

## **SIVA JNĀNA SIDDHIYĀR: INTRODUCTION**

**SIVA JNĀNA SIDDHIYĀR, THE POETIC COMMENTARY OF SIVA JNĀNA BŌDHA** by **Aruṅnanthi Sivam**, the prime disciple of **Meikaṇḍār**.

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With earnest prayers to the Supreme Sivam to give strength and illumination, we proceed to study the **swa paksha of Siva Jnāna Siddhiyār**, a work so far unparalleled for the lucidity of its thought, felicity of its expression, and closeness of its reasoning. In the **para paksha**, (others point of view), the views of other religions were considered and analysed critically. In the **swa paksha** (our point of view), the ultimatum **Saiva Siddhānta** is stated, and the objections are met.

The essence of **Vēdās** is given in **Upanishads**; this is also called **Vēdānta**. The essence of it as a practical understanding and approach to **Vēdānta** in our day-to-day life is given in **Āgamās**. **Vēdās** and **Āgamās** are considered as the words of God revealed to various sages, saints, celestials and gods at different times. The essence of this **TRUTH**, explained in **Āgamās**, is given in fourteen texts of **Meikaṇḍa Sāththira Texts (The Texts of TRUTH revealed)** in Tamil.

Some says the content and message of fourteen **Meikaṇḍa Sāththira Texts** are unique for Tamils as such they have no connection to Sanskrit **Vēdās** and **Āgamās**. But Saiva canonical texts of twelve **Thirumurai** and fourteen **Meikaṇḍa Sāththira Texts** talks about **Vēdās** and **Āgamās** extensively.

Among the fourteen **Meikaṇḍa Sāththira Texts**, **Siva Jnāna Bōdha** by **Meikaṇḍār** is the crown text. Tradition says this as the translation of twelve aphorisms (**sūtrās**) in the **pāsa vimosana patala** of the text of **Rourava Āgama**. Many dispute this claim and sate **Siva Jnāna Bōdha** as the original book in Tamil. Absence of **Siva Jnāna Bōdha sūtrās** in the available **Rourava Āgama** validates their statement. They also point to the richness, niceties and nuances of Tamil **Siva Jnāna Bōdha** text compared to its Sanskrit version.

It is also noteworthy to mention here **G.U. Pope's** statement of “**Saiva Siddhanta is the choicest product of Dravidian intellect**”. But this statement will dispute the traditional concept of **Saiva Siddhanta** as it is the word of God.

**Siva Jnāna Siddiyār** is the poetic commentary of **Siva Jnāna Bōdha** by **Aruṅnanthi Sivam**, the prime disciple of **Meikaṇḍār**. Both these scriptures are not well-known to general public as they are only studied and discussed in secluded closed circles in traditional way. The words and phrases of these Tamil texts thoroughly permeate us in understanding **Saiva Siddhānta**.

Scriptures in Hinduism do not teach any particular doctrine. They teach various doctrines suited to different people at different stages of spiritual maturity. They look contradictory to each other but actually not. They are revealed for the understanding of the TRUTH layer by layer and step by step as per the individual maturity, fitness and intelligence. This is called **adhikāri bhēda**, restrictive authority of access.

Irrespective of race, religion, gender and faiths, we all are in this journey towards the ULTIMATE TRUTH by step by step. Hence the religions and teachings with the individualistic and totalistic claim of exclusively their path alone is the right path does not reflect the TRUTH. As such these individualistic views are met and refuted critically in **Saiva Siddhānta**.

At the same time, **Saiva Siddhānta** does not endorse the concept that all religions directly lead to the same destination. **Saiva Siddhānta** is the core that proceeds on the footing that every religion and faith have a place in the schema evolution to the ULTIMATE TRUTH (உண்மை). Each religion or faith is a rung in the ladder as life is a growth from truth to TRUTH. We cannot climb the ladder by breaking the rungs as such **Saiva Siddhanta** accepts and preserve other religions and faith while maintaining its uniqueness at the same time. **Saiva Siddhānta is all inclusive but still exclusive**.

Study of **Siddhiyār** will take you through the journey of all the possible faiths and views of the past, present and future religions. It makes you comfortable with all the religions, faiths and scriptures of the past, present and future. But this is not achievable merely by self-reading or academic studies alone.

Study of this scripture should be combined with **sādhana**, the personal spiritual practice, guided by a Guru, the bona-fide spiritual master. Commentaries of these texts are necessary to bridge the books to the reader. There are six commentaries considered authentic by tradition. These are commentaries in Tamil by **Marai**

**Jnāna dēsikar, Sivāgra Yōgi, Nirampa azhakiya dēsikar, Jnāna pirakāsa Munivar of Thirunelvēli - Jaffna, Siva jnāna Munivar of ThiruvāvaduthuRai Ādheenam and Subrāmaniya dēsikar of ThiruvāvaduthuRai Ādheenam.** New commentary in Tamil (புத்துரை) by **M. ThiruviLangam** of Colombo, Sri Lanka is also considered authentic.

**J. M. Nallasami Pillai** was the first one to translate **Siva Jnāna Siddhiyār** in English and it was published in series in the magazine of **Siddhānta Deepika**. Our translation and commentary follow his version in many places. **V. A. Devasenapathi**, Professor of Philosophy, University of Madras wrote a beautiful book in English called “**Saiva Siddhanta – as expounded in the Sivajnāna-siddhiyar and its six commentaris**” in 1974. **K. Sivaraman** translated **Siddhiyār** in English along with its Hindi translation and it was published by Kasi Mutt, ThirupanamthaL in 1988.

I am now attempting to give an English translation closely following the footsteps of the above, to bridge this masterpiece **Siva Jnāna Siddhiyār** and its philosophy **Saiva Siddhānta** with our current and future generation. My intended readers are neither possessing the necessary expertise in Tamil language nor the understanding of classical **Saiva Siddhānta** but having the true desire to know these as the Philosophy of Tamils by Tamils. My sons **Sai Geethan, Vaasudevan** and my daughter **Bhavaani Amma** read the scripts and content with me while it was being written and formatted and offered their corrections and comments in language, grammar, format, and content. Efforts were made to present the translation easily understandable and perceivable by these young children. so it could be an easy grasp for the younger generation. Ongoing study and discussion of **Siva Jnāna Siddhiyār** in our weekly **Sat-Sang** in Toronto while writing this book for over a period of five years from 2013 to 2018 facilitated my writings.

My sincere gratitude goes to my **Jnāna Guru A. Krishnamurti Aiya** of **Chidamparam**, desciple of **Sivakkudil Satcithananda natheswara Swamikal** of **Kovaiputhur**. He instructed me in 2006 to spread the message to others. I am also thankful to my **Vidyā Guru S. Shanmugavel Aiya** of **Tuticorin, Vidwan of Thiruvavaduthurai Adheenam** whose instructions strengthened my foundation in **Saiva Siddhānta**.

I beg my readers to forgive my errors of commission and omission in this book.

May the Almighty Lord **Nadarājah** with **Sivakāmi AmbāL** Grace us in our efforts and endeavours.

