

CHAPTER - IX

RESUME

Sivaprakāsa Swāmiḡal who lived in the second half of the 17th century A.D. lived only for 32 years. He was both a versatile scholar and a prolific writer. During the short span of 32 years, he wrote more than 32 works covering a variety of fields. Mention may be made of some of the areas covered by him. He wrote Sivaprakāsa Vikāsam dealing with Saiva Siddhanta. On Advaita Vedanta he wrote Vedanta Cudamani. The Tarka Parbhāsa which he wrote gives an account of the Nyaya system. Though he was a virasaivite, he did not write an independent work of his own on Virasaivism. On the contrary he has given only a translation of the Siddhanta Sikāmani which was written by Sivajogi in Sanskrit.

Why is it that Sivaprakāsa Swāmiḡal, a follower of Virasaivism, did not write an independent work of his own on Virasaivism? To answer this question, it is necessary to take into consideration the philosophical climate that prevailed at his time. During the first half of the 17th century A.D. Saiva Siddhanta was very popular in Tamil region, because of Kumaraguruparar who carried the message of Saiva Siddhanta as far as Benaras. Kumerasamy Desikar, the father of Sivaprakāsa Swāmiḡal, was himself a

etaunch Saiva Siddhantin and was respected as a preceptor by the Saivites. But nevertheless he became a follower of Virasaivism. What made him change his faith? He gave his consent for the linga dharana and became a Virasivite, because of the practical advantage of being in possession the Linga all the time for his puja and not because of the philosophical importance of Virasaivism. The only thing that was definitely known about Virasaivism at the time of Kumarasamy Desikar was the linga dharana which was emphasized by Virasaivism. Neither its philosophy nor its ethical principles were known to the people at large. In short Kumarasamy Desikar came over to the fold of Virasaivism without knowing any of its philosophical principles and religious practices. It was no wonder, therefore, that Sivaprakasa Swamikal did not write an independent treatise of his own on Virasaivism. There were two reasons why he chose to translate the Siddhanta Sikamani. Tradition has it that the Siddhanta Sikamani contains the teachings of the sage Renuka to the sage Agastya. Further the Siddhanta Sikamani was written originally in Sanskrit and this also contributed to its importance. It must have occurred to Sivaprakasa Swamikal that the best way to popularize the Virasaivism at that time was to give a translation of the Siddhanta Sikamani and not to write an independent work of his own.

It should not be thought that Sivaprakāsa Swāmiḡal did not have his own views on some of the philosophical principles and religious practices of Virasaivism. Though it was not possible for him to give expression to his own views on Virasaivism in the Siddhanta Sikamani he has given his own interpretations in his other works such as Sivajānana Balaya Swāmiḡal Thalattu, Nonju Vidu Thuthu and Prabhu Linga Lilai.

In the course of the present research, I have indicated at the appropriate places the new interpretations of some of the principles of Virasaivism and its religious practices as given by Sivaprakāsa Swāmiḡal.

There are certain points which I have interpreted in a new way which give a new light to the principles of Virasaivism. I have also developed a new theory which is related to Virasaivism in this research. The followings points have been discussed in this research.

I. Origin of Virasaivism:

There are two views with regard to origin of Virasaivism. According to the traditional view, Virasaivism owes its origin to Paṇcācāryas namely Revaṇarādhya, Maṇḡlarādhya, Ekoramarādhya, Paṇḡditarādhya, and Viśvaṇarādhya. As against the traditional view modern scholars like Sakhare, hold the view that Virasaivism is

only a modification of Kashmir Saivism. Though there are undoubtedly many differences between Kashmir Saivism and Virasaivism in ethical discipline and religious practices, there are many points of similarity between the two in their philosophical views. Sakharé, therefore, maintain that the origin of Virasaivism must be traced to Kashmir Saivism, and that it was done by Basava in 12th century A.D.

I have argued that Virasaivism has its origin in Tamil region and that it embodies in its philosophy the valourous aspects of Siva. In order to substantiate my position I have traced the origin and development of Saivism from the time of Sangam literature till the time of Sivaprakasa Swamikal. I have also traced the origin of Virasaivism from the concept of Siva. It is my contention that the Supreme Being as the embodiment of love, is called Semporul; and the same supreme Being in its aspect of wrath is known as Siva. The following points lend support to my contention.

- 1) The word Saivism is associated with Siva.
- 2) Though the word Sivam is not to be found in the Vedas, it can be safely concluded that the practice of the worship of Siva as prevalent in ancient cities like Mohenjodaro and Harappa as evidenced by excavations in those places.

3) Though scholars point out that the worship of Siva was practiced by the ancient Tamils words like Sivam, Saivism were not seen in Tamil Literature. On the contrary we do find words like Seyon, Semporul.

4) Semporul was conceived as the embodiment of Love and happiness.

5) The ancient Tamils designated 'Semporul' by other terms like Kadavul, Iraivan, Engunathan.

6) They thought of God or Semporul as possessing three characteristics namely Kodinilai, Kandazhi and Valli.

7) Since the word 'Sivam' conveys the sense of anger or wrath and since the Supreme being is said to have destroyed Tripura, he has been given the name Sivam. Tolkappiyam gives reference to the identification of wrath with Sivappu (சிவப்பு) For example, கறப்பும் சிவப்பும் வெகுளி பொருள்".

8) God who is the embodiment of love and happiness assumed the form of one who is wrath or anger destroys all that is evil with a view to help living beings. There he is called 'Siva'.

9) Semporul and Siva are the two names to indicate two different and opposite characters of one Supreme Being.

10) Virāsaivism has its origin only from Siva or wrathful aspect of Supreme Being.

II. The Significance of Vira:

The term Virāsaivism contains two words, Vira and Saivism. Virāsaivism was prevalent even before Basava. It is wrong to think that the Saivism which he or any other person practiced came to be known as Virāsaivism, because of the valour with which he defended it in opposition to others. We cannot attribute the valour which was characteristic of the person to the doctrine of Saivism which he upheld. The interpretation of the term Virāsaivism in the above sense is very superficial and has to be rejected.

I have argued that the word Vira which is added to the word Saivism should bring out the peculiar characteristic of the system to justify the name Virāsaivism. Only if Saivism has the unique characteristic of Vira, it deserves to be called Virāsaivism. The word 'Vira' is not to be found in ancient Tamil works like the Tolkaḷḷiyam. But there are references in these ancient works to 'Anbu Nerī', the path of love, and 'Arul Nerī', the path of Grace. The former is புறத்தீர் காமம் புலியெடு நெறி while the latter is அமரர்க்கு முடியும் அறவகை நெறி . The Supreme Being in its wrathful form performed eight valourous deeds with a view to help the souls attain immortality. The Supreme Being performed the

valourous deeds by pursuing the Śatsthala Yoga or the Virāśaiva Yoga or the Yoga through the six plexuses. Hence the term Virāśaivism emphasizes the yoga discipline which is valourous. The well known Śatsthala Yoga of Virāśaivism is no other than the valourous yoga discipline practised by the Supreme Being which has been referred to as Arul Neri in the ancient Tamil works.

There are many references which I have given to explain these two paths prevailed in the life of ancient Tamils. 'Arul Neri is connected with Naga Neri. Origin of Naga worship and the names ending with Naganar are ~~six~~ clearly explained with the help of Arul Neri. This is a new addition to the philosophy of Virāśaivism and it explains the nature of Śiva.

III. Development of Virāśaivism:

I have traced to the development of Virāśaivism from the time of the Sangam Literature till the time of Basava and also its renaissance after Basava, till the time of Śivaprakāsa Śwami-gal. In the course of my discussion on this problem I have emphasized the following points.

1) Virāśaivism must have existed long before Basava inasmuch as the doctrine of Śatsthala was known before him.

2) There was also the practice of 'linga dharana' before him.

3) The practice of applying Vibhūti and the use of Hudrāksa which are important items of Astavarana were prevalent in the Tamil region before the time of Basava. Mention may be made of a poet by a name Venbhuti who lived in the Sangam period. The name of the poet refers to the sacred ash (Vibhūti).

A reformer and a revolutionary that he was, Basava brought about some changes in Virāśaivism. It was Basava who emphasized the importance of Bhakti in Virāśaivism.

Again, it was he who insisted on the combination of Bhakti and Yoga for the purpose of attaining the goal of liberation.

Thirdly, Basava was of the view that the combination of Jñāna and Karma was not enough. To the Jñāna - Karma - Samuccaya, he added one more factor, namely Bhāvana.

Fourthly, he laid emphasize on the Guru-Sisya-relationship.

Fifthly, it was because of Basava that the Tantras were also included along with the Vedas and the Āgamas as the authoritative sources of knowledge.

Sixthly it was he who expounded in detail the five fold virtue called the Pancācāra for the purpose of regenerating the lives of the people in society.

Lastly, the conception of the Sūnya Simhāsana as a seventh stage beyond the Aikya-Sthala was entirely due to Basava.

IV. The explanations of the meaning and significance of the word 'Linga' is necessary to understand the philosophy of Virasaivism. Reference has been made to as many as sixteen views about the meaning and significance of 'Lingam'. None of these views, it seems to me, is acceptable. The word is derived from a very ancient Tamil word 'EL' which means 'light' and 'what illumines'. In short, the word 'Linga' means 'light' which is located in the six adharas. The expression ⁶oṣṭāṅga refers to the Satsthala Yoga. The outward form of the Linga is an outline of a human being practicing Satsthala Yoga.

This is the only suitable explanation stood on logical ground to the philosophy.

* Virasaivism and it removes the charge that the 'Linga' is nothing but the symbol of phallus.

VF. Virasaivism a systematized philosophy:

In the course of the exposition of the philosophy of Virasaivism. I have drawn comparison with other systems such as Saiva Siddhanta, Advaita, Viśiṣṭādvaita and the Bhēda bhēda schools of Vedānta. The categories admitted by Virasaivism can be brought out by the following classifications.

Section I:

Brahman:

1. The essential nature of the Brahman
2. Nirguna and Saguna aspects of Brahman
3. The Murta and Amurta aspects of Brahman
4. The accidental qualities of Brahman

Section II:

Soul:

1. Various theories of soul
2. Origin of Soul
3. Nature of Soul
4. Kinds of Soul
5. The creation to the Jiva
6. The creation to the Atma
The creation to the Anga

Section III:

World:

1. The cause of creation
2. Three kinds of creation
Jiva Sṛsti, Ātma Sṛsti and Aṅga Sṛsti

VI. Easiest discipline:

Viśālavism holds the view that it is possible for the spiritual aspirant who successfully pursues the ethical and spiritual discipline prescribed by the system, to transform his body

which is an indication of the change from the physical to the spiritual level. The system lays special emphasize on the importance of Vibhūti for the purpose of bringing about the transformation of the body.

In the course of the explanation of the different meanings of Mantra reference has been made to the way in which 'विष्णुसंज्ञा' can be interpreted in two ways. The expression 'विष्णुसंज्ञा' according to Virāśaivism indicates the Lingapath or Satsthala Yoga. Again the term 'विष्णुसंज्ञा' consists of three syllables namely 'विष्णु' and 'संज्ञा' refers to the Anga-Linga-Aikya, the union of the soul and God.

The doctrine of Astavarana, it has been shown, is connected with the eight valourous deeds performed by Śiva.

Conclusion:

Virāśaivism is not a modern philosophical view. Since its origin can be traced to the Sangam period, it cannot definitely be later than the Sangam period. Far from being a philosophy and religion of the past it is a living creed practised by quite a few. It has been a source of inspiration not only to reforms like Basava and philosopher-mystics like Śivaprakāśa Śwāmīgal, but also to renowned saints like Ramalinga Śwāmīgal whose theory of Sāhā-kalal could be traced to Virāśaivism and also to the social reformers like Mahatma Gandhi who was very much pleased by the discipline Pañcācāra of Virāśaivism.