

The Position of Saint Appar in Tamil Śaivism

A. Velupillai

1. Introduction

Hinduism is a loose cover term for many religious manifestations which originated in different regions and different ages in the South Asian sub-continent. The assertion of a Hindu identity is a modern phenomenon which tries to distance itself from other religious identities, mainly Islamic and Christian in India. There are some modern attempts to include religions like Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism (which also originated in South Asia) within the Hindu fold, but Buddhism which has become an international religion and Sikhism are successfully asserting their individuality. The origin of Hinduism is sometimes sought to be traced from the Indus Valley Civilization but the matter remains speculative as the study of that civilization has not progressed sufficiently to draw definite conclusions. The Vedic Civilization is a definite milestone in the development of Hinduism. The early phase in the development of Hinduism is the Brahmanical religion. Religions like Jainism and Buddhism arose as anti-Brahmanical movements. There were also philosophical movements like the *Sāṃkhya*, *Yoga*, *Nyāya*, *Vaiśeṣika*, *Mīmāṃsā* and *Vedānta*. These religions and philosophical movements were competing to win adherents but they were not exclusive in their approaches. There was some form of interaction among these groups and by the end of the Gupta period, the Brāhmaṇical religion had become dominant in North India.

The Tamils in the Far South of India have been able to have an identity of their own, in relation to North Indian religious developments. Along with Sanskrit, Tamil is also a classical language of India. Independent of classical Sanskrit literature, it developed a classical literature which is more than two millennia old. The description of this classical Tamil literature as 'secular' by some modern scholars is not entirely correct; but it helps to emphasize its distinctive nature when compared to Vedic and Sanskrit literature which was mainly religious. When North Indian religious developments reached Tamilnadu, they had to undergo some form of acculturation or indigenization to become acceptable to the Tamils. They had to assimilate some indigenous forms of worship and religious practices of a vibrant Tamil culture. Brāhmaṇism, Jainism and Buddhism, each in its own way, appear to have engaged in this process. Brāhmaṇism embraced emotional bhakti and put forth two off-shoots, monotheistic devotion to either Śiva or Viṣṇu. Both of them emerged victorious at the expense of Jainism and Buddhism. Of the two, Śaivism appears to have emerged as the dominant creed among the Tamils. The three outstanding leaders of the Śaiva bhakti movement were Campantar, Appar and Cuntarar. The family background¹ of these three appear to indicate

¹ The family background of all the 63 Śaiva saints are available in Cekkīlār's *Periyapurāṇam*. Campantar's hymns themselves refer to his own family background.

clearly the social background of the Śaiva bhakti movement. Campantar was a Vedic Brahmin of Kaundinya gotra, who praised Vedic sacrifices and who glorified Śaiva worship. Appar belonged to the land-owning peasant class, representing the vast majority of non-Brahmin Tamils. As a pious non-Brahmin, he was first attracted to Jainism which promised salvation, even to those outside Brāhmaṇism. The new Śaiva bhakti movement could bring together both Campantar and Appar under the same umbrella. Both of them were contemporaries in the seventh century; the first was credited with converting the Pandya king from Jainism to Śaivism and the second was credited with converting the Pallava king from Jainism to Śaivism. Both of them were promoting temple worship in the Tamil country and outside, undertaking pilgrimage, criss-crossing South India. Campantar helped his father to perform Vedic sacrifices and on his own was praising, in many poems, Brahmins engaged in Vedic sacrifices as well as in Śiva temple worship. Appar was praising Śiva temple worship in most of his hymns, occasionally referring to the Brahmins and the Vedas, but propagating also the maintenance of Śiva temples, and worship of Śiva, in the hearts and the homes of the devotees, not necessarily with Brāhmaṇic rituals². Cuntarar was an *Ādi-Śaiva*, a group or rather a sub-caste of hereditary temple priests of Śiva temples, who claimed to be Brahmins.

Of these three, Saint Appar seems to represent also one strand in Tamil Śaivism which does not give total authority to Brāhmaṇical rituals in Śiva temples. Appar seems to be faithful here to Kāraikkāl Ammaiṃyār, the pioneer of the Tamil Śaiva bhakti poetry³. She was worshipping Śiva in her heart at the beginning. Lord Śiva directs her to go to Tiruvālaṅkāṭu (sacred cremation ground under a banyan tree) to enjoy his dance⁴. She has praised Śiva's dance at the cremation ground, but there is no mention of any temple or Brahmin ritual in her poems⁵. It is interesting to note that two other Śaiva *nāyaṇmārs*

² According to François Gros, Appar's work is a small āgamic encyclopaedia. ("Towards Reading the *Tēvāram*", p. lvi., *Tēvāram, volume 1, Nāyaṇcampantar*, ed. T.V. Gopal Iyer, Pondichéry: Institut Français d'Indologie, 1984). But the date of the āgamas remains very controversial. Only a few āgamas have been published till now by the French institute at Pondicherry. There is a view that āgamas evolved with the development of temple worship in South India and the earliest āgamas could not be earlier than the fifth century AD. *Tēvāram*, volume 3, p. 43 mentions that *kāraṇa āgama* as well as *amsuta āgama* mentions about celebrating Campantar's impalement of the Jain monks in special festivals in Śiva temples. These references could not be earlier than the eleventh century AD. Appar's poems could have been the sources for some āgamas.

³ Cēkkiḷār refers to Kāraikkālammaiṃyār's family as traders. She was born in a trading family from Kāraikkāl; she was married to a trader from Nākappaṭṭinam. She appears to be non-Brahmin, as Brahmins were referred to as such in the *Periyapurāṇam*.

⁴ It is interesting that Śiva does not direct her to go Citamparam, a Brahmin temple establishment for the worship of the Dancing Śiva. It is worth investigating why Tiruvālaṅkāṭu could not compete with Citamparam in later times, even though it had the earliest Śaiva bhakti poetry and a tradition that Lord Śiva himself certified the importance of this place to the Kāraikkāl saint.

⁵ Her devotional hymns, two decads on Tiruvālaṅkāṭu "sacred banyan jungle", as well as *arputat tiruvantāti* "miraculous sacred end-beginning", and *tiruviraṭṭaimaṇimālai* "sacred garland of double gems", totaling 140 stanzas, are part of the Tamil anthology called *paṭiṇṇōrān tirumuṇai* "the eleventh sacred canon", of Tamil Śaivites.

were also said to have worshipped in their hearts only and attained salvation⁶. Vāyilār, a peasant like Appar, had a vision of a Śiva temple in his heart, to which he continued to offer worship. Pucalār, a Brahmin, was said to have built a Śiva temple in his heart because he had no funds to build a temple, consecrated it with rituals in his heart, and then attained salvation.

2. Distinctive Features of Appar's Tamil Śaivism

Though there were a number of Brahmin *nāyanmārs*, Tamil Śaivism could not be said to be dominated and led by the Brahmin community. Appūtiyaṭikal⁷, a Tamil Brahmin, almost hero-worshipped Appar, a peasant and a Śaiva convert from Jainism. He worshipped Appar in place of Śiva; he was so concerned that Appar should eat at his home that he ignored the death of his eldest son through snake-bite and hid this information from Appar. *appar* in Tamil means 'father' and Śaiva hagiography records that it was Campantar who addressed him as Appar first. Campantar was also known as *piḷḷaiyār* "son". The role of Appar and Campantar in the establishment of Tamil Śaivism looks like that of a father and son --- a *vēḷāḷar* "peasant" father and a Brahmin son. Nampiyāṅṭār Nampi, a Brahmin, who compiled the Tamil Śaiva canon, wanted to give the foremost place to Campantar. In order to justify his stand, he wanted to glorify Campantar as the violent persecutor and exterminator of the Jains in Maturai⁸. While it is highly probable that Campantar respected Appar and addressed the elder as "father", Nampiyāṅṭār Nampi creates a supernatural story to make Śiva and Umā as "father" and "mother" of Campantar. Campantar's hymns, compiled by him in the first three *tirumuṟai* "sacred canon" get precedence over Appar's hymns, compiled by him in the next three *tirumuṟai*⁹. Besides the *Tiruttonṭar Tiruvantāti* where Nampi praises all sixty-three individual *nāyanār*, and other devotees as nine groups, he has authored seven books¹⁰, six on Campantar and one on Appar — an obvious indication of how he was shaping Tamil Śaiva hagiography.

There is reason to suppose that Brahmin reluctance to educate peasants in Sanskrit and religious studies was of long standing. Buddhism and Jainism were more liberal; some peasants studied in their monasteries, became erudite scholars in Pali/Prakrit and Sanskrit, and became monks; later, they were

⁶ Cēkkiḷār's *Periyapurāṇam* narrates their stories.

⁷ His story also occurs in the *Periyapurāṇam*.

⁸ Nampi of the 11th century was the first person to allude to the story of Campantar of the 7th century, impaling 8000 Jain monks in Maturai. This action might have given Campantar prestige in the medieval times, but this action is difficult to defend in modern times.

⁹ Appar's importance is brought out in note 34 on page liv in "Introduction: Towards Reading the *Tēvāram*" in the *Tēvāram*, volume 1. The relevant portion of the note is as follows:- "It is significant that the compilation (in 1307) of an anthology of *Tēvāram* hymns, the *Tirumuṟaittiraṭṭu* (99 hymns, 26 by Campantar, 63 by Appar, 10 by Cuntarar) is attributed to Umāpati himself; the preponderent place of Appar, a theme of our presentation, is justified here by the doctrinal and ritual elements which prevail in his poems."

¹⁰ Nampi's books also form parts of *Patiṅṭōrān Tirumuṟai*.

attracted to Śaivism, may be from their knowledge of Śaivism from Sanskrit sources. Appar was an admirer of Cākkiyanāyaṇār, a *vēḷāḷar* “peasant”, who was said to have become a Buddhist monk, who later ended up as a Śaiva saint. Appar mentions him with respect while Campantar does not. As Appar has stayed long at Tiruvārūr, he might have been responsible for instituting worship for him as a Śaiva saint there. So Cākkiyanāyaṇār was able to find a place in Cuntarar's *Tiruttonṭattokai* and later in Cēkkiḷār's *Periyapurāṇam*. Cēkkiḷār does not explain how and when Appar learnt about Śaivism. With the name Tarumacēnar, as a Jain monk, Appar is said to have engaged the Buddhists in debate and defeated them. This is an indication that the study of other religions for the purpose of proselytization might have been a part of the curriculum in leading Buddhist and Jain monasteries. Cākkiyar from Buddhism and Appar from Jainism might have been introduced to Sanskrit texts in Śaivism in their monasteries. What was happening in their life-story was apparently their straying from their folds to Śaivism, another fold which attracted them.

Among the Śaiva saints, Appar is the only one to point out the name of one Tamilnadu city and of one harbour, associating them with learned scholars in his time. Maturai, which had been associated with classical Tamil scholars, seems to have faded in his time. Appar refers to Nākai (Nākappaṭṭiṇam) as *karṇavar payilum nākai*¹¹ “Nākai where scholars abound”, and *karṇār payil kaṭal nākai*¹² “Sea (port) Nākai where scholars abound”. Nākai¹³ in his time has replaced Kāviriṇṇampāṭṭiṇam/ Pukār of the classical times as the major port and commercial center of the Cōlas and their overlords, the Pallavas. Pukār probably lost its importance gradually and not swallowed by the sea, as mentioned in the Maṇimēkalai. Appar mentions a Śiva temple there¹⁴. Campantar has a hymn on a Pallava Śiva temple there¹⁵. Appar refers to *kalviyai kkarai ilāta kāñci mānakar*¹⁶ “the city of Kāñci where there are no limits to learning”. As the capital of the extensive Pallava kingdom which comprised Tamilnadu minus the Pandyan kingdom, as well as the southern parts of Andhra, it must have attracted scholars, especially religious scholars and philosophers from the North.

Even though the tradition of calling the first seven sacred books of the Śaivas as *Tēvāram* “garland to god” is now well established in Tamil, it was the

¹¹ *Tēvāram*, volume 2, p. 71.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 102.

¹³ It is interesting to note that the hagiography about Kāraikkālammaiār, the pioneer of Tamil Śaiva bhakti poetry, was interwoven with Nākai, according to the *Periyapurāṇam*. Her husband was a trader from Nākai. It was his friends who brought the marvellously delicious mango fruits to her. The spiritual transformation in her life begins, when Śiva himself visits her in disguise to eat one of these fruits. Irrespective of the veracity of the details of this story, it can be asserted that new religious ideas were entering Tamilnadu through this sea port.

¹⁴ *Tēvāram*, volume 2, p. 349.

¹⁵ *Tēvāram*, volume 1, p. 67-8.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

hymns of Appar which were designated as *Tēvāram* first. There is also a tradition that the entire text of Appar's *Tēvāram* was inscribed in copper plates and preserved in Citamparam temple at first and then later at Tiruvārūr temple.¹⁷ Neither the *Tēvāram* of the other two saints nor the hymns of any other saint has been so honoured. A big temple has come into being at Tiruvāmūr, the village of his nativity, in the present day South Arcot district in the latter half of the last century¹⁸. His anniversary is celebrated as a grand *kuru pūcai*, "guru pūjā", every year¹⁹. The distinctiveness of Appar's *Tēvāram* should be studied to understand its great appeal to the Tamil populace.

Though both Campantar and Appar try to identify Śaivism with Tamil, Campantar was very keen to identify himself with Tamil, as his Vedic Brahmin background might have made his Tamil background suspect. He was claiming to be an expert in both Sanskrit and Tamil. Appar, as a Tamil peasant, has no need to project his Tamil identity. He probably cannot claim to be an expert in Sanskrit. So he makes Śiva an expert in Sanskrit and Tamil and an embodiment in three divisions of Tamil and four Vedas. Appar seems to equate here both Sanskrit and Tamil languages and cultures and make Śiva the expert. The lines, *āriyan kaṇṭāy tamilan kaṇṭāy* "See him as an Aryan, see him as a Tamilian", *muttamilum nānmaraiyum ānān kaṇṭāy* "See that he has become the three Tamil and the four Vedas", make Śiva a Tamil God (along with a Sanskrit God also)²⁰. This is a big step in the indigenization of Śaivism among the Tamils. There is a big difference between what Campantar was saying and what Appar was saying, and Appar has scored a point here in making Śiva attractive to the Tamil people. What Campantar achieves is gaining acceptance for himself from the non-Brahmin Tamils.

2.1. The Dancing Śiva.

The cult of the Dancing Śiva has become very popular among the Tamil Śaivites and Citamparam temple was gaining pre-eminence among the Tamilnadu Śaivite temples. All the three saintly authors of *Tēvāram* visit this temple and sing hymns. Campantar and Cuntarar appear to be proponents of a form of restrained bhakti. Appar has eight hymns on this shrine. It is remarkable that it was only Appar who was enamoured of Śiva's dance. He refers to Śiva's performance and to his own deep appreciation, almost reaching infatuation of that dance. All the Śaiva saints, including Appar, dreaded rebirth. In fact Appar could be said to have been more keen to escape from rebirth as he was living as a Jain monk, performing rigorous austerities, because at one time he thought

¹⁷ See "Towards Reading the *Tēvāram*", p.lxv (Reference in fn. 2).

¹⁸ See pp.87-88 of the *Tiruvāmūr Śrī Appar Cuvāmikaḷ kurupūcai vilā malar*, 30-4-1970. Publisher: Members of that Festival Society. Other bibliographical details are not available.

¹⁹ The anniversary celebration on a grand scale at Appar temple started in 1966 according to the above souvenir. Tarumapuram ātinam, one of the well-known Śaiva Siddhānta monastic establishments in Tamilnadu, sponsors this celebration.

²⁰ *Tēvāram*, volume 2, *Appar et Cuntarar*, T.V.Gopal Iyer, Publications du Département d'Indologie 68.2 (Pondichéry: Institut Français, 1985), pp.252-3.

that it was the best way to escape from rebirth. But Appar makes an exception here - if it were possible to witness Śiva's dance again, it is worth being reborn again in this world as a human being. This statement is unique in these devotional poems. Even Kāraikkālammaiṃ has not praised Śiva's dance in such words. But she has many poems appreciating Śiva's dance in the cremation ground. According to Cēkkiḷār, she who reached Śiva's abode in Mount Kailās, came back to Tiruvālaṅkāṭu to be a perpetual spectator of his dance. Campantar has appreciated people, especially women, dance. Ammaiṃ and Appar appreciate Śiva's dance. One has to recollect here the importance of dances in classical Tamil society as reflected in Caṅkam literature. Jainism and Buddhism could not give importance to dance in their religious schemes. The indigenization of Śaivism in Tamil was taken a step forward when Śiva appeared as an attractive expert dancer. It is probably Appar's devotional praise poems on the dance of Śiva that leads to the production of bronze sculptures of the dancing Śiva in large numbers in the later Cōḷa period. It is in these bronzes that one can see the emergence of dancing Śiva as the king of dance (Naṭarāja in Sanskrit and Āṭavallāṅ in Tamil). Modern scholars of Hinduism, both within and outside India, are fascinated by these sculptures.

2.2. Murukaṅ's father claims Tamil loyalty.

The shrine of Tiruvārūr also becomes very important in Tamil Śaivism. Two of the three *Tēvāram* saints — Appar and Cuntarar — become very closely associated with this shrine. This shrine is associated with Somāskanda worship — Śiva with Umā and Skanda. There is a mythic story to explain the importance of Somāskanda worship in Tiruvārūr — the particular icon was worshipped first by Viṣṇu, later by Indra and then gifted by the latter with great reluctance to Mucukuntaṅ, his Cōḷa ally for worship at Tiruvārūr²¹. But it is possible to explain the importance of the icon without recourse to myth. Murukaṅ was the popular God of the Tamils in the classical age. One characteristic of this God is youthfulness. This enabled the Śaivites to portray him as Śiva's son. Both the *Tirumurukārruppaṭai* and the *Paripāṭal* refer to him as Śiva's son. According to the latter, he was the son of god under the banyan tree, with no biological mother. The former seems to be wavering in assigning a mother to him. He was the son of Pārvaṭī, Śiva's consort, the young boy of Korṟavai “the Goddess of victory”, of the ancient Tamils, and the baby of Paḷaiyōḷ “Ancient Goddess”. During the Śaiva bhakti movement, Murukaṅ was identified with Skanda, Śiva's mythical son. Even the Skanda myth, both in Sanskrit and Tamil, do not make Umā his biological mother. But an affectionate family of father-mother-son came into being during the Pallava period. This development seems to be peculiar to South India. Many Somāskanda sculptures of the Pallava period have been identified. The myth may be trying to trace the origin of the icon to Tiruvārūr, one time capital of the Cōḷas. The incorporation of Murukaṅ in the Śiva family must have facilitated the acceptance of Śaivism

²¹ *Kantapurāṇam*, a Tamil text by Kacciyappar of about the fourteenth century, narrates this story in its last volume.

as Tamil religion. Appar made Tiruvārūr almost his second home and composed twenty-one hymns on this shrine alone. Appar seems to be utilizing a brilliant strategem, making Śiva, the Tamil God, by referring to his pedigree through Murukaṅ and Vaḷḷi, his indigenous Tamil consort, belonging to perhaps the most famous Murukaṅ shrine in the Tamil country. Appar says, “*nam centil mēya vaḷḷi maṇālarḱu ttātai kaṇṭāy*”,²² “See [that He (Śiva) is] the Father of the Husband of Vaḷḷi, of our Tirucentur”. So much of sentimental stuff is condensed in this cryptic clause. The first word *nam* “our”, is inclusive plural, including the second person (those who are addressed), but excluding the third person (people far away, outsiders) in contradistinction to *em* “our”, an exclusive plural — a peculiarity of the Dravidian languages. Appar sings in Tamil language and so includes Tamils in his range. Centil, the modern Tirucentur, carries other names like Cīr Alaivāy also. This is the only Murukaṅ shrine mentioned in early Caṅkam poetry; it also finds prominence in Tirumurukāṅruppaṭai. This could have been a prehistoric shrine, as it was located near Koṅkai, the port located in the famous Pearl Fishery Coast, and the probable capital of the Pandyas before they shifted their capital to Maturai. Centil is also situated very close to Adiccanallur where archaeological findings, some of them pointing to possible Murukaṅ worship in about 1200 BCE, have been located. Murukaṅ has been identified with Skanda and so his Tamilness in Somāskanda could be contestable. But Vaḷḷi, his consort, could not be identified with any goddess in the northern Sanskrit tradition. So Vaḷḷi is certainly a Tamil goddess and, according to Tamil tradition, her consort is Murukaṅ, a Tamil god. According to Appar, Śiva is the father of this Tamil god of great antiquity. Śiva thus becomes the father figure in a revived form of Tamil religion. According to Tamil grammar, the possessive form *nam* in this statement could qualify either Centil, Vaḷḷi, or *maṇālar*. His message is the same, whatever the interpretation.

Appar reinforces the sentiment in another hymn when he uses the expression *nam kaṭampanai pperravaḷ paṅkiṇaṅ*²³ “consort of goddess who gave birth to our Kaṭampan.”

He was worshipping Śiva at Kaṭampūr shrine; probably he remembered that the *kaṭampu* tree is closely associated with Murukaṅ. The title *kaṭampan* refers to Murukaṅ in this stanza. What is of special interest here is the usage of “*nam*” again as inclusive plural to refer to his Tamil indigenous identity. Of the two sons of Śiva, Murukaṅ, the younger son alone, is considered a Tamil god while the elder son is considered to be a North Indian god. Appar mentions both sons in a stanza. He mentions Murukaṅ first and uses the Tamil word *tantai* “father” to denote Śiva; he mentions the elephant-faced elder son then and uses the tamilised form of Sanskrit *tātā* “father”, to denote Śiva. The Somaśkanda icon at Tiruvārūr might have had mass appeal among the Tamils;

²² *Tēvāram*, volume 2, p. 252.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 130. There is a textual variation of *naṅ kaṭampanai* in the above point. But this could have been a metrical requirement accommodation. *naṅ kaṭampanai* occurs on page 25 of the *Tiruvāmūr Sri Appar* —, in an article by Makāvittuvān Ca. Taṅṭapāṇi Tēcikaṅ, a reputed Tamil scholar.

so it was adopted and introduced in different parts of the Pallava kingdom. There is a tradition that Tiruvārūr was, at one time, a capital of the early Cōlas. The *Periyapurāṇam* refers to Tiruvārūr as the capital of Maṇu Nīti Kaṇṭha Cōlaṅ. According to the myth, the Somaśkanda icon worship was instituted by Mucukuntacōlaṅ in his capital at Tiruvārūr. During the heyday of the Pallava kingdom from the seventh to the ninth centuries, the Cōlas appear to have been the subordinates of the Pallavas. The Pallavas patronised Skanda worship; there was even a Pallava king with the name of Skandavarman. There was among the Pallavas even a Kaṭampavarman, in whose reign a large number of Tamil inscriptions were issued. So a popular innovation introduced at Tiruvārūr could be widely adopted throughout the Pallava kingdom.

2.3. Refinement of Śaiva sects.

There were many sects among Śiva worshippers in Appar's age and Appar seems to have noticed them, moved among them and most probably tried to propagate his version of Śaivism among them. Apart from epigraphical evidence, it is only in Appar's *Tēvāram* that we find references to other Śaiva sects like *pācupatar*, *kāpālikar* and *māviratikaḷ* even in Tiruvārūr²⁴. One of the reasons which might have prompted him to stay long in Tiruvārūr, might have been the chance to live and work among these groups to unify them as the Tamil Śaivas. This speculation is further strengthened when we note that he had also spent long periods of time and sang many hymns in shrines where other evidence points out that the *pāśupatas* were strong as in Nākaikkārōṇam which was praised by him in four hymns, and where *māviratikaḷ* (*kāḷāmukar*) were strong as in Tiruvorriyur which was praised by him in five hymns. The *pācupatar* "worshippers of Paśupati", were an influential sect both in Karnataka and Tamilnadu. Peruntēvaṇār's commentary on *Viracōḷiyam* of about the twelfth century mentions the *śaivas* and the *pāśupatas* separately as two different sects²⁵. Appar, alone among the Śaiva devotional poets, has a separate hymn praising Paśupati²⁶.

He has described Śiva as Paśupati in some of his other hymns²⁷. Likewise, he has described Śiva as Kapāli "skull-carrier", in other hymns²⁸.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 22.

²⁵ *Viracōḷiyam*, Peruntēvaṇār *urai*, *tattitappaṭalam* pā 2-3.

²⁶ *Tēvāram*, volume 2, p. 106. Each of the eight stanzas in this hymn appeals to *emmai āḷum pacupati* "Paśupati who rules us" for pitying the *pāśupata* ascetic devotees and causing them to get rid of *karma* and suffering. This hymn is not autobiographical as most of the other hymns of Appar. This is an indication that Appar was not a *pāśupata*. He uses the first person exclusive plural *em* and not inclusive plural *nam*. This indicates that he considers Śiva/ Paśupati as the god of both the *pāśupatas* (in the third person) and himself. This view might not have been acceptable to many other Tamil Śaivites of his time.

²⁷ *Tēvāram*, volume 2, p. 9, 275, 290, 297, 363.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 127, 136, 139, 174, 175, 205, 216, 252, 364. He was probably trying to draw the *kāpālika*-s into the Tamil Śaiva fold.

Saint Cuntarar probably owes much to the spade work already done in Tiruvārūr by Appar. One of the reasons why Tiruvārūr became famous might have been due to Appar's long stay there and his twenty-one hymns on the shrine. Appar praises Śiva as Ārūraṅ “Lord of Ārūr”; Ārūraṅ becomes the name of Cuntarar who was born far away in Tirumūnaippātināṭu/ Naṭunāṭu which was also Appar's native region. Cuntarar gets married in Ārūr and stays long in Ārūr. According to some scholars, Cuntarar's greatest contribution to Tamil Śaivism is his *Tiruttonṭattokai*, the pioneer work for the later Śaiva hagiology of the *Periyapurāṇam*. Cuntarar names his contemporary and earlier Śaiva devotees and pays homage to each of them. Appar seems to be a fore-runner to Cuntarar here as he pays homage to Śaiva devotees in a Tiruvārūr hymn²⁹. Appar's hymn might have led to the institutionalization of the worship of individual nāyanmārs in Tiruvārūr. This must have given Cuntarar the chance to name each and to pay homage to each in his *Tiruttonṭattokai*. The worship of the devotees of Śiva, inaugurated by Appar, led to the creation of a new top layer transcending caste divisions in the hierarchy of Śaivism, distinct from the Brahmins and temple priests. Later Śaiva Siddhānta gives much importance to this layer and advises the *jīvanmuktās* (those who have attained liberation while alive) to move in the company of Śaiva devotees³⁰, so that they would not relapse into their former state of impurity.

2.4. Assimilation of an old form of worship.

Appar has addressed Śiva as *karṣakam* in many poems³¹. This seems to have been an adaptation of the *kalpa daru* (*karṣakam*) worship, belonging to earlier Indra worship in Appar's Tamil Śaivism. Indra, the Vedic god, found early acceptance in the Tamil country; the *Tolkāppiyam*, the earliest grammatical work in Tamil, mentions Vēntaṅ (identified with Indra) as the god of the agricultural tract. The *Cilappatikāram* refers to temples of Indra, in some of which either Vajra, Indra's weapon or the wish-fulfilling tree were worshipped³². The worship of Indra, along with that of Vajra, disappears, but the worship of the wish-fulfilling tree, identified with Śiva, gains a new lease of life. This also could have given the Tamil people the feeling that the new Śaiva bhakti movement was a continuation of the earlier religion prevalent among the Tamils.

²⁹ Ibid, p. 100. Appar uses the expressions *tonṭar* “servants”, and *tonṭarkku ttonṭar* “servant of the servants”, to indicate Śaivite devotees. In 3 places he uses *aṭittonṭar* “servants of the feet”. Cuntarar takes a hue from the last usage and changes his expressions to *aṭiyār* “people of the feet” and *aṭiyārkkku aṭiyār* “people at the feet of people of the feet”.

³⁰ Appar is probably adopting here what the *Nālaṭiyār* says as *nalliṇam cērtal* “associating with the good” in chapter xviii and *nallārai ttuṇaikkōṭal* “getting the help of the good”, in chapter xlvi. Devotion to Śiva replaces moral goodness in the new scheme. Appar declares that he is prepared to worship as gods even the Śaiva devotees who are (untouchable) *pulaiyar* who skin cows and eat beef and who suffer from leprosy. See the *Tēvāram*, volume 2, p. 369.

³¹ *Tēvāram*, volume 2, 265, 277, 281, 291, 313-4, 361-2, 364, 368.

³² *The Cilappatikāram of Iḷaṅkō Aṭikaḷ*, Translated by R. Parthasarathy, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), p. 52.

3. Appar and Jainism

According to the *Periyapurāṇam*, the Śaiva hagiology, Appar, a born Śaivite, was attracted to Jainism because of its professed lofty principles and he joined the Pāṭalipuram (= Pāṭaliputra/Tiruppātirippuliyūr, near Kaṭalūr) monastery and became a leading Jain monk and defeated the Buddhists in debate. However he was soon disillusioned with the Jain monkhood and he returned to Śaivism. The Jain monks at Pāṭalipuram were scared that his apostasy might ruin their popularity and they appealed to the Jain Pallava ruler (unnamed) to punish Appar for his bad example. The Pallava ruler, on the advice of Jain monks, attempted to harm Appar, first by feeding poisoned milk rice, then by locking him up in a lime kiln, then by getting his royal elephant to trample down Appar, and finally tying him to a heavy stone and throwing him into the sea. Appar's Śiva *bhakti* enabled him to escape from all these ordeals unscathed. At this point the Pallava king became a convert to Śaivism and persecuted the Jain monks whom he thought purveyors of false doctrines. He demolished the Pāṭalipuram monastery and built Kuṇapara Īccaram³³.

Appar was very bitter about Jain monks and Jain monastic life. Unlike Campantar who was a complete outsider criticising Jain monks, Appar was an insider from Jainism, and most of his polemical comments against Jains appear as autobiographical references. He was devastating in his comments against Jain monks and this appears to have clouded the vision of many scholars on his attitude to Jainism as a whole. There is only one hymn at the Northern Shrine of Paḷaiyārai³⁴ where his references to the Jains are very uncharacteristic, almost reminding Campantar's references against the Jains at Tiruvālavāy in Maturai. The complete texts of Appar's *Tēvāram* which could add up to 3066 stanzas have not yet been translated into English or any other Western language and the critical scholarship of western scholars could not go beyond secondary sources of indigenous scholars who could not do a penetrative study of Appar's texts.

The book, entitled *Open Boundaries, -- Jain Communities and Cultures in Indian History* opens a new approach to the study of the relationship between Jainism and Śaivism within the Tamil country³⁵. Two articles in that volume have some very relevant points from which one can peer through Appar's hymns.

Indira Viswanathan Peterson, in her article “Śramaṇas Against the Tamil Way”, makes the following comment:

“Appar focuses his critique on Jain monks, castigating them and their religion, and laments his own wasted years as a Jain monk (Peterson 1989, 283-301). His

³³ Cēkkiḷār mentions this name. Modern scholars equate it to Guṇadhara Śiva temple; as *guṇadhara* was a title of Mahendravarman I, known from his inscriptions of early seventh century, he was identified with that ruler mainly because of this factor, but also due to some other factors.

³⁴ *Tēvāram*, volume 2, p. 169-170.

³⁵ *Open Boundaries, Jain Communities and Cultures in Indian History*, ed. Jon E. Cort, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998).

poetry is pervaded by a sense of sin and guilt, and he views his earlier faith in Jainism as his greatest sin.”³⁶

Richard H. Davis, in his article “The Story of the Disappearing Jains”, makes the following comment:

“Even among those who called themselves Śaiva Siddhānta, or who were later labeled as such, there was a division between the devotional orientation of the Nāyaṅmārs and the more ritual orientation of the “Śaiva Brāhmaṇas”. [...] While these Śaiva Siddhāntins surely shared in, and profited from, the Nāyaṅmār project of placing the devotional cult of Śiva at the center of Tamil society, their formulation of Śaivism tended towards the ascetic and ritualistic (like Jains), while the Nāyaṅmārs (along with the Vaiṣṇava Ālvārs) were pioneering “emotional bhakti” and seeking to reformulate Tamil cultural identity. Their outlook (like the Jains) was primarily pan-Indian and universalizing, in contrast to the more local and regional perspective of the Nāyaṅmārs”.³⁷

Peterson, who could use Appar's sources in the original, appears to come very close to understanding Appar's relationship with Jainism but still the picture is not very complete. Davis's use of secondary sources in Tamil appears to lead him to miss the point. Coupling the *nāyaṅār* along with the *ālvār* as pioneers of “emotional *bhakti*”, he seems to have entirely missed Appar's individuality. He could find the influence of Jainism only in the Sanskritic Śaiva Siddhāntins. What both these scholars missed was that Appar, who was first attracted to Jainism by its lofty principles to become a convert to Jainism and then to become a Jain monk, had not given up his past entirely. He had brought in some elements of Jainism into Śaivism to give it a more humanistic face. Compared to many other Śaiva sects, Tamil Śaivism, the precursor of Śaiva Siddhānta, appears to be a very “mild” form. Campantar and Cuntarar did not seem to have brought into Śaivism similar ideas.

3.1. Impact of Jainism.

Appar, even according to Cēkkiḷār, was attracted to Jainism because of its lofty principles like compassion and non-violence. When Appar says, *tayā mūla taṅmavalī enakku nalki maṅam tiruttum*³⁸ “having gracefully shown to me the path of virtue based on compassion to refine (my) mind”, he seems to be incorporating the Jain teaching within Śaivism. Appar refers to self-refinement of his mind here, through the path of virtue based on compassion. There does not appear to be any early Śaiva text teaching *dharma* based on compassion and stressing refinement of the mind. When he says, *tayā mūla tattuvattiṅvali niṅṅu tāṅtōrkku ellām nalam koṭukkum nampiyai*³⁹ “the Lord who benefits all the downtrodden through following the philosophy based on compassion”, Appar

³⁶ Ibid., p. 168.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 219.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 280.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 247.

appears to identify the Jina with Śiva. Śiva appears to be getting transformed when Appar refers to him as *pal uyirkkum parivōṅṭannai*⁴⁰ “he who pities all living beings”. Appar also admires Śiva's *tirukkaruṇai*⁴¹ “sacred compassion”, which manifests itself deeply in Śiva putting up with the whole gamut of Appar's failures.

Tamil Śaivism is generally considered a very tolerant religion. It is again to Appar one has to go for the broad outlook. *virivu ilā ariviṇārkaḷ vēru oru camayam ceytu eriviṇāl conṇārēnum empirārku ērratu ākum* “It will be acceptable for our lord even if those with narrow vision establish a religion out of jealousy”⁴². This outlook is the product of the Jain *anēkāntavōtam* which advocates the many-sided nature of truth. Appar himself claims again and again that he had conquered *ārva cceṇṇa kurōtam* “love, anger, and hatred”⁴³. He brings in a refined mind to Tamil Śaivism.

Even though Appar was in the thick of the *bhakti* movement, he seems to have still carried on his aversion to Brahmin orthodoxy and rituals. He finds the recitation of the Vedas, performance of Vedic sacrifices, functioning as temple priests, studying *śāstras*, pilgrimages to the Ganges and the Kāviri, etc. as of no merit when compared to the supreme virtue of *bhakti*⁴⁴. Campantar and Cuntarar could not be expected to subscribe to some of these ideas. One of the two reasons which Campantar gives for defeating the Jains in Maturai was their condemnation of the Vedas and the Vedic sacrifices. Probably because he belonged to the sub-caste of temple priests, Cuntarar was privileged to touch the Śiva icon and be near it; he claimed that Śiva was his best friend. Appar's *bhakti* probably retained some of his predilections of his Jaina times even after his reconversion to Śaivism. It is probably these unconventional ideas that have made the later day orthodox school to downgrade Appar's *bhakti* as *dāśa mārga* “the path of the servant”. It was probably again his Jain background that caused Appar to look for release in *Śivaloka* “the world of Śiva”, which he mentions in a number of his hymns (tamilized as *civalōkam*). According to him, Śiva devised the good path to *Śivaloka* for others to go⁴⁵; Śiva was graceful to give him wisdom to know *Śivaloka*⁴⁶; Śiva himself is identified with *Śivaloka*⁴⁷. In Jainism the goal of all liberated souls is to reach a higher world (*Siddha-loka*) and retain their individuality.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 345.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 369.

⁴² Ibid., p. 60.

⁴³ Ibid., pp. 7, 22.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 211. There is an entire hymn of ten verses where Appar mentions the worthlessness of either ritual or pilgrimage or Vedic recitation in each of the stanzas and then dismisses them. The title of the hymn mentions *pāva nācam* “destruction of evil karma”, as the subject matter. Matters which Appar dismisses as worthless may be his views as a Jain monk. But Appar substitutes intense Śiva *bhakti* for severe austerities as the path for the destruction of evil *karma*.

⁴⁵ *Tēvāram*, volume 2, pp. 247, 265.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 303.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 270, 287, 353-5.

The expression *Śivagati* is very interesting. Appar is the only early Śaiva bhakti poet who is using this expression (tamilized as *civakati*). He has used it in six places. This word has the meaning of "auspicious stage of liberation". Its earliest usage⁴⁸ in Tamil is found in a Jain context in the *Cilappatikāram* which is now dated to the fifth century C.E. The *Tamil Lexicon* also explains this word in the Jain context. This word appears later again in a Jain context in the *Nīlakēci* commentary. The contexts in which Appar uses the word *Śivagati* are very interesting. Appar's quest for *Śivagati* in one context is by basing his life on truth, love, patience, self-realization, appropriateness and good conduct⁴⁹. This will be applicable to a Jain seeker of release and this particular stanza does not mention Śiva bhakti. The second context is where Appar says that the attainment of *Śivagati* is possible only if you reflect on a pig, in dirt, finding beauty in a cloth-covered human body, full of impurities⁵⁰. Besides the fact that this stanza also does not mention *Śiva bhakti*, it is worth noting that Buddhism also emphasizes this kind of meditation. Whether Appar knew Buddhism is a question that could be asked. According to Cēkkiḷār, when Appar was a Jain monk with the name Tarumacēnar (Dharmasena), he defeated the Buddhists in debate. So he must have known Buddhism to debate and win over them. In this connection it is also interesting to note that Appar was the only *Tēvāram* author who mentions with respect a Buddhist monk who became a Śaiva saint. Cākkiyanāyanār from Caṅkamaṅkai in Toṅṭaimaṅṭalam has not composed hymns; so his contribution to Śaiva thought could not be assessed. According to Appar, Śiva changed the pebbles which the Buddhist used to throw at him steadily into new flowers⁵¹ and "made him the ruler of the high sky" (*nī vicumpu ālavaittār*)⁵². There was in Appar's poems some resemblance to the world-view of the Jains and the Buddhists; the type of reflection on impurity of the human body could very well be mentioned as typical of the Buddhists also.

Śivagati could mean the sphere of Śiva and in that sense it is equivalent to *Śivaloka*, for which also Appar was longing in some of his hymns. Appar uses *Śivagati* in the sense of *Śivaloka* in the other four contexts⁵³. He places *Śivagati* in the context of devotional acts to Śiva. Later *Śaiva Siddhānta* speaks of four kinds of release — *sāloka*, *sāmīpa*, *sārūpa* and *sāyucciya*. Appar's release is said to be *sāloka*. Ādi Sankara interpreted orthodox Vedic philosophy as *advaita* "monism". *Bhakti* saints found this interpretation unacceptable and the Vaiṣṇava Rāmānuja developed *viśiṣṭādvaita* "qualified monism". The Śaiva Siddhāntins developed *suddha advaita* "pure monism", somewhat close to Rāmānuja's position. The Vaiṣṇava Mādhva developed *dvaita* "dualism", but its

⁴⁸ *The Cilappatikāram*, p. 101. This usage in the Jain tradition does not appear to have been recorded outside Tamil sources.

⁴⁹ *Tēvāram*, volume 2, p. 76.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 77.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 301.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 50. To Appar, *Śivaloka*/*Śivagati* appear to be equal to the high sky, *loka ākāśa* of the Jains.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 94, 154, 168, 183.

influence outside Karnāṭaka was limited. The word *advaita*, in one or another of its interpretations, is very much preferred in orthodox and mainstream Hinduism. But Appar's position appears to be close to dualism, even though no particular school of dualism developed from his stand. One reason why Vaiṣṇavism developed "dualism" while the Śaiva school did not, appears to be that *Nālāyira Tivviya Pirapantam* continued to be scrutinised by a series of commentators which led to the possibility of development of divergent schools. The devotional literature of the Śaiva preceptors was never subjected to such scrutiny in a commentatorial tradition. It is generally read and interpreted as the bases of Śaivism. Even though Appar is very popular among the Tamil Śaivites — although ranking after Māṅikkavācakar — for the excellence of his *bhakti* poetry, the orthodox Brahmin tradition sometimes downgrades him as just a follower of the *dāśa marga*, which is the farthest among the four kinds of *bhakti mārga* to attain Śiva.

Some ideas which Appar introduced in Śaiva bhakti poetry from Jainism have been de-contextualised in later Śaiva hagiology — it is not clear whether it was done purposely or whether the proper context was not known to Cēkkiḷār.

There is a hymn⁵⁴ beginning as follows:-

nāmārkkun kuṭiy allōm namaṇai ancōm,

"we are not subjects of any body; we are not afraid of death".

narakattil iṭarppaṭōm naṭalai yillōm,

"we will not suffer in the hell; we have no deception",

ēmāppōm piṇiy aṟiyōm paṇivōmallōm,

"we will not be deceived; we will know no bond; we will not submit",

iṅpamē eṇṇāḷum tuṅpa millai,

"we have happiness everyday and no suffering".

The interpretation in the hagiology is that just after Appar's reconversion to Śaivism, the Jain monks prevailed on the king to take Appar into custody in order to punish him. The king's soldiers tried to take Appar away to the king. Appar, as a devotee of Śiva, was said to be asserting his bravery. The reality seems to be that Jain laymen at their initiation into *sāmāyika* "equanimity", a temporary form of renunciation, assert thus their freedom and courage, as indicated by Padmanabh Jaini⁵⁵. *Maṟumārṟam* "defiance" is the title of Appar's hymn; the title is appropriate for its tone. Some other expression occurring in this hymn like *parṟarṟōmē* "we have been rid of attachment" confirm the veracity of Jain oaths or assertions. Abandoning all cloths, the Jain renouncer says that he does not care for those who are well dressed and decorated with ornaments.⁵⁶ Abandoning all forms of possession, he does not care for earthly

⁵⁴ Ibid, p. 373- 5.

⁵⁵ Padmanabh S. Jaini, "Jaina Rituals and Ceremonies", *The Jaina Path of Purification*, (Delhi, Varanasi, Patna: Motilal Banarsidass, 1979), pp. 223-227.

⁵⁶ *Tēvāram*, volume 2, p.373 (VI.98-2) *tukil uṭuttu ppoṇ pūṅṭu tirivār collum col kēṭka kkaṭavōmō?* "Are we bound to obey the words of those kings who wander wearing costly clothes and wearing ornaments of gold?".

rulers travelling on chariots. Taking the oath of celibacy, he says that he will never go to the homes of women. But it should be pointed out that Appar introduces many elements of Śaiva *bhakti* poetry here. Appar makes the Jain equanimity assertion in this hymn, not when he becomes a Jain renouncer, but when he becomes a Śaiva devotee. Appar seems to serve as a bridge between the world view of Jainism and the Śaiva *bhakti* movement. He rejects Jain monastic life and adopts Śaiva devotee life. His conversion to Śaivism is not a total repudiation of Jainism.

Appar's description of Śiva resembles the description of the liberated soul in Jainism. According to Appar, Śiva is without equal, not one, not of one village, and with no comparison⁵⁷. What Mahāvīra is reported to have said illuminates Appar's description as can be noticed in the following:- "The liberated is not long or small or round or triangular — he is not black — or white — he is without body — he is not feminine or masculine or neuter — but there is no analogy; its essence is without form; there is no condition of the unconditioned."⁵⁸

3.2. Jain ideology, as reflected in the *Nālaṭiyār*.

This fact becomes clear when the general tenor of Appar's poetry is compared to the *Nālaṭiyār*, one of the eighteen minor works in classical Tamil literature. The expression *nālaṭi* "quatrain" refers to a metrical form and this book might have been named so because it was the first of its kind. Two works in Tamil, the *Kuraḷ* and the *Nālaṭi*, named after their metrical form, "were serving as mutual commentaries, and together throwing a flood of light upon the whole ethical and social theory of the Tamil people"⁵⁹. According to Pope, the latter work is also called "the *Vellāḷar-Vētham*, the 'Bible of the cultivators of the soil' ", as it was so popular among the Tamil peasants, and he says that the majority of the poems were almost certainly composed by Jain ascetics. According to Kamil V. Zvelebil, Jain ideology pervades the entire book.

Neither the *Kuraḷ* nor the *Nālaṭi* employ technical terms and jargons associated with Jainism, and so even if both of these works are sometimes ascribed to Jain authors by modern scholars, they appear to be non-sectarian. The *Kuraḷ* is now interpreted and acclaimed as a secular work, the *Nālaṭi* seems to have receded into the background from where it was by the end of the

⁵⁷ *Tēvāram*, volume 2, p. 373.

⁵⁸ Jaini, *The Jaina Path of Purification*, p. 271. Jaini quotes Mahāvīra from *āyārāṅga-sūtra*.

⁵⁹ Rev. G.U. Pope, *The Nāladiyār*, first published in 1893, reprint (New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1984), introduction, p. viii. What G.U.Pope says on p. xi is interesting: "There is no mention of God in the *Nālaṭi* (save in the quite modern invocation) and no trace of religion. In this respect the quatrains differ from the *Kurraḷ* (sic). [...] Yet pervading these verses there seems to be a strong sense of moral obligation, an earnest aspiration after righteousness, a fervent and unselfish charity, and generally a loftiness of aim that are very impressive. I have felt sometimes as if there must be a blessing in store for a people that delight so utterly in compositions thus remarkably expressive of a hunger and thirst after righteousness. They are the foremost among the peoples of India, and the *Kurraḷ* and the *Nālaṭi* have helped to make them so."

nineteenth century, as vouchsafed by Pope, may be because of its relatively negative attitude to worldly life.

The *Nālaṭi* utilizes this relatively negative attitude to emphasize an ascetic way of life, as in Jainism and Buddhism. Appar utilizes this negative attitude to lead human beings to *Śiva bhakti*. Appar makes very frequent and liberal use of the first five chapters and the eleventh chapter of the *Nālaṭi*, such as the instability of prosperity, the transitoriness of youth, the perishable nature of the bodily frame, the might of virtue, the essential impurity of the human frame, and the nature of previous *karma* to emphasize *bhakti* to Śiva. The sixth chapter in the *Nālaṭi* deals with asceticism, and most of the following chapters, especially in the first section, deal with matters like self-discipline, liberality, and self-realization. Appar seems to be even utilizing these ideas occasionally to express his almost ascetic fervour in his *Śiva bhakti*. Compared to Appar, very few poems of Campantar and Cuntarar have such ideas, even though Campantar's hymns outnumber Appar's hymns.

To the vast majority of Tamil Śaivites, who have no knowledge of Sanskrit and who care little for Sanskrit traditions, the Tamil Śaivism, as portrayed by Appar, seems to offer hope of redemption from the negative attitude to the world, preached by the Jains (and the Buddhists), which is accepted by them as a valid world view. But they reject the view that asceticism and monastic life as preached in those religions lead to redemption.

Some ideas from the *Nālaṭiyār*, taken out of context emphasizing the importance of observance of dharma, were utilized by Appar to emphasize Śiva bhakti. The chapter 1, *celvam nilaiyāmai* “the instability of prosperity” in the *Nālaṭiyār*, is reminded by the following instances:

*vaiṭṭa māṭum, maṇaiviyum, makkal, nīr
cettaṭōtu, ceṇiyār piriṭatē*⁶⁰,

“When you die, (your) saved wealth, wife, and children will not be with you, but separate”,

*māṭu tēṭi mayakkiṇil vīṭntu nīr
ōṭi eyttum payaṇ ilai*⁶¹,

“There is no use in your searching for wealth, falling in delusion, and running and trying hard”,

The chapter 2 of the *Nālaṭiyār*, *iḷamai nilaiyāmai* “youth abides not”, is reminded by the following instances:

*pokkamāy niṇṇa pollā puḷumiṭai muṭai koḷ yākkai
tokku niṇṇu aivar toṇṇūrṇaruvarum tuyakkam eyta
mikku niṇṇu ivarkaḷ ceyyum vēṭaṇaikku alantu pōṇēṇ*⁶²,

“The (human) body, with various openings, foul-smelling with plenty of harmful germs; the five senses together with the ninety-six elements to wander

⁶⁰ *Tēvāram*, volume 2, p.183.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p.188.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p.67.

about; I have become confused through the excessive pain which all these cause.”

*aḷakiyōm, iḷamaiyōm, eṇṇum ācaiṇāl
oḷuki āvi uṭal viṭṭum muṇṇame*⁶³,

“Before life departs from the body after living with fond hopes of ‘we are beautiful’, ‘we are young’ ”.

The chapter 3 of the *Nālaṭiyār*, *yākkai nilaiyāmai* “the bodily frame endures not” is reminded by the following instances:

*ūṇ ulām muṭai koḷ yākkai uṭaikalam āvatu, eṇṇum
māṇulām maḷaikkaṇār tam vāḷkkaiyai meṇṇu eṇṇi*⁶⁴,

“thinking that life with women with cool eyes, resembling the eyes of the deer, is lasting, (without) realizing that the foul smelling body consisting of flesh, is like a breakable pot”.

*naṭu ilākkāḷaṇ vantu naṇukumpōṭu ariya oṇṇā
aṭuvana aṇcu pūtamavaitamaku āṇṇal ākēṇ
paṭuvana palavuṇ kuṇṇam pāṇkilā maṇitar vāḷkkai*⁶⁵,

“It is not possible to know when unjust death approaches; the five elements torture me; I cannot put up with them; most of what happens is sin; (therefore) worthless human life.”

urai taḷarntu uṭalār naṭuṅkā muṇṇam,⁶⁶

“before the body shivers, after speech falters”.

*tiṇaittanai oṇ porai ilā uyir pōm kūṭṭaip poruḷ eṇṇu mika uṇṇi matiyāl inta
aṇaittulakum āḷal ām eṇṇu pēcum āṅkāram*⁶⁷,

“The pride of saying that through intelligence you can rule the entire world, thinking highly of the frame which may be vacated by life without even a minimum of consideration.”

*et tāyar ettantai eccurrattār emmāṭu cummāṭu evar nallār
cettāl vantu utavuvār oruvarillai ciṇu viṇakāl tī mūṭṭic cellā nirpar*⁶⁸,

“which mothers?; which fathers?; which relatives?; which wealth is supportive?; who are good people?; nobody comes to help when (you) die; they will light the firewood (to burn the corpse) and go”.

The chapter 5 of the *Nālaṭiyār*, *tūytaṇmai* “impurity”, is reminded by the following instances:

*paṭu kuḷi ppavvattu aṇṇa paṇṇiyai ppeyta āṇṇāl*⁶⁹,

⁶³ Ibid., p.184.

⁶⁴ Ibid., p.67.

⁶⁵ Ibid., p.76.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p.154.

⁶⁷ Ibid., p.283.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p.316.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p.52.

“As it is pouring into the stomach which resembles sea of immense depth”.

*puḷu ppeyta paṇṭi taṇṇai ppuṟam oru tōlāl mūṭi oḷukkaṟā oṇpatu vāy*⁷⁰,

“covering outside, stomach full of worms, with one skin; secreting through nine openings”.

*pollāta eṇ aḷukkil pukuvāṇ*⁷¹,

“he who enters my evil dirt (body)”.

The chapter 6 of the *Nālaṭiyār*, *tuṟavu* “renunciation”, echoes the following instances:-

*cīrtta nal maṇaiyāḷum ciṟuvarum
ārtta cuṟṟamum paṟru ilaiyātalāl*⁷²,

“as the good accomplished wife, children and numerous relatives have no attachment”.

*tantai yār tāy yār uṭaṇṇiṟantār tāram āṟ puttirar āṟ tāmtām āṟē
vanta āṟu eṇṇāṇē pōmāṟu ētō māyamām itaṟku ētum makīla vēṇṭā*⁷³,

“Who is the father? Who is the mother? Who is sibling, life partner? Who are the children? Who are we, ourselves? How did (we) come in? How will (we) go? This is illusion. Be not deceived.”

The Chapter 4 of the *Nālaṭiyār*, *araṇṇ valiyuruttal* “The might of virtue”, reminds the following instance:

*vēmpīṇai ppeci, viṭakkiṇai oṃpi, viṇai perukki,
tūmpīṇai ttūrttu, aṅku oṟ cuṟṟam tuṇai eṇṇu iruntīr*⁷⁴,

“having spoken harsh language, having cared for the flesh (physical well-being), having increased the *karma* (load), having filled your stomach, you who exist thinking that your relatives will help”.

The chapter 7, *ciṇamiṇmai* “the absence of anger: meekness”, and chapter 8 *poraiyuṭaimai* “patience”, reflect aspects of Jain asceticism which Appar observed facing persecution, allegedly unleashed on him by a king on the instigation of Jain monks.

Nampiyāṇṭār Nampi, who compiled Appar's *Tēvāram* into three anthologies, and who elaborated Cuntarar's *Tiruttoṇṭattokai* into *Tiruttoṇṭar tiruvantāti*, has referred to Appar in the latter work as *tiru niṇṇa cemmaiye cemmaiya kkoṇṭavar* “he who professed righteousness enriched by Śiva worship as proper conduct”. Explaining this phrase has proved difficult as the words *tiru* and *cemmai* have many meanings in Tamil language. Nampi seems to have constructed the phrase from Appar's usage of these words. Appar has

⁷⁰ opp.cit.

⁷¹ *Tēvāram*, volume 2, p.356.

⁷² Ibid., p.168.

⁷³ Ibid., p.366.

⁷⁴ Ibid., p.101.

explained the word *tiru niṅṅa* in *cintaiyil civoamāy niṅṅa cemmai*⁷⁵ “righteousness when the mind is pervaded by Śiva”. In another context, Appar uses the phrase *tiru niṅṅa cemmai* in the line *civaṅ eṇṇum ōcai allatu, araiyō, ulakil tiru niṅṅa cemmai uḷatē?*⁷⁶ “Speak. Is there in the world *tiru niṅṅa* righteousness, excluding the Śiva sound”. So, it seems that the Śiva sound is the essence of what he considers *tiru niṅṅa*. The other Tamil bhakti poets have not used *cemmai*; so it is proper to look for Jain antecedents. It could stand for the Jain concept of *saddharma* “righteousness”. The Jains stress the importance of *samyag-dṛṣṭi* “proper knowledge”, *samyag-cāritra* “proper conduct”, and *samyag-darśana* “proper view”. Having lived as a Jain monk for a considerable period of time, Appar's concern for righteousness and propriety could be the reason for the usage of the term *cemmai*. This Nampi's description might be an apt way of referring to Appar's Tamil Śaivism.

References

- Jaini, Padmanabh S., *The Jaina Path of Purification*, Berkeley -- Los Angeles -- London: University of California Press, 1979.
- Open Boundaries, Jain Communities and Cultures in Indian History*, ed. Jon E. Cort, Albany: State university of New York Press, 1998.
- Patīnorān Tirumurai*, Ceṇṇai: Caiva Cittānta Mahā Camājam, 1933.
- Periyapurāṇam eṇṇu vaḷaṅkukiṅṅa Tiruttoṅṅar Purāṇam*, Cēkkiḷār, Āṅṅumuka Nāvalar eḷām patippu, Ceṇṇai: Mutaliyār G. Subramaniam, 1955.
- Pope, G.U., *The Naladiyar or Four hundred Quatrains in Tamil*, first ed. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1893, New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1984.
- Tēvāram*, T.V.Gopal Iyer (ed.), directed by Francois Gros, volumes 1-3, Pondichéry: Institut Français d'Indologie, 1984, 1985, 1987.
- The Cilappatikāram of Iḷankō Aṅṅikal*, Translated, with an Introduction and Postscript, by R. Parthasarathy, New York: Columbia University Press, 1992.
- Tiruvāmūr Srī Appar Cuvāmikaḷ Kurupūjai Viḷā Malar*, Ceṇṇai: Tiruvāmūr Srī Appar Kurupūjai Viḷākkalākattīṅṅar, 1970.
- Vīracōḷiyam, Peruntēvaṅṅār uraiyuṅṅaṅ*, patippu Kōvintarācamutaliyār, Ceṇṇai: Pavānantam Akkaṅṅemi, 1942.

⁷⁵ Ibid., p.159.

⁷⁶ Ibid., p.9.