

DANCE OF SIVA

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ஆதிநடு வந்தமிலா வளவில் சோதி
யருள்ளான மூர்த்தியா யகிலமீன்ற
மாதினையு மொருபாகத் தடக்கி வானோர்
மகுடசூ ளாமணியாய் வையம் போற்றப்
பாதிமதி யணிபவளச் சடைகள் தாழ்ப்
படரொளி அம்பலத்தாடும் பரனார் பாதத்
தாதுமலி தாமரைகள் சிரத்தே வைத்துத்
தளராத பேரன்பு வளரா நிற்பாம்.

ஆதி நடு அந்தமிலா அளவில் சோதி
அருள் ஞான மூர்த்தியாய் அகிலம் ஈன்ற,
மாதினையும் ஒரு பாகத்து அடக்கி வானோர்
மகுட சூளாமணியாய் வையம் போற்றப்,
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ātinaṭu antamilā aḷavil cōti aruḷñāṇa mūrṭṭiyāy akilam īṇra
māṭinaiyum orupākat taṭakki vāṇōr maḷuṭacū ḷāmaṇiyāy vaiyam pōṇṇap
pāṭimati yaṇipavaḷac caṭaikaḷ tālap paṭaroḷiam palattāṭum paraṇār pātat
tātumali tāmaraikaḷ cirattē vaitṭut taḷarāta pēraṇpu vaḷarā niṇpām

The One who has no beginning, middle, and end. The Infinite Light,
Personification of Grace and Intelligence, the consort of the Mother of the cosmic
clusters, the precious crown gem for the celestials dances in the arena of spreading
light within the souls (**chit-ākāsh**) with the hanging coral braids adorned with the
half-moon praised by the world. His pollen-breaded lotus feet, I will keep on my
crown. Let our relentless love grow towards Him.

- Siva Jnāna Siddhiyār

The secret of the incessant dance of the Supreme can be perceived at three levels by the seekers as follows:

- 1.1. One is at the cosmic plane, which is called gross dance. This can be perceived in the movement of the cosmic flux. The same dance is also there in every atom as the movement of particles. This dance represents His five cosmic activities – **pancha kritya**, constitutes creation – **shrishti**, sustenance – **sthiti**, desolution – **samhāra**, obscuration – **tirobhava** and grace – **anugraha**. This cosmic activity is the central motif of this dance.

தோற்றம் துடியதனில் தோயும் திதிஅமைப்பில்
சாற்றியிடும் அங்கியிலே சங்காரம் - ஊற்றமா
ஊன்று மலர்ப்பதத்தில் உற்ற திரோதம்முத்தி
நான்ற மலப்பதத்தே நாடு.

thōtram thudi yataṇil thōyum thithi amaippil
cāriyitum aṅkiyilē caṅkāram – ūtramā
ūṇRu malarp pathatthil uttra thirōtam mutthi
nāṇra malarp pathatthē nādu

*The fivefold act of Siva
The hand that wields the drum evolves;
The hand of hope that sustains;
The fire on His hand destroys;
The Obscuration is by the flowery foot that presses down;
Gracious deliverance ensues from the flowery foot held aloft.*

- **UNmai viLakkam, one of the fourteen MeikaNda Sāstra texts, song 35**

This grandeur conception of gross dance of **Siva** at the inert base of cosmos and atoms is the synthesis of science, religion and art. This is universally acknowledged by scientists as such we can see the ten feet tall statue of **Lord nādarāj** at the Centre for Nuclear Research in Europe (CERN) in Switzerland. This is the dance which was perceived, visualized and expressed by physicist **Fritjof Capra** in his book of “**Tao of physics**” in 1975. This is the reason for intelligence, there by an order of the inert. Let us see about this dance in his own words.

“I had a beautiful experience which set on a road that has led to the writing of this book. I was sitting by the ocean one late summer afternoon watching the waves rolling in and feeling the rhythm of my breathing when I suddenly became aware of my whole environment as being engaged in a gigantic cosmic dance. Being a physicist, I knew that the sands, rocks, water and air around me were made of vibrating molecules and atoms and that these consisted of particles which interacted with one another by creating and destroying other particles. I knew also that the earth’s atmosphere was continually bombarded by showers of particles of cosmic rays of high energy undergoing multiple collisions as they penetrated the air. All this was familiar to me from my research in high energy physics, but until that moment I had only experienced it through graphs, diagrams and mathematical theories. As I sat on that beach my former experience came to my life. I saw cascades of energy coming from outer space, in which particles were created and destroyed, in rhythmic pulses. I saw the atoms and the elements and those in my body participating in this cosmic dance of energy. I felt this rhythm and I heard its sound and I knew at that moment that this was the **Dance of Siva**, the Lord of dancers, worshiped by the Hindus”

–from the book **Tao of Physics** by **Fritjof Capra**



Statue of Lord Natarajah at the Centre for Nuclear Research in Europe - CERN

1.2. The subtle dance of the Supreme happens in the Supreme itself. This dance is His intelligence, this dance is His actions, this dance is His flow which actuates and animates everything. It is the subtle dance hard to perceive, realize or understand. Our Lord is the Dancer, who, like the heat latent in firewood, diffuses His power in mind and matter, and makes them dance in their turn. His dance is the dance of Supreme Intelligence – **jnāna nadana**; the dance of nature – **ūna nadana** is the dance of **Kāli**, the dark obscuring energy – **thirodhāna sakthi** of the Lord. This dance of nature by **Kāli** is not possible unless the Lord wills it and dances Himself.

1.3. The plane for the third and most subtle dance of the Supreme is our soul. This Supreme Intelligence dances in every soul for the purpose of removing our fetters. This is the reason for the perception and intelligence of every sentient being. This is the most subtle dance of all three to comprehend or understand. This can be realized within the self (heart/spirit). This is the dance that ultimately smashes our fetters.

மாயை தனைஉதறி வல்வினையைச் சுட்டுமலம்
சாய அமுக்கிஅருள் தானெடுத்து - நேயத்தால்
ஆனந்த வாரிதியில் ஆன்மாவைத் தானழுத்தல்
தானெந்தை யார்பாதம் தான்.

māyai tanaiutarī valvinaiyaic cutṭumalam
cāya amukkiaruḷ tānetuttu – nēyattāl
ānanta vāritiyil ānmāvait tānaluttal
tānentai yārpātam tān

*Throwing Maya away, gutting with fire cruel Karma,
Crushing irretrievably āNava, manifesting Grace,
Impelled by love, immersing the soul in the sea of Bliss:
This indeed is the Dance enacted by our Father-Lord.*

- **UNmai viLakkam, one of the fourteen MeikaNda Sāstra texts, song 36**

எட்டும் இரண்டும் உருவான விங்கத்தே

நட்டம் புதல்வா நவிலக்கேள் - சிட்டன்
சிவாயநம வென்னுந் திருவெழுத்தஞ் சாலே
அவாயமற நின்றாடு வான்.

eṭṭum iranṭum uruvāṇa liṅkattē
naṭṭam putalvā navilakkēḷ – ciṭṭan
civāyanama venṇūn tiruveḷuttañ cālē
avāyamara ninrāṭu vāṇ

*O Son! Listen to the exposition of the dance that is
Enacted in the soul the emblem of which is the letter -Ya
Representing the number ten made up of eight and two.
The Lord with His body si va ya na ma
Dances, that all lives may gain deliverance.*

- UNmai viLakkam, one of the fourteen MeikaNda Sāstra texts, song 31

2. This Supreme Dance can also be perceived at five levels by the advanced seekers as follows:

ஆமேபொன் னம்பலம் அற்புதம் ஆனந்தம்
ஆமே திருக்கூத் தனவரத தாண்டவம்
ஆமே பிரளயம் ஆகும்அத் தாண்டவம்
ஆமேசங் காரத் தருந்தாண்ட வங்களே.

*āmēpon nambalam arputam ānandam
āmē tirukkūttu anavarata tāṇḍavam
āmē pralayaṃ ākum at tāṇḍavam
āmē saṅkārattu aruntāṇḍa vaṅkaḷē*

In the golden hall, our Lord Śiva is performing five kinds of dance – **arputha tāṇḍavam**, **ānanda tāṇḍavam**, **anavarata tāṇḍavam**, **pralaya tāṇḍavam** and **sanhāra tāṇḍavam**.

- Thiru manthiram, the 10th ThirumuRai by Saint Thiru Mūlar – song 887

2.1. **pralaya tāṇḍava** is the dance performed for dissolving the created worlds and **tattvas** into their respective causal sources and dissolving even the causal sources

into Śakti. This is performed in the **rāja sabhā** identified with **annamaya kośa** – our gross body. This dance signifies the creation anew (**punar utbhavam**). **praḷaya tāṇḍava** denotes not only the total dissolution but also the immediate new creation.

2.2. **samhāra tāṇḍava** is the dance performed for the destruction of hostile forces which impedes the efforts undertaken by the aspirant to disentangle himself/herself from the triple bondage – **āNava, karma** and **māyā** and his/ her spiritual progress. This **tāṇḍava** is performed in the **dēva sabha** identified with **prāṇamaya kōśa** – our vital body.

2.3. **aṇavarata tāṇḍava** is performed constantly for the sake of betterment of the three kinds of souls – **sakalas** (the souls with all three fetters – **āNava, karma** and **māyā**), **praḷayākalas** (the souls with only two fetters – **āNava** and **karma**) and **viññānakalas** (the souls with the single fetter **āNava**), for the sake of liberated souls and for the sake of those perfect souls with whom the cosmic deeds related to the next creation are entrusted. Since this is performed even during the cosmic night of the absolutely dissolved state, this is called ‘**aṇavarata tāṇḍava**’ – incessant dance. This is performed in the **niruttha sabha** identified with **maṇōmaya kōśa** – our psychic body.

2.4. **atputa tāṇḍava** is performed for the sake of manifestation of different forms of Śiva necessitated by the worldly events, both good and bad. ‘**atputam**’ means that which is not seen before or that which has occurred anew. This is performed in the **kanaka sabha** identified with **viññānamaya kōśa** – our intellectual body.

2.5. **ānanda tāṇḍava** is the dance of Bliss for the bestowal of grace in the form of eternal bliss and for the liberation of the souls. This is performed in the **cit sabha** identified with **ānandamaya kōśa** – our causal body.

Just as the bestowal of grace(**aṇugraha**) is the basis for all other four cosmic functions (creation, sustenance, dissolution and obscuration) performed by the Lord, even so **ānanda tāṇḍava** is the basis for all other four **tāṇḍavas**.

மோனந்த மாமுனிவர் மும்மலத்தை மோசித்துத்
தானந்த மானிடத்தே தங்கியிடும் - ஆனந்தம்
மொண்டருந்தி நின்றாடல் காணும்அருள் மூர்த்தியாக்
கொண்டதிரு அம்பலத்தான் கூத்து.

mōṇanta māmuṇivar mummalattai mōcittut
tāṇanta māṇiṭattē taṅkiyiṭum – āṇantam
moṇṭarunti niṇṛāṭal kāṇumaruḷ mūrṭṭiyāk
koṇṭatiru ampalattāṇ kūttu

*The great sages are poised in the Bliss of Silence, having quelled
The triple fetters; they are fixed themselves in the Self;
They quaff Bliss witnessing the Divine Dance; this is what
The dance of the gracious Lord of the Ambalam performs for them.*

- UNmai viLakkam, one of the fourteen MeikaNda Sāstra texts, song 37

3. There are even more subtle dimensions of the Supreme Dance revealed by the seers which are beyond the grasp of our words and deeds.

கற்பனை கடந்த சோதி
கருணையே யருவ மாகி
அற்புதக் கோல நீடி
யருமறைச் சிரத்தின் மேலாஞ்
சிற்பர வியோம மாகுந்
திருச்சிற்றம் பலத்துள் நின்று
பொற்புடன் நடஞ்செய் கின்ற
பூங்கழல் போற்றி போற்றி

*karpaṇai kaṭanta cōti
karuṇaiyē yuruva māki
arputak kōla nīṭi
yarumaṛaic cirattiṇ mēlāñ
cirpara viyōma mākun
tiruccirram palattuḷ niṇru
porpuṭaṇ naṭaṅcey kiṇra
pūṅkalal pōrri pōrri*

*It is beyond the ken of our imagination;
It is from Grace personified;
It is poised in wondrous Beauty;
It abides above and beyond the peak of vedic scriptures,
At the mystic gnostic ether of conscious - Tiru-chitr-ambalam;*

*This is the Grand Dance enacted by the,
Ankleted and flowery feet of the Supreme! Praise be!*

- Periya purāNam, the 12th ThirumuRai by Saint Sēkkizār

உலகெ லாம்உணர்ந் தோதற் கரியவன்
நிலவு லாவிய நீர்மலி வேணியன்
அலகில் சோதியன் அம்பலத் தாடுவான்
மலர்சி லம்படி வாழ்த்தி வணங்குவாம் .

*ulake lāmuṇarn tōtar kariyaṇ
nilavu lāviya nīrmali vēṇiyaṇ
alakil cōtiyaṇ ampalat tāṭuvāṇ
malarci lampāṭi vāṭṭi vaṇaṅkuvām*

*Omniety is He; Who is hard to be comprehended and expressed
By all sentient beings in all the cosmic worlds;
In His crest rests the crescent moon and the water of Ganga;
Limitless is His effulgence;He dances in the Ambalam.
We hail and adore His ankleted flowery-feet
Which is the source of all the cosmic flux.*

- Periya purāNam, the 12th ThirumuRai by Saint Sēkkizār

Jnanis, the realized persons only can envision and experience all forms and planes of this dance of Siva everywhere.

எங்கும் திருமேனி எங்கும் சிவசத்தி
எங்கும் சிதம்பரம் எங்கும் திருநட்டம்
எங்கும் சிவமாய் இருத்தலால் எங்கெங்கும்
தங்கும் சிவன்அருள் தன்விளை யாட்டதே .

*eṅkum tirumēṇi eṅkum civacatti
eṅkum cūtamparam eṅkum tirunaṭṭam
eṅkum civamāy iruttalāl eṅkeṅkum
taṅkum civaṇaruṭ taṇvilai yāṭṭatē*

*His Holy form is Everywhere;
All-pervading His Siva-Sakti;
Chidambaram is Everywhere;
Everywhere His Dance,
As Siva is all and Omnipresent,
Everywhere is Siva`s Gracious dance, temporal, timeless, incessant is
All, all, His Sport Divine.*

Thiru manthiram, the 10th ThirumuRai by Saint Thiru Mūlar – song 2722