṉpōṭu puṇarnta aintiṇai* or *aṉpiṉaintiṇai*. Manickam states "The love theme of *aintiṇai* is morally good, universally acceptable, humanly possible, and poetically fit for imagination."[186] Unreciprocated love too (*kaikkiḷai* and *peruntiṇai*) finds a

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[183] Kinship terms are abundantly encountered in *Tēvāram* and in the *Tirumantiram*. They are used by Tamils to address strangers or people who are not related to them.

[184] *kātalar tavac cēy nāṭṭār āyiṉum mikappēr aṉpiṉar* (Naṟ. 115:7-9).

[185] *aṉpu kalantu nam vayiṉ purinta koḷkaiyoṭu neñcattu uḷḷiṉar uṟaivōr ūrē* (Naṟ. 59:6).

[186] *The Tamil Concept of Love* (Madras : South India Śaiva Siddhānta Works Pub. Society, 1962), 24.

place in the *akam* poetry.[187]   However, it is excluded from *aṉpiṉaintiṇai* and not linked to any physiographic regions.

Aṉpu primarily manifests as a delight in union and sorrow in separation.[188]   It follows that one who causes sorrow to another is deemed loveless, and that one who safeguards another from misery is considered affectionate.   For instance, avaricious hunters ready to kill the wounded elephant for its tusks are described as *aṉpil kāṉavar* (AN 21:24).   Protective function is ascribed to *aṉpu*:   the one who wears *kaḻaltoṭi* protects the bards [from the tribulations of poverty] out of affection (*aṉpu*).[189]   The function of protection attributed to *aṉpu* is sometimes denoted by a separate term *aruḷ* meaning granting a wish or rendering a favour to a seeker.   Like *aṉpu*, *aruḷ* also occurs mostly in *akam* works.   Both *aṉpu* and *aruḷ* are paired together in the literature and attributed to *talaivaṉ* as desirable characteristics.   In the *akam* genre the hero is expected to show *aruḷ* for his beloved by abandoning his plans to leave her in pursuit of worldly goals.[190]   In *puṟam* contexts, he is required to possess *aruḷ* for bards and his subjects, who are his dependents.[191]   Thus, *akam* and *puṟam* genres can be considered to be the two sides of a single coin as they reflect the challenges the hero faces in both the domestic and public realms.

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[187] Unreciprocated love falls into two groups: *kaikkiḷai* and *peruntiṇai*.

[188] The emotions associated with union and separation are expressed through the eyes.   The Caṅkam literature treats briefly the first meeting of lovers: kaṇ tara vanta kāma oḷḷoḷi (Kuṟu.305:1). He looked at her again and again disregarding her gaze :   parimuṭuku tavirtta tēraṉ etir maṟuttu niṉmakaḷ uṇkaṇ paṉmāṉ nōkkic ceṉṟōṉ maṉṟa ak kuṉṟu kiḻavōṉē (Aka. 48:20-23). The affectionate look of the heroine is often mentioned: cēyari maḷaikkaṇ amarntiṉitu nōkkam (Naṟ.16: 9-10) ; kuṟu makaḷ kuvaḷai uṇkaṇ makiḻmaṭa nōkkē (Naṟ.77:11-12) .   When the hero makes plans to go abroad, tears stream down like rain from the eyes of the heroine that signal him not to go. (Naṟ.5) When the heroine realises that she would not able to accompany her lover who goes on the mission of amassing wealth, her eyes become sorrowful in response to impending separation: aruñceyal poruṭpiṇi muṉṉi yāmē cēṟum maṭantai eṉṟaliṉ tāṉṟaṉ neytal uṇkaṇ paital kūra ....kalaṅka ñar uṟuvōḷ pulampukoḷ nōkkē (Naṟ.113: 5-6, 12).

[189] akavunarp puranta aṉpiṉ kaḻaltoṭi (Aka. 97:11)

[190] aruḷum aṉpum nīkkit tuṇai tuṟantu poruḷvayiṟ pirivōr uravōr āyiṉ (Kuṟu. 20:1-2)

[191] aruḷum aṉpum nīkki (Puṟa.5:5)

Whereas the Caṅkam literature reflects the tension between the man's worldly pursuits and conjugal life, *Tēvāram* advises him to rise above this conflict and focus his attention on Śiva. The most significant semantic change that took place during the *bhakti* era in this regard was that secular love, denoted by the term *aṉpu*, is referred to as *ācai* in *Tēvāram* and *aṉpu* is interpreted as divine love.[192] In *Tēvāram* Śiva is equated to a local Tamil hero (*talaivaṉ*) liberating his devotees from the misery and suffering of worldly life. Saint-poets imagine themselves as bards who sing his praise and /or his beloved who pines away in separation from him. Thus both *akam* and *puṟam* themes and motifs find a place in *Tēvāram*.

Both Śiva and the devotee are denoted by the term *aṉpaṉ* in *Tēvāram*. Only those who love him can reach his feet.[193] Since *aṉpu* is influenced by factors like proximity and kinship, it is not surprising that Śiva is easily accessible to those who love him.[194] *Aṉpu* operates in a relationship. Hence, one enters into a relationship with Śiva, this mostly being a being a master-servant relationship.[195] Since Śiva is the sole refuge of the devotee, he represents all kinship relations: Śiva is father, mother, elder brother, uncle and aunt.[196] Śiva reciprocates the love of his devotee: he binds them with his love.[197] Hence, he is called *aṉpuṭaiyāṉ* (affectionate).[198]

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[192] vācam malku kuḻaliṉārkaḷ
vañca maṉai vāḻkkai
ācai nīkki aṉpu cērtti (7:7:7)

[193] If there is pleasure there is pain
Domestic life is [the result of] ignorance
O dry-hearted! [it is so because] you earlier uttered words of ridicule
Those who do not love him will not reach the feet of the deity adorned with koṉrai [Siva]
Let us reach the temple of Etirkolpāṭi. 7:7:8

[194] aṉpāki niṉṟārkku aṉiyāy pōṟṟi (6:26:2)
aṉpuṭaiyārkku eḷimaiyatāy (6:96:7)

[195] aiyaṉārkku āḷāki aṉpu mikku 6:26:2.

[196] aṉṉaiyaiyum attaṉaiyum pōla aṉpāy aṭaintēṉai (6:91:1) aṉpuṭaiya māmaṉum māmiyum nī (6:95:1)
tāyuṉīyē tantaiṉīyē caṅkaraṉēyaṭiyēṉ āyuniṉpāl aṉpuceyvāṉ ātarik kiṉṟatuḷḷam (1:50 7)

[197] attā uṉ aṭiyēṉai aṉpāl ārttāy (6:95:8)

[198] aṉpuṭaiyāṉai araṉai (1:7:11)

Śiva never leaves the thoughts of his devotees.[199] Since their thoughts are always centred on him,[200] it is said that Śiva takes up abode in the heart of his devotees.[201] When their *aṉpu* for Śiva becomes intense (*aṉpu mikutal*), the heart melts, tears flow and the body perspires. These are taken as physical manifestations of *aṉpu*.[202] Constantly thinking of Śiva day and night with bones melting results in an uninterrupted flow of *aṉpu* for him.[203]

The discourse of *aṉpu* in the *Tirumantiram* closely adheres to the one found in the Caṅkam literature and *Tēvāram*.   A number of concepts are paired with *aṉpu* in the text; these pairs are as follows: (a) *aṉpu* and *aruḷ*:[204] It has already been noted that in the Caṅkam literature the hero is required to show *aṉpu* and *aruḷ* for both his beloved and his subjects. (b) *aṉpu* and *cintai*[205]: *Cintai* means the mind, the locus of emotion. The heart of the lovers is referred to as aṉpuṭai neñcam in Kuṟuntokai. (c) *aṉpu* and *kalavi* (sexual union)[206]: *Kalavi* is known as *puṇarcci*, one of the five phases of *aṉpu* according to Tamil grammarians. (d) *aṉpu* and *aṟivu* (Knowledge):[207] The notion that *aṉpu* issues from knowledge can be traced to the Caṅkam literature. The heroine in her address to the crane says that the bird would feel *aṉpu* for her if it comes to know of her pangs of separation from her lover in the evening.[208]

Aṉpu takes time to grow and mature- *aṉpu paḻuttal*. [209] It is a very slow and gentle process. Śiva is accessible to those who love him dearly.[210]   He is father,[211] and a peerless

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[199] aṉpuṭaiyār cintai akalār pōlum (6:89:1)
[200] nāḷum uḷkip piriyāta aṉparāy (7:90:3)
[201] aṭiyār neñciṉuḷḷē kaṉṟāppūr naṭu taṟiyaik kāṇalāmē (6:61:7)
[202] aṉpu mikku akam kuḻaintu meyyarumpi aṭikaḷ pātam kaiyiṉār toḻum aṭiyār (6:61:7)
[203] eṉpelām nekki irāppakalē niṉṟu iṉparāy niṉainteṉṟum iṭaiyaṟā aṉparām avarkkaṉpar ārūrarē (5:7:4)
[204] TM 280, 1469
[205] TM 267, 282
[206] TM 281, 283
[207] TM 416, 1471
[208] karuṅkāl veṇkuruku eṉava kēṇmati perumpulam piṉṟē ciṟupuṉmālai atu nī aṟiyiṉ aṉpumār uṭaiyai (Nat. 54:4-6)
[209] ātiyil aṉpu paḻukkiṉṟa vāṟē (TM 1977: 4)
[210] aṇiyaṉ nal aṉparkku (TM 8:3)
[211] taṉṉai appāyeṉil appaṉumāyuḷaṉ (TM 7: 3)

eldest son[212] (both are authority figures in a family). Śiva's love is superior to maternal love.[213] The text contrasts the love of Śiva with the love of kinsfolk. Relatives do not love one who has lost his wealth; they would only love him if they were able to benefit from him materially. Hence this self-interest cannot be compared to the selfless love shown by Śiva to his devotees.[214]

There are four distinctive aspects of the representation of *aṉpu* in the *Tirumantiram*. Firstly, the text classifies *aṉpu* into two types: violent love and tender love. The *Tirumantiram* denounces a violent expression of *aṉpu* for Śiva. Since the text lays stress on the preservation of the body, it disapproves of the mode of demonstrating *aṉpu* through self-harming acts.

> The bones are the fuel;
> Having cut the flesh of the body
> Even if one fries it in the fire glowing like gold
> The gem like Śiva cannot be attained
> unless one melts with love and his mind becomes tender. 272

The love that melts the heart is preferred. In this sense *aṉpu* is followed by the verb *uruku* or *urukku* (causative).[215] Melting with love is a common expression found in the text.[216] The heart should become tender (*akam kuḻaital*) with *aṉpu*.[217] Weeping and shedding tears are taken as signs of love.[218] As the love for Śiva is intense, the devotee wants to experience him with his mouth as well.

> I melt with love, cry and bewail
> I adore day by day with my bones melting
> He is my gold, the gem, Lord, and God
> I will eat, bite and chew him. (TM 2980)

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[212] taṉṉai oppāy oṉrumillāt talaimakaṉ (TM 7:2)
[213] ……nal aṉparkkut
    tāyiṉum nallaṉ tāḻ caṭaiyāṉē. (TM 8:3)
[214] TM 209.
[215] aṉpōṭu uruki (272:4) aṉpu urukki (274) aṉpiṉ urukuvaṉ (1456:1) aṉpuḷ uruki (2980:1)
[216] aṉpōṭu uruki (TM 272: 3) ; aṉpiṉ urukuvaṉ (TM 1456:1)
[217] TM 272:3
[218] aṉpuṭaiyārkaḷ aḻutu akaṉṟārkaḷē (TM 152:4)

Secondly, the text underlines the mutuality of *aṉpu*. The one who loves and the person who is loved are denoted by the same term in the text: *aṉpaṉ*.[219] *Bhakti* does not have a common terminology for the devotee and Śiva.[220] The *Tirumantiram* thus speaks of mutual love:

> Whoever could rejoice in the burning *aṉpu* for him ,
> to such, well-pleased he awards his grace of *aṉpu*.[221]

> Worship the lord with heart melted in *aṉpu*;
> seek the lord with *aṉpu*,
> when we direct our *aṉpu* to God,
> he too approaches us with *aṉpu*.[222]

This reciprocal love is referred to as "*icainttu eḻum aṉpu*"[223] (*rising love in harmony)* in the text. Those who stand in such love are referred to as *icaikkiṉṟa aṉpar*.[224]

Thirdly, *aṉpu* is used in connection with yoga in the text. Forming bonds of love with Śiva is a prerequisite to yoga. One's heart should melt with *aṉpu* if one wants to practise *kuṇḍalinī* yoga[225] or enter the *samādhi* with the goal of becoming *civam*.[226] Finally, *aṉpu* is identified with the transcendental state of *civam*. The third and fourth aspects will be elaborated in the next section on Yoga.

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[219] Śiva is referred to as *aṉpaṉ*: iṉpatiṭai niṉṟiratikkum aṉpaṉai (286: 3-4). His devotees are also referred to as *aṉpar* (plural of *aṉpaṉ*): neṟiyāṉa aṉpar nilai aṟintārē (617:4;2471:4) icaikkiṉṟa aṉpar ((1692:4) araṉ aṉpar (2391:1)

[220] Śiva is addressed as pattā (the one who has *pattars*-devotees!) 7:25:3

[221] TM 280;

[222] TM 274 –Natarajan's translation.

[223] TM 1590:1
The expression1692:4 refers to those who stand in love and in accord.

[224] TM 1692:4. *Icaikiṉṟa* becomes *icaikkiṉṟa* -the doubling of the consonant *ka*-in poetry.

[225] ōrkkiṉṟa uḷḷam uruka aḻal mūṭṭi (TM 1937:2)

[226] cittam urukkic civamām camātiyil (TM 325:1)

III
Yoga

The term yoga is employed in two senses in the *Tirumantiram*: (a) Yoga as the ultimate end (liberation), and (b) Yoga as a means to the end. Yoga as the ultimate end is referred to as *Śivayoga* in the text, the very purpose of which is to transcend dualities and to become *civam*. The highest form of yoga mentioned in the *Tirumantiram* is *samādhi*, meaning union, completion, silence, intense contemplation of any particular object (so as to identify the contemplator with the object meditated upon).[227] *Samādhi* is identified with the fourth and the final stage of consciousness called *turīya*, which transcends the other three stages of consciousness- *jāgrat* (waking), svapna (dream), *suṣupti* (deep sleep). "The word *Cit* (consciousness) applies both to waking and dream consciousness and the word *Acit* (unconsciousness) as the ground of *Cit* (consciousness) is not to be understood as devoid of consciousness. *Turīya* is beyond the concept of *Cit* and *Acit*."[228] *Śivayoga* is *turīya Samādhi* in which the dualism of *cit* and *acit*[229] is transcended.

Symbols representative of the supreme state:

The text provides two religious symbols, *ardhanārīśvara* and *linga* that represent the transcendental *turīya* state the practitioner strives to achieve. *Tēvāram* attests to the fact that the development of Śaiva *bhakti* in the Tamil country was centered on the temple and that one of the images of Śiva celebrated by the saints was that of *ardhanārīśvara*. Several expressions occurring in *Tēvāram*[230] evoke the image of Śiva as androgyne. Besides, his androgynous

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[227] Monier-Williams Sanskrit -English Dictionary.
[228] I.C. Sharma, "The Four Dimensional Philosophy of Indian Thought and Plotinus, Paulous Gregorios (ed.), *Neoplatonism and Indian Philosophy* (Albany : State University of New York Press, 2002), 193.
[229] tiruneṟiyākiya cittacittinṟi....turiya camātiyām (TM 232:1-4)
civayōkamāvatu cittacit tenṟu (TM 122:1)
[230] vēyaṉatōḷ umai paṅkaṉ, 2: 48:2; mātilaṅku tirumēṉiyiṉāṉ 1:2:2

image is vividly captured in several of the hymns through a juxtaposition of male and female

symbolism.

> A earring of bright new gold glows on one ear;
> a coiled conch shell sways on the other.
> on one side he chants the melodies of the ritual Veda,
> on the other, he gently smiles.
> matted hair adorned with sweet konrai blossoms
> on one half of his head,
> and a woman's curls on the other, he comes.
> the one is the nature of his form,
> the other, of hers;
> and both are the very essence
> of his beauty. (IV.8.10)[231]

Ellen Goldberg who analysed the image of *ardhanārīśvara* observes,

…it leads the devotee to an inner apprehension or progressive awareness of his/her own subtle and essential likeness with the deity (e.g. Ardhanārīśvara). The fundamental goal for Śaivites is to attain *mokṣa* by recognizing one's essential self as a "second" Śiva . This involves the self-realization of one's own so-called androgynous nature. The Tamil poet-saints, by utilizing the marks of Śiva's male and female nature, imply an androgynous counterpart in the listeners' own essential being…..[232]

The image of *ardhanārīśvara* is symbolic of the ultimate goal of yogic ideology

propounded by the *Tirumantiram* "to become *civam*,"[233] which refers to the transcendental state

embodied in the *turīya samādhi*.[234] The term *Civam* which is an irrational singular noun, is

different from the rational masculine noun *Civan* (Śiva) in Tamil. The state of being *civam*

results from the union of Śiva and Śakti within one's body.[235] Śiva and Śakti are referred to as

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[231] Translated by Indira Peterson. See *Poems to Śiva*, 105.

[232] Ellen Goldberg, *The Lord Who is Half Woman : Ardhanārīśvara in Indian and Feminist Perspective* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002), 99.

[233] iruntār civamāki (TM 127:1); civam āyiṉarē (TM: 1799:4); ..camāti civamātal.. (TM: 2713:4)

[234] civamām camātiyil (325:1)
  ceppariya civamkaṇṭu tāṉ teḷintu
  apparicāka amarntiruntārē (126:3-4)

[235] catti civamām iraṇṭum taṉṉuḷ vaikkac
  cattiyam eṉcittit taṉmaiyumāmē (TM 333:3-4)

nāda and *bindu* respectively.[236] Thus, the *turīya samādhi* is characterised by the union of *nāda* and *bindu* in the *sahasrāra*, called the mount of Meru.[237]

Civaliṅkam[238] also symbolises the goal of becoming *civam*, which is homologised to the transformation of copper into gold.[239] It represents the unification of *nāda* and *bindu*,[240] or Śiva and Śakti.[241] Realization of the union of Śiva with Śakti within the body constitutes true knowledge.[242] Once the knowledge is achieved by means of yoga, the body itself becomes *civalinkam*.[243] The *Tirumantiram* discusses the three techniques to realise the unification of *nāda* and *bindu* within the body: *aṣṭāṅga yoga,*[244] *paryaṅga yoga* and *candrayoga*. It may be

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[236] "binduḥ śaktiḥ śivo nādaḥ." "bindu-nādātmakam lingam." (Candrajñāna-Āgama, kriyāpāda Paṭala 3.13,16). Quoted in Guy L Beck, *Sonic Theology :Hinduism and Sacred Sound*, Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1993,153.
Nāda dwelling in the *sahasrāra cakra* represents Śiva: ucciyil ōṅki oḷitikaḻ nātattai nacciyē iṉpaṅkoḷ vārkku namaṉillai (TM 442:1-2). However, Tantra Seven that discusses the conquest of *bindu* or the regulation of *bindu* flow, identifies *bindu* as Śiva and *nāda* as Śakti:
puṟamakam eṅkum pukunttoḷir vintu
niṟamatu veṇmai nikaḻnātañ cemmai   (TM 1929:1-2)
[237] vintuvum nātamum mēruvil ōṅkiṟir
      cantiyilāṉa camātiyiṟ kūṭiṭum (TM 619:1-2)
[238] The male generative organ known as *iliṅkam* (...iliṅka vaḻiyatu pōkki (TM 346:2); viḻuntatu liṅkam virintatu yōṉi (TM 455:1)) is the symbol of Śiva in stone or other material established in temples (tāvara liṅkam, 515:1).
[239] naṭañ civaliṅkam nalañ cempu poṉṉē (TM 902:4)
[240] ātāra vintu atipīṭa nātamē
pōtāvi liṅkap puṇarcciya tāmē (TM 1754:3-4)
vintuvum nātamum mēvum iliṅkamām
vintuvatē pīṭa nātam iliṅkamām (TM 1757:1-2)
[241] catti civamām iliṅkamē tāparam
   catti civamām iliṅkamē caṅkamam
   catti civamām iliṅkañ catācivam (TM 1755:1-3) [241]
tattuvamām vintu nātam catācivam (TM 2396:2)
[242] entai paramaṉum eṉṉammai kūṭṭamum
   munta vuraittu muṟai colliṉ ñāṉamām (TM 1170:1-2)
[243] taṉmēṉi taṟcivaliṅkamāy niṉṟitum
   taṉmēṉi tāṉum catācivamāy niṟkum (TM 1750:2)
[244] According to the text, Tirumūlar is not the author of the system of yoga which consists of eight limbs, found in Tantra three. It was first expounded by his guru Nandi. The term *piraiccatam* is employed to denote yoga : *piraiccatam eṭṭu* (*aṣṭāṅgayoga*). The eight limbs of yoga are *yama*, *niyama*, *āsana*, prāṇāyāma, *pratyāhāra*, *dhāraṇā*, *dhyāna*, *samādhi*. Two significant benefits accrue from the practice of the eight-limbed yoga are knowledge and liberation. *Yama* consists of ethical injunctions: non-killing, not-lying, non-stealing, of sturdy character, virtuous, humble, impartial, sharing food with others, committing no faults, abstaining from intoxicants, and being devoid of lust. The *Tirumantiram* provides a lengthy list of religious virtues under *niyama*, the first and foremost among them is to have faith in Śiva. Other twenty virtues, mentioned under the category of *niyama* are as follows*:* purity, compassion, reduced food intake, patience, sound condition of the body and mind, truthfulness,

recalled that in one of his autobiographical verses Tirumūlar states that through the grace of Nandi, having resorted to mūlaṉ (i.e. practice of yoga involving the mūlādhāra), he became catācivam[245] (civalingam), and thereby came into possession of true knowledge.[246]

Concepts related to yoga- *puṇarcci, kalavi, aṭakkam and odukkam*

The text employs two terms- *puṇarcci* and *kalavi*- to underline the fact that the fundamental principle of yoga is the union of male and female elements.[247] According to the University of Madras Tamil Lexicon, the verb *puṇar* means mating and uniting.[248] In the text it has the meaning of "to wed",[249] "to have sexual union"[250] and "to stand united as *ardhanārīśvara*."[251] The literal meaning of *kalavi* is sexual intercourse.[252] Hence, *paryaṅga yoga* is referred to as *kalavi*.[253] Both *ardhanārīśvara*[254] and *linga* reflect the sexual union of Śiva and Śakti, from which proceeds the universe.[255]

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steadfastness, abhorrence of lust, of stealing and murder, penance, meditation, satisfaction, belief in the existence of god, charity, vows in honour of Śiva, learning of *siddhānta*, sacrifice, *śivapūjā* and wisdom. The Tirumantiram acknowledges the existence of numerous *āsanas*, among which only nine are mentioned by name. The literal meaning of *prāṇāyāma*, is control of breath, which is the means of restraining the mind (*maṉam*). " Let *prāṇa* merge in mind and together the two will be stilled; then no more shall birth and death be. (TM 567:1-2). This science of breath should be taught by a guru. The benefit of practising *prāṇāyāma* is immortality. These last four limbs of the *aṣṭāṅgayoga* (*pratyāhāra*, *dhāraṇā*, *dhyāna*, and *samādhi*), explained in 53 verses (578-631) contain references to *ādhāras* and *kuṇḍalinī* that are not previously dealt with. It is difficult to find a clear, consistent definition of these four steps. Pratyāhāra is the fifth step in the *aṣṭāṅgayoga* which is characterized by the withdrawal of the mind from the objects of senses and looking inward. *Dhāraṇā* is to concentrate on a particular object. *Dhyāna* is of two types: *para- dhyāna* (meditating on Śakti) and Śiva- dhyāna (meditating on the formless Śiva). The union of *nāda* and *bindu* in the *sahasrāra* takes place in *samādhi*.

[245] catti civamām iliṅkam catācivam (TM 1755:3)

[246] nanti aruḷālē mūlaṉai nāṭippiṉ nanti aruḷālē catācivaṉ āyiṉēṉ nanti aruḷāl meyññāṉattuḷ naṉṉiṉēṉ nanti aruḷālē nāṉiruntēṉē (TM 92)

[247] Female homosexuality is decried as folly: peṇṇoru peṇṇaip puṇarntiṭum pētamai (TM 1159:1)

[248] puṇarmati yōṭuṟṟu (TM 628:3), puṇarmati (TM 1080:3); puṇar vintu (TM 879:2)

[249] maṉam puṇar (TM 150:1)

[250] mātar puyaluṟu pulliṉ puṇarntavarē yiṉum (TM 206: 1-2) puṇarcciyuḷ āyiḻai mēl aṉpu pōla (TM 283:1); aṅkap puṇarcci (TM 828:1) pāvai puṇarvu (TM 1163:3)

[251] maṅkaiyum tāṉum puṇarntutaṉē niṟkum (TM 1063:3) kāccaṟa cōti kaṭavuḷutaṉ puṇarntu (TM 1160:3)

[252] kāyam puṇarkkum kalavi. TM 1249

[253] TM 825

[254] pākam parācakti paimpoṉcaṭaimuṭi (TM 1217:1)

Parāśakti is the half of him who sports golden matted locks (Natarajan's translation)

[255] TM 387.

Two more concepts that are vital to the understanding of yoga are *aṭakkam* and *odukkam*. *Aṭakkam* is one of the requisite qualities enumerated under the category of *yama* in *aṣṭāṅga yoga*.[256] It has very specific connotations in the *Tirumantiram*. Firstly, *aṭakkam* denotes the control of senses. The Siddhas who strive to curb their senses are compared to a tortoise[257] that retracts its head and limbs into its shell.[258]

Secondly it denotes the control of breath (*pirāṇaṉ,*[259] kāṟṟu,[260] vaḷi,[261] and vāyu[262]).

If the [sādhaka] inhales the breath and retains it in his abdomen (valiyiṉai vāṅki vayattil aṭakki)
The body would be as sturdy as crystal, and
Though it ages, it would remain young
If he receives the grace of the guru to calm [the mind]
His body would be lighter than air. [263]

To those who can sleep [while awake] in order to dispel misery
With both the eyes focused on the tip of the nose, and
With the air restrained within, without letting it rise
No more fear of [decay] of the body, this is the fruit of [yoga] [264]

The breath is compared to a horse that can only be driven by one who has mastered the techniques of breath control.[265] The soul (*jīva*) is described as the master of senses[266] and the

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[256] aṭakkamuṭaiyāṉ (TM 554:2)

[257] Natarajan comments on the symbolism of tortoise found in verse 133: "The simile of the tortoise and the five senses is a favourite one in Hinduism. The Goraknathis (Khanpata yogis) of the 14th century onwards seem to have adopted the tortoise as their symbol and emblematic mascot." The Bhagavad Gītā also uses this symbol in Chapter II.58.

[258] orumaiyuḷ āmaipōl uḷ aintu aṭakki (TM 133:3); āmaiyoṉ rēṟi (TM 1206:1)

[259] TM 567

[260] TM 571

[261] TM 569

[262] TM 575

[263] valiyiṉai vāṅki vayattil aṭakkil
    paḷiṅku ottuk kāyam paḻukkiṉum piñcām
    teḷiyak kuruviṉ tiruvaruḷ peṟṟāl
     valiyaṉum vēṭṭu valiyaṉumāmē (TM 569).

[264] nayaṉam iraṇtum nācimēl vaittiṭṭu
    uyarvu eḻā vāyuvai uḷḷē aṭakkit
    tuyar aṟa nāṭiyē tūṅka vallārkkup
    payaṉ itu kāyam payam illait tāṉē (TM 605).

[265] TM 565

[266] aivarkku nāyakaṉ (TM 564:1)

lord of the body-habitat:[267] the horse the *jīva* rides to reach his intended goal is breath.[268] Sometimes the number of steeds mentioned is two: *prāṇa* (air inhaled) and *apāna* (air exhaled).[269] Both could be tamed only by the grace of guru.[270] The text lays emphasis on breath control as it leads to the restraint of the mind.

> Let *prāṇa* merge in mind
> and together the two will be stilled;
> then no more shall birth and death be.[271]

Thirdly, the non-emission of semen is referred to by the term *aṭakkam*. The term occurs in this sense in connection with *paryaṅga yoga*. The practitioner is compared to a blacksmith who takes the precaution of covering the fire with carbon so that molten silver will not mix with gold. In *paryaṅga* yoga the practitioner should be wary of mingling silvery semen with uterine blood (gold); that is, he should avoid ejaculating the semen into the vagina of the woman. Instead, he should raise the semen through breath control and preserve it in the tip of the tongue.[272] The blessings of this practice are denoted by the expression *aṭakkattil ākkam*.[273] It is regarded as the sure means of attaining immortality.[274]

Aṭakkam is employed in the text in the sense of restraint or control. Nonetheless, the text is not of the view that complete elimination of sensual experience would enhance the effectiveness of yoga. Those who lay undue stress on absolute control of senses are derogatively called *aṟivilār* (ignorant), as it is said that there is little difference between those

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[267] avvūrt talaimakaṉ (TM 564:1)

[268] uyyakkoṇṭēṟum kutiraimaṟ ṟoṉṟuṇṭu (TM 564:2)

[269] āriyaṉ nallaṉ kutirai iraṇṭuḷa (TM 565: !)

[270] kūriya nātaṉ kuruviṉ aruḷpeṟṟāl
vārip piṭikka vacappaṭunt tāṉē (TM 565:3-4)

[271] pirāṇaṉ maṉattoṭum pērātaṭaṅkip
pirāṇaṉirukkiṟ pirappiṟappillai (TM 567:1-2)
Translated by Natarajan.

[272] TM 834

[273] TM 1957

[274] kiṭakkum uṭaliṟ kiḷar intiriyam
aṭakkaluṟumavaṉ tāṉē amaraṉ (TM 2032:1-2)

who practise such control and an inert mass (*acētaṉam*).   In other words, sensual pleasure is not forbidden to a yogi.[275]   He can practise sexual intercourse without ejaculation (*paryaṅgayoga*) that confers Śivabhoga.[276]   In Tantra five, *bhoga* is interpreted as the acquisition of the four goals in life (*dharma*, *artha*, *kāma* and *mokṣa*).[277]   The yogi does not perceive any conflict in enjoying the first three goals while his mind is set on liberation. Hence, Tirumūlar states that he came into possession of the knowledge that does not entail a complete riddance of sensory experience.[278]

Closely related to the concept of *aṭakkam* is *oṭukkam*.[279]   Both terms suggest a progressive withdrawal from the external world.   They are used in the sense of controlling desire.[280] They (*aṭaṅku* and *oṭuṅku*) also depict the state of non-dualistic liberation.

> aḷiyil aḷi pōy aṭaṅkiyavāṟum
> oḷiyil oḷi pōy oṭuṅkiya vāṟum[281]

In particular, the term *odukkam* also implies becoming calm and tranquil.[282]   Those whose minds are focussed and established in serenity do not agitate.[283]

The text also attempts to explicate *odukkam* in terms of reabsorption of tattvas into the mind.   Of the five acts performed by Śiva, emission and reabsorption are central to the

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[275] yōkamum pōkamum yōkiyark kākumāl
    ...iraṇṭum aḻiyāta yōkikkē (TM 1491:1, 4)
The immortal yogi may enjoy both yoga and bhoga.

[276] kayak kuḻali kalavi yoṭuṅkalan
    tūcit tuḷaiyuṟat tūṅkātu pōkamē (TM 825:1-2)

[277] pōkam puviyiṟ puruṭārtta citti (TM 1491: 3)

[278] añcu maṭakkā aṟivaṟint tēṉē (TM 2033: 4)

[279] *oṭuṅku* 1. To be restrained, as the senses or the desires; to grow less; to respectfully slide on to one side, as when meeting a superior; to move to a side; to be concealed, hidden; to be subservient ;to be lazy, inactive; to close, as the petals of the lotus flower; to cease, as noise, bustle; to be quiet, silent ;to be weary, exhausted; to sink; to become dissolved, involved one within another, as the elements, worlds, till all is absorbed in the great Infinite; to grow dim, as light (University of Madras Lexicon).

[280] arutti oṭukki (626) avāvai aṭakki TM 1108:4

[281]   As nectar drowns in nectar
     As light dissolves in light (TM 124:1-2)

[282] viṭuṅkāṉ muṉaintuint tiriyaṅka ḷaippōl naṭuṅkātu iruppāṉum (1942:1-2)

[283] oṭuṅki nilaiperṟa uttamar uḷḷam naṭuṅkuvatillai (TM 1624:1-2)

cosmology of Śaiva Siddhānta.[284] Richard Davis explains the emission and reabsorption of tattvas as follows:

> As with the emanation of the tattvas, any movement along the path of "path of emission" (*sṛṣṭimārga*) involves a transformation from unity to differentiation, from one to many, from pervasiveness to increasing particularity. By contrast, the "path of reabsorption" (*saṁhāramārga*) reintegrates that which has become separated; it reinstates the unity lost through differentiation. Emission indicates a movement from subtle *(sūkṣma)* to gross *(sthūla),* from pure to impure, from superior to inferior; reabsorption indicates the converse. Emission and reabsorption also relates to the disposition of things in space. The path of emission is represented visually as a descending motion from high to low, or as a radiating movement proceeding outwards from a centre toward peripheries. Reabsorption ascends or moves inward toward a centre.[285]

Dhāraṇā, one of the steps in the *aṣṭāṅgayoga,* is presented as being based on the principle of reabsorption of tattvas into the source, within one's mind.

> To contain body`s harassing senses five
> In elements of five
> To contain elements of five
> In organs cognitive internal
> To contain cognitive organs internal
> in their *tanmatras*
> To contain the *tanmatras*
> in their Being Uncreated
> That, verily, is *Dharana*
> In stages practised (TM 597)[286]

Cheever Brown explains the link between the process of liberation and that of reabsorption. "Liberation entails a reversing of the cosmogonic process through the practice of meditative dissolution."[287] Tattvas merge or dissolve into preceding tattvas successively until the unity of *nāda* and *bindu* is realised in the *sahasrāra*, which culminates in the dawn of Knowledge (*jñāna*). *Paryaṅgayoga* also gives rise to *jñāna*.

> He (who is engaged in *paryaṅgayoga*) becomes master of *jñāna* [288]

> When nāda and bindu are raised to the Meru [*saharāra*]
> There will be *samādhi* as a result of the union [of them]
> The endless, excellent Light which is the great object of knowledge
> Will verily appear [in *samādh*i] [289]

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[284] Richard Davis, *Ritual in an oscillating universe: Worshipping Śiva in Medieval India,* 109.
[285] Ibid., 110.
[286] Natarajan's translation.
[287] *The Devī Gītā: the song of the Goddess(*Albany : State University of New York Press, 1998),15.
[288] talaivaṉumāyiṭum taṉvaḻi ñāṉam (TM 829:1)

Yoga and *aṉpu*: Yoga that gives rise to knowledge is founded in *aṉpu*. The literal meaning of the expression *aṉpir kalavi ceytal* occurring in verse 281 is to engage in sexual union, being immersed in love. Since sexual intercourse is recognised as one of the yogas, the phrase could be taken to denote *paryaṅga* yoga; alternatively, the expression may be construed as simply implying yoga which is interpreted as "an internalization of sexual intercourse between a man and a woman."[290] A*ṉpu* is especially linked to *samādhi,* the final limb of the *aṣṭāṅgayoga*:

> He is our own; he is the primal one; he is the reciter of the Vedas
> He is the light that shines within the purest gold
> Having restrained the desire they conceived *aṉpu* for him
> They scaled the horn,[291] united the palms[292] and merged with him (TM 626)

Thus, yoga and *aṉpu* are inseparable elements of religious *sādhanā* the *Tirumantiram* deals with.

Unlike *bhakti* that is regarded a gratuitous gift of Śiva,[293] the secular concept of *aṉpu* is suggestive of human free will. The verbal roots that accompany *aṉpu* in the Tirumantiram (*aṉpu* cey,[294] anpinai ākku,[295] and *aṉpu* vai[296]) imply that the emotion of *aṉpu* is intentional. It

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[289] vintuvum nātamum mēruvil ōṅkiṭiṉ
cantiyil āṉa camātiyil kūṭiṭum
antam ilāta aṟiviṉ arumporuḷ
cuntarac cōtiyum tōṉṟiṭuntāṉē (TM 619)
[290] David White, *Tantra in practice* (Princeton, NJ : Princeton University Press, 2000)，15.
[291] *suṣumṉā nāḍi* or *sahasrāra*
[292] *iḍā and piṅgalā*
[293] pattiyum nātaṉ aruḷir payilumē (TM 1575:4).
Through the grace of Śiva (Guru), [one] will be endowed with *bhakti*.
Humans have no power over *bhakti*. It will be bestowed on the person select. Nonetheless, a person could engage in activities that would ensure his chances of being endowed with *bhakti*. For instance,
ottu mikavum niṉṟāṉai uraippatu patti koṭukkum (TM 1639:1-2).
Praising the One [who is resident in the body] is instrumental in the production of *bhakti*.
[294] makiḻntu aṉpu ceyyum aruḷ (TM 280:4)
avaṉpāl aṉukiyē aṉpu ceyvārkaḷ (1880:1)
[295] TM 626:3
[296] aṉpu vaittilai (TM 544:2)
ātittaṉ pattiyuḷ aṉpu vaittēṉē (1465 :4)
aṉpu vaittu uṉṉātatillai (TM 2095:2)

is within the power of the person to create love for the object he chooses. In other words, the underlying premise is that a person is endowed with the capacity to direct and control his emotions.

> The Lord knows who despises Him and who possesses [loves] Him.
> The best of Lords will grant His grace accordingly.
> To those capable of tender love for Him in abundance,
> Pleased, He [who is an embodiment of] benevolence reciprocates the love.[297]

***Aṉpu* and kāmam**: The *Tirumantiram* distinguishes *aṉpu* from *kāmam* (lust) which is one of the five great sins.[298] *Kāmam* is excessive passion, whereas *aṉpu* is regulated by *aṭakkam*. *Kāmam* tends to make one swerve from the right path to the chosen goal. While the text recommends sexual intercourse as one of the yogas, it distances itself from *vāma* tantric practitioners by condemning their ritual sex practices [299] and ritual drinking.[300] Disapproval of *vāma* tantric ritual sex stems from the perception that practitioners of that sect do not observe sex without emission. The abstinence from *kāmam* and *kaḷ* is counted as one of the virtues belonging to *yama* in the text.[301] The union with Śiva is possible only if the semen is conserved and internalised within the body.[302] Hence, yoga is defined as follows:

> Two bodies in union may unite,
> Yet if he emits not Bindu
> That union is Yoga way; [303]

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[297] ammalarp poṟpātattu aṉpu vaippārkaṭkē (TM 2744:4)
ikaḻntatum peṟṟatum īcaṉ aṟiyum
ukantu aruḷ ceytiṭum uttama nātaṉ
koḻuntu aṉpu ceytu aruḷ kūra vallārkku
makiḻntu aṉpu ceyyum aruḷ atuvāmē (TM 280).

[298] kolaiyē kaḷavu kaḷ kāmam poykūṟal
malaivāṉa pātakamām (TM 200:1-2)
kāmam is also counted as one of the three blemishes along with *vekuḷi* (wrath) and *mayakkam* (mental delusion) TM 2436:1.

[299] Copulation, one of the *pañcamakāras*, is referred to as *kāmam* in the text.

[300] kāmamum kaḷḷum kalatikaṭ kēyākum (TM 326)
vāmattōr tāmum matuvuṇṭu māḷpavar
kāmattōr kāmak kaḷḷuṇṭē kalaṅkuvar

[301] Yama is the first step in *aṣṭāṅga yoga.* See verse TM 556:3

[302] …..kāmat toḻil niṉṟu
mātavaṉ iṉpam maṟanttoḻintārkaḷē (TM 2091:3-4)

[303] Translated by Natarajan.

Aṉpu **and inpam:** The text often emphasizes the link among *aṉpu*, yoga and *inpam.* *Puṇarcci* or union produces an immense pleasure with which Śiva is identified. Śiva is described as the orgasmic sexual intercourse (*iṉpakkalavi*)[304], iṉpam (*pleasure*)[305] and *iṉpaṉ* (one who gives pleasure). The *Tirumantiram* postulates that *iṉpam* or pleasure experienced in the union with Śiva is parallel to the pleasure derived from sexual intercourse in which seminal emission is arrested.

Tirumūlar proclaims that he seeks to impart the knowledge of the means through which he attained *inpam* (pleasure).

> Let this world experience the bliss I experienced
> The esoteric teaching that leads to heaven is this:
> If one steadfastly clings to the mantra
> Rooted in the sensual perception of the body
> It will result in the unitive experience with Śiva. (TM 85)

However, the emotion of *aṉpu* is not disruptive of the mental concentration required of yoga as the *sādhaka* is exhorted to practise the virtue of temperance. Phrases such as *cittam, kalaṅkātu,*[306] *uṇarcciyilātu*[307] lay stress on the unruffledness or equanimity of the mind in the act of *paryaṅgayoga*. The text also advocates the attribute of *naduvunilai* (middle path) for practitioners of yoga. *Naduvunilai* means impartiality. I, however, interpret the term as middle path because yoga as envisaged by the *Tirumantiram* means transcending dualities by following the middle *nādi, suṣumnā*, that is, in the course of *prāṇāyāma, iḍā* and *piṅgalā* become united with *suṣumnā*. Unless one stays on the middle path, knowledge is inaccessible.[308] Tirumūlar

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[304] iṉpamum iṉpak kalaviyumāy niṟkum (TM 416:2)
[305] iṉpamum iṉpak kalaviyumāy niṟkum (TM 416:2)
[306] vaitta iruvarum tammiṉ makiḻntuṭaṉ
cittam kalaṅkātu ceykiṉṟa āṉantam (TM 835:1-2)
[307] uṇarcciyil lātu kulāvi ulāvi
aṇaittalum iṉpam atuvitamāmē (TM 283:3-4)
[308] naṭuvuniṉ ṟārkkaṉṟi ñāṉamum illai (TM 320:1)

refs to himself as a practitioner of middle path.[309] It is worthy of note that *naduvunilai* is identified with *śāntarasa* by Tamil grammarians. According to the *Tirumantiram*, the <u>sādhaka</u> who has his emotion under control becomes an embodiment of love in his state of *jīvanmukti*.

> *Aṉpu* (love) and *civam* are separate,`` say the ignorant;
> None knows that *aṉpu* itself is *civam*
> Realizing that *aṉpu* is none other than *civam* itself,
> They remain as *civam* which is *aṉpu* itself. (TM 270)

This verse depicts the state of *civam* in which the dualities are transcended. It also suggests that c*ivam* is to be known as well as to be felt because *civam* is the embodiment of the contradictory principles: knowledge (*aṟivu*) and love (*aṉpu*);[310] both are defining elements of God and the Siddha. The concept of *aṭakkam* is the moderating principle of the emotion *aṉpu*.[311] In the light of the discussion of the relation between yoga and *aṉpu*, the term yoga in the *Tirumantiram* should be defined as *uṇarcciyuḷ oṭukkam,* the absorption in the emotion of *aṉpu*. When deeply absorbed in the emotion, categorical distinctions fade away and self-realisation dawns. However, this is not a transitory state of the mind. The *Tirumantiram* contrasts *aṉpu* (love) with *kāmam* (lust) and cautions against intense emotion that dissipates one's life-energy. *Aṉpu* is a carefully guarded emotion that constitutes the basis of the final state of *samādhi* in which the soul's bondage is shattered and unity with the ultimate reality is realised.

I recapitulate the main points of my argument in conclusion. Ideological differences between *bhakti* and yoga are conspicuous and undisguised. In *bhakti* the deity is perceived to be external to the worshipper, who considers herself inferior to the deity in all respects. This is one of the reasons for scholars to define *bhakti* as reverential devotion. *Bhakti* does not arise in

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[309] naṭuvuniṉ ṟārvaḻi nāṉumniṉ ṟēṉē (TM 320:4)
[310] aṉpum aṟivum aṭakkamumāy niṟkum (TM 416:1)
[311] aṟivum aṭakkamum aṉpum (TM 1471:1).

the heart of the devotee without the intervention of Guru.[312]   The *Tirumantiram* uses the term *bhakti* to refer to the form of devotion displayed in public, institutional or formal settings.   In Tantra five, *bhakti* is linked to the institution of temple. *Gurubhakti* is also demonstrated to be related to *maṭam* (monastery).   The *Tirumantiram* itself was composed by the Head of a monastery called *mūlaṉmaṭam*.[313] One verse states that having a vision of the monastery confers salvation.[314]   In contrast, the practitioner of yoga does not see God as external to and distinct from him. He does not go out to the world in search of God because God resides within his body and he attains liberation by realizing his own divine nature.   The divine is an embodiment of the union of male and female elements, known as Śiva and Śakti respectively. By means of yoga, the practitioner becomes *civam* himself.

Yoga is premised on the notion that dualities are transcended in sexual intercourse without emission. In the Caṅkam literature, it is *aṉpu* that constitutes the basis of sexual union. Hence, *aṉpu* is a more appropriate notion than *bhakti* to be employed in connection with yoga. Besides, *aṉpu* is spontaneous whereas *bhakti* is taught.   *Aṉpu* is personal whereas *bhakti* is impersonal.   In *bhakti* the deity and devotee are in a hierarchical relationship.   In *aṉpu* that leads to sexual union, compatibility of the partners is emphasized. *Tirumantiram* declares that those who follow the path of *bhakti*, based on duality of worshipper and the worshipped, would not be in a position to appreciate the signification of the text, *Tirumantiram*. [315]   The next chapter is concerned with another strategy of indigenizing the yogic tradition- use of connotative language distinctive to Tamil literary culture.

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[312] pattiyum nātaṉ aruḷiṟ payilumē (TM 157.5)
[313] TM 101.
[314] TM 2649.
[315] muttikkirunta muṉivarum tēvarum
   ittutaṉ vēṟā iruntu tuti ceyyum
   pattimaiyāl ip payaṉ aṟiyārē (TM 98:2-4)

CHAPTER FOUR

LIVING LIBERATION AND CONNOTATIVE LANGUAGE

The objective of this chapter is to bolster the previously made argument that the

Tirumantiram displays a body-centered tradition that is distinct from both the temple-

based ritual tradition enshrined in Sanskrit *āgamas* and the pilgrimage-based bhakti

tradition celebrated in Tēvāram. The core teachings of the text reflect the fundamental

belief that male semen epitomizes the divine presence in the human body. Such a belief

necessitates the retention of semen through the practice of yoga as the means to

immortality and freedom.   This explains why extraneous religious practices are

disparaged in the text.[1] The text resorts to a symbolic and profoundly enigmatic mode of

language to disseminate living liberation, its central teaching, which is fundamentally a

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[1] "Extraneous religious practices" may be defined as those which, in the opinion of the *Tirumantiram*, are
not conducive to finding God, immanent in the human body. I give below a few examples:
(a) pilgrimage (*tīrtha):*
Within the mind [body] are many holy waters
They do not take a dip in them to destroy karma
They wander about the hill and the plain
They are misinformed men of perplexed mind. (TM 509).
There is no point
in circumambulating the earth
girded by roaring ocean
With feet sore by walking   (TM 707:1-2).
They wander everywhere in the country looking for him.
[But] they do not perceive the fact that he is indwelling within the body (TM 2550/ 2071 3-4).
The dumb despises the body as impure
See! [They] remember [go about seeking] something else as a holy shrine.
malam enru uṭampai matiyāta ūmar
talam enru vēru tarittamai kaṇṭīr (TM 2137)
(b) Wearing external insignia: Brahmans are condemned for wearing the sacred thread and tuft without
possessing true knowledge (TM 230). Those who pretend to be *jñānis* by donning the sacred thread and
matted locks are condemned (TM 240-242, TM 1665, TM 1668-69)
(c) Ritualistic practices of left-handed *tāntrika*s : Sexual intercourse and consumption of intoxicating drinks
and meat are despised (TM 326- 330, TM 332, TM 1452).
(d) Observance of purity (TM 2551-2552).
(e) Penance unaccompanied by yoga (TM 2565, TM 1568).
(f) Reading scriptures, gathering flowers, performing worship without love for God (TM 1506).
(g) Reciting *stotras* without comprehending their true meaning. (TM 33).

transformation of consciousness through "the transformation of sexuality."[2]   The downward flow of the semen has to be reversed and sent upwards for the self to transition into a higher plane of consciousness. It should be noted that the practice of retaining semen constitutes an integral part of the *kuṇḍalinī* yoga this Chapter is concerned with. The passage quoted below explains the role played by *kuṇḍalinī* in attaining immortality: In her sleeping state, she is associated with death as vital energy is drained away. When she is awake, activities of the *iḍā* and *piṅgalā,* that are connected to the markers of the passage of time, i.e. the Sun and moon, cease to exist and the *suṣumṇā nāḍi* opens up. The semen is raised to the *sahasrāra* along the channel of *suṣumṇā;* consequently, immortality is attained.

> …the kuṇḍalinī, when she sleeps, is identified with kālāgni, the fire of time that cooks all creatures to death, through the aging process. ….. the fire of yoga (yogāgni) that destroys the fire of time, is identified as kālāgnirudra, the "Rudra of the Fire of Time," that is, a fire which is greater than, which consumes, the fire of time.   When she sleeps, the kuṇḍalinī is associated with the fire of time, a time whose passage is marked by the movements of sun and moon in the subtle body; when she awakens, sun and moon (here the iḍā and piṅgalā nāḍis) are immobilized, and the kuṇḍalinī, doubling as the suṣumṇā nāḍi, is said to "consume time." …..when the kuṇḍalinī rises, she also siphons upwards the semen that had previously remained inert and subject to loss in the yogi's abdomen….. what happens when the kuṇḍalinī rises? A "column" of ambrosial semen is raised, via the suṣumṇā nāḍi to flood the cranial vault.[3]

Two kinds of language are employed for the exposition of fundamentals of yoga in the text: technical language and connotative language. The connotative language, mostly dominated by colloquial expressions and by images of man and nature drawn from the rural life of the Tamil country contrasts sharply with the technical language whose vocabulary is borrowed from Sanskrit tantric texts. This chapter is concerned with the connotative language, which is comparable to *Sandhābhāṣā*[4] found in Tantric

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[2] Gopi Krishna, *Kuṇḍalinī:The Evolutionary Energy in Man* (Berkeley: Shambhala Publications, 1971),98.
[3] *The Alchemical Body* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996), 232-233.
[4] *Sandhā* is an abbreviated form *sandhāy*a, a gerund formed by a verb dhā prefixed by s*aṃ*. Agehananda Bharati notes that though *sandhā* is more prevalent than *sandhāya*, the latter occurs in important passages.

literature. Sandhābhāṣā[5], translated as intentional language, is defined as "the language literally and apparently meaning one thing, but aiming at a deeper meaning hidden behind."[6] For instance, in *sandhā* terminology*, vajra* (thunderbolt) and *padma* (lotus) represent the phallus and the vulva respectively. It is difficult to find an appropriate Tamil term to describe the esoteric language of the Tirumantiram. The text's highly symbolical and metaphorical language may be called *kuṟiyīṭṭu moḻi*[7] in Tamil, though it is not an ideal one. The term *kuṟi*[8] in this expression means symbol. The description of the symbolic language by Will Coleman is applicable to *kuṟiyīṭṭu moḻi*:

> Linguistically, it seems to be a system, for lack of a better expression, of picture words and imagistic metaphors. And finally, all symbolic language says something other than what it seems to- that is, it is polyphonic (Bakhtin) or poly voiced. The symbol itself has the semantic structure of an immediate or apparent sense, a material, physical sense that also intends an existential one, one that is deeper and therefore non-verbal. Furthermore symbolic language says more than what it says, something other than what it says, and consequently, grasps the individual because it has created new meaning in its expression or articulation, multidimensionally speaking."[9]

In this chapter, the term connotative language refers to both *sandhābhāṣā* of the Tantras and *kuṟiyīṭṭu moḻi* of the Tirumantiram. The connotative language of the Tirumantiram is not monolithic and homogeneous. The text makes use of several literary

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He also points out that the shortened form *sandhā* could be explained in terms of a certain linguistic pattern in Pali in which the final letter is dropped: e.g. abhiñña, abhiññāya (Skt.abhijñāya). See *The Tantric Tradition* (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, Publishers, 1965), 168, 181-182.

[5] The language used by esoteric *āgamas* is known as *sandhābhāṣā* or *sandhyābhāṣā*. The term *sandhyābhāṣā* was proposed by Haraprasad Shastri in 1916 to denote the language in which the songs of the Buddhist Caryāpadas and Dohas are composed. *Sandhyābhāṣā.* is interpreted as twilight language meaning semi-concealed and semi- revealed. However, M.M Vidhusekhara Sastri contends that the correct term is sandhābhāṣā or intentional language: *Sandhābhāṣā* is also translated as "enigmatic language", "mystery" and "hidden sayings." S. Dasgupta, *Obscure Religious Cults* (Calcutta: Firma K.L. Mukhopadhyay, 1969,3d ed.), 413.

[6] S. Dasgupta, *Obscure Religious Cults,* 413.

[7] The language of the siddhas is referred to as *kuṟiyīṭṭu moḻi*. See T.N. Ganapathy, *cittarkaḷiṉ kuṟiyīṭṭu moḻiyum tirumūlariṉ cūṇiya campāṣaṇaiyum (*Chennai: Ravi Publications, 2006).

[8] The male or female generative organ is also denoted by *kuṟi*. Upward ascension of the sperm is referred to by the expression *kuṟivaḻi ceṉṟu* (TM 2848:3).

[9] *Tribal Talk* (Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000), 158.

devices including symbols, extended metaphor, and double entendre to treat esoteric themes.

The chapter is based on the presumed notion that connotative language is a vehicle of esoteric knowledge. Defining esoteric knowledge is beset with several difficulties. Though secrecy and initiation do play a part in defining esoteric knowledge, they represent only one end of the continuum, that representing the distribution of knowledge. The actual production of esoteric knowledge is mostly overlooked. In this chapter, I define esoteric knowledge as self-knowledge derived from both one's own spiritual experience and from interaction with a guru. The first part of the chapter deals with the claim made by the text that self-knowledge is higher than revealed knowledge. The second part looks at the reasons for the emergence of connotative language. From the perspective of a preceptor, esoteric knowledge could be imparted only to those worthy students who are initiated into the tradition and hence, it may be asserted that connotative language is meant for the initiated alone. Yet, from the perspective of disciples or practitioners, connotative language serves as both a mnemonic apparatus and also a medium to express those experiences that surpass words. Besides, if we assume that choice of a particular mode of language is socially meaningful and significant, the connotative language of the Tirumantiram reflects a desire to contest and subvert the existing social order of the society. The final section deals with the theme of sublimation of semen, fundamental to living liberation. Firstly, I explain how myths are exploited to convey principles of yoga by making use of the technique of double entendres. I point out that the overt and hidden meanings of select mythological verses are incompatible. Secondly, I demonstrate how the theme of sublimation of semen is expressed through

three symbols -milk, snake, and fruit – and through extended metaphor that involves agriculture. This section ends with a discussion on the symbolism of the dance of Śiva.

I

Esoteric Knowledge and the Tirumantiram

The term esoteric is used to describe tantric cults in Hinduism. For instance, Peter Hees states "Given the number and diversity of Hindu tantric texts, one is obliged to speak not of a single system but of many different ones……The chief purpose of all tantras is to present the rituals of esoteric cults, which are said to be more effective than the rituals of the Veda, particularly in this present, debased age."[10] Nonetheless, Alexis Sanderson points out that not all tantric cults are esoteric. Of the two major tantric paths, Atimārga that excludes Goddess worship is meant for ascetics alone. In Mantra mārga, which is followed by both ascetics and householders, the hierarchy of various cults is determined according to the degree of proximity in which each of them stands in relation to the concept of Śakti, because goddess-centered traditions offer "a more powerful, more esoteric system of ritual (tantra) through further initiation (dīkṣā)." [11] The less removed a tradition is from the concept of Śakti, the more esoteric it is. According to this principle, tantras dealing with Kālī are more esoteric than those of Siddhānta. The Siddhānta tantras (ten Śivāgamas and eighteen Rudrāgamas), that are concerned with the cult of Sadaśiva or Linga, are seen as exoteric revelations, whereas Bhairava tantras connected to various manifestations of the Goddess, Tumburu cult, Bhairava cult etc, are reckoned as esoteric revelations. Factors that contribute to the Śaiva Siddhānta being reckoned

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[10] Peter Hees (ed.), *Indian Religions: A Historical Reader of Spiritual Expression and Experience* (London : Hurst, 2002), 193-94.

[11] "Śaivism and the Tantric Traditions" in *The World's Religions,* ed. Stewart Sutherland, Leslie Houlden, Peter Clarke and Friedhelm Hardy (London: Routledge, 1988),669.

as exoteric revelation include the subordinate position occupied by feminine power, and the absence of rituals that make use of impure substances such as blood, meat and alcohol.[12]

However, the term esoteric is used in relation to the Tirumantiram, connoting incomprehensibility and vagueness of the text. Judith Martin argues in her Ph.D thesis that "certain portions of the manual dealing with advance techniques in tantric yoga are deliberately written in guarded esoteric language and consequently, remain largely unintelligible to the uninitiated."[13] She states that "such opaqueness, however, is not characteristic of the work as a whole"[14] and only less than 10 percent of verses contribute to the ambiguity of the text. Since the Tirumantiram was composed in the Tamil language and made use of the idiom of the masses, she concludes that "the Tirumantiram was an intelligible document of considerable social relevance, not an elite atemporal manual of esoteric instruction."[15] The notion of intelligibility of the text is vital to Martin's argument that the text emerged as a book of popular instruction with a vision to reconciling Vedic, āgamic and bhakti cults through the use of myths.

The understanding of the adjective 'esoteric' merely as abstruse or obscure is, however, misleading. The term is derived from the Greek word esô (or esôterikós), meaning the inner, and is first encountered in a satire by Lucian of Samosata of the second century C.E., whereas its antithesis exoteric was already present in ancient Greek philosophy.[16] However, the term esotericism came into vogue only in the early part of

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[12] Ibid. 668.
[13] *The Function of Mythic Figures in Tirumantiram,* 25.
[14] Ibid., 126.
[15] Ibid., 129.
[16] Kocku von Stuckrad, "Western Esotericism: Towards an integrative model of interpretation" in *Religion* 35 (2005), 80.

the nineteenth century. "Scholars described the esoteric as a kind of subculture, as a tradition that had formulated alternatives to the Christian mainstream from the renaissance onwards. Like 'Gnosis' and mysticism-in fact terms often used synonymously in earlier scholarship for what today is discussed as esotericism – esoteric currents were regarded as having been suppressed as heretical by orthodox Christianity."[17]

In this chapter I argue that the term esoteric is intimately connected to the notions of higher knowledge, secrecy, symbolism and subversion in the sense of "destroying and reinventing language."[18] (The social significance of this aspect is dealt with in Section two.) This section deals with "self-knowledge" and contends that self-knowledge constitutes esoteric knowledge which is privileged over revealed knowledge or exoteric knowledge in the text. As explained in the first chapter, the Tirumantiram discusses two types of religious instruction and provides us with a clue as to how to distinguish the esoteric from the exoteric. To shed light on how a work may contain both esoteric and exoteric teachings, Sanderson explains that an esoteric text might incorporate exoteric teachings, but an exoteric work cannot include esoteric teachings, as esoteric teachings are deemed higher than exoteric ones. In verse 90, Tirumūlar asserts that he has explained in detail the theological concepts that are the fundamental precepts of Śaiva Siddhānta (exoteric teachings).

> I have explained in full what is to be known,
> Knowledge [that facilitates that understanding) and the knower,
> Māyai, parai āyam that arises from māmāyai,
> Śiva and akōcara vīyam[19]

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[17] Ibid.

[18] Mircea Eliade, *Yoga: Immortality and Freedom,* 251.

[19] ñēyattai ñāṉattai ñāturu vattiṉai
  māyattai māmāyai taṉṉil varumparai
  āyattai accivaṉ taṉṉai akōcara

In contrast, the expressions-*mantiram* (*mantra*) and *maṟai* or *maṟaipporuḷ* (esoteric knowledge or esoteric substance)-occurring in verse 85 are suggestive of the esoteric nature of the teachings related to living liberation:.

> May the world attain the bliss I experienced
> Let me speak of esoteric knowledge that leads to heaven/ambrosia
> If one steadfastly clings to [or practise repeatedly]
> The mantra,[20] tied to the consciousness of the body
> It would slowly emerge.[21]

The above two verses represent two types of knowledge the text is concerned with: propositional or revealed knowledge, and personal or empirical knowledge. The Śaiva Siddhānta concepts referred to in verse 90 could be traced to *jñāna pāda* of *Śaivāgamas* which embodies the knowledge revealed by Śiva to humanity.[22] It is dubbed *tattuvañāṉam*[23] (*tattvajñāna)*. However, revealed knowledge in Sanskrit remained little

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vīyattai muṟṟum viḷakkiyiṭṭēṉē (TM 90)

[20] One might be tempted to identify mantra with intentional language since both are considered secret instructions and remain inscrutable to an ordinary reader. Agehananda Bharati agrees that intentional language may be taken "as a specialized extension of mantric language." He cautions, however, that it is not identical with mantric language. A wrongful identification of intentional language with mantra might have arisen "from the fact of outward analogy: both mantra and *sandhābhāṣā* are cryptic, clandestine utterances, unintelligible to the non-initiate. On a more sophisticated level, the confusion could have arisen from the enormous amount of instructions and directions about the correct formation of mantras, which fill all tantric texts. Such secondary instruction is frequently couched in *sandhā* terms and works as a sort of mantric meta-language." See *The Tantric Tradition,* 164,101-102.

[21] yāṉpeṟṟa iṉpam peṟuka iv vaiyakam
vāṉparri niṉṟa *maṟai*pporuḷ colliṭiṉ
ūṉparri niṉṟa uṇarvuṟu mantiram
tāṉparrap paṟṟat talaippaṭuntāṉē (TM 85)

[22] aṇṇal aṟaintta aṟivu (TM 64:3).

[23] tattuva ñāṉam uraittatu tāḷvarai (TM 98:1).

However, the meaning of *tattuvañāṉam* is modified in the text in Tantras three, eight and nine. According to Varatarājaṉ, *tattuvañāṉam* denotes true knowledge derived from the practice of *khecarī yoga*. His commentary on verse 816 runs thus: "When the creeper-like *kuṇḍalinī śakti* that confers *kāmajaya* (winning of desires) stays happy in ethereal space conjoined with *civam*, then true knowledge that leads to the attainment of *aṣṭhasiddhi*s would blossom. Śiva whose form is knowledge exists in knowledge together with cit- Śakti (The *kuṇḍalinī śakti* takes the name of cit- Śakti as it completes its upward movement in sahasrāra)." Tattuvañāṉam denotes the knowledge of *tattvas* as well as true knowledge in verse 2330. Varatarājaṉ states, "*Tattuvañāṉam* [true knowledge] dawns on those who lead their lives with the goal of possessing the knowledge of thirty-six *tattvas* and the manner of their functioning. The soul that attains *tattuvañāṉam* [true knowledge] becomes *civam* and *tattuvañāṉam* [true knowledge] leads to the state of *Śivānanda.*" The term *tattuvañāṉikaḷ* may be interpreted as those who possess *tattuvañāṉam* or those who have self-knowledge: taṉṉai aṟintitum tattuva ñāṉikaḷ (TM 2611:1).

understood by the Tamil populace for several reasons including restrictions imposed on its learning by non-Braḥmans.

In contrast, verse 85 speaks of empirical knowledge to realize the one hidden in the body. This knowledge is called *taṉṉaṟivu*[24] (self-knowledge) that can be accessed both by mediation and by individual experience. Self–knowledge does not result from scriptural study, but from inward scrutiny and reflection of the self, as well as from the intervention of Guru.[25] The fact that it is celebrated in the text as liberating knowledge implies that it is higher than revealed knowledge.

> If one knows himself, no harm befalls
> He perishes without knowing himself
> When he attains the knowledge of knowing himself
> He remains [as knowledge or *civam*] being worshipped [by others][26]

Self-knowledge is also referred to as *Śivajñāna* (*civañāṉam*) which is explained as *civamāṉa ñāṉam* in verse 1587, which may be interpreted as '*civam* itself is knowledge'. The physical body is indispensable to attaining *Śivajñāna*,[27] which is also known as *meyññāṉam* (true knowledge).[28] The one who possesses *Śivajñāna* is called a *Siddha*,[29] *aṭiyār* (slave),[30] *Śivajñāni*,[31] *mōṉattaṉ* (the silent)[32] and *muttaṉ* (the liberated).[33]

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[24] TM 2224:2.
[25] akamukam āyntta aṟivu (TM 2654:4).
[26] TM 2355.
[27] uṭampār aḻiyil uyirār aḻivar
   tiṭampaṭa meyññāṉañ cēravu māṭṭār (TM 724:1-2).
[28] *Jñāna* is of two types : true *jñāna* and false *jñāna*. True *jñāna* can be subjected to critical scrutiny whereas false *jñāna* cannot. Only *śivajñāni* is the true *jñāni* and others are imposters who should be punished by the king (TM 242).
[29] cittar civañāṉam ceṉṟeytuvōrkaḷē (TM 1446:1).
[30] The term *aṭiyār* generally means devotees. However, the Tirumantiram reinterprets *aṭiyār* as those who possess *śivajñāna*: aṭiyār civañāṉamāvatu peṟṟōr (TM 1672:3).
[31] ñāṉattiṉār pata naṉṉum civañāṉi (TM 1674:1).
[32] TM 1674:3.
[33] TM 1674:3.

Śivajñāna,[34] is conferred by a guru who is a *sivajñāni* himself, without whom liberation is unattainable and remote.[35] Tirumūlar fondly refers to his guru as "our Nandi" (*eṅkaḷ nanti*) when he is first introduced in the text,[36] and states that he attained true knowledge through the grace of his guru,[37] who is eulogized as chief of knowledge.[38] Nandi is credited with inaugurating a new path to liberation (known as *caṉmārkkam*, *kuruneṟi* and *teyvac-civaneṟi).*[39]

Mediation by the Guru is essential in order for the disciple to have access to true knowledge, as the latter is afflicted with impurities, especially with ignorance. The only difference between the soul and God is that the former is enveloped in ignorance whereas God is omniscient.[40] As the Sanskrit term Ātman in the Upaniṣads denotes both the supreme entity and the soul, the Tamil term *aṟivu* represents both God and the soul, highlighting the fact that both are not fundamentally dissimilar in character. In other words, in the highest state of consciousness, the subject (*jñātṛ,* the soul) identifies itself with the object of knowledge (*jñeya,* i.e. Śiva), and knowledge *(jñāna).*[41] Guru is the one who invests the disciple with the knowledge that enables the latter to realize his own true nature and become *civam*.

> I knew not that my form is knowledge
> Nandi taught by his grace that my form is knowledge
> When I knew through his grace my form as knowledge
> I experienced the form of knowledge.
> [I became knowledge itself][42]

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[34] kaṟṟum civañāṉamillāk kalatikaḷ (TM 318:1).
[35] TM 2937.
[36] nava ākamam eṅkaḷ nanti peṟṟāṉē (TM 62:4).
[37] nanti aruḷāl meyññāṉattuḷ naṉṉiṉēṉ (92:3).
[38] nantiyai entaiyai ñāṉat talaivaṉai (TM 2801:1).
[39] TM 1478.
[40] aṟivu iraṇṭum oṉṟākum (TM 892:1).
[41] ñēyattai ñāṉattai ñāturuvattiṉai (TM 90:1).
[42] TM 2357.

Mediation and individual experience are complementary means to the attainment of knowledge. Whereas yoga represents individual experience, the guru stands for mediation. Hence, we find statements in the text to the effect that yoga leads to *jñāna*[43] and that *jñāna* is conferred by Guru. Verse 2346 uses a metaphor that compares Śivajñāna (self-knowledge) to a horse. The commentator explains that *Śivajñāna* itself is *kuṇḍalinī*, thus he points to the close connection between yoga and *jñāna*.[44] *Śivajñāna* is the root of immortality and bliss. Unlike propositional knowledge, self-knowledge that is based on personal experience, is subjective, and expresses itself in vernacular tongues. Tirumūlar, having been initiated by Nandi and attained eternal bliss through self-knowledge[45] decided to share his experience with his fellow-beings in Tamil.[46]

It was briefly noted that the Tirumantiram discusses two types of knowledge: revealed knowledge contained in the Āgamas and self-knowledge known as *Śivajñāna* that alone liberates the souls. Self-knowledge is attained through the practice of yoga and through the intervention of Guru who is Śiva himself. Self-knowledge which is experiential knowledge is regarded higher than propositional knowledge found in the revealed texts. Self-knowledge is also associated with the notions of secrecy, subversion and symbolism which are examined in subsequent sections.

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[43] nanneri celvārkku ñānattilēkalām (TM 551:3) ;TM 320.
[44] civañāna māviṇait tāṇ ēr it tāṇṭic civanuṭan cāralumāmē (TM 2346:3-4).
[45] ennai ariyalurru inpurravārē (TM 2288:4).
[46] ennai nanrāka iraivan paṭaittanan
   tannai nanrākat tamil ceyyumārē (TM 81:3-4)

II

Secrecy and Subversion

The term *maṟai*, as a verb means to hide or conceal, and as a noun denotes the Vedas (the etymological meaning of Veda is knowledge), the hidden, hence, the secret.[47] The Upaniṣads are also considered esoteric texts, referred to as *arumaṟai antam*,[48] or *eḻutā maṟai yīṟu*.[49]   The text's use of the term *maṟai* to indicate the Vedas suggests that the Brahmanical religious scriptures were confined to particular *varṇas*, and that access to these sacred revelations was restricted to inhabitants of the Tamil country, identified with members of the *śūdra varṇa.* The *āgamas* are also signified by the term *maṟai* in the Tirumantiram: *cittānta māmaṟai*.[50] Śivabrahmans who had the privilege of studying the *āgamas* are denoted by the term maṟaiyavar.[51] Thus, the use of the term *maṟai* was confined to revealed knowledge, which was the exclusive property of Brahmans, and Śivabrahmans in the case of the *āgamas*.

The text, however, redefines the term *maṟai* as self-knowledge characterised by mediation and experience. In Tantra three dealing with yoga, the text advises the student not to reveal the secrets of his training:

> Unless one perseveres in the due manner as instructed [by the Guru]
> It is impossible for anyone to become God.
> Self-knowledge (*maṟai*) is the sole ground, none other than that
> Accomplish in meekness without trumpeting [52]

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[47] nāṉ *maṟai* (TM 1148:1); paṉṉu *maṟai*kaḷ (2005:2); peru*maṟai* (TM 2546:3) *maṟai* (2789:3).
[48] TM 234:1.
[49] TM 1426:3; TM 2358.
The term Vedānta meaning the upaniṣads is literally translated as *maṟai* īṟu (the end of the Vedas) in the text (TM 2358).
[50] … cittānta mā*maṟai*yāyp poruḷ
  tuṉṉiya ākama nūleṉat tōṉṟumē (TM 2403:3-4).
[51] *maṟaiyavar* arccaṉai vaṇpaṭikantāṉ (TM 1721:10).
[52] muṟaimuṟai āyntu muyaṉṟila rākil
  iṟaiyiṟai yārkkum irukka aritu
  *maṟai*yatu kāraṇam maṟṟoṉṟu millai
  paṟaiyaṟaiyātu paṇintu muṭiyē (TM 748).

The text also interprets *maṟaiyava*r or *maṟaiyōr*[53] denoting Brahmans, as Siddhas who have attained *turīya samādhi* by following the path of guru.

> The pure *maṟaiyavar* are those
> By means of the supreme *gurumārga*,
> Resorting to the refuge of guru
> Transcending cit and acit (polarities)
> And abandoning religious rites and injunctions
> Attains turīya *samādh*i. (TM 232)

These concepts seem to have been revised during a period in which Tamil tantric practitioners resented brahmanical dominance in the socio-religious sphere of the country.[54]

The reasons for the text's use of connotative language, though nowhere expressly stated in the text, can be accounted for. The fact that self-knowledge is denoted by the term *maṟai* suggests that it is deemed esoteric. One could reasonably assume that, similar to its counterpart esoteric tantras in Sanskrit, the text is meant for the initiated alone. The very purpose of the text is to disseminate the means of achieving blissful liberation while alive. This knowledge is accessible to all irrespective of *varṇa* and caste distinctions, but

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[53] These terms maṟaiyavar or *maṟaiyōr* refer to Brahmans in general.
[54] Verse 229 depicts Brahmans as innately avaricious or materialistic. The term *vēṭkai* used to describe their materialistic inclination, is connected to the act of gobbling food rapidly without sharing with others.

O the greedy! Do not hasten to eat [your] food!
 Know the eating time of the crow during which
 it calls out to other crows [to share the food]
 vēṭkai uṭaiyīr viraintu ollai uṇṇaṉmiṉ
 kākkai karainttu uṇṇum kālam aṟimiṉē (TM 250:3-4).

 The rapt focus on satisfying sensual needs stands in the way of ascertaining the truth (vēṭkai mikuttatu meykoḷvār iṅkillai TM 175:1). The text prescribes the study of Vedānta for the dissolution of worldly desire. Those who have truly understood Vedānta abandon desire. Yet, Brahmans, even after the study of Vedānta, are enveloped in desire, a trait the text attributes to their hypocritical leaning.

vētāntam kēṭka virumpiya vētiyar
vētāntaṅ kēṭṭum vēṭkai oḻittilar
vētāntamāvatu vēṭkai oḻinttiṭam
vētāntam kēṭṭavar vēṭkai viṭṭārē (TM 229)

with initiation. A graded initiatory system is set forth in Tantra five. Followers of *caryā*, *kriyā*, *yoga* and *jñāna* should undergo *samaya dīkṣā*, *viśeṣa dīkṣā*, *nirvāṇa dīkṣā* and *abhiṣeka* respectively.[55] The text lays an injunction on the disciple not to share his knowledge with unauthorized people, blatantly telling him not to trumpet his knowledge ("*paṟai aṟaiyātu*," TM 748). The *paṟai* is a percussion instrument associated with funerals in the second Tantra.[56] Hence, the use of *paṟai* in connection with the teachings of yoga might be taken to suggest that disclosure of esoteric practices brings upon the revealer misfortune and misery. This also emphasizes the fact that one needs to receive knowledge from the preceptor alone.

Furthermore, the text admits the inadequacy of verbal language to describe "the intuitions and perceptions that often lie beyond consciousness."[57] Verse 2944 speaks about the eye of the body and the eye of the mind. True knowledge emanates from perceptive experiences of the mental eye, whereas the physical eye is related to the superficial survey of the material world, the conclusions of which are bound to be unreliable. While language is the medium of expressing the mundane world as experienced by the physical eye, the experience of the inward-looking mental eye defies words. The union of the soul with Śiva, homologized to the union between a man and a woman, cannot be adequately expressed as this experience can only be grasped by the mind.

> O fools who [only] see [things] with eyes on the face (fleshy eyes)
> Bliss is to see with the eye of the mind (inner eye)
> If a mother is asked to tell her daughter
> the pleasure derived from the union with her husband
> How (in what terms) would she describe it?[58]

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[55] TM 1450.
[56] TM 153.
[57] Edward C. Dimock, *The Place of the Hidden Moon, 4.*
[58] mukattiṟ kaṇkoṇṭu kāṇkiṉṟa mūṭarkāḷ

Thirdly, connotative language was possibly used to serve as a mnemonic device in the text. For instance, *prāṇāyāma* is described in the text using animal symbolism:

> iraṇṭu kaṭāvuṇṭu ivvūri ṉuḷḷē
> iraṇṭu kaṭāvukkum oṉṟē toḻumpaṉ
> iraṇṭu kaṭāvum iruttip piṭikkil
> iraṇṭu kaṭāvum oru kaṭā vāmē (2889)

> Two rams are in this hamlet [body]
> Only one slave the two rams have
> If the two rams could be controlled [and merged]
> One ram would they become.

In the above verse, the two rams denote *iḍā* and *piṅgalā nādis* or *pūraka* and *recaka*. The hamlet and the slave stand for the body and the soul respectively. Regulating the breath is the key to restraining the activities of the mind. Inhalation is called *pūraka* and exhalation is called *recaka*. Since the transcendence of dualities is the object of yoga, both *pūraka* and *recaka* merge in *kumbhaka*. In other words, *iḍā* through which breath is inhaled and piṅgalā through which breath is exhaled unite to form a central *nādi* called *suṣumnā*.[59] The unification of nādis should be understood in terms of the larger yogic goal of the transcendence of dualities in order to find a middle path.[60]

Agehananda Bharati cites an example from a Buddhist *tantra* to illuminate the use of connotative language as a mnemonic device. He notes that several Buddhist tantras

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akattiṟ kaṇkoṇṭu kāṇpatē āṉantam
makaṭkut tāytaṉ maṉāḻaṉōṭu āṭiya
cukattaic col eṉṟāl collumāṟu eṅṅaṉē (TM 2944)
[59] Ellen Goldberg, *The Lord who is half woman,* 79.
[60] Goldberg observes, "bipolar pairs as *prakṛti* and *puruṣa*, *iḍā* and *piṅgalā*, sun (*sūrya*) and moon (*candra*), *prāṇa* and *apāna*, guru (*nātha*) and disciple (*chela*), inhalation (*pūraka*) and exhalation (*recaka*), left (*vāma*) and right (*dakṣiṇa*), northern and southern, and so on, all based on the conventional, underlying, hierarchical gender paradigm of masculine and feminine. ….In a more extended sense, we also encounter triads in yoga tradition in so far as the members of the aforementioned pairs unite to form a third unified field. When the dyadic homologues become unified (emptied of duality), then and only then can Śakti ascend through the medial channel of the subtle body (*suṣumnā*) to unite (yoga) with Śiva and to attain emancipation. As mentioned previously, it is in this sense that the *suṣumnā* or central channel (middle way) is not a separate *nādi* but rather the union of the *iḍā* and *piṅgalā*." (See *The Lord who is half woman,*78-79).

begin with a statement that "once upon a time the Lord of all *Tathāgatas* was dwelling in the vulvae of the *vajra-* woman." The translation of the commentary runs thus: "..the intuitive knowledge is the *vajra*-woman due to its nature as undivided wisdom (*prajñā…*) and "vulva" is (used on account of its) destroying all afflictions (*kleśa*..)."[61] He therefore, concludes that it is easier to remember the teaching couched in sexual terms, representative of typical *sandhā*-diction.[62] In contrast, the Tirumantiram uses non-sexual symbols to convey sexual themes, as will be seen in the next section.

Evidence is also available to show that the connotative language of the Tirumantiram was partly the result of an attempt to mask sexual aspects of the Śaiva yogic cult. Several verses found in *cūṉiya campāṣaṉai* are concerned with the sexual potency of a yogic practitioner. For instance, the ram mentioned in the verse quoted above is recognized as a universal symbol of male sexual potency and phallic deities.[63] This subject is dealt with in detail in the next section.

Finally, connotative language is connected to the subversion of normative values of the society. Conventional poetry subjects itself to rules of language and produces meanings in consonance with a dominant system of values. Thus it reflects the symbolic order underlying the socio-economic system in which it takes shape. On the other hand, symbolic and metaphorical poetry is not bound by 'common-sense' rules of the language and in almost every case attempts to undo the meaning traditionally ascribed to words. This type of poetry is often courted by people, marginalized by influential sections of the society and, in a way, reveals their unconscious will to subvert the symbolic order of the

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[61] *The Tantric Tradition,* 170.
[62] Ibid.
[63] Hope B. Werness*, The Continuum Encyclopaedia of Animal Symbolism in Art* (New York*,
: Continuum, 2004),341.

orthodox society. As far as the Tirumantiram is concerned, it may be said that it aims at the transformation of society through the transformation of sexual practices that ultimately lead to transcendence of polarities.[64]

Several examples can be furnished to show that the text has rejected the fundamental values of Vedic culture. The text does not endorse the *varṇa* system introduced by the Brahmans. It maintains that one is not born a Brahman and that a Brahman should not be identified on the basis of the distinctive hereditary insignia of wearing a sacred thread and having a tuft of hair.[65] It thus negates or trivializes the significance attached to the sacred Vedic *upanayana* ritual, only after which one is considered a full Brahman and entitled to wear the insignia.[66] The text also condemns the performance of temple ritual by one who is a *pārppāṉ* only by name and warns of drastic consequences that would result from it, such as deadly wars, epidemic and famine.[67] The text insists that only the possession of certain qualities makes one a Brahman and places stress on attributes rather than on birth and deed. Brahmans are portrayed as lacking in qualities critical to performing their functions and are called *pittēṟum mūṭar* (demented fools).

> [They] are not truthful, lack in singular wisdom
> [They] are without self-restraint [they wander off from the fit objects of senses]
> They want in scrutinizing consciousness
> [they] are not pious; they do not grasp the truth supreme

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[64] See Toril Moi, *Sexual/textual politics :Feminist Literary Theory* (London: Methuen, 1985), 11. In this she summarizes the argument made by Kriesteva about symbolic order and modern symbolic poetry.
[65] nūlum cikaiyum nuvaliṟ piramamō (TM 230:1)
[66] nūlatu kārppācam nuṇcikai ñāṉamām (TM 230:2)
   The thread is but cotton and the tuft is but hair.
   Instead, the Vedanta and jñana are recognized as the sacred thread and the tuft of hair respectively.
   nūlatu vētāntam nuṇcikai ñāṉamām (TM 230:3)
[67] pērkoṇṭa pārppāṉ pirāṉ taṉṉai arccittāl
   pōr koṇṭa nāṭṭukkup pollā viyātiyām
   pār koṇṭa nāṭṭukkup pañcamumām (TM 519:1-3)

Insane simpletons are verily the Brahmans [68]

The major concepts relating to Brahmanical ideology have been revised by the text. As we noted in this section earlier the term *maṟai*, used to denote the Vedic corpus, is reconsidered as self-knowledge one attains both through the practice of yoga and the grace of a preceptor. Hence, maraiyor are those who have reached the highest state called *turīya samādhi* in which ideational and phenomenal polarities melt away. In other words, the term *maṟaiyōr* refers to those who have attained living liberation, *jīvanmuktas*. The Tirumantiram also redefines the notion of fire ritual as one in which a person kindles the fire of *mūlādhāra* in his body by engaging in sexual coitus with his spouse.[69]

The superiority claimed by Brahmans over other *varṇas* or castes on the basis of purity rules are also challenged by the text. Brahmanical fear of pollution stems from two sources: bodily discharges and excrements, and contact with impure substances and persons.[70] The Tirumantiram does not regard bodily fluids, especially the semen, and menstrual blood and vaginal discharges, as impure. The semen is identified as *bindu* and menstrual blood as *nāda*. These two are the purest of all tattvas and the union of them leads to living liberation and a state of eternal bliss. Hence, the text does not agree with the view propagated by Brahmans that some people are purer than others, or that an individual from a high caste would be polluted by coming into contact with a person born of low caste. It argues that since human birth itself is pollution, one cannot entertain fear that another person could pollute him as he or she is already in a state of pollution.

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[68] cattiyam iṉṟit taṉiñāṉantāṉ iṉṟi
   otta viṭaiyam viṭṭu ōrum uṇarvu iṉṟip
   pattiyum iṉṟip paraṉ uṇmai iṉṟip
   pittēṟum mūṭar pirāmaṇar tām aṉṟē. (TM 231)

[69] TM 216.

[70] Patrick Olivelle, "Deconstruction of the body in Indian Asceticism," in Vincent L. Wimbush and Richard Valantasis (ed.), *Asceticism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 190.

> The ignorant say impure, impure
> None knows where impurity lies
> If one knows the locus of impurity
> It is humanity [human birth] that is impure.[71]

Since the concept of physical impurity is absent in the text, the term *ācūcam* occurring in this verse should be interpreted as three types of impurities that afflict the soul: *āṇava, karma, māyā*.

The Brahmanical concern and anxiety about bodily impurity is rooted in the unconscious fear of threats to the social order that privileges the Brahmans. Olivelle observes,

> Especially within the Brāhmaṇical tradition, maintaining the purity of the body was and continues to be a major element of ritual and morality. Mary Douglas (1982) again has argued, convincingly I believe, that anxiety about bodily margins and the pre-occupation with keeping them clean express anxieties about social integrity and concern for maintaining social order. This anxiety and the resultant preoccupation with bodily purity increase with the increase in the perceived threat to the integrity of the social body. [72]

The text not only rejects the purity-impurity paradigm and but also declares, "One the lineage; one the God."[73] Instead of the hierarchical *varṇa* system, the text seems to favour the indigenous classification of the populace into different occupational groups. The fact that self-knowledge is accessible to all is reflected in the representation of the soul as a member of different occupational groups in the text: temple priest,[74] farmer,[75] robber,[76] fowler and fortune-teller,[77] goldsmith,[78] charioteer,[79] warrior[80] and trader.[81]

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[71] ācūcam ācūcam eṉpār aṟivilār
    ācūca māmiṭam ārum aṟikilār
    ācūca māmiṭam ārum aṟintapiṉ
    ācūca māṉiṭam ācūca māmē (TM 2551)
[72] Patrick Olivelle, "Deconstruction of the body in Indian Asceticism," 189.
[73] oṉṟē kulamum oruvaṉē tēvaṉum (TM 2104)
[74] paṉavaṉ (2874), pārppāṉ, (2883)
[75] uḻavu ceyvār (2871)
[76] kaḷḷar (2900)
[77] kuṟavaṉ (2923)
[78] taṭṭāṉ (2876, 2924)

Finally, I end this section on a note on secrecy, which can be defined in two ways. One is privileged information, intelligible to all, but accessible to the initiated alone. The other constitutes of deliberately obfuscated statements or poetry, and uses various literary strategies such as multiple symbolisms, double entendres, and extended metaphors. Though the latter may be accessible to all, as in the case of Tamil Siddha poetry, few are capable of comprehending its meaning. Even among the initiated, it is subjected to various interpretations as noted out by Urban (2001) who studied the esoteric teachings of the *Kartābhajā* sect in Bengal. In this chapter, I focus on both the form and content of secrecy, and propose to uncover the hidden meaning of the Tirumantiram's esoteric verses with the help of technical jargon used in the text and through the study of symbols in vernacular literature. The technical jargon, abundantly used in the text, should be distinguished from the connotative language that speaks with two voices: the surface meaning and the underlying meaning of what is communicated are not identical in connotative language. For instance, *iḍā* and *piṅgalā* and *naṭu nāṭi* (*suṣumnā*), may be cited as instances of technical language. Yet, in connotative language, they are referred to as left hand *(iṭakkai)*, right hand (*valakkai*), and trunk (*tutikkai*)[82], or two intractable rams that need be made into one as shown in verse 2889. Secondly, religious symbolism and metaphors are interpreted on the basis of their use in Tamil culture. For instance, to understand the reference to a lizard occurring in one of the verses of the Tirumantiram in

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[79] pākaṉ (2926)
[80] maṟavaṉ (2927)
[81] vāṇipam ceyvār (2915, 2930, 2935)
[82] iṭakkai valakkai iraṇṭaiyum māṟṟit
tutikkaiyāl uṇpārkkuc cōravum vēṇṭām (TM 801:2)

terms of esoteric knowledge, one is required to appreciate the things (prophetic knowledge, divination) symbolized by lizard in Tamil culture.

<p style="text-align:center">III</p>

<p style="text-align:center">Connotative Language</p>

Living liberation is attainable by sublimating the bindu (Śiva) and uniting it with *nāda* (Śakti). This section begins with an introduction to the theme of sublimation of semen known as *vintucayam* (*bindujaya*) and illustrates how this subject is treated in connotative language. My examples include mythological narratives taken from the second Tantra, symbols and extended metaphor found in *cūṉiya campāṣaṇai* in the ninth Tantra and the dance of Śiva (*kūttu*).

Sexuality lies at the heart of the religious tradition represented by the Tirumantiram. It is not easy to penetrate the exoteric covering of bhakti or the Śaiva Siddhānta theology woven around the esoteric nucleus of sexuality. For instance, in the Tirumantiram published by the Śaiva Siddhānta Press in 1942 (with the commentary by P. Irāmanāta Piḷḷai, and explanatory notes by A. Citamparaṉār), the dilemma about the interpretation of the word *kāyam* (body) is quite palpable. The commentators prefer to see the heart as the abode of God, rather than the corporeal body,[83] and denounce practitioners of kuṇḍalinī as attached to the body.[84] Śiva is declared to be the supreme

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[83] Line 2 in verse 1606 *meykkāyam iṭam kaṇṭāl* is interpreted as follows: meyyākiya uṭampiṉ kaṇ civaperumāṉ uḷḷam peruṅ kōvilākak koḷvōṉ ātaliṉ… See pp. 629-630. A Citamparaṉār explains kāyattu uḷ - uḷḷattiṉuḷḷē on page 807. The heart of the guru is said to be the abode the dwelling of Śiva. (See pp. 1067-68).

[84] The Tirumantiram with the commentary of P. Irāmanāta Piḷḷai, and explanatory notes by A. Citamparaṉār, 122.

deity for all, and people are encouraged to worship him by means of the Tamil Veda, Tēvāram.[85]

The Tirumantiram states that even those who accept the doctrine of immanence of God in the universe, are disinclined to recognize the fact that Śiva is present in the semen.

> Sweet-tasting Nandi stands as cosmic seed
> [They] do not realise that he is present in the human seed
> atuvitti lēniṉṟaṅ kaṇṇikku nanti
>   ituvitti lēyuḷa vāṟṟai uṇarār (TM 1931)

> If only they perceive without confusion
> the seed within the seed
> vittiṉil vittai vitaṟa uṇarvarēl (TM 1946:3)

The text seeks to establish the unity between the one who pervades the universe and the one who exists in human seed, invoking the Upaniṣadic Great statements. "The Divine presence in semen" is to be seen as the fundamental core principle on which the text is built. This constitutes the primary reason for the text to underscore the preservation of the body. As God protects the seven worlds,[86] one needs to cherish the body.[87] In both instances, the Dravidian verb *ōmpu* [88] is used.

The semen is often denoted by the term *poruḷ* in Tantra three, meaning essence, true object or significance. In verse 725, the author explains that the body became the temple of God following his vision of *poruḷ* in the body,[89] which is identified as vintu (bindu) in Tantra Seven.[90] Verses 761 and 762 speak about the wasteful ejaculation of semen.

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[85] elliyum kālaiyum ēttum iṟaivaṉai (TM 280:3) is commented upon as follows: "iravum pakalum yāvarkkum iṟaivaṉām civaperumāṉaic centtamiḻt tirumā*maṟai* vaḻiyākat toḻuṅkaḷ" 123

[86] ōmpukiṉṟāṉ ulaku ēḻaiyum uḷ niṉṟu (TM 2352:1)

[87] uṭampuḷē uttamaṉ kōyil koṇṭāṉ eṉṟu
   uṭampiṉai yāṉiruntu ōmpukiṉ ṟēṉē (TM 725:1-2)

[88] See entry 1056 Ta, in *A Dravidian Etymological Dictionary*.

[89] uṭampiṉukkuḷḷē uṟuporuḷ kaṇṭēṉ TM 725:2).

[90] They do not know the amount of Bindu [thus] destroyed
They do not look into the ways of retaining it within

> Those do not see the substance discharged.
> [but] they could see that substance discharged.
> If they attentively look into the substance discharged
> They could see that imperishable substance (762)

> Those who cannot see speed to ruin
> Those who do not have shame speak rhetorically
> All the substance discharged by those who cannot see
> Go waste without their knowledge (761)

Sexual intercourse in which emission is suspended is hailed as *paryaṅgayoga*.[91] Mingling of *bindu* (white semen) with *nāda* (red female blood) confers longevity and liberation.[92] The ejaculation of semen into the vagina of the woman is described as *veḷḷi urukip poṉvaḻi ōṭutal*[93] or *poṉṉiṭai veḷḷi tāḻtal*.[94] (The slivery liquid - *veḷḷi*-mingles with female blood-*poṉ*.) By coursing the breath through the *suṣumnā nāḍi* while engaged in sexual intercourse, one could amplify and prolong his enjoyment,[95] keep the organ erect and stiff,[96] and raise the semen upward preventing its outward flow into the womb of the female partner.[97]

The act of retaining the semen in the body is called *amuri tāraṇai* (*dhāraṇā*) in the Tirumatiram. Several commentators interpret *amuri* as urine. However, Varatarājaṉ points out that the placement of the section *amuritāraṇai* right after *paryaṅgayoga* suggests that this section is related to male sexual fluid. Besides, urine has no role to play in yoga as expounded by the text. The semen assumes several names in the text such as *kuṭinīr* (845:1), *civaṉīr* (846:1), *civattiṉ nīr* (847:1), *uvari* (848:1), *vīra maruntu*

They who suffer and become fatigued in the perishing body
Do not know the cause of the decay and give it up (1936)

[91] See Tantra III and VII. Even though two bodies mingle, the union without emission enabled by yoga is indeed Śivaboga. (TM 1960:1-2). Those who adopt the path of yoga will not waste their seed in sexual intercourse out of lust for women.(TM 1961:1-2)

[92] TM 1929

[93] TM 834:3

[94] TM 836:3

[95] ūcit tuḷaiyuṟat tūṅkātu pōkamē (TM 825:4)

[96] taṇṭu orukālum taḷarātu aṅkamē (TM 827:4)

[97] cōrvillai veḷḷikkē (TM 833:3) ; turuttiyil veḷḷiyum cērātu eḻumē (TM 837:4)

(850:1), *viṇṇōr maruntu* (850:1*), nāri maruntu* (850:2), *āti maruntu* (850:3), *cōti maruntu* (850:4), *kaṅkai* (712, 809, 832, 1774). One who practices the suspension of emission is endowed with immortality, youthfulness and golden complexion. [98]

I. Mythology:

Śaiva mythology is discussed in Tantra under eight titles,[99] and sporadic references to it are found throughout the text. In the pages following, I discuss three myths: The first myth "Destruction of three cities" is introduced to show the distinction between Tēvāram and the Tirumantiram in handling Śaiva myths. This is followed by a discussion of two myths to illustrate how yogic ideology is conveyed through them.

Sanskrit mythology does not constitute a very prominent literary feature of classical *Caṅkam* works as it does in devotional genre "Tēvāram." In general, myths are used in two ways in *Caṅkam* anthologies. Martin points outs that deities and their deeds are transformed into similes and applied to earthly heroes in verses eulogizing them; or else, they are incorporated into the descriptions of places of the Tamil country.[100] Cosmic imagery is generally used when invoking blessings on the king in the *Caṅkam* works.[101] However, Auvaiyār compares her patron-king Atiyamāṉ to Śiva who is

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[98] TM 846-849

[99] 1. The myth of Agastya (Akattiyam) 2. Eight heroic deeds of Śiva (*Pativaliyil vīraṭṭam*) 3. The linga purāṇa (*Iliṅka purāṇam*) 4. Sacrifice performed by Dakṣa *(takkaṉ vēḷvi)* 5. Destruction (piraḷayam) 6. Offering a disc to Viṣṇu (cakkarap pēṟu) 7. The bone and skull (elumpum kapālamum) 8. The lingodbhava myth (aṭi muṭi tēṭal).

[100]*The Function of mythic figures in Tirumantiram,* 49-58.

[101]   O Lord! May you live long in this world
As the cool-beamed moon and
As the sun of burning bright rays
taṅkatir matiyam pōlavum teṟucuṭar
oṇkatir ñāyiṟu pōlavum
 maṉṉuka peruma nilamicaiyāṉē (Puṟa.6:27-29)

depicted as black-throated and as a wearer of a crescent moon on his head.[102] In verse 56

in *Puṟanāṉūṟu,* a Pāṇṭiya king is compared to Sanskrit deities as well as to the Tamil god

Murukaṉ.

Mythic material is also incorporated in the delineations of Tamil places. For

instance, in *Perumpāṇāṟṟuppaṭai*, the description of the city of *Kāñci* alludes to the

cosmic myth of creation (402-405):

> ……The city shines
> like fair seed vessels of the lotus bloom
> That many –petalled springs from navel fine
> Of dark-skinned Vishnu tall from whom was born
> The four-faced god. [103]

 The *puṟam* tradition of the classical *Caṅkam* literature sets precedence to

Tēvāram in the phenomenon of eulogy. Śiva is treated as a Tamil king or chieftain, and

his mythical acts are interpreted as acts of heroism and gallantry in Tēvāram. A local

chieftain is compared to the cosmic divine in the *Caṅkam* literature whereas the cosmic

deity assumes local identity in Tēvāram.[104] In the Tirumantiram, verses dealing with

Śaiva mythology lend themselves to more than one reading.[105] At the exoteric level the

theme is related to bhakti and at a deeper level they correspond to yogic ideology. This

brings to mind an exoteric/esoteric type of literature Paul Bagley discusses in his essay

titled *On the Practice of Esotericism*, which he interprets as a forgotten esotericism. In

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[102] May you live long
   as black throated Śiva
   who wears the milky white
   crescent moon on his head.
   pālpurai piṟainutal polinta ceṉṉi
   nīlamaṇi miṭaṟṟu oruvaṉ pōla
   maṉṉuka peruma nīyē (Puṟa. 91:5-7)

[103] See Pattuppāṭṭu, *ten Tamil idylls : Tamil verses with English translation.* trans. J.V. Chelliah.

[104] Mythological material which is a very prominent feature in Campantar's Tēvāram is presented in epithet form.

[105] Karu.Āṟumukattamiḻaṉ, *Tirumūlar kālattiṉ kural,* 61-75.

this type of esotericism, the exoteric and the esoteric discourses are not governed by the principle of segregation, but rather the esoteric is contained within the exoteric. This type of literature simultaneously addresses both the initiated and the uninitiated.

> The purpose of exoteric/esoteric literature exceeds the aims of other types of esotericism. It is designed to present two dissimilar teachings at the same time: one is propounded for the majority of readers, while the other is detected only by those who exercise sufficient effort to discern it. Consequently, by speaking both to the vulgar and the wise in the same writing, exoteric/esoteric literature serves the purpose of communicating certain views in a covert manner to one audience without plainly divulging them to others.[106]

The Tirumantiram adopts this literary technique with a view to accommodating two differing ideologies of bhakti and yoga in the presentation of Śaiva mythology.

Destruction of three cities:

The following Tēvāram claims Śiva, the destroyer of three cities or fortresses (*puram*), to be a resident of Vīḻimalai in the Tamil country.

> When the gods cried, "Save us from peril,
> O Lord seated under the ancient banyan tree!"
> The celestial beings united to become his chariot;
> Ayaṉ, the creator, yoked the Vedas as horses;
> The world-mountain became the bow,
> its string was the great snake.
> Māl was the arrow, with wind for its feathers.
> With swiftly kindled fire he shot at the citadels.
> Vīḻimalai is his abode. (1:11:6)[107]

Whereas Tēvāram is purely concerned with the depiction of Śiva's mythic acts, and with indigenizing the Sanskritic deity, the Tirumantiram is interested in exploring the underlying meaning of myths and in exploiting them as a vehicle for advocating the fundamental principles professed by the text. A clue as to how myths should be interpreted is provided in verse 343.

> "The primal lord who wears the Ganges in his red hair

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[106] "On the practice of esotericism", *Journal of the History Ideas* 53, No.2 (1992), 236.
[107] Translated by Indira Peterson. See *Poems to Śiva:The Hymns of the Tamil Saints,* 128.

Destroyed three cities" simpletons say
The three cities are triple impurities
Who would know that [the same lord] resides in the body

appaṇi ceñcaṭai āti purātaṉaṉ
muppurañ ceṟṟaṉaṉ eṉparkaḷ mūṭarkaḷ
muppura māvatu mummala kāriyam
 appuram eytamai yāraṟi vārē (TM 343)

This refers to the myth in which three demons, oppressors of the whole universe, had three flying fortresses which were burnt to ashes by Śiva. According to the text, the three fortresses made up of gold, silver and copper are symbolic of the triple impurities, *āṇava*, *karma* and *māyā*, which are removed by the guru, Siva-incarnate.[108]

My interpretation of the last line of the verse *appuram eytamai yāraṟi vārē* differs from that of Natarajan and of Varatarājaṉ. Both of them take the term *puram* as alluding to the three fortresses mentioned in preceding lines of the verse. For instance, Natarajan translates the last line thus: "It is them He burnt. Who knows this truth thereof." Varatarājaṉ's commentary does not materially differ from that of Natarajan: "Who is capable of knowing the destruction of the fortresses by him." However, there is a pun on the word *puram*. It has the meaning of human body in addition to that of city, temple, upper storey and house. The pun gives added meaning to the last line suggesting that the underlying theme is concerned not only with the destruction of impurities, but also with the immanence of the sacred. The word *eytamai* stands abbreviated for *eytiyamai (*having attained*)*. Thus, it is implied that all three- the mythic Śiva who destroys the three citadels, the tantric guru who burns the impurities of the disciple and the Tamil notion of the sacred that lies within the human body -are of single identity.

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[108] Śva takes the human form of guru. See verse TM 113.
The guru shatters all impurities: kaḷimpaṟut tāṉeṅkaḷ kaṇṇutal nanti (TM 114:1) patiyaṉu kiṟpacu pācaṉil lāvē (TM 115:4) mummala māṟrit tayā eṉṉum tōyamatāy eḻum cūriyaṉāmē (TM 116:3-4) cūriyaṉ canniti yiṟcuṭu māṟupōl āriyaṉ tōṟṟamuṉ aṟṟa malaṅkaḷē (TM 117:3-4).

Exoteric-esoteric literature:

Myth of Agastya: It was noted that the text invites readers to make an effort to uncover the meaning buried in myths. I further illustrate how the text conveys two different teachings in a single unit of poetry. The following verse briefly recounts a myth of Agastya who, at the behest of Śiva, journeys to the south to redress the balance of the earth, disturbed by the assemblage of celestials and humans on the mount Kailāsa on the occasion of the wedding of Śiva and Pārvatī.

> naṭuvunillātu ivvulakam carintu
> keṭukiṉṟatu emperumāṉ eṉṉa īcaṉ
> naṭu uḷa aṅki akattiya nī pōy
> muṭukiya vaiyattu muṉ iru eṉṟāṉē (337)

> " Our Lord! This world which has lost its balance
> and is tipped towards the side
> is about to perish" said [celestial beings]
> The Lord says, "Agastya who tends the [sacrificial] fire in the centre
> Go and rectify [the imbalance of] the earth
> hastened [towards its destruction].[109]

The double reading of the verse is possible if the special meaning attached to the term *naṭuvu* is taken into account. In general, *naṭuvu* or *naṭu* means middle or centre. However, in the text they refer to the *suṣumnā nādi* (*naṭunāṭi*[110] and *naṭuvu*[111])   that runs up the spinal column from the lower back to the cranial vault. *Naṭuvuniṉṟār* are those who awaken the *kuṇḍalinī* and bring it up through the *suṣumṇā nādi*to the *sahasrāra* by means of the force of *prāṇa*. Only they are endowed with knowledge, escape hell and become immortal.[112]

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[109] naṭuvunil lātiv ulakam carintu
   keṭukiṉṟa temperu māṉeṉṉa īcaṉ
   naṭuvuḷa aṅki akattiya nīpōy
   muṭukiya vaiyattu muṉṉiṟeṉ ṟāṉē (TM 337)
[110] TM 669:3; TM 857:2
[111] naṭuvu nillāmal iṭamvalam ōṭi aṭukiṉṟa vāyuvai (795:1-2)
[112] naṭuvu niṉṟārkkaṉṟi ñāṉamum illai
    naṭuvu niṉṟārkku narakamum illai

The myth makes a connection between Kuṇḍalinī yoga and Agastya (*naṭu uḷa aṅki akattiya)*, who is celebrated as the first preceptor of Tamil Siddha tradition.[113] The verse may be interpreted as follows. A complaint is made to Śiva that people on earth are doomed as they are ignorant of the means for transcending dualities. (*naṭuvunillātu ivvulakam carintu keṭukiṉratu*) . Śiva commands Agastya to save the world by imparting the knowledge of Kuṇḍalinī yoga.

Destruction of Kāma: The following verse narrates the myth of destruction of Kāma by Śiva. Once celestial beings were oppressed by a demon called Tāraka whose end could only be brought about by the progeny of Śiva. At the request of the celestials the god of love attempted to arouse Śiva, who was deep in penance; however, enraged Śiva frustrated his attempts by burning him to ashes. This valiant act is said to have taken place at Koṛukkai in the Tamil country.

> He sat in great tapas- like yoga at Koṛukkai
> Foiling the attempt by the Lord of love [to tempt him]
> Dismissing the path of generative organ [abstaining from sexual act]
> With the mind firmly set on [meditation] [114]

According to the commentator Varatarājaṉ, the underlying theme of this verse is *paryaṅgayoga* (sexual intercourse without emission) which is dealt with in Tantra Three. His interpretation rests on the double reading of the word Koṛukkai. Koṛukkai can be split into two words as *koṛu* and *kai*. Koṛu means the wicker-muzzle placed on the mouth of a calf to prevent it from drinking milk when it stays close to its mother. *Kai* denotes

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    naṭuvu niṉṛār nalla tēvarumāvar (TM 320:1-3)

[113] K. Sundararajan and Bithika Mukerji (ed.) *Hindu Spirituality: Postclassical and Modern* (New York : Crossroad Publishing, 1997), 235.

[114] irunta maṉatta icaiya irutti
   porunti iliṅka vaḷiyatu pōkkit
   tiruntiya kāmaṉ ceyalaḷit taṅkaṉ
   aruntava yōkaṅ koṛukkai amarntatē (TM 346)

hand. Varatarājaṉ takes it to mean the *suṣumṇā nāḍi*. However, the hand is a euphemistic symbol of phallus.[115] Hence, *koṟukkai* means "muzzled penis", namely, the sexual organ in which the downward flow of semen is suspended. The expression *aruntavayōkam* denotes *pariyaṅka yōkam*, which is difficult to perform. The verse may be thus interpreted: contemplating Śiva in the mind, not letting the semen escape through the generative organ, withdrawing from the act of *kāma*, that is, ejaculation, to engage in sexual intercourse, is known as *koṟukkai*.

II. *Cūṉiya campāṣaṇai (śūnya saṃbhāṣaṇam)*

The study of *cūṉiya campāṣaṇai* in Tantra nine is fraught with a number of difficulties. Firstly, little consensus is found on the esoteric meaning of the poetry. More than one interpretation is available for several obscure stanzas in modern commentaries. The issue of deciphering symbols becomes exacerbated owing to the multiplicity of symbols present in a single verse. It is not possible to interpret the intricate interplay of all the symbols involved. Knowledge of the fundamental principles of yoga and Tantra is certainly helpful in determining the main theme of the stanza. However, that alone does not suffice to comprehend the interconnectivity of symbols. Unless this knotty issue is tackled, the poetry appears absurd and unintelligible.

In certain ways, the symbolic poetry of *cūṉiya campāṣaṇai* resembles the classical *Caṅkam* literature. Features common to both texts include the technique of suggestion,[116]

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[115] Mahadev Chakravarti, *The Concept of Rudra-Siva through the Age (*Delhi : Motilal Banarsidass, 1986), 123.

[116] The subject-matter of the Caṅkam literature falls into two divisions: *akam* (poetry dealing with love) and *puṟam* (poetry dealing with heroism, magnanimity etc.). The universe is perceived in terms of three categories: *mutal, karu, uri*. *Mutal* denotes space and time. The space is divided into five landscapes and time is classified into major seasons of the year and minor divisions of day and night. *Karu* represents all things native to respective landscapes. Finally, *uri* stands for psychological states connected to the landscapes. Descriptions of nature in the Caṅkam poetry are related to events taking place in the lives of the hero and heroine. They are introduced to enhance the aesthetic appeal of the poetry. Two techniques,

sexual symbolism and a complex interplay of symbols. Hart, thus, comments on the symbolism of classical *Caṅkam* works:

> Every image in the poem has an often complex symbolic function, and the interplay of symbols causes the poems to create a resonant effect in the reader's mind, with each symbol reinforcing the others to create an almost inexhaustible variety. That is why the deeper one hoes into these poems, the more one can find in them. It is curious that this technique fits the *dhvani* theory of Sanskrit poetry propounded best by Ānandhavardhana of Dhvanyāloka, far better than most of the Sanskrit poems that the *alaṅkārika*s sought to analyze by it.[117]

I give below a poem from Kuṟuntokai (38) to illustrate how a technique of suggestion is handled in the *Caṅkam* literature.

> He was from the mountain
> Where a monkey cub
> Sporting in the sun
> Rolls an egg
> laid by a wild peacock on a boulder
> His friendship was always pleasant.
> I am separated from him
> With tears incessantly filling my eyes painted black
> He was strong –willed to leave me
> Without thinking of separation from me.

The above is a poetic utterance made by the heroine who is distressed at the hero's procrastination to wed her and formally accept her as his wife even after her furtive rendezvous with him has come to public knowledge. The hero took advantage of the friendship and intimacy offered by the heroine and then abandoned her without considering the sad plight she is placed in. She describes the hill country of the hero as a place where a monkey cub playing in the sun, rolls the egg laid by a wild peacock on a boulder. Through a portrayal of the ignorant and unkind act of the monkey, she suggests

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iṟaicci and *uḷḷuṟai uvamam* (ambient allegory) are used in the Caṅkam poetry. *Iṟaicci* is a "suggestion or an implication through the description of a natural phenomenon or event." Another literary technique present in the Caṅkam literature is *uḷḷuṟai uvamam* (ambient allegory or implied metaphor) in which objects of nature and their actions stand for the hero, the heroine, and other humans and their actions. It is " constructed with the *karupporuḷ* of the respective regions, except the god of the region." See Zvelebil, T*he Smile of Murugan*, 102 and 135; Abraham Mariaselvam, *The Song of Songs and ancient Tamil love poems,*135.

[117] *The Poems of Ancient Tamil :Their Milieu and Their Sanskrit Counterparts,* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975),169

the wanton and ruthless behaviour of the hero. Like the monkey cub, naturally inclined to play in the sun, does not take into account in its sport the brittleness of the egg and the pain of the peacock in the event of its breakage, the hero, who is just a pleasure-seeker full of youth and vigour, knowingly ignores the damage caused to the heroine's reputation in his flirting with her and the mental agony she suffers as a result. Hence, she utters in despair if any one could advise such a person to marry her without delay. As the *Caṅkam* poetry exploits events happening in nature to indicate the psychological states of the speaker, the physical world serves as an aid to illustrating fundamental tenets of the Tirumantiram, which will be discussed shortly.

Besides, love poems are replete with sexual imagery. For instance, the heroine who speaks of her love for the hero describes him as "from a hillside where black stalks support Kuṟiñci flowers from which rich honey is made."[118] The act of bees gathering honey from flowers is sexual imagery which illustrates the bedrock of her relationship with him. In another verse from *Aiṅkuṟunūṟu* (454), the heroine who is separated from her husband awaits him at the onset of the rainy season. Her sexual longing is conveyed by the imageries of nature presented sequentially in the poem: the intertwining of two creepers, the desire of the jasmine for the rain and the jasmine nurturing its straight buds like moonlight. The poem ends with the reference to her yearning for his chariot. The chariot appears as a sexual symbol in the *Caṅkam* poetry.[119] In Verse 186 in *Aiṅkuṟunūṟu*, the image of the chariot splashing water to water lilies symbolises love-making.[120] It is notable that a male yogi engaged in paryaṅga yoga in the Tirumantiram is

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[118] G. L. Hart, *The Poems of Ancient Tamil,* 165.
[119] Ibid., 164-65.
[120] Ibid., 164.

referred to as an excellent charioteer.[121] In Kuṟuntokai (25) a solitary heron eyeing the āral-fish, its victim, represents the lover who seduced the heroine in a lonely place. With this brief introduction on Tamil symbolism in *Caṅkam* literature, we now turn our attention to *cūṉiya campāṣaṇai*.

The expression *cūṉiya campāṣaṇai* is not easy to define. The term *cūṉiyam* does not occur at all in the text save for the titles of two sub- sections, "muccūṉiyat tontattaci" in the eighth, and "cūṉiya campāṣaṇai" in the ninth Tantra. The Upaniṣadic *mahāvākya tat-tvam-asi* (Thou art that) is represented as *tontattaci* (tvam-tat-asi) in Tamil. (The three terms in *tat-tvam –asi-* are known as *taṟpatam- tompatam –acipatam* respectively in Tamil).   The expression *muccūṉiyat tontattaci* is interpreted as the highest state in which the differences between the three terms (*tat-tvam-asi*) are extinct or no longer valid. Hence, it may be said that *cūṉiyam* denotes the transcendental state of a jīvanmukta. *Cūṉiya campāṣaṇai* consisting of 70 verses (2866-2935**)** is not constructed in the form of a dialogue despite the suggestion made by the term c*ampāṣaṇai*. Symbolism found in *cūṉiya campāṣaṇai* lends support to my thesis that living liberation constitutes the principal concern of the text. I examine three symbols: milk, snake and fruit.

Milk: Milk stands for semen in *cūṉiya campāṣaṇai*.[122] Milk is mentioned in connection with *pārppāṉ* or *paṉavaṉ*, both the terms referring to a priest belonging to the Adiśaiva lineage performing *pūjā* (*parārthapūjā*) in temples.[123] Tēvāram speaks of Śiva being bathed with milk, curd, ghee or *pañcagavya*.[124] However, the reference to abhiṣeka

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[121] TM 826:3

[122] kāl koṇṭu kaṭṭik kaṉal koṇṭu mēlēṟṟip
      pāl koṇṭu cōmaṉ mukam paṟri uṇṇātōr (TM 246:1-2)

[123] pērkoṇṭa pārppāṉ pirāṉ taṉṉai arccittāl (TM 519:1)

[124] māntartam pālnaṟu neymakiḻntāṭi (1:44:5) ampāl neyyōṭu āṭal amarntāṉ (1:99:1) tēṉ ney pāl tayirteṅkiḷa nīr karumpiṉ teḷi āṉañcāṭum muṭiyāṉum (2:6:5) tēṉulā malar koṇṭu meyttēvarkaḷ cittarkaḷ pāl ney añcuṭaṉ

is absent in the Tirumantiram, though milk, curd and ghee count among substances that may be used for the formation of a linga.[125] Milk and milk products do not find a place in *cakrapūjā* either. Only flowers,[126] unguents,[127] and water[128] are recommended for *arcanā*. In Tantra seven, the offerings of songs of praise (*pāṭṭavi*) to Nandi is favoured over milk-sacrifice (*pālavi*).[129]

Milk has a sexual connotation as early as in the *Caṅkam* literature. *Akanāṉūṟu*, one of the anthologies of love poetry, describes two activities of a new bride at a nuptial house, which have overt sexual overtones. The freshly wedded wife boils milk on a many -sided hearth[130] and pestles rice obtained from the paddy field.[131] The act of boiling milk is homologized to the act of raising semen by means of *kuṇḍalinī* fire in the Tirumantiram.

> Having blocked [the downward flow of semen] with breath
> raised it by means of kuṇḍlainī fire
> Those who do not imbibe in the moon sphere
> the milk (semen) [that turned into ambrosia]
>
> kāl koṇṭu kaṭṭik kaṉal koṇṭu mēlēṟṟip
> pāl koṇṭu cōmaṉ mukam paṟṟi uṇṇātōr (TM 246:1-2)

It is noteworthy that the same idea recurs in *Meyññāṉappulampal* composed by one of the late Siddhas called Pattirakiriyār.[132]

> When will the time be I will satisfy my hunger drinking the milk

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āṭṭamuṉ āṭiya pālvaṉaṉ (2:9:5) pāloṭu neyyāṭiya pālvaṉṉaṉē (2:23:3) āṭiṉāynaṟu neyyoṭu pāltayir antaṉar piriyāta ciṟṟampalam (3:1:1); pālneyyāṭum paramaṉaṉṟē (3:11:3);

[125] TM 1720.
[126] TM 1003
[127] TM 1004
[128] TM 1828
[129] TM 1824
[130] palkōṭṭu aṭuppil pāl ulai irīi (Aka. 141:15)
[131] pācaval iṭikkum iruṅkāḻ ulakkai (Aka. 141:18)
[132] The late medieval centuries saw a resurgence of esoteric tantric elements in the Tamil country and modern editions carry esoteric poetry allegedly composed by Siddhas during this period. Unlike the Tirumantiram, the Tamil Siddha poetry wins no religious recognition. Hence, the points of differences in scope and emphasis between the Tirumantiram and Tamil Siddha poetry that was composed during this period, taken as a whole, are worthy of scrutiny.

in the moon-terrace,
boiled in the fire ignited in the *mūlādhāra* (95)

mūla neruppai viṭṭu mūṭṭi nilā maṇṭapattil
 pālai iṟakki uṇṭu paci oḻivatu ekkālam? (95)

The following two verses in *cūṉiya campāṣaṇai* stress the importance of producing semen in abundance. Though this might sound contrary to a popular image of a yogi, he is entailed to produce semen in large quantity, preserve it, and then transform it into ambrosia. Gopi Krishna states,

> "Our text refers to unusual ferment in the genial parts and to the production of an increased abundance of semen. This runs contrary to the usual notions that yoga is an acetic discipline through which the sexual impulse is depotentiated. Just not! And we can understand why chastity and continence and other sexual mystiques (including the orgy and black mass) belong archetypally to the disciple of the 'holy man'. It is not that he has less sexuality than others, but more. …The 'holy man' as 'greater personality' implies the endowment of greater sexuality.[133]

Let us look at the first verse involving the Śaiva priest and cows in *cūṉiya campāṣaṇai:*[134]

> Stray cattle are twenty four in number
> Young cows are seven and five
> Young cows give pots of milk
> Yet, the paṉavaṉ has only stray cows. (2874)

The Brahman who is required to gather *pañcagavya* (five substances derived from cows) for the conduct of *pūjā* in temple, is mistakenly going after barren stray cattle, ignoring young cows that are liberal in providing milk. His folly would thus prevent him from performing his function in due manner. Similarly, a yogic practitioner who needs to

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[133] *Kuṇḍalinī*,98-99.
[134] Verses which contain extended metaphor may be said to be making use of the figure of speech known as *piṟitu moḻital aṇi* or *oṭṭaṇi* mentioned in later Tamil treatises on rhetorics. In *oṭṭaṇi* the intended idea is hidden; but it is sought to be conveyed by a depiction of another idea similar to that. This may be illustrated through a couplet from the post-caṅkam Tamil didactic work *Tirukkuṟaḷ*: "The axletree of a cart which though loaded with only peacock's feathers will break, if it be greatly overloaded (475)". The intended meaning of the couplet is that even though a king is strong and valiant, he will be vanquished by his feeble foes if they rise in unison against him.

produce semen in abundance with a view to realising liberation, seeks worldly desires represented by the twenty-four *ātmatattva*s, that would drain his vital energy, while being oblivious to seven *vidyātattvas* and five *Śivatattva*s, both of which are conducive to the achievement of his goal.

The second verse reads thus:

Five milch cows are in a temple –priest's house
They roam inebriated with none to herd them
If there is one to herd them and if their wild behaviour is controlled
The five cows of the temple-priest would give milk in abundance (TM 2883)

This verse suggests that the performance of *abhiṣeka* with milk for Śiva is feasible only if the intractable cows are domesticated. Indirectly, the control of senses is emphasized for a yogic practitioner as a prelude to the highest goal of converting the semen into ambrosia in the sphere of the moon.

Snake: The snake occurring in *cūṇiya campāṣaṇai* is identified with *kuṇḍalinī* by Natarajan and Varatarājaṉ. In Tantric literature, *kuṇḍalinī*, having the form of a snake, is described as *kuṭilāṅgī* (crooked bodied), *bhujaṅgī* (a female serpent).[135] David White speaks of two *kuṇḍalinī*s: the *kuṇḍalinī* in slumber and the *kuṇḍalinī* in awakening.

When she slumbers, "as if stupefied by a poison," in a man's abdomen, the kuṇḍalinī is identified with human mortality, with death laden existence, and the bondage of the ignorant, which is figured by the incessant drain of semen that she, as woman, effects in man. In this role, the sleeping kuṇḍalinī is identified with the fire of time (kālāgni) because the mortal who allows her to drain away his semen is doomed to be consumed by the fire of time and die…….It is when the kuṇḍalinī is awakened that she becomes capable of giving pleasure-and here too, it is appropriate that she be figured as a female serpent…………… The yogin in rousing her from her slumber finds in the rising kuṇḍalinī a vehicle by which to raise himself from mundane existence to the god-consciousness that renders him a second Siva.[136]

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[135] The Haṭhayogapradīpikā describes the kuṇḍalinī thus:

tena kuṇḍalinī suptā santaptā samprabudhyate
daṇḍāhatā bhujaṅgīva niśvasya rjutāṃ vrajet (3:68)
[136] *The Alchemical Body*, 219-220.

The term *kuṇḍalinī* is conspicuously absent in the *Tirumantiram*. Instead, we find in Tantra three a term *kuṇḍalī,* that emits red fire. The *kuṇḍalī* is identified with the *mūlādhāra* region which is referred to as *ceñcuṭar maṇṭalam*, a red, luminous sphere (2719:1).

> Two finger length above the anus
> Tow finger length below the genitals
> Four finger length below the navel
> Arises the red fire in the kuṇḍalī (580)

Fire is a metonym for *kuṇḍalinī* in the text.[137] The sublimation of semen[138] would not materialise unless the fire of *kuṇḍalinī* is ignited.[139] The seed is scorched or burnt in the *kuṇḍalinī* fire[140] and then raised through the *suṣumṇā nāḍi* to the region of the moon where it transforms into ambrosia.[141] One who preserves the semen in the aforesaid manner is called *vintu aḻiyāta aṇṇal*, the exalted being whose semen is not destroyed (TM 1950), Śivayogi (TM 1937, TM 1949), and the state he attains is described as Śivayoga (TM 1937, TM 1949), Śivagati(1968), Śivabhoga (TM 1960-1961) and Śivoham (TM 1969).

However, it is questionable whether the snake can be identified as kuṇḍalinī in *cūṉiya campāṣaṇai*, in which it occurs in association with other symbols. I suggest that in the following verse the serpent symbolizes semen.

> There is a neem tree that is born of the bamboo shoot.
> On the palmyrah tree that leans against the neem

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[137] *Kuṇḍalinī* is denoted by the terms *kaṉal, aḻal, cuṭar* and *aṉal* meaning fire: vintuvum nātamum mēlak kaṉal mūḻa (TM 1963:1) ; vanta aṉal (TM 1963:2); mūlattu aḻalai eḻa mūṭṭi (TM 1962:3); ceñcuṭar maṇṭalam (TM 2719:1); varra aṉalaik koḷuvi marittēṟri (TM 1949:1)

[138] Several expressions are used to indicate this act: *marittēṟrutal* (TM 1947) indicates the act of sublimation of semen. vintu varral (1946); vintu māḷutal (1956, 1963, 1965, 1952); vintu aṭaṅkutal (1969) vittiṭutal (1946), vintu cerral (1954) aṭakkattil ākkam (1957); vintu cayam 1957, 1967)

[139] varra aṉalaik koḷuvi marittēṟri (TM 1949:1); mūlattu aḻalai eḻa mūṭṭi (TM 1962:3); vintuvum nātamum mēvak kaṉal mūḻa (1963:1); aḻal mūṭṭi (TM 1937:1)

[140] kaṉaliṭaikkaṭṭi kalantu erittu (1951:3) mūlattu nantiya aṅkiyiṉālē nayantu erittu(1958:1-2) varukkiṉravārum (1970:1)

[141] nāṟricai ōṭā naṭu nāṭi nātattō ṭāṟri amutam arunta vintāmē (TM 1962:3)

Is found a serpent. There is none who could chase and eat it.
Hence, the neem lies withering away.[142]

The first line refers to a neem tree that arises from a bamboo shoot. The neem tree known as vēmpu or vēppa maram in Tamil is treated as a sacred tree with medicinal value in the *Caṅkam* literature. The wife who tends her mortally wounded husband places neem leaves in the house, which have healing properties.[143] Pāṇṭiyaṉ Neṭuñceḻiyaṉ is described preparing for the war by taking a bath in the pond and wearing a garland of gentle leaves of the neem tree to the sound of drums.[144] *Akanāṉūru* describes how the deity immanent in the neem tree is worshipped:

Ferocious inhabitants of the desert tract…
For the sake of the deity living in the huge trunked neem tree
Killed a fat cow and sprinkled the blood [worshipped the deity offering the blood]
And consumed the flesh after scorching it[145]

A striking similarity is seen between the neem tree and the human body in that both are deemed to be the abode of the sacred.

To appreciate the connection between the bamboo (*mūṅkil*)[146] and the neem, one needs to look at the primitive method of extracting oil from neem seeds. For the extraction of the oil, the seeds were fed into the mortar, the inner surface of which was

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[142] mūṅkiṉ muḻaiyil eḻuntatōr vēmpuṇṭu
vēmpiṉir cārntu kiṭanta paṉaiyilōr
pāmpuṇṭu pāmpait turattit tiṉpāriṉri
vēmpu kiṭantu veṭikkiṉra vārē (TM 2887)
[143] vēmpu maṉaicceri I (PN 281:1)
[144] mūtūr vāyil paṇikkayam maṇṇi
maṉra vēmpiṉ oṅkuḻai milaintu
teṅkiṉai muṉṉark kaḻirriṉ iyali
vempōrcceḻiyaṉum vantaṉaṉ (Pura. 79:1-4)
[145] kaṭuṅkaṇ maravar ..
teyvañ cērnta parārai vēmpir
koḻuppā erintu kuruti tū uyp
pulavup puḻukkuṇṭa (Aka. 309: 4-6)
[146] Tender bamboo shoots are mentioned murrā mūṅkil muḻai (AN 85:8). mūṅkil iḷa muḻai (Aka. 241:6) ; muḻai vaḷar mutala mūṅkil (Aka. 331:1).

made with bamboo. [147]   The act of grinding neem seeds in the bamboo mortar represents the sexual act, the result of which is a strong neem tree.

The second line reads, "Reclined against the neem is a palmayra-palm (*paṉai*)." This might evoke an image of a mortar carved out of neem tree and a pestle made of Palmyra, both are obvious sexual symbols.   In the *Caṅkam* literature, pounding rice (*pācaval* also denotes productive green land) with a pestle symbolizes sexual intercourse.[148] The marked characteristic of the pestle (*kāḻ,* meaning a piece of wood) is its being black. *Kāḻ* is prefixed with the adjectives *irumai* and *karumai* denoting blackness.[149] The Palmyrah which "has an erect, straight, unbranched almost black trunk"[150] with white sprouts[151] is a phallic symbol. In the *Caṅkam* literature, the palmyrah palm is linked to other phallic symbols such as elephant's trunk,[152] birds,[153] ear[154] and fish.[155]

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[147]   H.S. Puri, *Neem* : the divine tree : Azadirachta indica *(*Amsterdam, Netherland : Harwood Academic Publishers, 1999),67.
[148] pācaval iṭitta karuṅkāḻ ulakkai (Kuṟu. 238:1)
pācaval iṭikkum iruṅkāḻ ulakkai (Aka. 141:18)
[149] irumai kāḻ = iruṅkāḻ; karumai kāḻ = karuṅkāḻ.
[150] K. Theivendirarajah, *Palmyrah Palm* (Scarborough, Ontario, 2008), 1.
[151] irumpaṉai veṇ tōṭu malaintōṉ (Puṟa. 45:1)
[152] paṉait tiraḷ aṉṉa paru ēr eruḻt taṭakkai... yāṉai (Aka. 148: 1,3)
   vēṉil veḷirruppaṉai pōlak kaiyeṭuttu
yāṉaip perunirai vāṉam payirum (Aka. 333:11-12)
the upward trunk of the elephant is compared to the palmyrah palm that is shorn of leaves in the dry hot wind.
paṉaimaruḷ taṭakkaiyoṭu...nōṉ pakaṭu (Puṟa. 161: 16-17)
irumpaṉai aṉṉa peruṅkai yāṉai (Puṟa. 340:5)
paṉai veḷiru aruntu paiṅkaṇ yāṉai (Aka. 187:18)
The tender-eyed elephant eating the young shoots of the palmyrah palm .

[153] iṉamīṉ aruntu nāraiyoṭu paṉai micai aṉril cēkkum muṉri (Aka. 360:16-17) l –the Palmyra palm standing in the compound of the house on which dwell white cranes and aṉril.
maitarum paṉaimicaip paitala uyavum aṉrilum (Naṟ.335:7-8)
[154] paṉaip pōḻ cerī ik wearing an ear stud made up of Palmyrah palm leaf (Puṟa. 22:21)
[155] paṉai nukumpu aṉṉa ciṉaimutir varāḷoṭu
   Mature (white) eggs of a greyish green fish resembling unexpanded (white) tender leaf/flower buds of (black) Palmyrah (Puṟa.249:5).

The next imagery presented in the verse is the palmyrah palm encircled by a snake. Both of them are symbols of immortality. Snake and tree together are male and female respectively and also symbolize the earth's fertility.[156] The snake that appears to be an androgynous fertility symbol in the classical *Caṅkam* literature, is associated with mountains, water, rain and thunderstorm.[157] The *Caṅkam* literature contains numerous snake imageries connected to male sexuality. In the following instances the snake is linked to water, a prominent symbol of semen: Water gliding like a snake (Aka. 324:13,339:3); water flowing from the mountains into the caves in which snakes lie (Aka. 362:1); the gems spewed by the snakes being carried away by the river that enters the dark caverns of the mountain (Aka. 192:11). The snakes setting out to look for food at night is a metaphor for sexual union (Aka. 258:10; Aka. 285:1).[158] The term *pōkam* (Skt. *bhoga*) occurring in verse TM 825 meaning sexual enjoyment is a synonym for snake. Furthermore, the snake is identified with Soul and breath in the poetry of Pāmpāṭṭic Cittar of the late medieval period.[159] Eliade states, "The *bindu* is dependent upon the breath and is in some sort homologized to it; for the departure of the one as of the other is equivalent to death."[160] In the Tirumantiram too, the semen is homologized to breath *maṇṇiṭai māykkum pirāṇaṉām vintuvum* (TM 1951:2). This may be translated as follows: The bindu that is breath itself causes death (if not properly controlled.) The above examples confirm that the snake is a symbol of male sexuality.

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[156] James Hall, *Illustrated Dictionary of symbols in eastern and Western Art* (London : J. Murray, 1994), 46.
[157] Kuṟu.158:1-2; Aka. 92:11, 323:10-11; Puṟa. 17:38-39, 37:1-4, 58:6-7,126:19, 366:3.
[158] Similarly, "..the heron searching for and eating fish is often used in the poems as a symbol of sexual activity." (See George Hart, *The Poems of Ancient Tamil,* 162.)
[159] David Buck, "The Snake in the Song of a Sittar" in Harry M Buck and Genn E Yocum (ed.) *Structural approaches to South Indian studies* (Wilson Books, 1974), 162-183
[160] *Yoga: Immortality and Freedom,* 249.

Without eating the poisonous snake, the text says that the neem tree cracks or splits. In fact, the act of eating the snake symbolizes the highest spiritual experience represented by the *khecarī mudrā*. The semen initially being poison when it leaves the body becomes amṛta when ingested by the body.[161] Several steps precede the act of transformation of poison into ambrosia: kindling the *kuṇḍalinī* fire; reversing the downward course of the semen and sending it upwards along with *kuṇḍalinī*. The semen scorched in the fire of kuṇḍalinī reaches the realm of the moon where it is transformed into ambrosia. This is imbibed by the yogi through the *khecarī mudrā*.

The expression *pāmparintuṇṇal* (chopping and eating the snake) occurs in Tantra Two as well.

> The educated spend [the semen in vain] and speed away [to death]
> Those who have a lizard [those who possess the correct knowldge] cut the snake and eat it.
> [By means of yoga, they raise the semen to the sahasrāra]
> Day and night worship the Lord [conserve the semen forever]
> Your body will become like the one fortified by medicinal herbs (valli)[162]

The phrase *palliyuṭaiyār* (literally meaning those who have a lizard) refers to persons who possess Śivajñāna. In the *Caṅkam* literature, the lizard is linked to prophetic knowledge. Kailasapathy states,

> The lizard was considered a creature of prophetic insight. Prognosticators made use of the chirps of the lizard to peep into the future. Several poems speak of the use the early Tamils made of the lizard's clicks. Wives awaiting the return of their husbands from long journeys looked out for the omen from the lizard. The man on his homeward journey wishes the lizard might signify to his wife his safe return and thus console

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[161] "In Tamil thought, *amirtam* is considered to be transformation of semen, which also holds a man's life essence. Tamil siddha yogis are believed to bring their semen up into their heads and to carry out this transformation of semen to *amirtam* at a place behind their throats. They feed only on this *amirtam* created by their own bodies and dripping into their throats, in a kind of eternal narcissistic cycle. As long as they keep themselves to themselves in this way, they will remain deathless." See Margaret Trawick, *Notes on love in a Tamil Family,* 33-34.

[162] kalvi yuṭaiyār kaḻintōṭip pōkiṉṟār
  palli yuṭaiyār pāmpariṉ tuṇkiṉṟār
  elliyum kālaiyum iṟaivaṉai ēttum
  valliyuḻ vātitta kāyamumāmē (293)

her…..............The lizard is said to possess   a mouth of prophetic import, kaṇivāyppalli . It is also described as mutuvāyppalli.[163]

It should be noted that the epithet *mutuvāy* used for the lizard is shared by the male priest who appears possessed and prophetic in the *Caṅkam* works.   This dance-priest plays a key role in the exorcist cult of ancient Tamils. It was previously noted in Chapter one that the priest identifies himself with the deity Velan in his exorcist dance ritual according to *Tirumurukāṟṟuppaṭai* and assumes the name of his deity. The notion of his ritualistic identification with the deity was possibly embraced and enlarged on by the Tirumantiram.   Hence, the expression *palliyuṭaiyār* may be taken to refer to persons who have special knowledge on becoming one with Śiva. Only such people successfully impede the outflow of semen.

Fruit: The fruit of the male seed is offspring, or liberation and immortality through sublimation.   The text recognizes sexual intercourse in which the semen is retained as one of the principal yogas and recommends ejaculation for the sake of progeny alone.[164] The general tenor of the text is to discourage procreation as it involves the squandering of vital energy. The practitioner is advised to shun women who look at him[165] and to regard every woman as *kūṟṟam* (death). Kūṟṟam or kūṟṟuvaṉ is a Dravidian deity who separates the soul from the body according to the *Caṅkam* literature.[166] If a practitioner cannot observe self-discipline, he may be engaged in normal sexual intercourse for the sake of progeny alone. However, the woman whom he chooses to deposit his seed in is discredited as a dissembling woman (*māyāḷ*).[167] The auspicious day

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[163] *Tamil Heroic Poetry* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), 64-65.
[164] TM 1939
[165] pārkkiṉṟa mātaraip pārātu akaṉṟu pōy (TM 1937:1)
[166] George Hart, *The Poems of Ancient Tamil,*24.
[167] TM 1939:1

for impregnating a woman is calculated according to the lunar calendar. Any day after
the sixth day to the twenty-first day following menstruation, is appropriate for this
purpose supposing it happens to be within the last six days of the waxing moon and the
first six days of the waning moon.[168] The text decrees against further union with the
woman thereafter.[169]

The expression *vittiṭu* (to sow the seed) has a paradoxical meaning of sublimating
the seed, rather than planting it in the womb of the woman. Two categories of persons
are mentioned in the text: *vittukkuṟṟuṇpāṉ*[170] (one who pounds the seed and consumes it)
and *vittuccuṭṭuṇpavaṉ*[171] (one who absorbs the seed in his body, having fried it in
Kuṇḍalinī fire). The latter category is applauded as *vittuvittāṉ* (one who has planted the
seed in his own body)[172] whereas the former is said to be unconcerned about the harvest
(*viḷaivu aṟiyātavaṉ*). The text categorically states that only those who sublimate the seed
would reap a good harvest, which symbolizes liberation and immortality.

> viḷaintu kiṭantatu mēlaikku vittatu
> viḷaintu kiṭanttatu mēlaikkuk kātam (TM 2879:1-2)

> The seed [meant] for the supreme state was produced in abundance
> In that supreme state the honey[173] was produced in abundance

[168] TN 1939, TM 1940
[169] TM 1945
[170] The pounding of the seed symbolizes sexual act.
[171] aṉṉal uṭalāki avvaṉal vintuvum
maṉṉiṭai māykkum pirāṇaṉām vintuvum
kaṇṇum kaṉaliṭaik kaṭṭik kalantu erittu
uṇṇil amirtāki yōkikkaṟivāmē (TM 1951)
[172] I follow the interpretation of Natarajan.
vittukkuṟṟuṇpāṉ viḷaivu aṟiyātavaṉ
vittukkuṟṟuṇṇāmal vittuc cuṭṭuṇpavaṉ
vittukkuṟṟuṇpāṉil vēṟalaṉ īṟṟavaṉ
vittukkuṟṟuṇṇāmal vittuvittāṉaṉṟē (TM 1964)
[173] *Kātam* means toddy (white in colour). The semen that is transformed into ambrosia is said to be sweet-tasting. Hence *kātam* is translated as honey.

When the realization dawns on the yogi that the seed of the universe (Śiva) exists in the human seed, then the sublimated seed turns into a nectar-dripping mango fruit. This is referred to as a mango in the garden (*tōṭṭattu māmpaḻam*),[174] or the mango that is present in the curdled milk. Mattu means both the churning rod (phallus) and the curdled milk (semen) in the following verse. In this particular instance, it is not apposite to consider the mango to be a vaginal symbol as suggested by Gananath Obeysekere.[175]

> Except for those who sow the seed
> No harvest exists beyond
> Except for those who sow the seed
> There will be no great wisdom
> If [they] realise the seed within seed
> [The seed sublimated] is a mango fruit
> That is present in the curdled milk (TM 1946)[176]

The following verse from *cūṉiya campāṣaṇai* contains multiple symbols and ends with a reference to a ripe banana which I contend to be the sublimated seed in sexual intercourse known as *paryaṅgayoga*.

> vaḻutalai vittiṭap pākal muḻaittatu
> puḻutiyait tōṇṭiṉēṉ pūcaṇi pūttatu
> toḻutu koṇṭōṭiṉar tōṭṭak kuṭikaḷ
> muḻutum paḻuttatu vāḻaikkaṉiyē (TM 2869)

> The bittergourd grew as the seed of brinjal was sown
> I dug up the dust; the pumpkin bloomed
> Tenants in the garden darted out paying homage
> The entire [bunch of plantain] became ripe.

The first two lines of the verse contrast the act of sublimation with the act of procreation. I interpret the verse as follows: The term *vaḻutalai,* literally meaning a brinjal, represents the male sexual organ. When the seeds are planted into womb of

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[174] TM 624.
[175] *The Work of Culture* (Chicago : University of Chicago Press, 1990), 120.
[176] vittiṭu vōrkaṉri mēlōr viḷaivillai
    vittiṭu vōrkaṉri mikkō raṛivillai
    vittiṉil vittai vitaṛa uṇarvarēl
    matti liruntatōr māṅkaṉi yāmē (TM 1946)

the woman, a child is born. Wife and children represent bondage denoted by bittergourd. In Akanā<u>nū</u><u>r</u>u the bittergourd creeper is used to bind cows that have just given birth, to a *Kāñci* tree to prevent them from consuming the ripe paddy.[177] The second line is concerned with sexual intercourse without emission. "Dust" (*rajas*) in tantras means menses and genital secretions.[178] Digging the dust means arresting the outflow of semen and stimulating vaginal secretions, the result of which takes the form of a yellow- hued pumpkin flower, which I infer, heralds the emergence of *nāda* (Śakti). Other tattvas depart in the wake of the union of *nāda* with *bindu* (seed). The seed sublimated is symbolized by a ripe banana.

I end this section with a discussion of an extended metaphor using agricultural language. Agricultural symbolism is already found in the *Caṅkam* literature. Descriptions connected to battle and battle- fields contain similes drawn from the agricultural realm. Hart observes,

> The battlefield itself was metamorphosed into another world for the participants, a place where everything was charged with sacred power to the highest degree. Thus the poems describe over and over the metamorphosis of the gruesome objects of battle into beautiful or productive things associated with peace, especially things connected with agriculture. A warrior hindered by gust around his feet is like an elephant whose legs are chained (Pu<u>r</u>. 275). Elephants' heads are cut off and roll on the ground, so they resemble plows, the tusks being like handles and the hallow severed trunk being like the plowshare (Pu<u>r</u>.19)[179]

In the Tirumantiram, the term *u<u>l</u>avu* (ploughing) means to make one fit for spiritual training. The expression *e<u>nn</u>āvi u<u>l</u>avu koṇṭā<u>n</u>ē*[180] meaning "he ploughed my life for abundant harvest" implies that Śiva, in the form of Guru, rids the soul of its impurities. However, in *cū<u>n</u>iya campāṣaṇai* it takes on sexual meaning. Production and

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[177] Aka. 156: 3-6.
[178] M. Eliade, *Yoga: Immortality and Freedom,* 254.
[179] *The Poems of Ancient Tamil*, 32.
[180] TM 1875:4

absorption of semen is denoted by the expression "ploughing the interior field".[181] Wasting the semen through sexual intercourse with women is described as *kaḷar uḻutal* (ploughing the wasteland).[182]   The verse given below emphasizes the need for sublimation of semen.

> There are two picottahs and seven wells
> The elder draws out, the younger waters
> If the water does not flow into the field
> But flows into the waste land
> It is like the hen
> The harlot rears. (2873)[183]

The interpretation of the verse is as follows: Two picottahs are the two nādis: idā and piṅgalā. Seven wells denote seven cakras: *mūlādhāra, svādhiṣṭhana, maṇipūraka, anāhata, viśuddhi, ājñā and sahasrāra.* Whereas exhalation and inhalation of breath is represented by elder and younger siblings, the semen is symbolized by water. The energy is wasted if it is not raised by the force of breath along the medial channel. The premature emission of semen is symbolized both by the danseuse (prostitute) and the hen (*kōḻi*). It is notable that *kōḻi-p-pōkam* denotes sexual union attended with a very early discharge of semen.

Kūttu (Dance)

Though there are sporadic references to *kūttu* throughout the work, 81 verses (2722-2803) in the ninth Tantra have been dedicated to the depiction of Śiva's dance.[184]

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[181] uḷḷaccey yaṅkē uḻavucey vārkaṭku (TM 2871:3)

[182] We do not know why they plough the waste
Those who plough the waste do not think deeply
Those who plough the waste perish due to
The young vañci creeper that shoots from the wasteland. (TM 2880)

[183] ērram iraṇṭuḷa ēḻu turavuḷa
mūttāṉ iṟaikka iḷaiyāṉ paṭutta nīr
pāttiyiṟ pāyātu pāḻppāyntu pōyiṭiṟ
kūtti vaḷarttatōr kōḻippuḷḷāmē (TM 2873)

The terms *kūttu* and *naṭam* are pregnant with esoteric meanings. The term *kūttu* occurs in the text for the first time in Verse 74 in which the author claims to have lived for seventy million years, after witnessing *kūttu* in the *sabhā*.[185]   *Kūttu* in this verse represents the acme of yogic experience that enabled him to defy time. Subsequently in verse 77, he declares his intention to expound the esoteric meaning of *kūttu* performed by Śiva in the company of his blue-hued consort.

> O Mālāṅka [let me tell you] the reason why I came here
> I came to proclaim the esoteric nature
> Of the sacred dance, the root of everything, which he performs in the company of
> The dark –limbed woman bedecked with exquisite jewels

To answer the query, "what enabled the author to have a vision of the dance of Śiva", we have to turn to Tantra three that deals with the subject of yoga extensively. According to verse 730, when *iḍā* and *piṅgalā* are united, the consciousness of the practitioner would undergo a tremendous transformation, the final stage of which is marked with "the acoustic, and photic, phosphorescing drops of sound."[186]

> If the left and the right are merged
> In the temple [body] of one who bears a javelin
> you can hear the sounds of instruments in the central place between the brows (ājñā cakra)
> Siva will manifest with his rhythmic dance
> This is true, we declare in the name of Nandi. 730[187]

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[184]   Verse 2723 mentions five types of dance:
cirparañcōti civāṉantak kūttaṉaic
corpatamām antac cuntarak kūttaṉai
porpatikkūttaṉaip porrillaik kūttaṉai
arputak kūttaṉai yārarivārē
Accordingly, the eighty verses are divided into five sections titled *civāṉantak kūttu, cuntarak kūttu, porpatikkūttu, porrillaik kūttu, and arputak kūttu.*
[185] tappillā maṉril taṉik*kūttu*k kaṇṭapiṉ
    oppil ēḻukōṭi yukam iruntēṉē (TM 74:3-4)
[186] David Gordon White, *Kiss of the Yogini,*235.
[187] cattiyār kōyil iṭamvalam cātittāl
    mattiyāṉattilē vāttiyam kēṭkalām
    tittitta *kūttu*m civaṉum veḷippaṭum
    cattiyam coṉṉōm catānanti āṉaiyē (TM 730)

Whereas the merging of breaths gives rises to a vision of Śiva dancing to the accompaniment of musical instruments, the expression *cattiyār kōyil* (body) signifies the fundamental aspect of yoga, sublimating the semen. One of the meanings of *catti* is a javelin and the deity Kumāra is known as *cattiyāṉ* (one who possesses a javelin or spear). The change of the noun ending *āṉ* to *ār* is expressive of respect or politeness. The javelin, being a phallic symbol, represents the role played by sexual fluid in the attainment of the final goal. The same notion is reiterated in Verse 666 which relates *kūttu* to yogic practices of *prāṇāyāma*, especially *kumbhaka*. *Kūttu* becomes visible in the *ājñā* region between the two eye-brows only if the air is controlled and the mind is focussed.[188] Suspension of breath is facilitated through the control of senses (*oṭuṅkutal*) and the concentration of the mind (*oruṅkutal*).[189]

The term *kūttaṉ* refers to Śiva, the soul imprisoned in the body,[190] and the semen.[191] In the following verse, the semen is referred to as *kūttaṉ*.

> kaḻalkaṇṭu pōmvaḻi kāṇa vallārkuk
> kuḻalvaḻi niṉṟiṭum kūttaṉu māmē (TM 754:3-4)
>
> To those who can see the path shown by (kaḻal)
> And proceeds on that way
> He [the semen] is the dancer in the *suṣumṇā nāḍī*.

The term *kaḻal* is interpreted as foot[192] by commentators. However, it also means an anklet or a toe-ring, which evokes the image of a ring of iron placed around the penis by Kanphata yogis with a view to avoiding sexual contact with women. *Kaḻal* cannot be

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[188] oṭuṅki oruṅki uṇarntaṉ kirukkil
maṭaṅki aṭaṅkiṭum vāyu ataṉuḷ (TM 666:1-2).

[189] Ibid.

[190] kūttaṉ puṟappaṭṭup pōṉa ikkūṭṭaiyē (TM 167:4).   The term *kūṭu* (cage) refers to the body.

[191] kollaiyiṉiṉṟu kuti koḷḷum kūttaṉukku (TM 542:3)

[192] The foot is considered a very primitive sexual symbol. See S. Freud, *Three Contributions to the theory of sex* (New York : Nervous and Mental Diseases Publishing Co., 1920),34.

taken to refer to a physical device similar to what the Kanphata yogis wore, because sexual intercourse plays an integral part of the yogic discipline envisaged by the text. Hence, *kaḻal* in this context means merely a stoppage of emission so that the semen *(kūttaṉ)* could be retained and lifted upward through the *suṣumṇā nāḍī*. *Kuḻal* meaning any tube –shaped thing may be interpreted as phallus or the middle nāḍi.

The text attaches special significance to *mūlādhāra cakra* and *ājñā cakra* as the locus of *kūttu*. The Golden court at the sacred shrine Cidambaram is referred to as *maṉru*,[193] *pati*,[194] *tillai*[195] and *ampalam*.[196] Whereas the Golden hall denotes *ājñā cakra*, the term *kollai* refers to the *mūlādhāra*.[197] The journey of male seed begins in the *mūlādhāra* and ends in *ājñā cakra*. *Ampalam* is defined as the place where fire and water mingle.[198] In yogic parlance it indicates a place where dualities do not exist. Siva's dance is generally interpreted as a symbol of his five activities known as *pañcakṛtya*. Śiva's drum, his right hand gesturing protection, the fire, the foot planted down and the left foot raised, represent creation, preservation, dissolution, obfuscation and Redemption respectively.[199] Fundamentally, *kūttu* is expressive of the state of bliss that results from the completion of the upward journey of the semen in the *ājñā cakra* from the *mūlādhāra cakra* via the *suṣumṇā nāḍi*.

I have examined in this chapter the form and content of connotative language of the Tirumantiram. The esoteric language should be differentiated from technical

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[193] TM 67:3; 74:3; 123:3;131:3; 2743:2
Maṉru is the Golden Hall (*kanaka sabhā/* the golden court) of Cidambaram, the most sacred shrine for Śiva in the Tamil country: āṉippoṉ maṉril āṭunt tiruk kūttai (TM 131:3).
[194] poṟpatik kūttaṉ (TM 2723:3)
[195] poṟtillaik kūttaṉ (TM 2723:3; 2743:1)
[196] TM 2744:3; 2749:4
[197] kollaiyiṉiṉru kuti koḷḷum kūttaṉukku
ellaiyillāta layamuṇṭāmē (TM 542:3-4)
[198] ampalamāvatu apputtī maṇṭalam (TM 2775:3). Fire and water are also mentioned in verse 2266.
[199] TM 2799.

language which derived its vocabulary solely from Sanskrit Tantras. In contrast, the connotative language drew inspiration from various sources: Tamil literary tradition, colloquial Tamil speech and the tantric tradition. In connotative language the literal meaning of the text is incompatible with a deeper meaning which lies beneath the surface of the text. This appears to be a result of the deliberate obfuscation of content intended to be communicated. The Tirumantiram makes use of several literary devices –double entendre, symbols, extended metaphor- for this purpose.

The chapter was premised on the notion that connotative language is a vehicle of esoteric knowledge. I defined esoteric knowledge as self-knowledge, which is capable of liberating, hence higher than other types of knowledge, and which is derived both from one's own spiritual experience and from interaction with a guru. Several reasons were cited for the emergence of connotative language on the strength of the evidence found in the text. The final section looked at how the theme of sublimation of semen, fundamental to living liberation, is dealt with in myths, symbols and extended metaphors.

CONCLUSION

In general, the question of unity and coherence of the *Tirumantiram* is either disregarded or inadequately dealt with in commentaries and secondary works.   The scholars who treat the *Tirumantiram* as a unified text dealing with Tamil Śaiva Siddhanta, have difficulty in elucidating why the human body is privileged in the text or why immortality is the supreme goal of Siddhas.[1]   It is not that Tamil *Śaiva Siddhānta* does not recognize living liberation.   The issue here is that the doctrine of living liberation developed by Tamil *Śaiva Siddhānta* is not identical with the one conceived by the *Tirumantiram*.   According to *Tamil Śaiva Siddhānta,* living liberation is merely an interim state a practitioner has to dwell in until he attains the ultimate goal of *videhamukti* (salvation after death), and total freedom from bondage is only possible after death; hence, a *jīvanmukta* is not a fully liberated person in Tamil *Śaiva Siddhānta,*[2] as in the *Tirumantiram*.   Besides, the concept of immortality that is integral to living liberation in the *Tirumantiram* is entirely lacking in Tamil *Śaiva Siddhānta*.   On the other hand, to the scholars who consider the *Tirumantiram* to be the fountainhead of both Tamil *Śaiva Siddhānta* and Tamil Siddha tradition, it is a work consisting of two distinct texts: the first four Tantras represent Tamil Siddha tradition while the remaining five Tantras (5-9) constitute an exposition of Tamil Śaiva Siddhānta.[3]   The link between the two sections of the text, however, remains unexplored and unexplained.

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[1] According to Tamil *Śaiva Siddhānta, tanu-karaṇa-bhuvana-bhoga* are created by God for redemption of the souls bound by *pāśa* since the time immemorial; the notion of immortality does not figure in the discourse.

[2] Chacko Valiaveetil, "Living Liberation in Śaiva Siddhānta" in *Living Liberation in Hindu Thought* ed. A.O. Fort, & P.Mumme (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), 226.

[3] R. Māṇikkavācakam, *Tirumantira ārāycci,* 270.

This dissertation was written to establish the textual unity of the *Tirumantiram*. It analyzed how textual unity was brought about by the coalescence of two divergent religious and cultural idioms reflected in the Sanskrit religious texts and the Tamil Caṅkam literature. It was highlighted that the Tamil–Sanskrit dichotomy is integral to Tamil thought. The *Tirumantiram* which identifies itself with the *Śaivāgamas*, places Tamil on an equal footing with Sanskrit by claiming that both Sanskrit and Tamil are capable of disclosing the nature of God and that the *āgamas* were revealed by Śiva in both languages. Despite the fact that the Vedas and the *āgamas* are recognized as primary texts for Sanmārga Śaivism, the *Tirumantiram*'s ambivalence towards them is quite palpable.

All the four chapters in this dissertation dealt with aspects of living liberation and its relations to Tamil and Sanskrit traditions. The interaction between Tamil and Sanskrit takes the following forms in the text:

(a) Assimilation of autochthonous elements into the text modelled on Sanskrit *āgamas*

In the first chapter, I showed how the notion of the sacred and its relation to humanity as conceptualized by ancient Tamils and the yearning for eternal life on earth symbolized by fame possibly contributed to the formulation of the concept of living liberation in the *Tirumantiram*. The notion of the sacred cannot be considered in isolation, but within the framework of Tamil literary conventions governing themes and motifs, oriented towards this world. Six elements of indigenous Tamil culture represented in the *Caṅkam* poetry were identified as possible antecedents to the concept of living liberation: (a) this worldly –orientation (b) the concept of immanence of the

sacred (c) interpenetration of humanity and divinity (d) the divinization of the human priest (e) conception of the sacred as heat (f) immortality conceptualised in the form of fame. The discussion of the *Caṅkam* literature is crucial, as the origin of *bhakti* and *aṉpu* in the third chapter and of connotative language in the fourth chapter, are traced to it.

The second chapter, which was devoted to the analysis of the relationship between the revealed textual traditions and the *Tirumantiram*, argued that the text drew on the Sanskrit *āgamas* to construct a theological background to the doctrine of living liberation. It was demonstrated how thematic unity was accomplished within the broad *āgamic* conceptual framework, which contrasted itself with the autochthonous Tamil worldview. The conceptual framework was rooted in two major concepts, bondage and liberation, unknown to older layers of *Caṅkam* potery.

Despite its best efforts to integrate and reconcile the Sanskrit traditions with the Tamil tradition, the *Tirumantiram* reveals an uneasy and tension-ridden relationship with ritualistic traditions reflected in the *Vedāgamas* and their privileged custodians, Brahmans/Śivabrahmans. The text contests through the exposition of living liberation the discriminatory *āgamic* injunctions that explicitly forbids the majority of the Tamil indigenous populace considered *śūdras* from seeking liberation and becoming teachers of liberation. The text not only dissociates itself with temple ritualistic tradition which considers the body of the *śūdras* as the most impure of all, but also deemphasizes ritual as the means to liberation, in favour of yoga and *jñāna*, thus contradicting the core principle of Sanskrit *Śaiva Siddhānta* enshrined in the *āgamas*. The text draws on the Upaniṣadic *mahāvākya*s to buttress the claim of identity of the soul with God in the state of release; but it repudiates the Vedic sacrificial lore and the supremacy claimed by the Brahmans.

Thus, it maintains conflicting positions with regard to the *karmakāṇḍa* (ritualistic section) and the *jñānakāṇḍa* (the Upaniṣads) of the Vedas. Moreover, the Vedic sacrifice is interpreted as tantric yoga and the identity of the Brahman is converted from that of ritualist to that of Siddha who treads the path of *sanmārga*.

(b) Marginalization of dualistic *bhakti* from the highest soteriological aim and integration of *aṉpu with yoga*

Aṉpu and *bhakti* are related concepts and at times used interchangeably. The third chapter discussed the synthesis of Tamil and Sanskrit that culminated in the enrichment of the concept of yoga, one of the means to living liberation. Though a secular concept initially, *aṉpu* added a new dimension to the ideology of yoga found in Sanskrit texts. Despite being one of the key concepts in the *Tirumantiram*, *bhakti* was not directly involved with yoga, the means to living liberation, as the ideology of *bhakti* is in conflict with that of yoga. *Bhakti,* which is modelled on the relationship between patron and bard of the classical *Caṅkam* literature is a form of devotion displayed in public, institutional, or formal settings, and is rooted in the hierarchical patterns of relations between Śiva/preceptor (guru) and a devotee/disciple. Besides, it is linked to the lowest form of religious worship, *caryā* path, in the text. Dualistic *bhakti*, therefore, is an inadequate concept to be associated with yoga, which aims at non-dualistic union with God. This should have made the text privilege the term *aṉpu* in connection with yoga.

Aṉpu is treated in the text as a distinct concept from *bhakti,* with the meaning of sexual love wherever it is mentioned in connection with yoga, which is recognized as the means to attain blissful union with Śiva. Hence, of the two major modes of *aṉpu*: love in

separation which is predominant in Tēvāram and love in union, the *Tirumantiram* embraces the latter as is deemed more appropriate to be associated with yoga. This illustrates the text's commitment and willingness to formulate the doctrine of yoga within the framework of Tamil language, literature and culture. *Pātañjala* definition of yoga lays stress on intense mental concentration: "Yoga is the restraint of the fluctuations of the mind."[4] In contrast, the *Tirumantiram* that evolves an eight- fold yoga system similar to the one found in *Patañjali* Yoga *sūtra* reinterprets yoga in terms of immersion or absorption in the emotion of *aṉpu: uṇarcciyuḷ oṭukkam* (TN 283). Thus, one who reaches the highest state of yoga becomes *civam*, an embodiment of two contradictory principles: knowledge/*aṟivu* and emotion/*uṇarcci* (*aṉpu* or love). The Tamil notion of *aṉpu* thus augments the concept of yoga, and also transforms the way Śiva is perceived in the *āgamas*. However, this does not minimize the importance of *bhakti* in the overall conceptualization of the text. In the *Sanmārga* Siddha tradition represented by the *Tirumantiram*, emphasis shifts from the institution of temple to that of guru, who is none other than Śiva himself; *gurubhakti* is regarded as the highest form of *bhakti*. *Bhakti* that characterizes *caryā* is deemed the foundation of the hierarchized religious paths, recognised by the *Tirumantiram*. Moreover, there are indications to present *bhakti* as an independent path to liberation as demonstrated in chapter Three.

(C) Indigenizing esoteric tradition

The fourth chapter further extended the discussion of yoga by examining the connotative language which is easily distinguishable from technical language that uses Sanskrit terms, and established that the *Tirumantiram* is an esoteric text. (An esoteric manual can contain exoteric material, but not vice-versa). The connotative language that

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[4] yogaścittavṛttinirodhaḥ 1:2

employs myths, double entendres, extended metaphors and symbols, is concerned with living liberation, specifically, the esoteric element of yoga: sublimation of semen. It was also shown that the connotative language draws on both Tamil and Sanskrit traditions and is characterized by secrecy, symbolism and subversion of the normative values of society.

This chapter also brought to light the dual nature of the text which is reflected in its exoteric and esoteric discourses. Though the exoteric –esoteric distinctions are acknowledged by the text itself, they are not structurally demarcated. Esoteric meaning underlies many a verse, which is overtly devotional or at times moralistic. Hence, it is impossible to hold that that only certain Tantras deal with doctrine and others with esoteric practice, as claimed by certain scholars. The exoteric sections provide doctrinal contextualization for living liberation and contain interpretations of *Śaiva Siddhānta* which are meant to be read. On the other hand, the esoteric material of the text cannot be grasped through intellect alone, but should be experienced through a combined effort of the body and the mind *(sādhanā)*. The doctrine that bridges the esoteric with the exoteric is living liberation.

The *Tirumantiram* stands out as a paramount example of a literary genre that incorporates both exoteric and esoteric material in a single text. This literary style was adopted by later Siddhas in their poetry, for instance, by Civavākkiyar. The extreme form of esoteric/exoteric is found in several stanzas of the text, in which the esoteric underlies the exoteric meaning. The method of presentation of esoteric material is unique in the *Tirumantiram* because, conventionally, the esoteric and the exoteric constitute the subject matter of separate texts and are rarely presented in the same text, let alone, in the same stanza. The text finds a solution to the issue of communicating transgressive content in the innovative manner of combining both. Thus, the text succeeds not only in

eliminating possibilities of public scrutiny, but also in achieving recognition as one of the Śaiva canonical texts. In other words, this style of writing reflects the text's conscious decision not to oppose and challenge any theology or religious practice that was dominant and authoritative in the society, though not in harmony with its esoteric doctrine.

Implications of esoteric/exoteric distinctions:

The findings of the research, particularly the flourishing of a parallel stream of Śaivism – independent of temple, the central feature of the Tamil bhakti movement – justify to a greater extent the claim that the *Tirumantiram* is a work of *Sanmārga* siddhas in its essence. Though it is highly probable that Tamil Tantric Siddha tradition existed long before the composition of the *Tirumantiram*, it is difficult to reconstruct its early history with the scant evidence available to us now. The fact that local images and colloquial language are found in *cūṉiya campāṣaṇai* speaks for a broad diffusion of esoteric practices at a popular level at the time the *Tirumantiram* was composed. I tentatively suggest that the dancing priest Velan of the Caṅkam era, the exorcist and the healer, could be a precursor to the Tamil Siddha. It should be noted that dance emerges as an important symbol in the *Tirumantiram* through which the author conveys the objective of his text (TM 77). Besides, the text devotes more than a hundred verses to describing the dance of Śiva, apart from intermittent references to it throughout the text.

The term Siddha can be traced to Tēvāram in which it is used in several meanings: a Tantric Siddha, a semi-divine–being, the enlightened one in Jainism, and performer of extraordinary feats or miracles. Śiva is also known as *cittaṉ*[5] and the temple

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[5] 1:29:11; cittar (1:96:4; 5:77:7; 5:87:4; 7:52:10); taṉ aṭiyārkaḷ cittaṉ(2:82:4); 3:51:2; 5:2:6; 5:4:3; 5:13:4; 5:40:8; 6:87:4; 7:52:1

he resides in is known as Cittīccaram.[6] In Tēvāram, Siddhas are mentioned along with *bhaktas* as opposed to Jainas and Buddhists.[7] Tēvāram also looks for commonalities between *bhaktas* and Siddhas: both worship Śiva[8] through singing and dancing,[9] and practice penance.[10] Paḻuvūr[11] and Vētavaṉam[12] Tirukkāṉūr[13] are home to both categories. Tenets and practices of the Siddhas also receive attention in Tēvāram. Cuntarar defines them as those who worship Śiva through meditation in his *Tiruttoṇṭattokai*.[14] Appar's Tēvāram reflects some of the ideology of *Sanmārga* siddhas discussed in the *Tirumantiram*: the human body being the temple,[15] immanence of God in the body[16] and condemnation of external worship.[17]

Despite the portrayal of an amicable and harmonious relationship between *bhaktas* and Siddhas in Tēvāram, a converse picture emerges in the *Tirumantiram* that is suggestive of enmity and competition between the two groups. "Siddhas never know Him, the supreme Light; But He gave salvation and revealed Himself to devotees who worship Him in devotion (*bhakti*)" (TM 284). "Though they practice yoga for eight thousand years, they would not perceive Him who is pleasing or sweet like ambrosia to the eyes "(TM 603:1-2). Whereas the fifth Tantra states that only an inferior type of *sāloka mukti* is available to devotees, the devotional hymns in the text suggest that the

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[6] 1:29:1-11

[7] 1:43:10; 1:47:10; 1:66:10; 2:87:10; 2:118:10

[8] pattar cittar palar ēttum paramaṉ (7:52:10)

[9] pārār pukaḻāl pattar cittar pāṭi āṭavē (1:71:5)
   pattar cittarkaḷ pāṭiyāṭum paiññīli (7:36:8)

[10] tavamali pattar cittar (2:87:10)

[11] pattaroṭu cittarpayil kiṉṟapaḻu vūrē

[12] 3:76:5

[13] cittar pattarkaḷ cēr tirukkāṉūr (5:76:5)

[14] cittattaic civaṉpālē vaittārkkum aṭiyēṉ (7:39:10).

[15] 4:76:4

[16] 4:43:6; 4:45:1

[17] 5:99

highest goal of liberation is attainable through *bhakt*i. The outcome of the acts of *bhakti* is liberation from *saṃsāra*[18] purging of sins and removal of darkness of ignorance[19]

It is probable that *Tirumantiram* was the fruit of the efforts invested by Tamil Tantric Siddhas in synthesizing their tradition with that of Tamil bhakti tradition, which upheld the *āgamic* temple ritual system governed by the theology of *Śaiva Siddhānta*. The *Tirumantiram* reflects the challenges faced by Tamil Tantric Siddhas in the competitive and polemic religious environment around the ninth century. The rising ascendancy of Brahmans with their sacrificial ritual system, the social system of *varṇa* introduced by them, and temple worship popularized by Tamil *bhakti* saints and extensive temple ritual cultivated by the *āgamas*, and the prestige enjoyed by the Sanskrit language must have placed the vernacular *Sanmārga* Siddha tradition or Śuddha Śaivism at a disadvantage. It seemed to have responded to the challenges in two ways: firstly, the tradition was institutionalised. The institutionalization of tradition- that characteristically takes place in the event of external or internal challenges- is mentioned in the prologue of the text. Seven *maṭha*s, probably with a few bi-linguals at the head with a large gathering of monolingual vernacular followers, existed under the leadership of seven chiefs including Mūlar. Secondly, the tradition responded to these challenges innovatively through the synthesis of Tamil and Sanskrit, alternatively speaking, by synthesizing yoga with the notion of *aṉpu* and by identifying *civam* with *aṉpu*. *Aṉpu*, in a general sense, is the bedrock of Tamil *bhakti*, but not related to "mechanistic" *tantra* at all. Besides, the whole theological structure of the text was borrowed from Śaivism. Thus, the adoption

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[18] tiraipacu pācac ceḻuṅkaṭal nīnti
   karai pacu pācam kaṭantteytalāmē (49:3-4)
[19] pakaliṭat tumira vumpaṉiṉ tētti
   ikaliṭat tēyiruḷ nīṅki niṉ ṟēṉē (TM 4:3-4)

of the exoteric covering of bhakti and of Śaiva Siddhānta theology rendered the Tamil tantric Siddhas acceptable to Tamil society and also enabled them to exercise some authority in the outer social world. Besides, the esoteric/ exoteric poetry and symbolic poetry discussed in the fourth chapter suggest that internal aspects of the tradition were different from its external features. This means that outwardly *Sanmārga* Siddhas posed as *bhaktas* and theologians of Śaiva Siddhānta but continued to observe their esoteric practices in secret. Thus, they assumed a dual identity that enabled them to negotiate the legitimacy of their tradition in a competitive religious environment, while cherishing a liberated esoteric identity of Siddha for themselves.

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