

A COMPARATIVE STUDY ON VEDĀNTAM AND CAIVA CITTĀNTAM

ACCORDING TO SELECTED TAMIL SOURCES

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Before we compare the Philosophy of Caiva Cittāntam and Vedāntam, it is better to give a brief clarification to the wording of Caiva Cittāntam and Vedāntam. Infact, there is hardly any conceptual difference or contradiction between Tamil and Sanskrit tradition. Therefore, Caiva Cittāntam here means Caiva Cittāntam which mainly relies on Tamil sources like Meykanta Cāttiram and so. Likewise, Vedāntam, especially on Kaivalya Navaitam of Tāntavarāya Cuvāmikal.

The fourteen texts of Meykanta Cāttiram are the basic literature of Caiva Cittāntam. Among these Meykanta Tévar's Civalaṅapōtam gets prominent place and its Philosophy is considered as the most closely reasoned religious Philosophy in India. The two texts of Meykanta Cāttiram, namely Tiruvnitiyār of Tiruviyalur Uyavanta Tévar and Tirukkaliṅruppiyār of Tirukkāṭavur Uyavanta Tévar were earlier to Meykanta Tevar's Civāṅānapōtam. Both the texts belong to the 12th Century A.D. Apart from Civāṅānapōtam, Civāṅāna Cittiyaṅ and Irūpāirupatu of Arulnānti Civācariyār, Unmai vilakkam of Manavācankatātar, Umāpati Civācariyār, Cittānta astakam of Cittāntam namely Civappirakācam, Tirūvarutpayan, Vinānenpā, Porripaurotai, Kotikavi, Nencuvitutu, Unmaineri Vilakkam are the fourteen Meykanta Cāttiram. Kaivalya Navantam is written in Tamil by Tāntavarāyar who lived during the 18th Century A.D. It gives prominence to the path of Jñāna and contains the essence of Upaniṣad, Brahma Sutra, Bhagavad Gita, Jñānavācittam, Pañcataṣi and Vivēkaśūtamani. This work divides into two chapters namely Tattuvā Vilakkam >> Philosophical explanation << (180 verses) and Cāntekam Telital >> Realizing the truth from doubt << (108 verses). It contains altogether two hundred and eighty verses.

Caiva Cittāntam is one of the realistic system in the India Philosophy. It brings out the doctrine of mupporul >> three entities << which maintains that there are three eternal truth in the universe, namely, pati >> the Lord <<, pacu >> the bound soul <<, and pacam >> bond <<. Tiruvarutpayan, one of the fourteen Meykanta Cāttiram says that " ēkaṅ anēkaṅ irul kaṅmam māyai irantaka yivai yārātiyil >> the one supreme, the many souls, the bond of anavam > egoism < the bond of kaṅmam > action < and the two fold forms of mayai > power < bonds are real with out

beginning. (Tiruvaṅṭupayan, Kural 6 -2) << In contrast to Caiva Cittāntam, Vedāntam is a monistic Philosophy. It advocates the concept of advaita >> non dual <<. Non dualism is the ultimate reality in that the reality is one that is inef-fable, undifferentiated and unqualified Piraman (Brahman). Piraman is the abso-lute reality and other than Piraman is mere appearance only. All perceived mul-tiplicity of the world must partake of unreality. According to Caiva Cittāntam, the word ' attuvitam' (advita) emphasizes the fact of non separateness (priviṅṅmai) or non difference (veṅṅmai). (Civaṅṅapōtam, Sutra II 1.4) From the word attuvitam it could be inferred that the things are in dual in nature though the two things stay together as non different things in a state. Meykanta Tévar who systematically presented the Caiva Cittānta Philosophy in twelve aphorism, explains that the word attuvitam implies three different aspects, namely, onrāy >> being one with <<. vérāy >> being different from << and utāṅṅ > being together with <<. (Civaṅṅapōtam, sutra II -4) There are fundamental differences among God, soul and the world. These difference can never disappear. Therefore, non separate-ness is more appropriate than non dual as the meaning of the word attuvitam ac-cording to Meykanta Tévar.

Though Philosophically both systems have fundamental differences in thoughts, there could be seen some similarities between these schools. Civaṅṅ is all powerful, absolute being according to Caiva Cittāntam. Civaṅṅ has two stages, namely, Cōrūpa Civaṅṅ >> natural stage << and Taṅṅṅta Civaṅṅ >> neutral stage <<. Cōrūpa Civaṅṅ is absolute reality. He also called Parama Civaṅṅ. He is beyond kalm >> time << veli >> spaces << of souls <<. (Kaivalya Navanitam verse 1 -65) Para Piramam is absolute, supreme perfect and ontological reality. It is described that he is free from contradiction and free from limitation of time, space and causality. In other words, He is Nirkuna Piramam >> attributesless piramam <<. This aspect of Para Piramam of Vetāntam and Cōrūpa Civaṅṅ of Caiva Cittāntam have some similarities in character. Kūtasta Piramam is higher level than Cakuna Piramam but lower than Para Piramam. Para Piramam will remain Nirkuna Piramam without any associa-tion of māyai. Kūtasta Piraman associates with māyai as sākshin level, Nirkuna Piramam is indeterminate and attributeless. Para Piramam is the supreme concept of the Vedāntam, as the last goal of our life. Piramam becomes transformed into Isvaraṅṅ on the Cakuna >> with attributes << when it links up with cattuvakuna dominated māyai >> power << according to Vedāntam. Isvaraṅṅ is the personal aspect of the non persona Piramam. Isvaraṅṅ is the highest Lord of the souls in the empirical life. In the empirical life Isvaraṅṅ is more useful to enable to realize the real nature of Piramam. It is the first step in the yearning of the souls to attain

absolute truth. The determinate Piramam, Isvaran is treated as a deity by devoted soul. In this way Isvaran is more valuable and useful in the practical sense. Like wise, Tatatta Civan is the worshipping God for the Caiva Cittāntam. He takes three kinds of tirumeni >> bodies << and nine different names for it. In both systems, Isvaran of Vedāntam and Civan of Cavia Cittāntam do the panca kiruttiam >> five kinds of functions << for the sake of souls. According to Caiva Cittāntam Tatatta Civan creates and destroys the worlds with the help of māyai. Likewise, Cakuna Piramam creates, sustains and destroys the Universe with the help of māyai in Vedāntam. Piramam becomes creative through māyai. (kaivalya Navanitam - Verse 1 -35) Moreover, Vedāntis and Caiva Cittāntis accept the concept of Catkāriya Vātam >> argument of effects reality << which suggests that the effect pre exists in the cause while explaining the creation of world. Even though Vedāntis subtly differ from Caiva Cittāntis while accept the causation theory. Caiva Cittāntis emphasize that cause and effect are real whereas Vedāntis maintain cause is real and effect is mere appearance only.

According to Vedāntam, the soul is called as Jivātman is the Universal self. But it appears as Jivas owing to avidya. Jivan >> the soul << cannot be doubted by any body because the essential nature of the doubting itself stands as proof for Jivan's existence. Piramam which identifies itself with the gross body is called Jivan. Actually there is no difference between the Jivātman and Piramam. While Para Piramam is the pure and the highest self the Jivātman comes into existence due to the influence of māyai. Jivan's plurality is derived from oneness owing to ignorance.

Concerning this, Caiva Cittāntam holds that the souls are real and have eternal existence like Civan. Though Civan and soul are a like Cittu >> conscious << they differ in their essential nature. The soul is a dependent reality. It is called catacattu, because it being cattu >> intelligence << when it identifies with cattu and being acattu >> non intelligence << when it identifies with acattu. 7(Tiruvarutpayan Verse 3 -7) Civan is the gracious almighty that confers grace and the soul is the recipient of the grace of the Civan according to Caiva Cittāntam. In contrast to Vedāntis, Caiva Cittāntis accept the pluralities of the souls and its reality. (Tiruvarutpayan - 2-3).

While Caiva Cittantis classify the souls into three kinds namely, vinnānakalar > the souls of higher class <<, piralayakalar >> the souls of intermediate class << and Cakalar > the souls of lowest class << (Tiruvarutpayan, 2 -3, Vedāntis also classify the souls into three kinds viz., Kaunātmā, who has the desire on son and gold. Mittaiyātmā, who has the desire of body and inriyam >> organs << and

Karttātmā, who has the desire of antakkaranam >> inner seat of thought << and uyir >> life <<. (Kaivalya Navanitam 2 - 118) while Piralaiyakalar has the association of two bonds, ānavam and karmam, Cakalar has all three bonds namely, ānavam, kaṇmam and māyai. Vinnānakalar has the influence of bond ānavam only.

Owing to the philosophical difference the concept of māyai in Vetāntam also differs from the concept of māyai in Caiva Cittāntam. Moreover, we find some similarities in these schools with regard to this concept. Both schools explain that māyai is the principal causes for the creation and destruction of the world. Māyai has three kinds of qualities, namely, cattuvam (sattuva), irācatam (rajas) and tāmasam (tams) according to both schools.

If we accept Pīramam as the only reality, then māyai is also not a real one according to Vedāntam. Māyai is the power of energy. But it is ontologically unreal. It is real enough to create the multiplicity of appearances. Māyai is called satasat vilaksana >> nature of real and unreal <<. Therefore, it is described as neither real nor unreal, but avācciyam (anirvacaniya) >> indescribable <<. Moreover, māyai is explicitly identified with avidya >> ignorance <<. It creates confusion and ignorance for soul according to Vetāntam. On the contrary, Caiva Cittāntam holds that māyai is a total entity like world and it is one of the three bonds. Though māyai gives confusion in some stage, it gives partial illumination for the soul. (Civanānapotam IV - 2). Māyai has two kinds of power, namely āvaranācatti > veiling power << and viksepacatti >> creating power << and it is described as darkness according to Vedāntam. In contrast to this, ānavam is mentioned as darkness according to Caiva Cittāntam. (Tiruvarutpayan 3-4) while Vedāntam emphasizes that māyai is the cause for the suffering of the souls, Caiva Cittāntam stresses on ānavam as the cause for suffering of the souls, Caiva Cittāntam classifies that ānavam has seven kinds of attributes namely, mokam >> fascination <<, matam >> madness <<, arākam >> vehement desire << kavalai >> distress <<, tapam >> heat <<, vattam >> fading << and vicitram >> peculiar <<.

The souls get seven kinds of avattai >> stages << due to the influence of māyai according to Vedāntam. Munta anānam >> previous ignorance <<, mutal (avaranam) >> covering <<, mulaittal (viksepa) >> growing <<, kāntananam >> a rare spectacle of knowledge <<, cantatan kantanam (aparioksa nānam) >> direct sense of knowledge forever <<, talal ketal >> cessation of live coal of fire, kulirātal >> become coldness << are seven avattai according to Kaivalya Navanitam. (Kaivalya Navanitam 1-59) Atman stays without knowing Pīramam in the first and second stages. In the stages of mulaittal and kanta nānam, ātman

knows himself as Piramam, with the guidance of guru. The fifth stage is the stage of attuvitam. Removal of suffering occurs in the stage of *talal ketal*. The stage of liberation is *kuliratal*. Atman enjoys the endless eternal bliss in the final stage. Contrast to this, Caiva Cittāntam accepts three *avattai*, namely, *cutta avattai* >> pure stage <<, *cakala avattai* >> consciousness stage << and *kevala avattai* >> unconsciousness stage << due to the influence of the three bonds. (Civaneripprakācam -39). The bond *ānavam* predominant at the stage of *kevalam*. *Iccācatti*, *Nānācatti* and *Kiriyācakki* never activate at the stage of *cakalam*. *Māyai* creates *tanu* >> body << *karana* >> inner sense << *puṣanam* >> world << and *pōkam* >> pleasure <<. The soul is free from *kaṇmam* and *māyai* in the stage of purity. *Ānavam* stage as in effective in the stage and the soul realizes the true knowledge of Civan.

Both Vedāntis and Caiva Cittāntis accept the thirty six *tattuvas* >> categories << while explaining the creation of the world. Caiva Cittāntis hold that the world is real. In contrast to this, Vedāntis hold that the world is real only in the stage of *Viyavakārika* >> empirical << one of three stages. Infact, the world is neither real nor unreal but *avācciyam* (anirvacaniya) >> indescribable << according to Vetāntam.

According to Vetāntam, when the reality is fully realized the veil of *māyai* that hides the truth venishes and leads us to find Piramam. Like wise, *muti* is the stage where the soul enjoys the *Civānantam* in the stage of non separateness according to caiva Cittāntam. This kind of attuvita relationship is described in Civanānapotam of Meykanta Tevar as a sort of relationship that exists between a fruit and its sweetness or musical note and the words in which it is companied. (civananapotam - 11-1.3). The liberation means get rid of the bond which abstract the Individual soul from achieving release in union with Civan. Caiva Cittāntis suggest four ways to achieve liberation. On the contrary Vedāntais gives prominence to *nāṇam* >> knowledge. They insist that *bakti* >> devotion <<, *astamacitti* >> eight kinds of power >>, *yokam* >> meditation << and *karmam* >> action << could not lead to attain Piramāṇam >> supreme knowledge <<.

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