ABSTRACT

The thesis explores the mysticism of service and moral living of the nāyaṅmār through a comprehensive study of the Tamil literary and devotional masterpiece i.e. the Periya Purāṇam or the ‘Great Epic Narrative’. As a twelfth century poetical hagiography that reflects the lives of the nāyaṅmār or Tamil spiritual leaders, the mysticism of this sacred and canonical text of Tamil Śaivism is neither appreciated, as it deserves to be, nor has it been sufficiently studied in academia. The modest research is intended to fill a vacuum in the literature of Tamil Śaiva mysticism. Besides this primary purpose, the research aims to make an academic contribution by introducing this mysticism of service and moral living of the nāyaṅmār as narrated in the Periya Purāṇam to a wider academic community and to the Tamil Śaiva religious community at large.

The claim is that this mysticism that is embedded in the text has been largely overlooked. Through an integral approach of hagiographical-apologetic and thematic exegesis, it is argued that Cēkkilār, the author, by imbuing himself in the mystical quest of the early Tamil literary, moral and devotional traditions, textured around these nāyaṅmār, initiates a way to Śiva that was foreign to the Tamil tradition of his milieu. Cēkkilār shapes his mystical theology and ideology in the form of two aims i.e. service and moral living. By his radical theology of Śiva, he presents a theology of service and moral living which is ‘Person’ centred and a mystical thirst for Transcendence which is ‘Divine’ oriented. This interplay of cosmic and meta-cosmic levels of mystical experience provided a worldview, an alternative vision for political and social change in Tamil society.
DEDICATION

To my father Mr. Francis Fernando and to my mother Mrs. Augusta Fernando who always remind me to ‘EMBRACE the ‘UNCERTAINTY’ and to ‘EXPLORE the MYSTERY’.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

It is important to remember here with gratitude all those who journeyed with me on this pilgrimage and made their valuable contributions to this study and to see its light in different ways. First and foremost, I express my sincere appreciation to my supervisor, Dr. Sharada Sugirtharajah, for kindly consenting to be my guide in this study, for her continuous supervision, advises, support and encouragement throughout the various stages of this work. It is she who opened to me through her wisdom and her insight a wider horizon of study and formed my mind on the mystical traditions of Hinduism. I also would like to thank Dr. Donal Lynch, for his moral support and encouragement, for being a friend, for painstakingly going through the manuscript, chapter by chapter, polishing my English and making helpful suggestions. Many appreciations go to John McCabe S.J, not only for proofreading the thesis but also for being an inspiration through his mystical commitment to his responsibilities in service and humility.

I acknowledge with thankfulness the kindness that was shown me by the authorities and officials of the University of Birmingham, College of Arts and Law Graduate School, the University of Birmingham Main library, the Orchard Learning and Resource Centre at Selly-Oak and the Central Library Birmingham. I also recall with gratitude Prof. Aloysius Pieris S.J., the founder and director of ‘Tulana’- Centre for Research Dialogue and Encounter, Sri Lanka. I am grateful for his support and solidarity in prayer and to the members of his research institute, who helped me obtain materials from different places and encouraged me in my work.
I am deeply touched by the humane concern shown me by the Superior and the Novice Director of the Manresa House community in Birmingham, Paul Nicholson S.J. I am grateful to Gregory Brenninkmeijer, for his friendship and for accompanying me for walks in the English country-side which refreshed me in the pilgrimage of this study with vitality and energy. To the other members of the Jesuit community at Manresa House, members past and present, who through their friendship and understanding sustained me throughout my work.

Nothing would have been possible without the scholarship and grants of the British Province of the Society of Jesus. I am deeply indebted to them. To the Sri Lanka Province of the Society of Jesus, I owe an immense debt, for it is this institution that has made me what I am today. Last but not least, I extend my gratitude to my family – Rodney, Godfrey, Niru, Yasa and Lakesha – and to all my friends for their valuable encouragement, support and prayers throughout this endeavour. To all of you who are ‘fellow pilgrims’ and have journeyed with me; THANK YOU.
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TRANSLITERATION AND ARTICULATION OF TAMIL WORDS

The Tamil words are transliterated and based on the format given by the online version of the University of Madras 'Tamil lexicon' from the Digital Dictionaries of South Asia. The data for this dictionary which was originally published by Madras University 1924-1936 and was most recently updated in June 2007. All the terms that are transliterated are italicized with appropriate diacritics. The terms that are standardized in Anglicized form, their conventional English spelling is used, e.g. Tamil rather than Tamil. The possessive cases of certain Tamil words are shown in English by adding an apostrophe ‘s’ to the end of word, e.g. Periya Purāṇam’s. For names of deities, because of their conventional commonality, the Sanskrit equivalent of Tamil words are preferred; Śiva rather than Civan in Tamil.

### Vowels:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Short vowels</th>
<th>As in English</th>
<th>Consonants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ḍi  = a</td>
<td>apple</td>
<td>ḍo  = k</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ṣi  = e</td>
<td>edible</td>
<td>ṣo  = c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ᵃ = i</td>
<td>fit</td>
<td>ᵃ = t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ṯi  = o</td>
<td>rotate</td>
<td>ṯo  = t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ᵆi  = u</td>
<td>prune</td>
<td>ᵆo  = n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ᴍi  = u</td>
<td>prune</td>
<td>ᴍo  = n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ᴋi  = u</td>
<td>many</td>
<td>ᴋo  = m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long vowels:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ḍ̄  = ā</td>
<td>far</td>
<td>ḍ̄  = ſ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Üye  = ē</td>
<td>make</td>
<td>Üye  = m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ᴇ = ĕ</td>
<td>feet</td>
<td>ᴇ = p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ṙi  = č</td>
<td>orange</td>
<td>ṙi  = y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ṁī  = ū</td>
<td>broom</td>
<td>ṁī  = l</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diphthongs:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ṣi  = ai</td>
<td>fight</td>
<td>ṣi  = v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ᵆi  = au</td>
<td>bout</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Full Name</td>
<td>Translation</td>
</tr>
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<td>--------------</td>
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<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aka.</td>
<td>Akanāṉūṟu</td>
<td>(அகாணானுரூ)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aiṅk.</td>
<td>Aiṅkuṟunūṟu</td>
<td>(அஇங்குறுனுறு)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuṟu.</td>
<td>Kuṟuntokai</td>
<td>(குறுநுறுடைகை)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naṟ.</td>
<td>Naṟriṅai</td>
<td>(நாற்றிஙை)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pari.</td>
<td>Paripāṭal</td>
<td>(பாரிபாதல்)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pati.</td>
<td>Patirṛuppattu</td>
<td>(பாதுறதுப்பட்டு)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pura.</td>
<td>Puranāṉūṟu</td>
<td>(புராணானுறு)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PP.</td>
<td>Periya Purāṇam</td>
<td>(பேரியா புராணம்)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiru.</td>
<td>Tirumurukāṟṟuppaṭai</td>
<td>(திருமுருகாற்றுற்றை)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tēv.</td>
<td>Tēvaram</td>
<td>(தேவராம்)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TM.</td>
<td>Tirumantiram</td>
<td>(திருமாண்டிரம்)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TT.</td>
<td>Tāyumāṉavaṭikaḷ Tiruppāṭalkaḷ</td>
<td>(தாயுமாணாவதிக திருப்பாடல்கள்)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PRELIMINARY REMARKS

1. **Primary Source:** The primary source of this study is *Cēkkiḻār’s* text entitled the *Periya Purāṇam*. In its literary style, it is primarily a poetical hagiography. There are several editions and reprints. Nadarasan’s (2007) edition of *Daiva Cēkkiḻār Cuvāmikaļ Aruḷiya Tirtonṭar Purāṇam Ennum Periya Purāṇam* (செக்கிளார் திரட்டாள் சுவமிகால் அருளிய திரட்டாள் பூரணம் என்று பூரணம்) is considered authoritative. All references in this study are taken from this edition. This is the latest edition of the complete works of the *Periya Purāṇam* in four volumes. The edition offers a readable presentation of *Cēkkiḻār’s magnum opus* in Tamil prose. This is a further reason for the preference of this edition.

2. **References and Translations:** All the translations from the Tamil text of the *Periya Purāṇam* are mine. When references are cited in the original text which is in poetry, for readable purpose and for the flow of the thesis, the references are presented in English prose style rather than in the original poetic form.

3. **Abbreviations:** References in texts in the *Periya Purāṇam* are shown as abbreviations, e.g. (PP).

4. **Verse numbers:** For easy reference purpose, any references to the texts in the *Periya Purāṇam* are shown in brackets with verse numbers. They follow the verse division employed by Nadarasan’s (2007) edition of *Daiva Cēkkiḻār Cuvāmikaļ Aruḷiya Tirtonṭar Purāṇam Ennum Periya Purāṇam* (செக்கிளார் திரட்டாள் சுவமிகால் அருளிய திரட்டாள் பூரணம் என்று பூரணம்), e.g. (PP. 00).
CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Purpose of the Research

The purpose of this thesis is to explore and examine the ideals of devoted service (தேர்க்கை: *tontu*) and moral life (குறியீடு: *napperi*) which is embedded in Cēkkilār’s...
As a twelfth century work of the Tamil devotional and literary masterpiece, the *Periya Purāṇam* praises and honours the mystical legacy of the canonical saints\(^4\) of Tamil Śaivism known as ‘nāyaṃmār’ (நாயம்மார்) or ‘leaders’ (plural: nāyaṃmār; நாயம்மார்; singular: nāyaṉār; நாயகார்)\(^5\) who lived in the

\(^{3}\) The title which Cēkkilār, the author, himself gave to his epic is *Tirutoṇṭar Purāṇam* or ‘The Narrative of the Holy Servants’ (PP. 10).

\(^{4}\) There is actually no word in Tamil or in any Indian language that carries the precise meaning of the English word ‘saint’. The word in various Indian languages that denote ‘saint-like’ figure generally refers to persons associated with specific traditions and are not applicable in a more universal sense. For example, the Tamil term nāyaṃmār is used in the *Periya Purāṇam* to denote ‘saint’ in a more general sense. Cēkkilār himself sings of saintly conduct of the nāyaṃmār in a single sentence ‘Pācum nāṟṟupōl ulūm puṇiṭarkal’ (பாசெம் நாற்றுபோல் உலந் புணிதர்கள்) i.e. ‘...The whiteness of the ash reflects the purity or saintliness of their hearts...’ (PP. 141).

\(^{5}\) The origin of the word ‘nāyaṉār’ நாயகார் is traced to the Tamil word ‘nāyakāq’ (நாயகாண்). The word ‘nāyakāq’ means ‘lord’, ‘master’ and ‘leader’. It is also used to refer to and to address an honoured person and a faithful husband. The word became ‘nāyam’ (நாயம்) meaning ‘faithful’ or ‘hero’; by gaining the respectful suffix ‘ār’ (ஆர்) and it became ‘nāyaṉār’ நாயகார் or leader to refer to the Tamil Śaiva saints as spiritual leaders as a way of giving respect to them. They are, as Peterson notes, ‘first leaders’ because

‘...with unwavering love they offer worship ...’ (PP. 4165).

It is evident, therefore, in the *Periya Purāṇam*, motives rather than rulers, love’s implications rather than law prevailed in the Tamil Śaiva culture to judge Śaiva morality. It was on this fundamental concept of love (anupu ṣaṅkum) that the *Periya Purāṇam* justifies the code of life that nothing of itself can be labelled as false or incorrect. The pathway to Śiva in *Periya Purāṇam* proclaims the unique truth of how a whole nation with one accord considered the superiority of the love for Śiva as the noble path to god (பெரியாயம்: uyārner) and upheld it as nāyaṉār’s supreme goal in life. Śaiva morality of Tamils, therefore, is a ‘way of life’. It becomes evident in the *Periya Purāṇam* in particular significant situations where self-denying, self-effacing love forms the major criterion. It must be also noted that the word ‘moral’ has several expression in Tamil. Tamil Lexicon of the Madras University uses the words naliḻukkam (நலிதுக்கம்) or nayyaṭattai in the sense of explaining one’s moral conduct. However, the word ṣaṅkum (meye) is used to explain one’s righteous conduct, path of virtue and moral life. For further discussion on the moral life of the nāyaṉār in the *Periya Purāṇam*, see Chapter 8.

\(^{5}\) As Peterson notes

...
medieval Tamil period from the third to the ninth centuries after the Common Era. On its completion, the Periya Purāṇam was immediately placed as the twelfth book of Tirumurai (திருமுறை) or ‘Holy Books’ and was venerated as the last book that formed the entire Śaiva canon. In its reflections on the lives of the nāyamār as the historical embodiment of such an ideal of service and moral living, the radicalism of the Periya Purāṇam is considered not only as the ‘crown of Tamil epic [literature] ... great treasure of history’ (Jagadeesan, 2001, p. 3905), the pinnacle of the Tamil scriptural canon but it is also worshiped and venerated as the fifth Veda. As Peterson remarks, it ‘truly completes’ (1983, p. 340) the Tamil ‘Sacred Compendia’ (Cutler, 2003, p. 148).

The author of this mystical text i.e. Cēkkilār was a renowned minister in the court of king Kulottunka II (குலோட்டுங்கர்) (1133-1150 A.C.E), who for his religious and social service later earned the title ‘Tonṭaimandalam nindru kāththa perumān’ (தொண்டற்கை சல்லல் நின்று காத்தக்கை பெருமான்) – the great one who saved from Thonṭai land or nātu (நாதூ); when Tonṭaimandalam (தொண்டற்கைசல்லல்) was attacked by famine, it was Cēkkilār who saved the country from suffering (Jagadeesan, 2001, p. 3904). Cēkkilār was born at Kunrathur (குனற்தூர்) near Chennai, in the modern state

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6 Tirumurai (திருமுறை) or Panniru Tirumurai (பந்திரு திருமுறை) forms the Tamil Śaiva Canon which comprises or brings together nearly 20,000 verses, the musings, meditations and affirmations of twenty-six singers or poets of South Indian Śaivite community, compiled by Nampi Āṇṭār Nampi (ca. 1000). For the significance of the Periya Purāṇam in relation to Tirumurai, see pp. 61-72 of the thesis.

7 When the Periya Purāṇam was completed, it is noted by Cēkkilār that the Cōla king, Anapāyaṉ wished to receive his book (PP. 8):

‘என்ன சிறந்த கையில் நின்று காத்தக்கை...பெருமான் எழுதவர்’ (பெண் 8).

The King, his officers of the state and high priest of the temple assembled and listened to the exposition of the whole epic. After a most touching consecration ceremony in Citamparam, Cēkkilār was highly honoured by the king. Thereafter it was ordained that this magnum opus i.e. Periya Purāṇam consisting of an account of the lives and works of the nāyamār should be included in the Tirumurai collection of the Śaivite canonical texts. This ordination was inscribed on copper plates along with the others and the eleven sacred books were preserved at the Citamparam temple, see Verma, 2012, p. 43.
of Tamilnāṭu (தமிழ்நாடு)\(^8\) named aruṃmolithevar (அருமொளிதேவர்). His intelligence and scholarship came to be widely known and king Kulōttunṅka II appointed him as a minister of state and gave him the title uttama-cōḻa pallavar (உட்டம்சோழ பல்லவர்).

Cēkkilār was born into the community of vēḷār (சீழலார்) or farmers. The community of vēḷār was noted for their industry, ethical excellence, fortitude and integrity (PP. 51-85)\(^9\). Their one remarkable trait was hospitality and they were noted for their charitable deeds for the needy and the poor (PP. 76)\(^10\). The community of vēḷār maintained their proud inheritance of integrity in all matters that they were sought after by the rulers to fill responsible positions as administrators and commanders of the army in various parts of Tamilnāṭu (PP. 4139)\(^11\). Their outstanding and distinctive trait was their loving servitude to Śiva (PP. 4140)\(^12\). Cēkkilār, who is also an exemplary torch-

\(^8\) Literally meaning the Land of the Tamils or Tamil country is one of the 28 states of India. Its capital is Chennai (formerly known as Madras), the largest city.

\(^9\) In the Periya Purāṇam, Cēkkilār dedicates a whole section i.e. verses 51-85 entitled ‘The Glory of the Holy Land’ (பீரிய புராணம் tiru nāṭṭu ciṟappu) to sing the praises of the community of vēḷār or farmers.

\(^10\) ‘The citizens of the land first pay their dues to the king, and then give alms in abundance. They provide for the worship of God and offer hospitality to visitors and to their honored relatives and rulers. Peopled with such citizens, the critics prosper, and towering palaces spring up on every side’ (PP. 76).

\(^11\) Among the nāyaṉmār whose life stories are narrated in the Periya Purāṇam thirteen are from this community of vēḷār and were all generals in the armed forces of kings. Cēkkilār narrates:

‘The glory of the vēḷār, Kōṭpuliyaṛ was born at Nāṭpuliyaṛ in the prosperous Cōḷa country. As commander of the army of the illustrious Cōḷa monarch, he waged war against his enemies near and far, won crushing victories and wide renown’ (PP. 4139).

The nāyaṅmār, mostly men but including few women, belonged to every caste and occupation in Tamil society, from kings and Brahmins, through military commanders and petty chieftains, well-to-do merchants and land owners, down to the followers of menial occupations such as potter, washer man and leather-worker. For all the sixty three nāyaṅmār and the various strata of life they represent, see Appendix I.

\(^12\) Cēkkilār sings of the nāyaṅmār:
bearer of his community whom he portrays as custodians of honesty, rectitude righteousness and munificence, understood these imageries as religious expressions (PP. 81-82). These were the foundational realities of a practical mystical experience, and an intensification of the relationship with the Lord Śiva rather than a religious experience that is qualitatively divorced from life (PP. 4150). He understood this intimacy with the Lord Śiva is not an emotional attachment of passivity but rather an effectual activity of service and moral living, inspired by an personal experience of Śiva. In other words, an experience which moved the nāyaṇmār to engage in service to others having set their hearts on Śiva (सितत्तात्ती शिवपाले वायदार्: sitattaic śivapālē vaitār) (PP. 4162).

Cēkkilār understood such an religious engagement and expression to be pragmatic; he based his ideals of service (नोत्तु: tonṭu) and moral living (नोत्तु: tonṭu):

‘He used all the generous prize money he received from the king to build up stocks of paddy in all the temples of the Lord Śiva...’ (PP. 4140).

‘...śivas are taught and chanted. Sacrifice is offered and ritual performed... They practice yoga and penance ... virtuous sages walk their streets....many servants of the Lord live here, and in their homes recite the Vedas’ (PP. 81-82).

It is narrated that in their land:

‘...we have offered worship at the feet of Kōṭpuliyar who ... attained the feet of the Lord, who is father, mother, our nectar and our very life, and who is forever free...’ (PP. 4150).

‘At the end of his narration of the life story of Kōṭpuliyar, Cēkkilār notes:

‘...they have set their hearts on Śiva. These are they who by their service have attained the feet of the Lord...’ (PP. 4162).
of the nāyaṁmār on a practical and mystical theology of service and moral living as both the source of its departure and the objective of its arrival; in his case it was a thirst for a better social order irrespective of caste affiliation\(^\text{16}\). Only a person who is attached to Śiva can nourish such passion (PP. 4164)\(^\text{17}\). Čēkkilār believed that for such a theology to be both mystical and life giving and in order to facilitate a devotion that overflows in moral living and service it has to be Śiva-centred; it had to be one that prompts a transformation of society towards a contemplative and conscious living of Śiva-faith (PP. 10)\(^\text{18}\). In Čēkkilār’s perspective, devotion is inseparable from the concerns of daily life. It was his intention to re-kindle the closer link between the visions of seeking Śiva, an ‘extraordinary’ mystical experience, with that of the ‘ordinariness’ of human living or an everyday life of service and moral living.

In the prologue to his work Periya Purāṇam, Čēkkilār himself refers to his work as that which will ‘dispel darkness imbedded in the human thought and that the life of the

\(^{16}\) The religious and social milieu in which the Periya Purāṇam was created participation in temple rituals and ritual behavioural demanded of an individual within the Tamil community was fixed by traditional rules found in varnāśramadharma i.e. ‘religious-moral system of caste duties based on caste structure’ (Vincentnathan, 1993, p. 161). Though, the origin of this traditional rule found in varnāśramadharma is not known, certainly it could be assumed that it served to legitimize variation based on family ritual practices, racial differences and occupational specialization. The nāyaṁmār belonged to every caste and occupation in Tamil society, from kings and Brahmins, through military commanders and petty chieftains, well-to-do-merchants and land owners, down to the followers of menial occupations such as potter, washer man and leather-worker. For all the sixty three nāyaṁmār and the various strata of life they represent, see Appendix I.

\(^{17}\) ‘...They have subdued their five senses, concentrated their minds upon a single point and offer worship at his feet. Theirs is the noble path’ (PP. 4164).

\(^{18}\) ‘...from old age there have been two kinds of darkness on the earth. The bright rays of the sun dispel the darkness of the outer world. In like manner, the holy servants of the Lord dispel the brooding darkness in the hearts of men’ (PP. 10).
holy nāyagmār illumine the human heart' (PP. 10). Thus, the mystical ideal of Čekkilār was inspired and narrated through the life of sixty three nāyagmār. Their emphasis was on a life of reflection and engagement in which Śiva is experienced as domiciling in the Tamil region (PP. 2). Intimacy with Śiva is explicit in service (PP. 140). It is apparent Čekkilār was painfully aware of the evils embedded in the flourishing of a new culture that came into existence with the formation of the Chālukya-Cōla Empire from 1070 A.C.E until its collapse in the second half of the thirteenth century after the Common Era. This was his historical setting that prompted Čekkilār’s hagiography in which he recounts the lives of the nāyagmār as models of religious expression of service and moral living.

In the Periya Purāṇam, which includes 4286 stanzas, Čekkilār attempts to give a solid foundation to a true Tamil Śaiva religiosity and society. He asserts that this goes

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19 ‘... பூதிகள் பைனாட்டில் செய்தற்போது ஒலியிருந்து குண்டுவிக்கலியும்...’ (Gll. 10).
20 Čekkilār notes that ‘At Tillai ... he performs his dance and grants his boons. In the worship of his golden feet, birth in this body and flesh and blood finds its true purpose’ (PP. 2).
   ‘மால்க்க அல்லாஹ்வு லாவில் பதிக்கி தலை அல்லாஹ்வு உய்யிலை ராஜவூட் ... கியாலோல் மம லாவில் அருமவுள் பூதாயிருக்கிறா’ (Gll. 2).
   In another occasion it is narrated:
   ‘...The Lord of creation who took the ant-hill as His home ... dwells in the flower temple at Tiruvārūr...’ (PP. 136).
   ‘...அரே வைத்தால் அல்லாஹ்வு கையாற்றில்...’ (Gll. 136).
   It is this Śiva who took the holy mountain Kailāsa as His permanent abode (PP. 11)
   ‘...நம்ப வைத்தால் கியாலோலும்’(Gll. 11).
   For the conception and belief on Śiva as domiciling in Tamilnātu, see chapter 5 of the thesis.
21 ‘அரே வைத்தால் கியாலோலும் அரே அரே கையாற்றில் கையாற்றிலை தோரோன் அல்லாஹ்வு உய்யிலை ராஜவூட்... கையாற்றிலை கையாற்றிலை அல்லாஹ்வு உய்யிலை ராஜவூட்’ (Gll. 140).
   ‘Long ago our Father chose to make these devotees His own. As their thoughts lovingly dwell upon Him, their bodies tremble and their hair stands on end. Their only duty is to serve Him...’ (PP. 140).
22 Scholars vary in their opinion of the number of the stanzas that are in the Periya Purāṇam. Five stanzas from 806-810 which are included in the edition that is used for this study are omitted in some other editions. Suppiramaniya Mutaliyār’s (1937-1953) edition of Čekkilār Periya Purāṇam and McGlashan’s (2006) The History of the Holy Servants of the Lord contain only 4281 stanzas. Vanmikanathan (1985, p. 35) also seems to indicate that the Periya Purāṇam has only 4281 verses. Whereas other editions such as that of Rangachari (2008) and T.N Ramachandran’s (1990) St. Sekkizhaar’s Periya Purāṇam contain 4286
beyond all forms of conditioning of social systems such as caste classifications and promotes a pursuit of a meaningful living which could be understood, as an existential inclination for mystical service and moral living (PP. 142). It was Cēkkilār’s belief that his work on the Śaiva religiosity of the nāyagmār could lead to a common transformation and disposition for moral living and service (PP. 4281). Hence, the focus of this study is the explication of these ideals of service and moral living as narrated in poetic account of Cēkkilār’s Periya Purāṇam.

Such study of the ideals of service and moral living as explicated in the Periya Purāṇam will not only enable us understand why the ideals of service and moral living as presented in the Periya Purāṇam is distinctive but it will also provide some additional revelations and insight to aid us understand the distinctive contribution that Cēkkilār brought to the religiosity of Tamil Śaivism. It will demonstrate, that as a follower of Śiva, Cēkkilār has left a vital mystical legacy to Tamil Śaivism. The ultimate significance of Cēkkilār’s ideals lies not in his emphasis on seeking Śiva as an intellectual reality but it is on his emphasis that the Śiva-experience transforms the ordinary life of a devotee of Śiva in a new and radical way. It incites the human person with a distinctive kind of active stanzas. It is indicated that the Periya Purāṇam originally had 4253 stanzas and another 33 stanzas were later interpolated into the original texts (Jagadeesan, 2001, p. 3905).

23 ‘...They stand fast in the path of love, rock-like in virtue’ (PP. 142).
24 ‘So the celestial glory of the servants of the Lord, who dwells in the golden court, everywhere abides throughout all the worlds’ (PP. 4286).
participation and direction; it is to exist humanly within a complex world with a vision of Śiva i.e. being with and in Śiva, is to be in his service (PP. 8).

1.2 Originality of the Research

The originality of the study is in the very choice of the religious text i.e. the Periya Purāṇam. Despite its popularity in Tamil Śaiva devotional practices and as instructive material for religious education, little academic interest has been shown and there is a lack of scholarly publications on the subject of mysticism of service and moral living in

25 '…’ (NG. 4154).
’With uncomplainingly love and joy they delight in worshipping God and His servants…’ (PP. 4154).

26 The term ‘Mysticism’ is more commonly applied to a variety of religious experiences. Most of the philosophers of religion and religious psychologists have endeavored to confine mystical experiences within the bounds of spiritual experience. Tamil Lexicon of the Madras University defines mysticism as a doctrine of deep thought to realize God (Irinhale Ezhavai Cēṇam: Irainilai inavuk kōtpātu). It reflects the silence of the worshipper before the incomprehensible character of an experience of God. If this explanation is accepted as the standard one, then, mystical experience is understood in terms of ‘passivity’ and ‘numbness’. This view can be equated with a Tamil concept known as ‘summa iru’ (Be quiet or still) which has a number of meanings with reference to the context – freedom, silence, often, inactivity etc. Tāyumānavar, philosopher-poet, mystic and scholar of the seventeenth century, and others have brought out the significance of this concept in their outpourings.

26 In religious nomenclature it is used in the sense of preserving silence without speech or action while performing religious austerities. Probably, the saints of Tamil Saivism might have derived the inspiration to keep themselves quiet in thought, word and deed from their intuitive experience as shown in their hymns. In Tamil devotional literature the exact equivalent word for mysticism is anubhuti (Ir. 43.23). Čekkilor gives a vivid picture of the Śaiva saints when they worship the Lord with all sincerity, in their psychological reactions and spiritual development. In spite of that in many places the author himself confirms that he is unable to adequately express the experiences of the saints. However, he delineates the experiences of Cuntarer when the latter beheld the vision of the dancing Lord at Tillai thus:

‘His five senses were all subsumed in the act of seeing, the four faculties of his mind in meditation, and the three qualities in pure enlightenment. At the awesome sight of the dancing Lord…’ (PP. 252).

'...
the *Periya Purāṇam*[^27]. In fact, the few studies that do exist and circulate are mainly translations and occasional articles in academic journals[^28]. What should be noted is that many of these studies, for example Candraleka Vamadeva, *The Concept of Vaṅgampu, "Violent Love,"* in Tamil *Śaivism*, with Special Reference to *Periya Purāṇam* (1995); Glenn E. Yocum, *Tests of Devotion Among the Tamil Śaiva Nāyaṉmār"* (1972-1977, pp. 66-71); D. Dennis Hudson, *Violent and Fanatical Devotion Among the Nāyaṉmār: A Study in the Periya Purāṇam of Cēkkilār"* (1989, pp. 373-404); George L. Hart III, *"The Little Devotee: Cēkkilār's Story of Ciruttoṇṭar"* (1980, pp. 217-36); and David D. Shulman, *The Hungry God: Hindu Tales of Filicide and Devotion* (1993, 18-47), have shown a ‘marked interest in the *Periya Purāṇam*’s violence’ (Monius, 2004a, p. 167) as a ‘metaphor for the single-minded intensity of devotion demanded by Śiva’ (Monius, 2004a, p. 124-125); for the reason that most of the *nāyaṉmār* exemplified a fanatical and

[^27]: For Cēkkilār, mysticism is oneness and madness and this is what the thesis as demonstrated and contributes to the understanding of mysticism. Mysticism in the *It* implies a ‘unifying’ experience of the devotee to Śiva (*Śiva-jñānam : 事关.Light) as well as a ‘unifying’ experience with other devotees who seeks a vision of Śiva to be in His service madly (*Śiva - toṇṭu : śiva ㄍㄍParagraph*) (PP. 342). This understanding of mysticism of the *Periya Purāṇam* as love of God which is expressed profoundly in their service to fellow devotees in a mystical state through the moral living is the contribution of this thesis to the understanding of mysticism. In their ‘unitive’ experiences of becoming one with Him, and seeing the unity of all things in Śiva, therefore, the *nāyaṉmār* promoted harmonious relationships with others, which is turn developed virtues of charity, forbearance and tolerance.

[^28]: For a partial list of published editions and translation of the *Periya Purāṇam*, see Zvelebil, 1995, pp. 547-548.
‘violent’ devotion as a significant religious attitude in expounding their love (anpu : அன்பு)29 to Śiva.

Hudson, for example, argues the shedding of blood in sacrifice is both the supreme manifestation of love, as the offering of one’s life to the beloved, whether in self-sacrifice or in the offering of a representative substitute; it is also the means by which offences against the love of God, may be expiated, by a payment of an ultimate price. Therefore for Hudson, violence has a power to cleanse one from such things that blocks one’s vision or offends the love of Śiva; whether it is a part of one’s body or others can be cleansed through their respective removal or slaughter. What is most pleasing to Śiva, therefore, is not the ‘violence’ itself but the passion of devotion that led the nāyaṇār to perform such acts (1989, pp. 373-75, 388, 390-91). Therefore, these extreme acts cannot simply be dismissed as the misguided enthusiasm of a few blind fanatics or devotees of Śiva. In the case of the Ciruttōṇṭar (சிற்றூன்றார்) nāyaṇār for example, it is God himself who is represented as demanding the gruesome sacrifice (PP. 3665-3752)30; where the initiative does not lie with God himself, as in the case of Kōṭpuli

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29 The word bhakti itself occurs only infrequently in the Periya Purāṇam, in its Tamilized form of patti (பாத்தி). More often in the sense of it, is conveyed by the Tamil noun anpu (அன்பு), which also means love or attachment, and which was used in the Caṅkam literature in the context of relationships between the sexes. For example Cēkkilār sings:

‘பாத்தியே பாத்தியே அன்பு பாத் பாத் அன்பு அன்பு...’ (Gīt. 72).

‘Just as in loving devotion the friend and servants of the Lord gather...’ (PP. 72).

Less frequently the noun kūtai (குத்தை) is used, which in modern usage commonly carries an erotic or romantic sense. The follower of this path of love is a devotee. Devotion is his/her distinguishing characteristic. In the Periya Purāṇam, the word pattar (பாத்தார்) (=bhaktar, devotee) occurs occasionally. More frequent, as noted above in the verse 72 of the text, it is the term appar (அப்பார்) i.e. lover from appu (அப்பு) i.e. love, the one who loves and is loved, the friend of God.

30 This nāyaṇār was an Ayurvedic physician and was, naturally, a scholar in Sanskrit; he was moreover skilled in the wielding of battle weapons. Later on, from is chronicle we shall learn that he was greatly skilled in dissecting a body. At heart and in deed, however, he was a servitor of the servitors of Lord Śiva. Once, in the course of his military duties, he led an elephant corps in a war against Vāṭhāvi in the north and returned a triumphant victor followed by a long train of loot on the backs of pack animals. When the king
God clearly gives his approval to the deed and rewards his blood-thirsty servant. Some commentators from within the Śaivite tradition take this as a challenge to theodicy, and bluntly affirm that the ways of God lie beyond human question or scrutiny (e.g. Ramachandran, 1990). Kirubānantha Vāriyār (2000) defends Cīruttoṇṭar’s act as the expression of an enlightened attitude of mind that has attained freedom from attachment to his own child. Vanmikanathan sees the action of the Lord in some of the more extreme cases in a similar way: the Lord was seeking to help them ‘wash away the the taints of the earthly attachments which bound them’ (1985, pp. 343).

In some instances, while some scholars, such as Vanmikanathan and Gopalakrishnan, have acknowledged the Periya Purāṇam as ‘one of the seminal texts of

31 This nāyaṉār was a commander-in-chief of the army of the Cōla king. While he led his life in this manner, one day the king sent him on a campaign against his enemies. Before he set out, he stored as much paddy as he could so that it might last till his return. When he was away on the war-front, a great drought set in, bringing in its train a severe famine. His relatives decided that it is better to live by taking the grain stored for the offering of rice to the Lord than die of starvation. Meanwhile, Kōṭpuli nāyaṉār returned from the war and learnt about the crime committed by his relatives. Without them getting to know it, he decided to kill all his relatives. At the moment, the great Lord appeared to him and offered counsel (PP. 4139-4151).
Śaiva Siddhanta’ (Vanmikanathan, 1985, p.iii; Gopalakrishnan, 1990, pp. 9-10) by delineating the devotion of the nāyaṃmār of the Periya Purāṇam merely as an expression of love of Śiva, others such as Prentiss, have studied the text merely as that which ‘contextualizes the life of nāyaṃmār within imperial temple culture’ (1999, p. 117) and as a reaction against the growing influence of Sanskrit Śaiva Siddhanta in the Cōla period. Important to Prentiss’s understanding is the assertion that for ‘being a good bhakta includes being a good Tamil citizen’ (1999, p.74). Further, asserting that the passionate and patient lives of devotion of the nāyaṃmār of the Periya Purāṇam and their experience of Śiva located at sites of pilgrimage to be understood in the sense of conscious “participation” in the Divine (1999, p.24) and involves a ‘theology of embodiment’, that which is intentionally developed to define their own religious identity with the awareness of alternatives and defended over against intellectual and religious alternatives, Prentiss notes ‘participating’ in the Divine the devotees experience ‘bhakti embodied in words, actions, images of agents who gave it distinctive representation based on their engagement with their own historical contexts and rhetoric’ (1999, p. 11).

Monius, for example quoting Vamadeva, affirms this assertion that the nāyaṃmār’s fanatical devotion “project[s] [the] kingly role of the ancient and mediaeval Tamil region onto the lives and deeds of the nāyaṃmār” (2004a, p. 122). Violent and fanatical devotion of the nāyaṃmār is part of the Tamil literary tradition and that relationship between love and violence was a core element of the identity of the hero in the Caṅkam literature. Many of the nāyaṃmār drew inspiration from these warrior

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32 For the study of the influence of the Caṅkam literature for the composition of the Periya Purāṇam, see pp. 27-49.
heroes of Caṅkam tradition to exemplify the extent of their devotion with violent imagery and presented themselves as not just religious but also as political heroes who sustained the Tamil Śaiva religion with their own blood and devotion during medieval period in Tamilṉātu. ‘While an understanding of this startling violence must obviously play an important role in any interpretation of the text as a whole’ (2004a, p. 167), Monius asserts, Periya Purāṇam ‘is a rich and complex literary work that interweaves its images of violence with a number of other significant themes (2004a, p. 167). For Monius, therefore, Periya Purāṇam ‘has a rich literary and intellectual agenda of its own’ (2004a, p. 168). The Periya Purāṇam, Monius argues, ‘offers a unique theological vision of Siva that would prove to have a lingering impact on the Tamil Saiva tradition in the centuries following Ĉēkkiḷār’ (2004a, p. 168). ‘Drawing on the complex images of Siva found’ in the Tamil devotional tradition, for Monius, Periya Purāṇam presents ‘a theology of Siva as heroic father and warrior-lord that departs significantly from earlier poetic visions of the deity as playful lover, charming mendicant, and devoted spouse’ (2004a, p. 168).

The goal, however, is union with the Lord, where all intervening boundaries are dissolved. The paradigm of such a boundary-less union in human relation is the infant feeding at the mother’s breast. It is natural that the oral domain of hunger and feeding becomes the arena in which the impulses arising from love of God is acted out. Love is oral, both the devotee and for God (Shulman, 1993). For Shulman, therefore, ‘God appears to generate a violent hunger that drives him continuously toward this world’ (1993, p. 38) and that ‘violent subtraction remains the favored mode of connecting with the real’ (1993, p. 144). By giving detailed attention to the story of Cīguntaṭṭar in
Cēkkilār's Periya Purāṇam, Shulman points out, that Ciṟuttōṇtar as a ‘devotee [is] also hungry, even desperate, for the autonomy and triumph that come with successfully force-feeding the object of his devotion’ (1993, p. 44). However what clearly emerges from Shulman’s argument is that ‘the sacrifice proceeds out of a divine command or from a demand made on the father, implicitly or otherwise, by the metaphysical ultimate’ and that it has ‘no easily recognizable or comprehensible logic, above all, no utilitarian explanation or rationale’ (1993,p. 6). Despite significant differences, all the stories of the Periya Purāṇam conform to a single fact that love and hunger for God bound the devotees into a tightly knit company of mutual loyalty and respect, in which conventional social distinctions of caste, rank, wealth, occupation and gender were transcended. In this perfect spiritual democracy even the one’s born of lower status of society gain entry into the previously forbidden territory of Lord’s temple (PP. 1046-1052).

It must be pointed out, on the other hand, that the approach to the Periya Purāṇam in Tamil academia has been largely from the point of view of Tamil literature and history. The works of scholars such as Gnanasambandam’s (1987) Periya Purāṇam: āru āyvu (இந்து புராணத் காவில் நாருநாரு); Kantacāmik Kavirāyar’s (1978) Periya Purāṇam: Ilakkiya Corpilivu (இலக்கிய குழுவு); Natarajan’s (1982) Periya Purāṇam Muttukal (இலங்கிய புராணத் குழுவு); Vēṅkatarāmaiya’s (1999) The story of Tirunālaippōvār as narrated in the Periya Purāṇam is significant in this regard. It is made clear in the narration that this nāyaṅār despite being a member of the lower caste was a devotee of Śiva. His ardent desire was to see and worship the dancing Śiva at Citamparam. Since, the people of his clan were kept away from entering the temple; he kept on delaying his visit to the temple. Finally, taking courage, he went to see the Lord at the temple. But Nandi or the Holy cow which stood in front of the Lord blocked his view of the Lord, as he stood outside the temple. The Lord felt the plight of his devotee and made the cow to move aside so that the devotee could see him. While narrating the biography of Tirunīlanakkar (PP. 1834-1870), Cēkkilār emphasises that the Lord is more pleased with love than ritual worship.

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Periya Purana Varalarukalum Mutumoli Venpakkalum (கொள்ளில் புராண அந்தகாலத்தில் விபரலுக்கும் முதுமோலின் வேண்பருட்போகம்); Gnanasambandam’s (1999) Cekkilar Thanthe Celvam (செக்கிலார் தன்னை செலவம்); Paramasivam’s (1987) Cekkilairin Ilakkiyathiran (செக்கிலாரின் இலக்கியாந்திரம்); Kamatci’s (1993) Periya Puranam Katthum Camutayyanilai (கொள்ளில் புராணம் காத்தூ சமுதாயனிலை) have studied the Periya Puranam from a purely Tamil literary perspective. Other works such as Paramasivam’s (1992) Periya Puranam Katthum Panpattu (கொள்ளில் புராணம் காத்தூ பாண்பது); Cuntaracuvamikal’s (1986) Periya Puranaththil Camutaya Nokku (கொள்ளில் புராணத்தில் சமுதாயா நொக்கு) have approached the Periya Puranam as a study of the socio-cultural relevance of the text. The works of Krishnan (1999), Arulpetra Nayanmarkal (அருள்பெளர் நாயன்மார்கள்); Supirayalu (2007), Periya Puranaththil Thiruvilaiyadal (கொள்ளில் புராணத்தில் திருவிலையாடல்); Civapatacuntaram’s (1978) Cekkilair Ariccuvattil Arupattumivar Varalurum Yattiraiyum (செக்கிலார் அரிச்சுவடில் ஆருப்பட்டுமிவர் வராலூரும் யாத்திரையும்) have studied the Periya Puranam from a religious perspective. However, little attention has been paid to the subject of mysticism of service and morality which is unique to Cekkilair’s Periya Puranam.

As a text that personifies the religious and cultural revolution that took place among the Tamil Saiva community of the period, ‘historically and thematically – from poetic expression of devotion to the philosophical formulation of the path’ (Monius, 2004a, p. 167) - the Periya Puranam presents a mystical ideology to effect a personal and social transformation (PP. 3534, seeking to foster a search for God in the oneness of all

34 ‘மகவள் மார்ப தீர்த்தமார் காரணத்தில் செக்கிலார் சூடையால் தையாராக குப்பு மெய்க்கவும் காற்றில் இன்றும் நருமும் காரணமாய் காத்தூ மாற்றம் கன்னகி வால்’ (பல்லு. 35).
realities and a search through unified consciousness of all things (PP. 966) in humble service (PP. 988) and moral living (PP. 1037). This study offers an interpretation and an understanding of that mysticism in the Periya Purāṇam which previously had received so little attention. Indeed by the very absence of such an academic study, this present exploration and research is a modest attempt to fill that gap.

The intention is to show that by drawing upon inspiration from the mystical footprints of the Tamil literary, devotional and moral tradition and using their literary characters, the Periya Purāṇam presents a distinctive mysticism, namely the efficacy of service and moral living. It is achieved by integrating the innate inclinations of human nature i.e. religious sentiments of devotion, wisdom, contemplation and action, interwoven around a profound theology of Śiva as a personal God of affection (PP. 2738). It is through a theological insight of the human person and a theology of service and moral living, the Periya Purāṇam leads to an inner perfection and creates a space to

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35 'In the South ..., the impeccable 'Catalogue of the Holy Servants of the Lord' were given to the world' (PP. 35).

36 'As the servant of the Lord played the flute with true devotion, all mobile and immobile living beings with all their senses and faculties did melt by the music and merged into one single whole' (PP. 966).

37 'In spite of all cruelties imposed on him by the King, the servant of the Lord continued his act of service without fault. Who can prevent our heroes from doing such a chosen path of service?' (PP. 988).

38 ‘He is radiant light’ – to those who have eyes to see, this means that while his outward form is burning fire, he shines as the light within the hearts of those who love him (PP. 2738).
have that mystical oneness with Śiva in contemplative service and moral living. At the same time this leads one to be a mystic in the ordinariness of human living. Cēkkilār’s ideal of service and moral living is not directed as a discipline to go beyond self but it exists intensely within one’s self i.e. to acquire an inner perfection of one’s personality and encourages one to strive for the fullness of being human.

The fundamental point for Cēkkilār, of any mystical experience however is service and moral living. It has in itself an intense ethical imperative to inform the immediacy of a life in service. The true mystic embodies a joyful and unified activity in real communion with life and the divinity; it is the origin and the foundation of all things. Its most eminent examples are revealed in the nāyaṇmār of the Periya Purāṇam. It is for this reason, the subject of the Periya Purāṇam primarily deals with love of Śiva of the nāyaṇmār and elucidates how they exemplified this love of Śiva through their act of service especially through their service to His devotees in their historic, social and religious settings. The nāyaṇmār were servitors of God Śiva and fellow devotees. In their daily encounter with divine and human they expresses devotion primarily serving their fellow devotee – a service done in a mystical state and through a right conduct of life or moral living. This is what the thesis seek to elucidate and contribute. The contention is that by returning to the Periya Purāṇam’s mystical roots and by studying its mystical heritage and mysticism, Tamil Śaivism could draw attention to the nāyaṇmār as once who testified to all ages, to the ineffable love of Śiva and its munificence and magnitude.
1.3 Research Methodology

The purpose of this study is to introduce the mysticism of service and moral living of nāyaṁmār as found in the hagiographical narration of the Periya Purāṇam. Hence the method followed in this study can be said to be first hagiographical and apologetic. It is hagiographical for the reason that the Periya Purāṇam is an anthology of fundamentally diverse biographical narratives of the sixty-three nāyaṁmār in their historic, social and religious settings with the theme of service and moral living as the unifying factor. The life of each individual nāyaṁmār is given as a separate Purāṇam. In these narratives, each saint emerges with a distinct personality. Cēkkiḻār gives a graphic account of the religious experiences as well as their mystical experiences of the nāyaṁmār. The descriptions of the religious experiences of the nāyaṁmār are nothing but the interpretative accounts made by Cēkkiḻār. The nāyaṁmār’s delightful communion with Śiva, their incessant efforts to achieve that goal, estrangement from empirical phenomena, involvement in religious austerities, contemplating the Lord at every moment in service and in their moral living, interaction among the nāyaṁmār, and finally realization of Śiva as a sustaining factor are overwhelmingly illustrated by Cēkkiḻār

From these illustrations we can imbibe the inherent elements of mysticism on a par with the first hand experiences of the nāyaṁmār. This study tries to delineate these two ideals of service and moral living through the life of service and moral living of the nāyaṁmār as narrated in the Periya Purāṇam.

39 For example, Cēkkiḻār notes:

‘I shall now relate what Pūcalār of Nīgravār achieved by the employment of his mental faculties. He had wanted to build a temple for Lord Śiva, but taking the wherewithal, he decided that a temple built by means his spiritual awareness would serve as well. So that is what he did, and it turned out to be a very fine temple too’ (PP. 4176).
Secondly, it is apologetic because, the study is to bolster the claim that this mysticism that is embedded in the text i.e. *Periya Purāṇam* has been largely overlooked. Through an integral approach of hagiographical-apologetic and thematic exegesis, it is argued that *Cēkkilār*, the author, by imbuing himself in the mystical quest of the early Tamil literary, moral and devotional traditions, textured around these *nāyaṇmār*, initiates a way to Śiva that was foreign to the Tamil tradition of his milieu. *Cēkkilār* shapes his mystical theology and ideology in the form of two aims i.e. service and moral living. By his radical theology of Śiva, he presents a theology of service and moral living which is ‘Person’ centred and a mystical thirst for Śiva which is ‘Divine’ oriented. This interplay of cosmic and meta-cosmic levels of mystical experience provided a worldview, an alternative vision for political and social change in Tamil society. Hence, the method employed in this study can be said to be hagiographical and apologetic.

Thirdly, this study employs both a descriptive interpretation and thematic exegesis, in which the lives of the *nāyaṇmār* are an interpretive tool to unravel the mysticism of service and moral living and profound theological visions that are stated implicitly. In this sense, an attempt is made here to study the two recurring ‘themes’ of the *Periya Purāṇam* i.e. service and moral living which are the unifying factor of the *nāyaṇmār* as a community in the *Periya Purāṇam*. While doing so the study offers a critique by tracing the roots of *Cēkkilār*’s mystical ideology and relating it to the mystical

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40 Thematic exegesis is used to study the recurrent theme or the central idea of a particular text by analyzing images, clues and symbols so as to understand the insight of the text and of the author. Taylor and Bogdan note that in such a method ‘conversation topics, vocabulary, recurring activities, meanings, feelings, or folk sayings and proverbs’ (Taylor and Bogdan, 1989, p.131) are discussed by ‘bringing together components or fragments of ideas or experiences, which often are meaningless when viewed alone’ (Leininger, 1985, p. 60). The method is largely used in Part II and III of this study on the concept of service and morality in the *Periya Purāṇam*. 
traditional of Tamil culture, ‘religious’ movements and the historical context that shaped and influenced his hagiographical narrative. This is to note that the *Periya Purāṇam* is a complex text which grew out different cultural and social context and that it has to be viewed within the context of the developing literary tradition, moral and devotional tradition of which it is a part. This allows one not only to know the world of the author and the text and the influence these traditions and religious ideals exerted on the formation of the text but it also permits a comprehensive presentation of Cēkkilār’s mystical ideology from a structural point of view. It should be noted that the intention here is not to approach the *Periya Purāṇam* as a work to be ‘deconstructed’ but to highlight that this sacred text is a dynamic and transformative text which shaped by an ideologicoal underpinning grew up with a definite ideology to reshape Tamil culture.

The use of such methodologies is based on the understanding that the *Periya Purāṇam* is not a systematic treatise on Śaiva philosophy or theology. It is a hagiographical narration that expresses its thoughts and messages in poetic stanzas through the lives of the nāyagrāmar. However, the poems contain in them a definite philosophy and theology. When the specific ‘vision’ or ‘worldview’ of the totality of reality has to be expressed in human language, difficulties are certainly encountered. Human language, which relates basically to the realms of ‘signs’ and ‘symbols’ as understood in semiotics, falls short of comprehending the totality of reality, which is ‘signified’. The language used in such matters to explain the experience of such an unfathomable reality cannot be ‘descriptive’ but ‘evocative’. Ordinary poetry often makes use of metaphor, similes, stories and other figures of speech to express a certain
‘mystical vision’ of reality which is too deep for words and is ineffable. Therefore, when a study of this nature is carried out to articulate in clear terms, the mystical vision of the *Periya Purāṇam* and the power of its symbolism, another difficulty is encountered; it is the hermeneutical difficulty of trying to read the mind, as it were of another, and of a comprehension of a text written in an entirely different historical and socio-cultural milieu. By paying attention to the problematic nature of religious language, as symbolic and evocative, and by paying attention to this complex hagiographical text which offers mysticism which has been largely been overlooked, the combined approach of hagiographical-apologetic and with thematic exegesis is used.

### 1.4 Challenges and Limitations

This study is limited to the subject of the ideals of service and moral living as delineated in the *Periya Purāṇam*. A serious research of this nature is bound to have certain limitations.

First of all, all the translations of the verses in the *Periya Purāṇam* made in this study are mine. Translating such a complex yet a dynamic text in prose style accurately especially certain technical terms and phrases into English in a manner that does not lose the original richness of meaning is a challenge. Secondly, though the *Periya Purāṇam* is venerated in Tamil Śaiva tradition as a significant religious text, there is a dearth of research studies in English and in Tamil on the *Periya Purāṇam* and specially on the subject of mysticism of *Periya Purāṇam*. It limits one to critically engage with other researches. However, the concern here is primarily to engage with the *Periya Purāṇam*
which contains such a rich material resource on the ideal of service and moral living of the nāyāṃmār. Thirdly, as already indicated, most of the published material available in either Tamil or English seems to be more for religious propaganda and for literary purposes rather than theological purposes.

As for the method of citing quotations from and reference to source materials, the University of Birmingham School of Philosophy, Theology and Religion postgraduate student handbook 2010-2011 recommends that the version of the Harvard system of referencing and bibliography is used, to present a standardized writing style. However, when the hymns of the Periya Purāṇam, Tolkāpiyam (தொல்காபியம்), Tirukkūṟul (திருக்குறள்), Tēvāram (தேவாரம்) and similar original texts are referred to, the number of parenthesis are the numbers of these hymns and texts and not the author, year and page numbers. The first time such references are made, the explanatory note indicates the full detail regarding the reference of the hymns or texts, and this is found in the list of references preceding the bibliography.

1.5 Outline of the Structure of the Thesis

The study is divided into three parts:

The first part focuses its attention on the roots of the ideal of service and moral living of the nāyāṃmār in Periya Purāṇam and attempt is made to place the Periya Purāṇam in its literary, religious, historical and socio-cultural context. It is necessary to understand not only the context that gave birth to the Periya Purāṇam but it is also necessary to understand its originality within the context. No text can be understood
without its given ‘context’ – including Tamil literary, moral, devotional traditions, literary characters, conventions, philosophy and theologies; these in the case of the *Periya Purāṇam* are found in the lives of the holy *nāyaṁmār*, and particularly the Tamil Śaivite milieu.

The first chapter of this first part, therefore, examines the mystical quest in early Tamil literature. It underlines the fact that the *Periya Purāṇam* drew on original sources from Tamil literary, cultural and religious tradition from classical texts to articulate its ideal of service and moral living. This chapter provides evidence to show how the aspiration of early Tamils to have communion with the ‘sacred power’ in *Caṅkam* literature, the moral integrity as that is exemplified by the ethical treatise *Tirukkuṟal*, and the devotional ethos of *Tirumugai* played an important role in shaping the ideal of service and morality in the *Periya Purāṇam*.

The second chapter addresses the mysticism of the prominent *nāyaṁmār* of Tamil Śaivism. The chapter affirms that Cēkkiḻār drew inspiration from the mysticism of these saints upon which he was able to base and formulate his own vision of the ideal of service and moral living. Cēkkiḻār was a product of his own tradition; he followed the path i.e. the affective mysticism established by the early Tamil *nāyaṁmār* and considered them as mystic giants on whose shoulders he stood.

The third chapter focuses on an inquiry into the socio-cultural or the historical context that influenced the creation of the *Periya Purāṇam*. It affirms that the *Periya*
Purāṇam is more than a hagiography. It seems to raise critical questions about Tamil society that articulated a holistic insight into life and provide an ideology that will enable Tamil society to adapt to emerging circumstances that began to define Tamil culture and identity. As a text’s vision is always better observed in the light of events, certain significant facts are singled out for consideration. Then, following a treatment of the impact of the socio-cultural issues in the Periya Purāṇam, the investigation moves to its second part, aimed at reconstructing the theological vision of Cēkkiḻar.

The second part presents Cēkkiḻar’s theological ‘vision’ of reality. This second part is divided into two chapters. The first chapter examines Cēkkiḻar’s unique theological vision. Specifically, his vision of Śiva. Cēkkiḻar shapes this image of Śiva by selectively drawing upon and integrating the myths and doctrines found in the Tamil tradition as well as pan-Indian myths. It is this vision of the Śiva that proved pivotal to his ideal of service and morality. The second chapter will focus on the goal of the nāyaṉmār as presented in the Periya Purāṇam i.e. the ultimate goal of their existence. The goal of the nāyaṉmār was to gain release from encumbrances of the impurities and to be a servant to the servant of the Śiva (PP. 345)\textsuperscript{41}.

In the third part, an attempt is made at an analysis of the Periya Purāṇam’s ideal of service and moral living. It is here, as previously mentioned, that this study finds even greater justification. The first chapter highlights the Periya Purāṇam’s unique idea of service. It explores the various facets of the theology of service as presented in the Periya Purāṇam. It affirms this fundamental ideal of life which must be the basis of all genuine

\textsuperscript{41} ‘...பெரியா புராணத் மூலகாளர்கள் அவர்கள் குடும்பத்தில் குடும்ப கூடம்’ (பெரியா, 345).
mystical and religious experiences. Indeed, to be in Śiva is to live in service – Śiva’s service. The second chapter attempts to analyse the Periya Purāṇam’s ideal of moral living. This is to emphasise that the nāyagmār’s mysticism cannot be separated from their influence in the moral dimension of life. It shows that the interface of the mystical experience and of moral living is a significant contribution of Cēkkilār.

At the conclusion, the issue of uniqueness of such ideal of service and moral living is discussed in detail, namely the originality of such a discourse and its contemporary relevance. It is here that Cēkkilār’s prophetic ideal of service and moral living not only responds to the needs of contemporary society but it also inspires brings religiosity to Tamil Śaivism. Finally, certain other recommended areas are opened up for further academic study and research in the future.
PART I

THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND THE ROOTS OF THE MYSTICISM

OF THE PERIYA PURĀṆAM
CHAPTER TWO  
THE MYSTICAL QUEST IN EARLY TAMIL LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

The Periya Purāṇam (பெரியா புராணம்) in the Tamil tradition is seen as a divinely inspired devotional text. Legend has it that Śiva himself directed Cēkkilār (சேக்கிலார்) to begin his work on the heroic lives of the nāyamār (நாயமார்) by declaring the first word of the first stanza of the Periya Purāṇam as ‘ulahelām’ (உலாவேலம்), meaning ‘all the worlds’ (PP. 1).\(^\text{42}\) The author, Cēkkilār, himself attests to the fact that he heard a divine voice urging him to compose the hymns honouring the lives of the nāyamār (நாயமார்) or the ‘Holy Servants of the Lord’ (PP. 9).\(^\text{43}\) Hence, a divine purpose guided the composition of the Periya Purāṇam and it ultimately originates from Śiva. As an inspired work on the lives of the Śaivite saints, it recollects the manifestations of life of

\(^{42}\) In all the worlds, no one can comprehend or tell of his greatness. In his mattered hair he holds the river Ganges and the crescent moon. He shines the brightest of all heavenly lights, and dances in the sacred court. His are the flower feet, circled with anklets, which we worship and adore’ (PP. 1).

\(^{43}\) The holy service of the Lord, which is my subject, is inspired by grace and lies beyond man’s power to comprehend. So, one might ask, since I can boast no special wisdom, what right have I to tell of it? This would be the answer I give: an unerring voice from heaven spoke to instruct me’ (PP. 9). Cēkkilār, the human author, guided by divine assistance, wrote the hagiography which the Lord Śiva wanted written.
devotion in service (Tṇṭu: நத்தோலியரி) and of the moral living (பானியோரி: nāṉṉer) of the nāyaṉmār, how they expressed themselves, and how they responded to the Śiva-experience that remembered and interpreted their devotional experience in daily living.

In the historical context, the Periya Purāṇam written under the support of the royal patronage (PP. 8)44 drew upon original sources from Tamil literary, cultural and religious tradition.

It is imperative, therefore, to research the literary history to which the Periya Purāṇam is an heir. Such a research will allow an investigation of the motives of the author and demonstrate how literary antecedents were used to form a devotional literature to address a particular crisis of the Cōla period under the King Kulōttunga II [(நூற்றாண்டுகள்) (1133-1150 A.C.E)].45 In fact Cēkkiḻār himself acknowledges his engagement with the literary sources and their values in the composition of the Periya

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44 ‘The Cōla king, Anapāyaṉ, won eternal fame by enhancing the holy court of the Lord with pure gold. Now, it is stated, his royal court wishes to receive this book’ (PP. 8).

45 For the particular historical crisis of the period, see Chapter 4.
This chapter therefore, will explore, examine and demonstrate the influence of the preceding Tamil classical texts in the creation of the *Periya Purāṇam*.

The chapter is divided into three parts:

2.2 The Mystical Quest and the Literary Character of the *Caṅkam* poetry

2.3 The Mystical Quest and the Moral Discourses of the *Tirukkuṟṟal*

2.4 The Mystical Quest and the Devotional Culture of the *Tirumurai*

2.5 Summary

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2.2 The Mystical Quest and the Literary Character of the *Caṅkam* poetry

The fundamental aspects of *nāyaṉmār*’s devotional service and moral living as narrated in the *Periya Purāṇam* are to be found in Tamil literary antiquity i.e. *cāṉṟōr ceyyul* (சான்றூர் சையுல்) known as *Caṅkam* (சங்கம்) corpus. *Caṅkam* literature, as Zvelebil

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46 *Purāṇam* (PP. 48). This chapter therefore, will explore, examine and demonstrate the influence of the preceding Tamil classical texts in the creation of the *Periya Purāṇam*.

47 As the source of this narrative, I use the revered poem called “The Catalogue of the Holy Servants of the Lord”, which *Vagūṉṭar* himself composed with the aid of divine guidance” (PP. 48).

48 These are assemblies which flourished in the Tamil environment across the period between 150 B.C.E to 600 A.C.E. These assemblies composed of poets from various strata of Tamil society gave birth to Tamil classical literature which came to be known as *Caṅkam* literature. There exists a considerable debate on the origin of the term *Caṅkam*, the assemblies and the timeline history of Tamil literature. According to Zvelebil the term *Caṅkam* appeared first in *Appar’s Tirupattur Tandakam* (திருப்பத்துர் தண்டகம்) which notes ‘look at him who was gracious enough to appear in the assembly (*Caṅkam*) as a poet of fine poems and presented the purse of gold of *Tarumi*’ (1973, p. 45). Zvelebil classifies the Tamil literary history into:

- Pre-devotional
  - i. The ‘bardic’ collection: (150 B.C.E – ca. 250 A.C.E)
  - ii. Post-classical period: (ca. 250 A.C.E – 600 A.C.E)
- Devotional and Post-devotional
  - iii. Devotional texts: (ca. 600 A.C.E – 900 A.C.E)
- Medieval
  - iv. Early Period: (ca. 900 A.C.E -1200/1400 A.C.E)
  - v. Later Period: (ca. 1200 A.C.E – 1750 A.C.E)
- Modern Literature
  - vi. Pre-modern: (ca. 1750 A.C.E – 1900 A.C.E)

However, the pre-devotional period as noted by Zvelebil postulated the following *Caṅkam* periods:

- i. Early-*Caṅkam* era: (150 B.C.E – ca. 250 A.C.E)
observes, is ‘a model unto itself - it is absolutely unique in the sense that, in subject-matter, thought-content, language and form, it is entirely and fully indigenous, that is, Tamil’ (1973, p.4). Hence, Caṅkam literature represents the most ancient, indigenous but ingenious form of literature, apart from Sanskrit to appear in India. Though such assertions are debated by scholars such as Nilakanta Sastri who emphasised that Caṅkam literature ‘is the unmistakable result of the blend of two originally distinct cultures, best described as Tamilian and the Aryan’ (1966, p. 129) and by Burton Stein who points to the fact of Sanskritic influence on Caṅkam literature (1980, p. 51) ‘the significance of the early Tamil poetry for the Tamil literature of later periods is enormous (Dubianski, 2000, p. xii). As emphasized by Dubianski

‘Its ideas were later modified to be adopted by the bhakta [devotional] poets and strongly influenced the specific character of the devotional bhakti poetry. Thus, there are reasons to view ancient Tamil poetry as a cornerstone of Tamil verbal culture in general’ (2000, p. xii).

Although the influence of these ancient literature and its literary conventions did not govern the entire composition of the Periya Purāṇam, nonetheless its influence and Cēkkilār's reference to it is discernible in the Periya Purāṇam. In several places Cēkkilār makes references to these Caṅkam assemblies (PP. 977)48 and emphasis that it was Śiva who presided over this academy of Tamil and expounded the true meaning of the Tamil

ii. Post-Caṅkam era: (ca. 250 A.C.E – 600 A.C.E)

The true existence of these Caṅkam or assemblies is debated among the scholars. It is now accepted by some Tamil scholars that this legend i.e. the existence of these assemblies is a reference to the codification of Caṅkam poetry. For Kailasapathy, that an assembly of Tamil poets that existed under the royal patronage in Madurai, is credited for the collection and compilation of earlier Caṅkam corpus. See David C. Buck and K. Paramasivam, 1997, pp. 4-6; George Hart III, 1975, pp. 9-10; Kamil Zvelebil, 1975, p. 60; K. Kailasapathy, 1968, p. 3.

48 ‘... டன்னது தமிழ் திருச்செக்யா முழுந்து வருந்து தெரிவு செய்து பற்றி பெற்று வைத்து வருவதே அந்த கைத்து நிலையிலுள்ள நூற்றவர்கள்’ (குலை 977).
‘...Madurai, the home of the academies where poets read their works and where the three branches of Tamil culture flourished in the schools...’ (PP. 977).
texts (PP. 1673)\(^49\). By this Cēkkiḻār seems to suggest not only the divinity of Tamil language by linking it to Śiva but also makes considerable effort to relate the Periya Purāṇam to the Tamil tradition. The pan-Indian deity Śiva is portrayed as the guardian of the Tamil language. In the introduction to his narration Cēkkiḻār implores Śiva to ‘... grant us the honour of telling the great story in sweet Tamil’ (PP. 3),\(^50\) which is also adored as ‘pure Tamil’ (‘nēṟmatṟi’ : centtamil) (PP. 260), \(^{51}\) ‘divine Tamil’ (‘daivatṟi’ : daivattamil) (PP. 975), \(^{52}\) ‘immortal Tamil’ (‘viṟṟmaṭṟi’ : asaital illāthe celuntamil) (PP. 1927), \(^{53}\) and ‘three kinds of Tamil’ (‘mummatṟi’ : mummaittamil) (PP. 2816). Furthermore, Cēkkiḻār refers to the devotional songs of nāyaṉmār in the Periya Purāṇam as ‘garland of Tamil praise’ (‘tamiḻmalar mālai’ : tamiḻmalar mālai) (PP. 2435)\(^55\) asserting his affection for the Tamil language and of nāyaṉmār’s Tamilness. This shows not only the adoration that Cēkkiḻār pays to Tamil

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\(^{49}\) ‘\/\^\ text (PP. 1673). ‘He moved in and came to the shrine of the Lord, who presided over the Academy of Tamil...’ (PP. 1673).

\(^{50}\) ‘... may he grant to us the honour of telling this story in sweet Tamil verse’ (PP. 3).

\(^{51}\) ‘... he offered worship singing garlands of pure Tamil’ (PP. 260).

\(^{52}\) The earliest usage of the term centtamil (‘nēṟmatṟi’) is traced to Tolkāppiyam. It is the “standard, ‘correct’, ‘polished’ language sanctioned by the norm of ilakkaṇam (இலக்கனத்) and used in ilakkiyam (இலக்கியம்) as the linguistic vehicle of high literary culture... in contrast to kotuntamil, lit. ‘crocked’ (in contrast to ‘straight’) language, the unpolished, non-standard, non-literary language obviously exhibiting features of regional/local (horizontal) and social (vertical) dialects” (Zvelebil, 1992, p. 135).

\(^{53}\) ‘... there divine Tamil whose glory spans the world nurtured the fragrance of kindness and beauty.’ (PP. 975).

\(^{54}\) ‘... the cause of immortal Tamil triumphed over all other tongues...’ (PP. 1927).

\(^{55}\) The three kinds of Tamil are iyal (இயல்: ‘natural’ Tamil i.e. prose or poetry), icai (இசை: musical Tamil, song) and nāṭakam (நடகம்: dramatic Tamil).
language and of his veneration of Caṅkam classics but emphasised the fact that the influence of early classical literature on the composition of the Periya Purāṇam cannot be totally dismissed.

Historically, the early Caṅkam (150 B.C.E – ca. 400 A.C.E) was based on an age of wonder and scepticism for Tamil society which was slowly emerging from its megalithic tribal culture. It adapted and evolved to a more civilized feudal system, nāṭu or state, as agricultural, pastoral and egalitarian societies, with chieftain-kings (kurunila manarakal) who ruled Tamil dynasties: Cēra (Caṅkam) (ca. 5th century B.C.E – 1102 A.C.E), Côla (Caṅkam) (ca. 300 B.C.E – 1279 A.C.E) and Pāṇtyars (Caṅkam) (ca. 550 B.C.E – 1250 A.C.E). It was during this period of a ‘widening sphere of social interaction’ (Ludden, 1985, pp. 3-15) and cultural fusion; the celebrated mystical songs of these native bards (porunar: Caṅkam) and wandering minstrels (pāṇar: Caṅkam), their imageries of the human conditions of Tamil society and their vision of life which later influenced the writing of the Periya Purāṇam were transformed into a lyric

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56 Tamil scholars have assigned various chronological levels to the Caṅkam corpus. For example, Hardy is of the opinion there are four chronological strata in Caṅkam poetry. Hardy believes that the classical Caṅkam poetry should be dated to the period from the first century to the sixth century B.C.E. However, he assigns a much later date i.e. 5th to 7th centuries to works such as Paripāṭal (Caṅkam) and Kalittokai (Caṅkam) in the Caṅkam poetry. Tieken places the Caṅkam corpus between the 9th or 10th century after the Common Era. The dating of Caṅkam poetry is beyond the scope of the thesis. The thesis follows the chronology of the Caṅkam poetry as suggested by Zvelebil. See Hardy, 1983, p. 125; Tieken, 2001, p. 235; Zvelebil, 1975, p. 107.

57 Hardy is of the opinion that there is clear evidence of the influence of pan-Indian religious ideologies, Brahmanical religion, Buddhism and Jainism. However, for him, Caṅkam literature contains elements which are unique to Tamil culture (1983, p. 120-121). Nonetheless, one could agree with Dubianski points to the fact that the Tamil worldview as presented in the Caṅkam poetry is unique and remains largely unaffected by external influence (2000, p.4). Though allusion has been made to the influence of pan-Indian religious ideologies, there are no clear references to them in the Caṅkam literature.
poetry; texts such as *Etṭuttokai* (எதுட்டுகோற்றை) or Eight Anthologies\(^{58}\) and *Pattuppāṭtu* (பத்துப்பாடு) or Ten Idylls\(^{59}\) (Wilden, 2006, p.4) aimed to construct a Tamil identity.

These bards, messengers or ‘servitor[s]’ of the state\(^{60}\) whose life and service set precedence to the devotional life of service and moral living of the nāyānār presented in the *Periya Purāṇam*, were considered as having an intuitive perception of the creative, yet ‘impersonal, anonymous power, an awe-inspiring supernatural force inherent in a number of phenomena but not identified or confused with any one of them in particular’ i.e. *anaṅku* (அணங்கு)\(^{61}\) (Zvelebil, 1986, p.190). It was their belief that the specific

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\(^{58}\) The eight anthologies and the subjects that they dealt with are:

1. *Aiṅkuṟunūṟu* (அஇங்குறுறு) - Courtship and love
2. *Akanānūṟu* (அகனாறு) - Love and separation
3. *Puranānūṟu* (புரணாறு) - Political and social life
4. *Kalithokai* (சாலிறுகை) - Nuances of love experience
5. *Kurunthokai* (குருங்கோகை) - Love and separation
6. *Naṭrinai* (நாதினை) - Tamil landscape
7. *Paripaṭṭu* (பறிப்படை) - Goals of Tamil land
8. *Pathituppaththu* (பாதித்துப்பத்து) - Glorification of the Cēra king

\(^{59}\) The ten idylls and the subjects they dealt with are:

1. *Tirumurukāṟuppatai* (திருமுருகாறுப்படை) - Greatness of the Lord Murugan and His dwelling
2. *Kurūcippāṭtu* (குருங்கிருப்பாடை) - Splendour of Kuruṅci land
3. *Malipaṭṭukatām* (மலிப்பட்டுக்கடாம்) - Eulogy of chieftain Naṇan ventān
4. *Maturaikkānci* (மதுரையின்கை) - Glorification of the king Neduncheliyan
5. *Maullaippāṭtu* (மாலூலிப்படை) - Love poems
6. *Netunvalvātai* (நெறுணவல்வாதை) - Love, landscape and praise of the king Neduncheliyan
7. *Paṭṭinppālai* (பாதித்தின்பாலை) - Love and praise of kings
8. *Perumpāṭṭai* (பேரும்பாடை) - Applauds the benevolence of Tondaiman Ilanthiraiyan
9. *Poruṇaṟṟai uppatai* (பொறுணாற்றை உப்படை) - Glorifies the Cōla king Karikala
10. *Cirupāṇnai uppatai* (சிருப்பாண்டை உப்படை) - Tribute to the chieftain Nalliyakottan

\(^{60}\) To understand the different service and functions these bards performed, see Kersenboom-Story, 1987, pp. 3-15.

\(^{61}\) This concept of *anaṅku* is considered as central to the study of *Cāṅkam* poetry (Hart G.L., 1973, p. 233). V.S. Rajam who has studied this concept considers it to be ‘an anxiety producing source/agent’ (1986, p. 261). The word is highly ambiguous. The Tamil Lexicon of the University of Madras gives different meaning to this term *anaṅku*. The term could be understood to mean pain, disease, fear, lust, killing, deity, celestial damsel, devil, danced performed under religious excitement, low-caste person, beauty, young offspring.
qualities of *anaṅku* inheres in cosmic realities; they are discernible in specific qualities of human beings (Kur. 70)\(^{62}\), in parts of human body (Aka. 177:19)\(^{63}\), in person’s actions or special qualities (Nar. 386)\(^{64}\), in animals (kuṟu. 308:2)\(^{65}\) and in god Murukan (mpūṟkai)\(^{66}\) (Pur. 299:6)\(^{67}\).

The reference to *anaṅku* as one of the qualities manifested by Murukan or inhabits in Murukay in Caṅkam literature is quite significant. He can cause as well as dispel *anaṅku* (Kur. 362)\(^{68}\). In the classical Tamil literature Murukan is presented as a

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\(^{62}\) ‘‘நீர் கை துரு அலந்து தாய வெள்ளை “நீர் கை துரு அலந்து தாய வெள்ளை’நீர் கை துரு தாய வெள்ளைநீர் கை துரு தாய வெள்ளை’நீர் கை துரு தாய வெள்ளை” (சான். 70).

‘It is difficult to describe with words the qualities of the fragrant, cool young girl with wet hair and bright forehead. She is of few words and as soft as quilt when I embrace her’ (Kur. 70). Here *anaṅku* is spoken as a person who caused love.

\(^{63}\) ‘‘... அனந்துகள் தலை முலை நீன்...’’ (அக. 177:19).

Here *anaṅku* is presented as manifesting the breast of women. In Patiruppattu (மற்பட்டிப்பு) it is depicted as manifesting in scary hands of the kings ‘‘... அனந்துகள் காலம் சுமார் வெள்ளை...’’ (மற்ப்ப. 62:11). ‘‘... scary ones with big hands ...’’ (Pati. 62:11). ‘‘A Tamil king is very much alive, too: a character who represents the sacred force directly and personally. He somehow embodies this sacred force, personifies it thus becoming an active participant in the ritual, for example, by performing a victory dance with his warriors’’ (Hart III, 1975, p. 12).

\(^{64}\) ‘‘... அனந்துகள் கையேடு கல்வைகள் கை கை வெள்ளை அனந்துகள் கை கை’’

Here *anaṅku* is presented as manifested in the hero’s action causing distress i.e. hero’s false promise to many women.

\(^{65}\) ‘‘... அனந்துகள் கையேடு கல்வைகள் கை கை...’’ (மற்ப்ப. 308.2).

Here *anaṅku* is presented as manifesting in elephants head.

\(^{66}\) ‘‘The Murukay of this period is associated with the hills and hill people. It is this peculiarly Tamil deity was later in the Tamil tradition became assimilated with Skanda – Śiva’s son. Though Caṅkam classics mention gods, it does not focus on them. Prentiss notes ‘‘the gods are part of a constellation of characteristics that signify particular landscapes’’ (1999, p.54). For example, Murukay is identified with mountain region, Tirumal with pastoral region, Vētan for agricultural region; Varuṇa for littoral regions; the goddess Kottavai was associated with the desert. The perception of the ‘sacred power’ and it presence in the world is fundamental element in Caṅkam classics religiosity.

\(^{67}\) ‘‘... கீழே வந்து வந்து வந்து வந்து...’’ (சுர. 299: 6).

‘‘... who have entered the temple of avenging Murugan...’’ (Pur. 299. 6).

\(^{68}\) ‘‘மலை வெள்ளை கையேடு கையேடு கையேடு வெள்ளை கையேடு கையேடு வெள்ளை கையேடு வெள்ளை கையேடு வெள்ளை கையேடு வெள்ளை கையேடு வெள்ளை கையேடு வெள்ளை கையேடு வெள்ளை...’’ (மற. 5: 80-81)

‘We implore thee not for boons of enjoyment or wealth, but for thy benevolence of beatific, love and virtuous deeds’ (Pari. 5:80-81).

‘... மலையேடு வெள்ளை கையேடு கையேடு வெள்ளை கையேடு வெள்ளை கையேடு வெள்ளை கையேடு வெள்ளை கையேடு வெள்ளை கையேடு வெள்ளை கையேடு வெள்ளை கையேடு வெள்ளை கையேடு வெள்ளை கையேடு வெள்ளை கையேடு வெள்ளை கையேடு வெள்ளை கையேடு வெள்ளை கையேடு...’’
wise man (*cāṅṛōṟ: சாங்ரோற்*) and a headman or warrior hero *talaivan* (*தலைவன்*) who possess qualities such as youth, beauty and love (Pari. 5:80-81, Pur. 16). This implies that *Murukan* was considered as the best of men who personifies the *Caṅkam* Tamil ideal of *kaḷavu maṇan* (காலவு மணன்: premarital union); he is a lover and possessor of beautiful girls (Pari. 9). When young maids fall ill i.e. when they are in love-sickness or to obtain the men of their choices or to gain the beauty of motherhood women had recourse to *Murukan* (Kur. 111:1-4) often in the form of dance called *veriyāṭṭu* (வேரியாட்டு) (Subrahmanian, N. 1976, p. 13) or ‘*Vēlanādal* [வேலானாதல்] an ecstatic dance by a priest possessed by *vēlan* (வேலன்)’ i.e. *Murukan* (Nilakanta Sastri, 1966, p22).

However, *Murukan* was only a ‘divine’ type of human lover (Nar. 82:4-10) who is depicted as ‘Lord of the hill’ (*முறுகன் மலை யார்*) (Kur. 1) who ‘grants spiritual favours...’ (FW. 1).
out of love’ as depicted in *Tirumurukāṟṟuppaṭai* (திருமுருகக்கருற்பப்பதை) (Tirum. 94).76 *Tirumurukāṟṟuppaṭai* and *Paripāṭal* (பரிபாடல்) are two prominent works of *Caṅkam* classics which speaks about Murukan. Though the idea of a distant God is absent in them, these poems are the first intensely devotional poetry dedicated to a deity in Tamil literature. They are recognized as ‘the earliest testimony of the bhakti movement in south India’ (Zvelebil, 1981, p.101).

Subbiah observes that the reference to *Murukan* (முருகன்) in these works as *talaivaṉ* (தலைவன்) i.e. leader in *Caṅkam* literature is quite significant that it is a ‘point of convergence that enabled the Tamils to identify and define the intersecting dimensions of the divine and the human….it was [and is] a notion that remained the bedrock for expressing the experiential relationship with the “other” in Tamil culture’ (1991, p.111). It reflects the deep religious belief that dimension of humanity and divinity are interwoven in the early *Caṅkam* Tamils. In fact, *Cēkkilār* adores the *nāyāgāmār* in the *Periya Purāṇam* as true leaders or *talaivar* (தலைவர்) pointing to the fact of divine and human intersecting in them (PP. 141).77 *Cēkkilār* also makes reference to *Murukan* and the performances of dance by the devotees to obtain his benevolence in the *Periya Purāṇam* when he states ‘... they celebrated festivals with dancing and spirit possessions in honour of the great *Murukan*’ (PP. 660).78

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76 ‘கந்தோகந் மண்வுர் மண்வரிகுற்று குறித்து வலம்’ (Tirum.94).
77 ‘...முருகன் தலைவன் மண்வரீஸ்வர் புரித்திருக்கினை
குரியாரம் கந்தோகாவய கந்தோகாவய
முருகன் தலைவன் புரித்திருக்கினை’ (GLGL.141).
78 ‘... ஒன்றில்லாமல் மண்வுர் மண்வரிகுற்று குறித்து வலம் வலம், நீங்க அவைக்கெல்லாம் குறியாரம் கந்தோகாவய முருகன் தலைவன்’ (GLGL. 660).
A significant aspect of *aṇaṅku* i.e. ‘awe-inspiring supernatural force’ is in the *Caṅkam* poetry; it has the potential to move in space. This aspect of movement is attributed to another significant term in *Caṅkam* classics i.e. *kadavul* (कदावुल); a notion that could be understood as a synonym for the concept *aṇaṅku* (Dubianski, 2000, p. 9). The term *kadavul* (कदावुल) has been interpreted in different ways. The word *Ka+da* (क+द) connotes the sense of ‘movement’, ‘surpassing’ and ‘crossing over’. The verbal derivation is that ‘to traverse’, ‘to pass’ or to ‘transcend’. The word *Ul* (उल) implies ‘interior’ or ‘the within’. Hart points out that the term denotes ‘that which transcends mind’ (1975, p. 26-27). Hence, the word *kada* (क+द: ‘transcend’, ‘crossing over’) + *Ul* (‘interior’: उल) implies a movement of crossing over to dwell in the interior of a place denoting a sense of going beyond all categories of existence and indwelling in the places. This specifically underlines the paradoxical nature of Tamil divinities and spirits: they are restricted to a place (*Ul*: उल) yet they ‘cross over’(*kada*: क+द) traverse the boundary of space (Dubianski 2000, p. 8-9).

The *Caṅkam* poetry speaks about ‘*kadavul* moving from the pillars’ (Aka. 307:12), ‘inhabiting the places’ (Aka. 348:8) and ‘domiciling in the houses’ (Aka. 282:18). This implies the conception of ‘awe-inspiring supernatural force’ inhabiting places: an idea that points to a ‘localized conception of the supernatural’ (Hardy, 1983, p. 135) in *Caṅkam* poetry. It indicates to an existence of a powerful relationship among the

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79 ‘... अंकाणकु वर्तरं दीर्घरं, भवानं धीरं गुणं दर्शनं...' (रूप. 319:6).
80 ‘... The demons wander about in this midnight...' (Nat. 319.6).
81 ‘... दाम्नं दृष्टानं सत्यं व्रजं, दर्शनं...’ (रूप. 307:12).
82 ‘... अंकाणकु वर्तरं दीर्घरं, भवानं गुणं दर्शनं...’ (रूप. 348.8).
83 ‘... दाम्नं दृष्टानं सत्यं व्रजं, दर्शनं...’ (रूप. 282.18).
‘awe-inspiring supernatural force’, space and humanity; a fundamental feature of the classical Tamil literature. The belief in the manifestation of this ‘awe-inspiring supernatural force’ also implies that the same space is intimately shared by the human and that which is divine. This belief in the ‘awe-inspiring supernatural force’ i.e. āṇāṅku (அந்நு) and conceiving the cosmos as concealing the primordial power is considered by David Shulman as the ‘phenomenon of localization’ (1980, pp. 40-89). This permitted space and time (talam: தலம்) being considered as ‘sacred geography’ (Spencer, 1970). It is also observable in verses like ‘kaṭavuṭkarpu’ (காதவுட்கர்பு) i.e. divine chastity (Kur. 252)83, ‘kaṭavul elutiya pāvaiyin’ (காதவுல் எழுதியா பாவையின்) referring to a statue made by god (Aka. 62)84, the word kaṭavul is used in Caṅkam classics to exemplify something of excellence of this ‘awe-inspiring supernatural force’ i.e. āṇāṅku.

The identification of religious practices that is performed to allure ‘āṇāṅku (அந்நு)’ in the form of a dance with particular place where god is believed to have his ‘abode’ or ‘dwell’ or have a concentrated presence is a motif which frequently occurs in the Periya Purāṇam. Cēkkiḻar’s poetry reveals the pan-Indian Śiva as intimately linked to Tamil landscape and culture crowded with local religious and cultural meaning. Śiva is depicted as the one who ‘dances in the sacred court’ (PP. 20)85, dwells in mount Kailāsa (PP. 11)86 and manifests in human form (PP. 224)87 in the Periya Purāṇam. Śiva is

83 ‘...அ காதவு கர்ப்பு ஆகன் குடிய வட்டத்தில்...' (Kur. 252).
84 ‘...அ காதவு கர்ப்பு பாவையின்...' (Aka. 62)
85 ‘...நூற்றன் ஆகன் திருக்காவையின் வளம் பாவையின் மகர் மலை கி குடிய வட்டத்தில்...' (PP. 20).
86 ‘...the Lord Śiva himself dances in the sacred court...' (PP. 20).
87 ‘பலகிராம் செங்காட்டில் குடிய வட்டத்தில் பாவையின் மகர் மலை கி குடிய வட்டத்தில்...’ (PP. 11).
described in Cēkkiḻār’s work as wandering in search of his devotees in the Tamil region (PP. 90). Śiva’s wandering around the Tamil region becomes the motif for the Tamil saints to travel to so many places propagating their ideal of service in the Periya Purāṇam. It must be emphasized, as Peterson note, the ‘love of God can become a reality to the Tamils only if it is set in the context of the traditional Tamil correlation of emotional and physical landscapes’ (1982, p. 74). No doubt, Cēkkiḻār carefully built on his expertise of Tamil tradition with its profound belief in the possibility of a personal relationship with the ‘awe-inspiring supernatural force’ and its dwelling in places and events. In this way, Cēkkiḻār tries not only to build a relationship between Tamil language, land and Śiva but unites the Saiva community and links it to the broader Indian tradition surrounding Śiva. Śiva is presented as dwelling in and intimately connected to Tamil landscape and culture.

What is even more significant to Tamil Caṅkam community is that the bards, whose way of life and service set precedence to the nāyaṉmār of the Periya Purāṇam, were employed by the kings and the people as messengers and mediators between the

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87 "The holy mountain of Kailāsa is the permanent abode of the Lord Śiva, who is beyond all human knowledge. It is part of the snow-capped Himalaya range, glittering white as though adorned with sacred ash’ (PP. 11).

88 'In this way the Lord who dwells in the temple of Aruṭṭuṟai at Venneynallūr came in the guise of a Brahmin and made Nampī Ārūrar of Nāvalūr his servant’ (PP. 224).

89 ‘It was there too that the Lord went with message for Vaṉtuṟar, his rebellious servant, and wherever he walked through the brightly lit and decorated streets, his lotus feet left a lingering fragrance’ (PP. 90).
human and the \textit{aṇañku} (அந்தன்) or the ‘awe-inspiring supernatural force’ to evoke and control the presence of these meta-cosmic powers in the cosmos ‘from within’ (Kersenboom-Story, 1987, p. 204) for the cosmic prosperity. By virtue of their experience of the mystical vision and by the fact that these meta-cosmic powers were manifested in them, the bards had the potentiality of deification and its control. As the recital of the poems of the bards and their dance end, as Ramanujan notes, ‘the chief dancer and the god have become one. The dancer does not simply worship or adore the god; he invokes the god by representing him’ (1981, p. 115).

In their mystical quest to embody the ineffable qualities of these forces and its causes in anthropocentric notions, the bards identified \textit{aṇañku} (அந்தன்) and its function in terms of love (\textit{aṉpu: அஞ்சு})\textsuperscript{89} and heroism (\textit{vīram: விரம்}). These two terms were later used to classify the function of the world and were attributed to the \textit{aṇañku} and became ideals to be achieved. The two functions which were projected on to this \textit{aṇañku} were also assigned to humans. It was thought human beings had these two powerful qualities of love (\textit{aṉpu: அஞ்சு}) and heroism (\textit{vīram: விரம்}). Hence, the civil responsibility of the bards of auspiciously awaking the king by beating of the drums in the morning was considered sacred. Their songs in praise of the bravery of king (Pur. 231:1)\textsuperscript{90}, their ballads composed in memory of the fallen heroes who fell in the cause of service in

\textsuperscript{89} The indigenous concept of love in early \textit{Caṅkam} poetry is presented of consisted of two different stages; ‘secret love’ (\textit{kaḷavu : களவு}) and ‘open love’ (\textit{kaṟpu : களு}, lit. ‘Publically known love’). In the actual \textit{Caṅkam} poetry love becomes public either by an indigenous type of formal wedding ceremony or by elopement. Although it is common among Tamils to adopt the rendering of ‘pre-marital love’ for (\textit{kaḷavu}) and ‘post-marital love’ for \textit{kaṟpu} for convenience, both of these terms are secondary meanings of these terms.

\textsuperscript{90} ‘நம்பவாள் யுவராஜன் தீர்த்தமாய் எங்கள் காதல் விருந்தே மாய் கேள்வுபட்டோம்...’ (Pur. 231:1)

‘The glory of our king ... will not fade, will not die’ (Pur. 231:1).
protecting the land (Pur. 223), their songs sung to ignite a communion with the spirit of the fallen heroes (Pur. 223), gave a mystical vision of the meta-cosmic powers abiding in them. The forms of love and heroism were shared by divinity and humanity in the midst of the temporality of human existence. The musical instruments lute (yal: உரு) that accompanied their songs (pans: பண்டு) were also considered as cosmic abodes of the meta-cosmic powers.

Therefore, any recitals of the poems, with the accompaniment of these musical instruments were thought of, as functionaries of keeping the meta-cosmic powers and the cosmos in order. Thus, the Tamil mind began early its passion for the mystical quest of the meta-cosmic reality that moulded the nāyāmār’s religious expression of service and moral living later found in the Periya Purāṇam. As Ramanujan notes ‘just as the classical Tamil bard wandered, visited, and praised patrons, the saints, too, wandered to the holy places and sang of them and the gods there’ (1981, p.12). A consistent theme in the Periya Purāṇam is in honouring the lives of the nāyāmār who through their (äppu: ஐற்பு) and heroism (vīram: விரம்) manifested as service and in moral living yearned for the vision of Śiva who possessed both the auspicious and fierce forces i.e. love (äppu:

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91 ‘परिया पुराणम्, संसार में मनोहर, जन्माननाद अन्यचाननाद श्रद्धानाद श्रोतानाद गुरुपति गुरुपति अभिनव आभिनव आभिनवै आभिज्ञै आभिज्ञै आभिज्ञै आभिज्ञै आभिज्ञै आभिज्ञै आभिज्ञै आभिज्ञै आभिज्ञै आभिज्ञै आभिज्ञै आभिज्ञै आभिज्ञै

92 ‘…तत्त्वं तत्त्वं तत्त्वं तत्त्वं तत्त्वं तत्त्वं तत्त्वं तत्त्वं तत्त्वं

93 ‘Oh king ! You were like a shadow to many, you gave, you showed your kindness and you were with great fame. Even after your death , being enduring and deeply rooted “ Nadukal” or stone If someone goes to him … with long standing love … [they] will make a place for him’. I have got the benefit of close friendship. (Pur. 223).

94 ‘… became enduring and deeply rooted stones. If someone goes to him … with long standing love … [they] will make a place for him’ (Pur. 223).
and heroism (vīram: விரைம்) (PP.2310,567)\(^93\). When Śiva and the lives of the nāyaṉmār are narrated, one sees the resonances of the bard’s worldviews of the Caṅkam age. For example, the Periya Purāṇam narrates the life of the Tirunilakanṭar Yālppānār (திருநிலகண்டர் யால்ப்பானார்) (PP. 4220 - 4231)\(^94\) who through his service of composition and recital of music immersed himself with the vision of Śiva who through his love and heroism governed the universe.

What are even more significant in the Caṅkam age, which eventually influenced the Periya Purāṇam, are the literary precepts that were used by the minstrel singers for their quest to attain the meta-cosmic powers through poems; this was systematized in Tolkāppiyam (தொல்கப்பியம்)\(^95\) which is celebrated as ‘the first literary expression of the

\(^93\) ‘நவான் எழுதிகள் செவிகள் வரிகள் நிற தெய்வமலை அமித்தா கல்சுரும்...’ (G. 2310).

\(^94\) ‘On arrival, Campantar sang in Tamil a hymn of praise of the Lord, his heart melting with joy’ (PP. 2310).

\(^95\) The date and the authorship of Tolkāppiyam (Thonmai: தோன்மை or Tol: தொல் ‘ancient’ or ‘old’ + kāppiyam: கப்பியம் epic: i.e. the ancient epic which safeguards the integrity of the Tamil language) are constantly debated in academic circles. While scholars like Srinivasa Iyengar attributes this work to be of a single author i.e. Tolkāppiyanār (1983, p.211), a disciple of Agsthiyar, the mystical precursor who brought from Lord Śiva the Tamil grammar and language others such as Zvelebil attributes the work to be of Caṅkam academia (1973, p.47).
indigenous, pre-Aryan Indian civilization’ and ‘the essence and summary of classical Tamil literature’ (Zvelebil, 1975, p. 131). Hence, the importance of Tolkāppiyam lies not only in its treatment of the Tamil language in its parts of speech i.e. eluttu: ஊட்டு (letters), col: கொல் (words), yāppu: யாப்பு (form) and ani: அனியு (method), porul: பொறு (meaning), and its literary standardization of the poetic techniques of these bards but also in its setting of the syntaxes formulated for the anthropocentric notion of the mystical power as inferred by the bards as the poruḷ (பொறு) which is the substance of Tamil poetry.

In fact, the dynamics of the now defied anañku (அணாங்கு) or ‘awe-inspiring supernatural force’ which began to be viewed as ‘sacred powers’ is spoken of, essentially, through the medium of two broad poetic and grammatical genres. These are akapporuḷ (அகப்புறு) or akam (அகம்) that which encompasses the ‘interior’ or ‘inner life’ – and purapporuḷ (புரப்புறு) or puram (புரம்) – which refer to the ‘exterior’ or ‘outer realm of life’; they constitute two intimately intertwined phases of life, and is made on the basis of psychological and psychic experience. These two contrasting but reciprocal phases of life, ‘paradox of embodied absence and presence’ (Cole, 1985, pp. 1-9), ‘spatial doubling’ and a ‘superimposition of one world upon the other’ (Cole, 1985, p. 19), mirror the two essences of human living which are devotional in nature; they are love (appu: அப்பு) and heroism (vīram: விரம்). It is this ideal of love and heroism established as a literary genre that was later used as a literary precept to explain the religious expression of service and of moral living of the Tamil saints as a deep love for Śiva and heroic service for his devotees in the Periya Purāṇam.
Even more remarkable is that, though, neither is a systematized philosophical or
metaphysical speculation, this concept of love (aṟpu: அள்ளி) and heroism (vīram: விரம்) captivated the Tamil mind of the period, which was emerging to carve its own identity in
the face of an influx of varying cultures into the Tamil environment. It is their
understanding of the phenomenon of life termed porul (போறுல்) as a synthetic totality
of the bi-polarities of love (aṟpu: அள்ளி) and heroism (vīram: விரம்) reflected as ‘domestic’
and ‘public’, ‘passive’ and ‘active’, ‘spiritual’ and ‘material’, ‘inner’ and ‘outer’,
‘feminine’ and ‘masculine’, that played a significant role in shaping the Caṅkam literary
formulae. Human living in the external realm (puram: புரம்) was closely interconnected
with that of the internal realm i.e. aham (அஹம்). This in turn had a significant influence
in the shaping of the Tamil saints of the Periya Purāṇam and their religious expression of
service and of moral living as a synthetic totality of the bi-polarities of love (aṟpu: அள்ளி)
and heroism (vīram: விரம்) as presented in the Periya Purāṇam. The lives of the
nāyaṉmār as the presented in the Periya Purāṇam validate the dynamic integral links
between the ‘inner’ (aham: அஹம்) and ‘outer’ realm (puram: புரம்).

The stories of the nāyaṉmār as narrated in the Periya Purāṇam are all woven
around this theme of love (aṟpu: அள்ளி) and heroism (vīram: விரம்). The story of Mūrti
nāyaṉār (காள்வர் தயார்) (PP. 973-1021)²⁶ exemplifies this, in that in spite of the

²⁶ It was his regular practice to provide sandal paste for the adornment of the Lord Śiva in the temple. In
those days, the king of vaṭuka karmāṭars decided to annex the pāṇṭya country by the force of arms. The
king came under the influence of the Jainism and began to persecute the devotees of the Lord Śiva. In spite
of the king’s persistent attack the nāyaṉār continued without fail to carry out his act of service as before.
The king angered by such devotion began to cut off his supply of sandal wood for making paste. So the
saint thought to himself that ‘I can not longer grind sandal paste for the body of the dancing Lord’, ‘but my
hand will not cease from grinding’.

'புரூர் புராண பான்தை தமிழ்நாடு மற்றை பரிவடிவ விசை என்று பதில் பார்வையாளர் அட்சை என்று அல்லது என்று தமிழ்நாடு அற்புதம் வழங்கிய தமிழ் மற்றும் விளக்கங்கள் சேகரித்தவர் செய்து வைத்திருக்கிறது'}
obstacles placed before him to continue his service of providing sandal wood for worship, the nāyaṉār with love and courage offered service to Śiva. Similarly, the narration of the life of Taṇṭi Aṭkal nāyaṉār (தாந்தி அட்டாள் நாயார்) (PP. 3597-3622) who was so determined to serve the Lord Śiva even when he was not able to see, posits the narrative according to the literary conventions of aham (அஹம்) and of puram (புரம்) as delineated in the Tolkāppiyam. In that whole incident and its aftermath the reader would recognise the reference to earlier Caṅkam literary convention. It is within this context nāyaṉār’s religious expression of service and of moral living is described. In the same way the heroism expressed by these Tamil saints are recorded in the Periya Purāṇam.

As standardized in the Tolkāppiyam, the aham poetries, centred on the theme of love, addressed the ‘inner world’, the ‘interior landscape’ (Ramanujan, 1994) or inner attitude of the human being as a person. Under this aham poetry comes what is supposed to be the most internal, personal, and directly incommunicable human experience, and that is love in all phases. The inner attitude of the person is revealed in the form of love nowhere else more than within the intimate world of the household. The highest

With that he placed his elbow on the grind-stone and ground away until the skin and bone and sinew was all reduced to pulp. The Lord himself could not bear the sight that appeared to him and consoled the saint (PP. 973-1021).

97 This nāyaṉār according the Periya Purāṇam is blind from birth. He used to daily worship at the temple of Ārūr. Now beside the tank on the West side of the temple, the Jains were extending their monastic buildings and causing serious congestion. When Taṇṭi Aṭkal realized what was happening, he determined to counter it by digging operation to widen the tank. Immediately the Jains raised uproar saying that digging into the earth would cause the death of many creatures buried in the mud. The saint went up to the gates of the temple, prayed for redress against the shame inflicted on him, went up to his mutt and sank into troubled sleep. Then the Lord appeared to him in the dream and consoled the saint saying: ‘do not let your heart grieve’, ‘you will receive your eye sight’

Then the saint rose to the surface praising the Lord and gained clear eye-sight and the Jains lost their eye sight (PP. 3597-3621).
revelation of the virtue of love within the household, as depicted in *Tolkāppiyam* is embodied in the chaste love of a woman (kaṟpu: கார்பு) (Aka.16:18-20). This chaste love was considered a benevolent revelation of the *aṇañku* (அணந்து) and was elevated to the status of the divine, which surpasses human physicality. This chaste love, which lies within the control of human emotion, is considered as mystical in nature. This love and its mystical intensity, when controlled and channelled, stands the test of time in marital separation (*pirivu: பிரிவு*) that often occurred due to war and national duties and most specifically at times of marital infidelity among the Caṅkam Tamils (Ain. 229).

Since marital separation often occurred as a result of the needs of the household, for the love of family and service of the state, the help of the bards was sought to keep the ‘purity’ of love, and the sacrament of marriage auspiciously alive in the family; it was kept from being defiled from other forms of ‘one sided love’ (*kaikilai: கைகிளை*), ‘mismatched love’ (*peruntinai: பெருந்தினை*), and ‘clandestine love’ (*kalavu: கலவு*) among Caṅkam Tamils.

The quest of love, in terms of martial separation takes various trajectories according to changing circumstances and the complexity of relationships. Love in *aham*...
poetry is spoken of, in different ways or in themes (turai: துறை) according to the changing contexts of space and time (tinai: தினை). The intuitive insight of the Caṅkam poets was to identify the trajectories of this inner emotion of love with landscape which suggests the essence of love ‘baffling in its antiquity and its singularity’ (Thaninayagam, 1966, p. 39). Thus, love is identified and characterised as: (i) furtive (punarthal : புரார்தல்) - with an infatuated anxiety of longing, (ii) chaste (irirutal : இறுற்றல்) - with a religious perseverance of waiting in trust, (iii) benevolent (udal:அடல்) - with a silent resentment towards infidelity and empathetic reconciliation, (iv) severance (irangal:இரங்கல்) - with a desolation of parting and relentlessness, and (v) mystical (pirithal: பிரித்தல்) - with a sorrow in the moment of separation and union in essence and being (Patippāciriyar, 1995, p.16).

Love is spoken of, in a mystical sense as the inner movement of power, the interior dialogue that longs in time of material separation for passionate union and harmony. The five facets of love are perceived (katci: காத்சி) and conceived (karuṭu: கருட்சு) as world views or ulakam (அலகம்) through association with vibrant territorial imageries that are unique to the Tamil environment, such as gods, flora, deities, music, occupation and seasons (Patippāciriyar, 1995, p.3). A persistent narration in the Periya Purāṇam is the love and religious life of Cuntarar nāyaṉār (குந்தரர் நாயானார்) (PP. 27-29, 147-349, 3140-3374, 3752-3927, 4234-4286). When one reads his life story, it resonates the events that are treated in aham (அஹம்) poetries of Caṅkam literature. For example in the narration, Cēkkilār records the meeting between Cuntarar nāyaṉār and Paravaiyār (பரவையார்) i.e. Cuntarar nāyaṉār’s wife (PP. 6: 284ff). Later in the
narration when Cuntarar nāyaṉār marries another woman Paravaivār comes to hear of it (PP. 35. 3473ff), her reaction to the news recalls the traditional mode of the lovers’ quarrel (udal: ஆடல்) as presented in Caṅkam literature. Accordingly, it is clear, that the stories of the lives of the saints as given in the Periya Purāṇam are also set against the backdrop of Tamil landscapes composed with the literary precepts employed in the aham poetry of Tolkāppiyam (PP. 51-85, 1088-1105)\(^\text{101}\).

On the other hand, puram poetry vividly presents the exterior or social life of the Caṅkam person. The heroism expressed through tribal wars, moral integrity, loyalty, hospitality, service and eulogies addressed to the tribal chiefs for their heroic service and moral living are the popular themes of puram (பூரம்) poetry.\(^\text{102}\) The puram literature also records the history of Tamil society which was emerging to carve its own collective identity in the face of tyrannical immigrant force like Maravar (மாராவர்)\(^\text{103}\) who by means of instigating violence, emerged to capture land, cattle and women (Ramachandran C., 1974, pp. 60-68). In fact, the emergence of these forces added to the stratification of

\(^\text{101}\) For Example:

‘இப்போது கிளைமதிப்பியர் என்று போன காலனித்து குழுந்தை என்று போன காலனித்து குழுந்தை என்று போன காலனித்து குழுந்தை என்று போன காலனித்து குழுந்தை என்று போன காலனித்து குழுந்தை என்று போன காலனித்து குழுந்தை என்று போன காலனித்து குழுந்தை என்று போன காலனித்து குழுந்தை என்று போன காலனித்து குழுந்தை என்று போன காலனித்து குழுந்தை என்று போன காலனித்து குழுந்தை என்று போன காலனித்து குழுந்தை என்று போன காலனித்து குழுந்தை என்று போன காலனித்து குழுந்தை என்று போன காலனித்து குழுந்தை என்று போன காலனித்து குழுந்தை என்று போன காலனித்து குழுந்தை என்று போன காலனித்து குழுந்தை என்று போன காலனித்து குழுந்தை என்று போன காலனித்து குழுந்தை என்று போன காலனித்து குழுந்தை என்று போன காலனித்து குழுந்தை என்று போன காலனித்து குழுந்தை என்று போன காலனித்து குழுந்தை என்று போன காலனித்து குழுந்தை என்று போன காலனித்து குழுந்தை என்று போன காலனித்து குழுந்தை என்று போன காலனித்து குழுந்தை என்று போன காலனித்து குழுந்தை என்று போன காலனித்து குழுந்தை என்று போன காலனித்து குழுந்தை என்று போன காலனித்து குழுந்தை என்று போன காலனித்து குழுந்தை என்று போன காலனித்து குழுந்தை என்று போன காலனித்து குழுந்தை என்று போன காலனித்து குழுந்தை என்று போன காலனித்து குழுந்தை என்று போன காலனித்து குழுந்தை என்று போ

‘The land watered by river kāveri falls within the region where the Tamil language is in common use for speech and song. It was ruled by the Cōla kings, who had once planted their tiger standard on the summit of the snow-capped Himalaya Mountains. I shall now give a description of that land’ (PP. 51).

\(^\text{102}\) ‘நாட்டில் குழுந்தை காலனித்து என்று; காலனித்து காலனித்து குழுந்தை என்று; குழுந்தை காலனித்து காலனித்து என்று; காலனித்து காலனித்து காலனித்து என்று; காலனித்து காலனித்து காலனித்து என்று; காலனித்து காலனித்து காலனித்து என்று’ (PP. 312)

‘To give birth to a son and nurture him is my duty. To make him gracious is the father’s duty. To make spears for him is the blacksmith’s. To show him noble ways is the king’s. And to bear a bright sword … is the young man’s duty’ (Pur. 312).

\(^\text{103}\)Maravar (‘grate Warriors’ or ‘punishers’) are one of the oldest martial groups in India. Legend has it that the term Maravar is derived from the Tamil word ‘marani’ (மரணி) i.e. sin for their sin of inflicting harm on others without remorse (Ramaswamy, 2007, p. 143).
society and curtailed the voice of the subaltern i.e. *vēḷār* (மேலார்) or farmers, who were *vēḷār* (மேலார்) i.e farmers the land owning agricultural Dravidian society. In the face of the oppression and difficulty in safeguarding the fundamental institution of family and the community in terms of land became paramount: heroism for the protection of the household, service and self-sacrifice for the safeguarding of the community became a necessity. The *puram* literature classifies the dynamics of heroism, not as that which stems from a person’s desire, viz. for reputation, but as a way of asserting prosperity for households in which the *anaṅku* (அண்கு) in the form of love abides (Kailasapathy, 1968, pp. 230-258). Heroism was not only considered as the virtue of a hero, but was seen as an exemplification of an all-embracing love, a symbol of a household (Patippāciriyar, 1995, p. 75).

The significance of *puram* (புரம்) poetry, therefore, in terms of manifestation of devotion as presented in the *Periya Purāṇam* lies in its presentation of the idea of service and of moral living symbolized and amplified in the self-sacrifice made by the heroes in defence of the interior space of love or *aham*. This love, in cases of the death of heroes who die protecting the land, is kept alive in iconographic form carved on stones. These stones were carved for those who gallantly sacrificed themselves, by serving the community and were an indication of how their sense of service and love were highly valued in early Tamil society. The stones (*naṭukkal* : நடுக்கல்) were believed to have been emblazoned by God (*kadavul eluthia kal* : கடவுள் எழுதிய கல்) and the spirit of heroes was considered as descending to find a home (*illam* : இல்லம்) in them: they were

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104 ‘...அந்த கால் கண்டாலிருந்து ளேன்று வரக்கோ விளக்கவேண்டி’ (Pur. 231).
‘...The fame he has gained will never fade away’ (Pur. 231).
sculptured as an iconic presentation of love which allowed for a fostering of a union with the deceased (Pur. 232). The practise was rooted in the belief that it fostered a union with the dearly departed, whose defied spirit was incarnated in stone. Rituals were enacted to foster the mystical union of hearts. The union occurred through a gradual process from an initial stage of yearning to a vision (katchi: கம்பி) of seeing the spirit of the hero that led to the invocation of the fallen, to abide in a stone (kalkol: கலக்கோல்).

The stone was then sculptured, immersed into water as a sacred symbol of re-initiation (natuthal: நைத்தக்); food offerings were made as a sign of the union and a blessing in the form of an eternal vision of enrapture (Pur. 306).

Though, the quest to transcend the visible realities seems quite incomplete at first appearance in the Tolkāppiyam and in the Caṅkam’s mind, the works of early grammarians of the in-depth complexity of Tamil syntax with its remarkable awareness to changing patterns of life in Tamil society, indicate that Caṅkam assemblies may have reasoned from the visible sphere i.e. from the perceived phenomenon, to the invisible unperceivable sphere. The Tolkāppiyam offers a glimpse into an early Tamil understanding of the totality of the phenomenon, in which religious experience is conceived and based on paradigms of polar imageries of love (aham) and heroism (Puram), as internal struggles to conquer the inner geography. These are the foundation of the quest for union with meta-cosmic power anāṅku (அனஞ்சூ) or ‘awe-inspiring supernatural force’. What is observable is that as, Varadarajan notes, ‘in these poems of

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105 ‘...முன்னவர் பெண் மனம்...’ (PG. 232)
‘We have placed peacock feathers on his headstone’ (Pur. 232).

106 ‘...ஏற்பிட்டு பெண் கோருமூசு பெண்மனம்...’ (PG. 232).
‘The women with soft hair and a bright forehead prays to the ancestor stone … and worships it’ (Pur. 306).
the theme of love, the beauty of nature is blended with sentiments of love with graciousness of imagination that defies analysis’ (1969, p.404).

In this way, significant literary images are interlaced together, ‘in a marvellously unique and fluid blending of geography, metaphor and imagination’ (Selby and Peterson, 2008, p. 17). This portrays the profound experience of inner (\textit{aham: உம்}) and outer (\textit{puram: புரும்}) which is religious in nature and became fundamental to Tamil Śaiva religiosity as shown in the \textit{Periya Purāṇam}. The nāyāmār’s expression of devotional service and of moral living in the \textit{Periya Purāṇam} oscillates in a relationship between the inner geography, interior phenomenon and the external outer geography, that is, Śiva. What is even more remarkable is the accentuation of the \textit{aṇaṅku (அணகு)} or ‘awe-inspiring impersonal power’ embodying the opposite forces of love and valour in a unity of juxtaposition. This unity in harmony is seen as a meta-cosmic correctness, which kept the cosmic order of the world. Hence, the mediating and keeping of this harmony in chaste love, within cosmic living, is the highest religious fulfilment of life which was intuitively realized by the \textit{Caṅkam} mind, early as human consciousness.

Even though one cannot overemphasize the enormous influence the \textit{Tolkāppiyam} had on the creation of the \textit{Periya Purāṇam}, it also definitely shaped its literary convention for the presentation of the Tamil saints’ religious expressions of service and morality woven around the literary genre of love (\textit{aham}) and heroism (\textit{puram}). These paradigms are set against a division of landscape (PP. 1088-1128), seasons (PP. 2231-2235) that are unique to the \textit{Tolkāppiyam}. The valour in which \textit{Kaṇṇappar nāyagār
pursued his worship of Śiva-linga stone, resonate the hero-stone worship found in Caṅkam literature. The heroism that was shown by Tiruṇāṭacampantar nāyaṉar to reinstate splendour of Śaivism’s in the meadival Tamil region, echoes the valour in which the chieftain-king protected the Caṅkam Tamil community (PP. 1348-1422). Kaliyar nāyaṉar filling the oil-lamp with his own blood (PP. 4027-4043), Kōṭпуli nāyaṉar punishing his relatives for the stealing of things that belonged to God are other examples of heroism (PP. 4139-4151). Similarly one could identify Cēkkilār’s careful usage of the moral discourse of Tirukkuṟal in the hagiography of the nāyaṉmār which are addressed in the following paragraphs.

2.3 The Moral Quest and the Moral Exhortations of the Tirukkuṟal

The shift in Tamil literary conventions as an ethical treatise in the post-Caṅkam period was marked by the influence of Buddhism and Jainism which began to take roots in early Tamil history. It was during this period, drawing moral axioms from various ideologies, that the Tirukkuṟal [(Tiru : venerable or sacred + Kural : discourse –

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107 This nāyaṉar was a mountain dweller and a hunter. One day he went out for hunting, he came across Lord Śiva in the form of lingam standing alone in the mountain. He embraced the lingam and kissed it. Reluctant leave the Lord alone, he began to feed the Lord with food and guard him. This went on for six days. On the sixth day when he returned from collecting food for the Lord, he was griev ed to see blood issuing from the Lord’s right eye. At once, with his own arrow, he plucked out his own eye and fixed it over the right eye of the Lord. Then he began to notice the left eye was bleeding. There was only one obstacle – how to replace the eye of the Lord when his own eye was plucked. So, he planted his foot at the place where the Lord’s left eye was on the lingam, and began to pull his left eye out, with his arrow. At once, moved by the saint’s devotion Lord Śiva took him with both hands and placed him on his right side (PP. 650-835).

108 He was devotee whose service in the temple took the form of providing oil for lighting the lamps in the temples. He hailed from the family of oil-extractors. In due time the occupation that provided him with ever-increasing wealth ceased to yield a profit. However, without being discouraged he intended to light the lamps with his own blood. So he took up the knife and slashed his own throat. At the moment the Lord intervened and stayed his hand (PP. 4027-4043).

109 For description of the life of Kōṭпуli nāyaṉar, see p. 12.
couplets) which is considered as ‘the greatest ethical treatise written in the Tamil language’ (Gopalan, 1997, p. 112) were composed. It is another significant work which antedates the Periya Purāṇam. Tirukkuṟaḷ, the revered book of wisdom, the 1330 couplets in 133 chapters, was believed to have been composed by Tiruvalluvar (துர்குறள்: ‘Holy Weaver’) of uncertain date perhaps in the post-Caṅkam period.¹¹⁰ Though little is known about him, his work is non-sectarian and it is didactic i.e. intended to teach. It points to the fact that Tiruvalluvar was eager to construct a system of practical ethics, reflecting the positive affirmation of life on earth that is characteristic of Tamil literature that would help the transformation of human life in all its various aspects.

In this work the Caṅkam categories of aham (அஹம்) and puram (புரம்) is discarded, and the author classifies his subject matter into three sections viz. aram (அஹம்) - virtuous conduct, porul (/popperul) - wealth and kāmam (காமம்) or inpam (இன்பம்) - love¹¹¹ according things that gives firm foundation for life or urutipporuḷ (things i.e. porul : பொருள் that gives firm foundation i.e. uruti for life). They constitute naturalistic but normative ideals to be achieved in human existence. The first section of book dwells on ‘aram ‘or ‘virtue’ i.e. virtuous conduct of a ‘domestic’ (Chapters 1- 24) and of ‘ascetic’ (Chapters 25-38) life. The second section on ‘porul’ or ‘wealth’ is divided into three categories: here the first part focuses on the person of king (Chapter 39-63); the second on good governance (Chapters 64-95), and the third part deals with different

¹¹⁰ Tiruvalluvar’s life is shrouded in mystery and his time and whereabouts cannot be determined with certainty. However, he is considered to be one of the greatest poets in classical Tamil literature. In all probability he lived and wrote between the second century B.C.E and the eight century A.C.E. Many scholars point to an earlier date (Cutler, 1992, p. 550). Legend has it that he was a weaver. He lived with his wife Vasuki, famed for her remarkable loyalty and virtue.

¹¹¹ Though it is believed that the classification of the objective of life as presented in the Tirukkuṟaḷ may correspond to the four purusārthas i.e. dharma, artha, kāma and mōksa of the Sanskrit dharma tradition, scholars argue that they are different from them, see Cutler, 1992, p. 93.
matters concerning human living (Chapters 96-108). The third section of the book is on ethics of ‘kāmam’ or ‘love’ expressed in different circumstance of i.e. through ‘secret’ (Chapters 109-115) and ‘public’ marriage (Chapters 116-133). It is believed that the proper pursuit of it would preserve not only the order in the universe but lead one to an intuitive knowledge of the ‘divine inner self’ (Iraianban, 1997, p.10).

A familiar theme in the Periya Purāṇam as reflected in the lives of the nāyaṉmār is the pursuit of this normative ideals i.e. aram (அம்கு) (virtue), porul (சோழுமு) (wealth) and kāmam (love) which led them to the vision of intuitive knowledge of the ‘divine inner self’ and of communion with Śiva, in whom is inherent all the virtues that order the universe (PP. 218)112. However, Cēkkilār could be seen as taking these normative ideals especially of aram (அம்கு) to a new level: aram is presented in the Periya Purāṇam as intrinsically stemming from and expressing the devotee’s communion with Śiva (PP. 438)113. Likewise, the ideal of kāmam (love) is given a new meaning when it comes to be applied primarily to the relationship between Śiva and the nāyaṉmār. In this context the ideal of kāmam (love) is not used in the sense of lust or eroticism but the word aypu (அய்பு) is used in the Periya Purāṇam (PP. 4153)114. Further, frequent reference to

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112 ‘...I am ignorant of the ocean of your virtues ... how can I find words to sing your praise?’ (PP. 218).

113 ‘...So the Lord granted abundant grace to his illustrious servant and to his chaste wife’ (PP. 438).

114 ‘...In the intensity of devotion, they have no peer.’ (PP. 4153)
practices such as the worship of God, hospitality to others and paying dues to the state in *Periya Purāṇam* as principles that uphold the cosmic order and the universal truth among the people (PP. 76)\(^\text{115}\) resonates with the human ideals of life found in *Tirukkuṟaḷ*.

The last of the four *purusārthas*, the supreme aim of life according to Indian tradition, namely *mōksa* or ‘release’ (vīṭu: விடு) is noticeably not emphasised in the *Tirukkuṟaḷ*. The implicit presentation of vīṭu, the final release from the cycle of birth and death is rather significant, as it is central to the study of religious ideals of the *nāyaṁmār* in the *Periya Purāṇam*. The indirect presentation of vīṭu or ‘release’ may be due to the fact that the author’s intention was to have a universal moral principle of life that went beyond the divisions of race, creed, customs and language. Moral attitude and service are indispensable for righteous living in the *Tirukkuṟaḷ* and when practiced will awaken the mystical vision of vīṭu or ‘release’. It is for this reason that from their earliest history ‘the Tamils have recognised ... their own inner voice speaking to them righteousness, justice and morality’ (Subramanian N., 1976, p. 64).

It is remarkable that even in the *Periya Purāṇam*, moral attitude and religious expressions of service are considered indispensable values, for the mystical vision of Śiva. By narrating the lives of the *nāyaṁmār* sourced from various strata of society, from

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\(^{115}\) அல்லது கிளைகள் அறிமுகம்

மூறு தென்னிப்பு அந்தக்கி முடிக்க

போடு அரசாலை ஆரம்பம்

சுருக்கம் மட்டும் போதுமை... அன்பானா பாலம் வீடு

சுருக்குடன் புருசன் சமணம்’ (PP. 76)

‘The people of the land pay their dues to the king, give alms in plenty. They provide for the adoration of God and offer hospitality to visitors …’ (PP. 76)
rulers such as Pukaḷcōlar (புகால்கோளர்) nāyaṉār (PP. 3947-3987)\(^{116}\) to ordinary citizens such as Kāṇnappar nāyaṉār (PP. 650-835)\(^{117}\), from holy men Meypporul (மேப்போருல்) nāyaṉār (PP. 467-490)\(^{118}\) to earthly women Māṅkaiyarkkaraci (மங்கையர்க்கரசி) Ammaiyar (PP. 4194-4196)\(^{119}\), from householders Tirukkurippuṉṭar (திருக்குறிப்புண்டர்) (PP. 1083-1210)\(^{120}\) to ascetics Tirumūlar (திருமுழு) (PP. 3569-3596)\(^{121}\), one can recognise that the path of moral living and a true path to communion with Śiva goes beyond the binding divisions of race, creed, customs and language.\(^{122}\) The path to Śiva in the Periya Purāṇam is experiencing the true nature of Śiva in the daily living of moral ideals.

_Tirukkuṟaḷ_, as a book of ethical ideals, begins with a chapter in praise of the qualities of Ādhi Bhagavan (அதியாதிபத்திரு பாகவன்) or ‘the primal deity’, without any reference to a

\(^{116}\) Pukaḷcōlar had a high sense of duty and responsibility. It is he who offered eripathṭar, a devotee of Lord Śiva, his sword bowing down him, pleaded to be beheaded as he, ultimately, was responsible for any crime in his kingdom (PP. 3947-3987).

\(^{117}\) For the short narration of the life of this saint, see p. 50.

\(^{118}\) Meypporul is known for his service to the devotees of the Lord. He faithfully followed the precepts of justice as tradition decreed. The sole objective of his concern were the devotees of the Lord Śiva apart from them, he knew no other loyalty. In spite of this saint’s piety another king named Muttanāṭaṅ (முத்தாந்தாஞ்சி) picked a quarrel with him and made war against him. However, again and again Muttanāṭaṅ suffered defeat. Knowing Meypporul nāyaṉār’s devotion to the devotees of the Lord Śiva, Muttanāṭaṅ disguised himself by putting the sacred ash and set off to kill Meypporul. Although Muttanāṭaṅ had intended to take his life, Meypporul continued to treat him as the friend of the Lord. By doing so, the king steadfastly followed the path of virtue (PP. 467-490).

\(^{119}\) Māṅkaiyarkkaraci is unique among the women. By the grace of the Lord, she dispelled the troubles that beset the broad Tamil land, and promoted the use of white holy ash. Over many occasions, he guided her king on the saivite path. Finally she was granted grace with him to dwell under the shadow of God’s feet (PP. 4194-4196).

\(^{120}\) This saint is a great devotee of the Lord Śiva. He would read the facial expressions of Śiva’s devotees and understand their needs. He too gains satisfaction in washing the clothes of the devotees of the Lord whenever they come to worship in the temple. One day to test the devotee’s faith the Lord appeared before this saint in the form of a devotee wearing dirty clothes. As usual, the saint offered himself to wash the devotee’s cloth. The devotee expressed his concern that it was the only cloth that was in his possession, therefore, the cloth has to be washed carefully and dried in the sun. He cautioned the saint that: if the washing is delayed, the act of delay would harm his body. So the saint began to wash his clothes. All of a sudden the sun disappeared rain began to fall heavily. The saint was so disappointed, he was weeping with grief. Even he felt guilty and attempted to break his head on the washing stone (PP. 1083-1210).

\(^{121}\) The significant life story of this saint is narrated extensively in the chapter 3 of the thesis.

\(^{122}\) For all the nāyaṉār and the various strata of life they represent, see Appendix I.
particular deity or God. In general, ‘the praise of God’ in Tamil literature is divided into two categories: either, it means the author’s salutation to the God whom the author worships or salutation to the God proper to the subject of that particular work. Tirukkural’s praise of Ādhi Bhagavan does not fall under any of these divisions; it is ‘neither an invocation nor a mantra. It has neither religious connation whatsoever in the partisan or sectarian sense’ (Pandian, 1996, p. 56) even though Parimēlālkar, the thirteenth century commentator of Tirukkural, places it into the second category (Sentuṟai Muttu, 1985, p. 107). In the Periya Purāṇam the ‘praise of God’ occurs to honour the divine guidance of Śiva in the composition of the book (PP. 1).

The reference to the Ādhi Bhagavan (அதி பாகவன்) as the meta-phenomenon that transcends any human categorization, religion or devotion is unique. Here the reference to Ādhi Bhagavan is so general and universal in character that it does not specifically refer to any particular concept of a God in specific religion. The sublime thoughts expressed therein lay the foundation for the betterment of humanity and affirm an implicit trust in the higher quality of human life. This first chapter of Tirukkural does not propose any significant modes of worship of Ādhi Bhagavan’s majesty imploring divine help; instead, it portrays qualities that are attributed to Ādhi Bhagavan as ideals to be

123 ‘அதி பாகவன் என்பது அவ்விலை என்பது என்னிடையே என்று’ (Kṟ mogul 1:1). ‘All alphabets start with ‘Aa’ sound, likewise, the whole universe originates from the Almighty, ADHI BHAGAVAN, the Supreme as its beginning’ (Kṟ mogul 1:1). All Tirukkural texts are from Ambrosia of Tirukkural and abbreviated as kūṟṟā.

124 The salutation is usually paid to the author’s kuladevatā and following are the examples: Viṣṇu for Vaiṣṇavas, Śiva for Śaivas.

125 For example Rāma for the Rāmāyaṇa, Kṛṣṇa for the Mahābhārata and the Bhagavāta Purāṇa.

126 ‘In all the worlds, no one can comprehend or tell his greatness. In his muttered hair he holds the river Ganges and the crescent moon. He shines the brightest of all heavenly lights, and dances in the sacred court. His are the flower feet, circled with anklets, which we worship and adore’ (PP. 1).
achieved in human life. Hence, the search for virtue and moral fulfilment, whatever be the channel along which it is directed, culminates in the ultimate finding of heavenly bliss (*Kural* 25: 242). Thus, even though, the first chapter of the *Tirukkuṭṭural* is in ‘praise of God’, more than deifying a particular, personal God of a particular religion, it exalts in the qualities of the *Adhi Bhagavan* as that which is universal and that which gives meaning and significance to human existence.

Significant is the fact, that in the first chapter of the *Tirukkuṭṭural*, the ineffability of the ‘primordial deity’ is articulated by the use of language as a metaphor. Just as the letter ‘A’ in the alphabet, stands as the first and the primary letter of the alphabet and gives vitality to the other letters in the alphabet, so too the world originates and is given life by God (*Kural* 1:1). All knowledge and wisdom that are gained through the uttering and studying of words are of no avail, if they do not lead one to contemplate the feet of God, who is ‘pure intelligence’ (*Kural* 1:2). This objective is said to be beyond the awareness of dualism and the understanding that is gained through learning. As a word, ‘S/He’ is the beginning, the primordial and the end of all that is uttered and spoken. Those who desire to be free from the ocean of birth have to embrace the feet (*aṭi: ḍh*), of God (*Iraivan; இராயவன்*) (*Kural* 1:10).

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127 ‘தருமை செய்ய வேண்டும் வருமானப் பெரியவன் அஸ்தித்வத்துடன் செய்யும் வேண்டும்’ (*Kural* 25:242)

‘A person should practise mercy by following the correct path; at it is seen by studying the teachings of all religions that only mercy leads to heaven’ (*Tiru. 25:242*). Here mercy is referred to as one of the cardinal virtues that lead to the heavenly bliss.

128 ‘ஏன் அறியாதலையில் போர்த்து போலின் வாத்தில் அஸ்தித்வம்’ (*Kural* 1:1).

‘All alphabets start with ‘Aa’ sound, likewise, the whole universe originates from the Almighty, ADHI BHAGAVAN, the Supreme as its beginning’ (*Kural* 1:1)

129 ‘கூறுமையால் அன்ன வாசகரையில் அனுஷ்டந்து வந்துள்ளது கூறியது’ (*Kural* 1:2).

‘The wise man must worship the Almighty who is the source of all knowledge, otherwise his wisdom is useless’ (*Kural* 1:2).

130 ‘புராணம் வாணங்கள் புனிதம் பிற்று இராயவன் ஆபருத் துறு’ (*Kural* 1:10).
The reference to God as ‘Iraivan’ (இறைவன்) is also quite significant. The word ‘Iraivan’ (இறைவன்) has a plethora of meaning. Hart points out that the word iraivan is used as an epithet to denote ‘he who is highest’, ‘Lord’, and ‘king’ (1975, p13). The word ‘Iraivan’ (இறைவன்) is derived from the word iṟu (இறு), which means ‘remain, dwell in’ (taiṅkal : தாங்கல்). It also denotes ‘primacy’ or ‘superiority’ (muthanmai: முத்தன்மை) of an entity. In this way the word ‘Iraivan’ (இறைவன்) is used to mean something of ‘superior’ ‘dwelling in all beings’ denoting the presence of something of ‘superior’ in all being (ellāp porulnum taṅkiyirappavan: எல்லறை பொருளும் தாங்கியிருப்பவன்). It is evident in that the author of the Tirukkural wants to emphasise that those who follow the path of virtue and that ‘those who shelter at the feet (aṭi: அதி) of the almighty [who is the supreme virtue] who dwells in the innermost recesses of their heart, live forever in him’ (Kural 1:3)\(^{131}\).

As in the Tirukkural, the objective of nāyāṇmār in the Periya Purāṇam is to reach and attain the ‘divine feet’ of God through service and moral living. In the introduction to the book, Cēkkilār states that ‘His are the flower feet, which nāyāṇmār worship and honour’ (PP. 1)\(^{132}\). The mystical quest of the nāyāṇmār in the Periya Purāṇam and their true purpose in life is found in the worship of the golden feet of the Lord (PP. 2).\(^{133}\) It is for this reason Cēkkilār frequently refers to the Tamil saints as aṭiyār

\(^{131}\)‘Nobody can cross the vast sea of births unless he embraces the feet of God’ (Kural 1:10).

\(^{132}\)‘மலர்மிகை இகின் (மலர்மிகை இகின்) refers to the Lord who speedily enters the human hearts. The word ‘flower’ (malar: மலர்) is used as a metaphor for heart or mind (ullam : உள்ளம்). The second line of the verse, ‘[they] will live long upon the land (nilamicai nituvalvar: நிலாமிகை நிதுவல்வர்)’ to mean simply, ‘they will live long, trouble-free lives on earth.’

\(^{133}\)‘... வா மலர்மிகை இகின் வரன்குந்து’ ( pg.4).
(அடி), from the root *ati* (அடி) meaning foot. They are the ones who have taken refuge at the feet of the Lord, as his servant, one who has placed his head at the feet of the Lord. Hence, Cēkkilār notes, those who worship his feet will flourish and are worthy to rule the world (PP. 139). The feet of the Lord are referred to as limitless treasures (PP. 2326); the very essence of all knowledge (PP. 3668), source of bondage and release (PP. 300), grace and benevolence (PP. 274), and pursuit of the feet is the noble path (PP. 4164). It must be mentioned here, at this stage, for Cēkkilār, the feet of the Lord is Śivam. However, what is important to the scope of this research are the qualities of goodness that are attributed to Śivam, wherein resonates, concepts originating in the Tirukkural.

The other couplets of the first chapter of the Tirukkural speak of the ‘primordial deity’ (*Ādi Bhagavan*; அடி பகவன்) as the encompassing foundation of human living.
The nature of God is elucidated as ‘source of all knowledge’ (Kural 1:2), ‘void of desire and aversion’ (Kural 1:4), ‘one who has destroyed the five desires of the senses’ (Kural 1:6), ‘beyond compassion’ (Kural 1:7), ‘sea of virtue’ (Kural 1:8) and ‘embodiment of character’ (Kural 1:9). The reference to ‘primordial deity’ as that which has conquered the five senses does seem unique and anthropocentric. The chapter succinctly portrays the characteristics of the ‘primordial deity’ quite clearly. Most important of all is the portrayal of God as the embodiment or seat of all virtues. A person who has realized the feet of God, who is the seat of virtue, would abide all these virtues. This indicates that among the three objectives of life, the most significant is being virtuous because God encompasses all virtues. In the Periya Puranam, Śiva is referred to as the Lord of all virtue (PP. 135) and a great ocean of virtue (PP. 218).

140 ‘वेदोऽभ्यस्तः सम्बन्धमवैनिस्त्रीयम् वानैकर्ष्णं गुणप्रदेशं कलो’ (कुरा. 1:2). ‘The wise man must worship the Almighty who is the source of all knowledge; otherwise his wisdom is useless’ (Kural 1:2).

141 ‘सदाशीत्रः सत्यानां सत्योपायं सदाः सत्यं हृदयं हृदयं’ (कुरा. 1:4).

142 ‘सत्यात्मानं विकृतिविहीनं सत्यं विद्विहीनं गुणं गुणं’ (कुरा. 1:6).

143 ‘नस्त्यात्मानं विकृतिविहीनं सत्यं विद्विहीनं गुणं गुणं’ (कुरा. 1:7).

144 ‘वेदोऽभ्यस्तः सम्बन्धमवैनिस्त्रीयम् वानैकर्ष्णं गुणप्रदेशं कलो’ (कुरा. 1:8).

145 ‘वेदोऽभ्यस्तः सम्बन्धमवैनिस्त्रीयम् वानैकर्ष्णं गुणप्रदेशं कलो’ (कुरा. 1:9).

146 ‘…अतेऽत्सवतेऽत्सवं आत्मां अत्सवं आत्मां अत्सवं आत्मां अत्सवं’ (पुस्त. 135).

147 ‘…अतेऽत्सवतेऽत्सवं आत्मां अत्सवं आत्मां अत्सवं आत्मां अत्सवं’ (पुस्त. 218).

… I know nothing of the ocean of your virtues’ (PP. 218).
Besides these, there are other references where the Periya Purāṇam is indebted to the Tirukkural. Even though these matters may not carry a direct impact on this research, key points can be noted in brief. Clearly, Čēkkilār has used several quotes from the corresponding couplets of the Tirukkural. This may be demonstrated by the following example: the v. 1986 of the Periya Purāṇam emphasises that ‘to the devotee who are impelled by spiritual maturity to reach him, the Lord riding on the bull with his consort who shares his body, grant the peerlessly strong currents of the sea of transmigration’\textsuperscript{148}. This resonates with the couplet of the Tirukkural 1:10 which states ‘no one can cross the vast sea of the births unless he embraces the feet of the Lord\textsuperscript{149}. On another occasion in v. 881 of the Periya Purāṇam, Čēkkilār sings that ‘by the grace of the ... Lord ... his wife who could command even the descent of rain.’\textsuperscript{150} In this, one hears the echoes of the Tirukkural 6:55 which states ‘the wife worships no other God but her husband, and by her mere utterance it will rain’.\textsuperscript{151} Only one who is familiar with Tirukkural will be able to recognise that it is a direct quote.

What is worth noting for the purpose of this study is that, though Čēkkilār and Tiruvalluvar, were two men who lived in a world set apart by socio-political, cultural and religious environment, they show a keen perception of Tamil society of their own times, their deep concern for the struggling masses of their time and their agreement on the high


\textsuperscript{149} ‘ஹூவையை நோக்காமல் நோக்கும் திருச்சம் அலம கொல்ளா’ (கிளியா. 1:10).

\textsuperscript{150} ‘அச்சுமல்லூர் கொலாமல் காவுமல்லூர் கொலாமல் காவுமல்லூர் கொலாமல் காவுமல்லூர் கொலாமல் காவுமல்லூர் கொலாமல் காவுமல்லூர் கொலாமல் காவுமல்லூர் கொலாமல் காவுமல்லூர் கொலாமல் காவுமல்லூர் கொலாமல் காவுமல்லூர் கொலாமல் காவுமல்லூர் கொலாமல் காவுமல்லூர் கொலாமல் காவுமல்லூர் கொலாமல் காவுமல்லூர் கொலாமல் காவுமல்லூர் கொலாமல் காவுமல்லூர் கொலாமல் காவுமல்லூர் கொலாமல் காவுமல்லூர் கொலாமல் காவுமல்லூர் கொலாமல் காவுமல்லூர் கொலாமல் காவுமல்லூர் கொலாமல் காவுமல்லூர் கொலாமல் காவுமல்லூர் கொலாமல் காவுமல்லூர் கொலாமல் காவுமல்லூர் கொலாமல் காவுமல்லூர் கொலாமல் காவுமல்லூர் கொலாமல் காவுமல்லூர் கொலாமல் காவுமல்லூர் கொலாமல் காவுமல்லூர் கொலாமல் காவுமல்லூர் 

\textsuperscript{151} ‘ஹூவையை நோக்காமல் நோக்கும் திருச்சம் அலம கொலாமல் காவுமல்லூர் கொலாமல் காவுமல்லூர் கொலாமல் காவுமல்லூர் கொலாமல் காவுமல்லூர் கொலாமல் காவுமல்லூர் கொலாமல் காவுமல்லூர் கொலாமல் காவுமல்லூர் கொலாமல் 

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ideals of human life, justice, virtue and service and their mystical quest for meaning in the ordinariness of human living. But Cēkkilār’s mastery lies not only in the literary standards and moral integrity achieved in the composition of the Periya Purāṇam but also in the integration of the literary conventions set in Tamil literary traditions and the moral exhortation of the Tirukkuṟal, and the profound devotion to Śīva as expressed in Tirumugai. The next section will examine the influence of the Tirumugai in the composition of the Periya Purāṇam.

2.4 The Mystical Quest and the Devotional Culture of the Tirumugai

The third literary genre of significance which proceeded the composition of the Periya Purāṇam are the devotional poetry of Tamil saints which were later compiled as the ‘mystical and canonical works of Saiva tradition’ (Manninezhath, 1993, p. xvi) i.e. Tirumugai (Tirukkoarmar) or ‘Sacred Order’. They hold the prosaic expressions of the nāyaṇmār’s devotional experiences, whose biographies are narrated in the Periya Purāṇam. These hymns of the nāyaṇmār, written and sung in praise of Śīva on various occasions ‘represent the spiritual excellence of Śaivism at best’ (Bose, 1998, p. 147), they are ‘extremely rich in lyrical poetry, theology, and historical legend’ (Farquhar, 1984, p. 255). Tirumugai is venerated as ‘the primary scripture (marai: mōcci)’ of Tamil Śaivism (Peterson, 1991, p.15).

As a sacred compendium, the Tirumugai, was discovered and edited between the eleventh and twelfth centuries after the Common Era. The argument regarding the discovery and the compilation of the entire compendium of the Tirumugai vary among
the scholars. While Marr (1979, p. 118-119) and Farquhar (1984, p. 256) give credit to Nampi Āntār Nampi (நம்பி அங்கர் நம்பி) for the formation of the larger body of Tamil Saiva canon who lived in the reign of Rajaraja Abhaya Kulasekara Cōla of the tenth century (A.C.E 985-1018), Peterson gives credit to Nampi Āntār Nampi only for compiling the first seven of twelve books of Tirumurai (1991, p.16). Their discussion is based on the confusion regarding the identity of the Cōla king who induced Nampi Āntār Nampi to compile the hymns. However, it is the canonization of the Periya Purāṇam in the later part of the twelfth century which forms the twelfth anthology of Tirumurai that completes the entire compendium. The entire work of the Tirumurai is a ‘canonical collection of Tamil religious literature’ (Ebert, 2006, p. 221); it is referred to as Panniru Tirumurai (Panniru: பந்திரு i.e. Twelve; Tirumurai: திருமுருகை i.e. ‘Sacred Order’) or a collection of Twelve Holy Texts. Zvelebil points to ‘its enormity, its heterogeneity, and the fact that it covers a period of at least 600 years of religious, philosophical and literary development’ (1973, p. 186) are the three characteristic features of this body of literature. It is a work of spiritual wisdom and devotion that inform the Saiva religiosity perhaps more pointedly than any other work in Tamil Saivism.

The first seven of the twelve books of the Tirumurai are known as Tēvāram (தேவாரம்) or ‘Divine Garland of Praises’ addressed to Śiva implying that devotion is the ‘string’ on which the numerous ‘flowers’ meaning verses are strung. Tēvāram comprises the hymns of Tiruñāṉacampantar (திருநானாசம்பாந்தர்) (ca. 637 A.C.E – 653 A.C. E) whose hymns are placed as the first three books of Tirumurai, while the hymns of his

152 For the discussion of the identity of the king who induced Nampi Āntār Nampi to compile the hymns, see Zvelebil,1975, pp. 133-134.
contemporary Tirunāvukkaracar (திருநாவுக்கரசர்), otherwise known as Appar (அபர்) (ca. 574 A.C.E – 655 A.C.E), formed the fourth, fifth and the sixth anthologies of Tēvāram.

The seventh book of Tēvāram comprises the seven series of hymns of Cuntaramūrtti (சுந்தரமுருத்திய) (ca. 807 A.C.E – 825 A.C.E) who’s Tiruttoneṭar Tokai (திருத்தோணையர் தொகை) or the ‘Roll of the Holy Servants’ is the primary source material for the composition of the Periya Purāṇam. The biographical information it contained was an important source for the composition of the Periya Purāṇam. The works of Manikkavakar (மஞ்சாகவாகர்) (ca. 850) that include Tiruvācakam (திருவாசகம்) or ‘Holy Readings’ and Tirukkovai (திருக்கோவை) or ‘Holy Works of Order’ are placed as the eight book of the Tirumuṟai. The collection of the metaphysical hymns of nine poets known as Tiruisaippā (திருไอசைப்பா) or ‘Holy Hymns’ forms the ninth book of the Tirumuṟai.

These nine anthologies of Tirumuṟai are categorized as sothiram (சோதிரம்) meaning ‘Hymns of Praise’ for Śiva. The tenth collection of the Tiumuṟai is the mystical poems of Tirumūlar’s (திருமுளர்) (ca. 200) Tirumandiram (திருமாண்டிரம்) or ‘Holy Invocation’; it is categorized as sāsthiram (சாஸ்திரம்) meaning the philosophical guidelines of Šaiva doctrine. The eleventh book of the Tirumuṟai includes the various compositions on the nāyānmār, including that of Nampi Āṉṭār Nampi’s Tiruttoneṭar Tiruvandadi (திருத்தோணையர் தொகையான் திருவாண்டாதி) which lists the names of the nāyānmār. By the time the Periya Purāṇam was composed, there was in existence the first eleven books of the twelve Tirumuṟai. They formed the basis not only for Tamil devotional culture,

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153 The significance of these Tēvaram poets together with the brief description of their lives is dealt in Chapter 3.
inspiring Tamil devotional literature, but also proved very significant for the exposition of the *Periya Purāṇam*. As a work of literature, that recalls the lives of the *nāyaṁmār*, the *Periya Purāṇam* ‘embodies the hagiographical traditions of the *Tēvāram* poets and the circumstances of the individual poem’s composition’ (Shulman, 1990, p. xxii). The *Periya Purāṇam* was later added to the corpus as the twelfth anthology of the *Tirumūraig* in order to complete the entire canon.

In the prelude to his hagiography in ‘terms of history and spiritual autobiography’ (Peterson, 1994, p.199) Cēkkilār writes that he uses *Tiruttoṇṭar Tokai* (திருடுண்டர் தோகை) of Cuntaramūrtti *nāyaṁnār* of the eight century, which included details on the lives of the *nāyaṁmār*, and *Tiruttoṇṭar Tiruvandadi* (திருடுண்டர் திருவண்டகி) of Nampi Āṇṭār Nambi (நம்பி ஆண்டார் நம்பி) of the tenth century, which are part of *Tirumūraig*, as his direct sources for the composition of the *Periya Purāṇam* (PP. 48-50, 4234).¹⁵⁴ *Tiruttoṇṭar Tokai* is an eleven canto poem in the *Tirumūraig* VII, *patikam* (பதிகம்) 9¹⁵⁵; it is the first collective record of information on the *nāyaṁmār* with their names, to appear in Tamil history. In it, Cuntaramūrtti, lists all the *nāyaṁmār* with just a brief descriptive word about each of them, and declares himself to the servant (*aṭiyēṇ*: அதியேன்) of each one. The circumstance that led to the composition of this poem of eleven stanzas, each of eight lines on the *nāyaṁmār* is described by Cēkkilār in the *Periya Purāṇam* (PP. 491-501). As a ‘Roll of the Holy Servants’, the *Tiruttoṇṭar Tokai* lists

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¹⁵⁴ ‘நம்பி ஆண்டார் நம்பியை குருக்காரராக பார்க்கி மூன்றில் குருக்காரராக மாற்றி குருக்காரராக நிரத்தியும் குருக்காரராக நிரத்தியும்’ (குருக்காரராக நிரத்தியும்) (பதிகம் 48).

The Roll of the Holy Servants of the Lord is the principal source of this present work. Its author was *Nampi* …’ (PP. 48).

¹⁵⁵ *Patikam* (பதிகம்) is poem in praise of a deity consisting generally of ten stanzas. For *Tiruttoṇṭar Tokai* (திருடுண்டர் தோகை), see Appendix II.
mystics and devotees drawn from various stages in the life and status of society who inspired a culture of devotion in the Tamil tradition. This, not only ‘serves to illuminate in an authentic, concrete manner the sense of community that informs the poet-saint’s devotion’ (Peterson, 1991, p. 322), but also as Iyenger suggests make a ‘world wonderfully held together and sustained by devotion’ and of the ‘unfailing ambiance of divine grace’ (Vanmikanathan, 1985, p. xvi).

Cēkkilār faithfully follows the Tiruttoṇṭar Tokai in terms of its structure, chapter division, and chapter title\textsuperscript{156} and in the order of listing the lives of the saints (Marr, 1979, p. 271). The order in which Cēkkilār presents the nāyaṃmār in the Periya Purāṇam follows exactly the order in which Cuntarar presents them in the Tiruttoṇṭar Tokai from beginning to the end. Each of Periya Purāṇam’s chapter divisions, except for first and the last, includes precisely the same lives as the equivalent stanza in the Tiruttoṇṭar Tokai. For example, in the second chapter, where the correspondence between the two begins, Cēkkilār includes the six nāyaṃmār who are listed in the first stanza of Tiruttoṇṭar Tokai. It is also true of the chapter titles where for each chapter from II to XII, Cēkkilār has taken the opening words from the corresponding stanza of Tiruttoṇṭar Tokai. However, besides his commitment to the path of devotion manifested in the nāyaṃmār’s service and moral living Cēkkilār adds detailed information drawn from Tamil tradition, culture describing the beauty of the Tamil land. This makes Periya Purāṇam an original work composed by Cēkkilār not mere elaboration of the primary sources.

\textsuperscript{156} For the structure of the Periya Purāṇam, see Appendix III.
The constant usage of the refrain ‘atýārkkum atiyēn’ (அதுற்குருக்கும் அதீயுள்) or ‘I am the servant of you, the servant of the Lord’ of the Tiruttonțar Tokai at the end of every narrative, is also a most important element that had an impact on Cēkkiḻār. The word atiyēn (அதீயுள்), derived from the root of ati (அதி) meaning the lowly or submissive, signifies one who had taken refuge in the grace of God. Thus, the constant repetition of the refrain ‘atýārkkum atiyēn’ (PP. 930) is an example of the devotion of Cēkkiḻār to the work of the Tiruttonțar Tokai. Every one of the nāyaṉmār who are worshipped in the Tiruttonțar Tokai is again adored in the Tiruttonțar Tiruvandadi or ‘Garland of Verses on the Holy Servants’ of Nampi Āṇṭār Nampi; this is in the eleventh Tirumuṟai, in eighty nine quatrains which is fuller than Tiruttonțar Tokai, with one whole stanza is dedicated to each saint. However, Nampi Āṇṭār Nampi adds Cuntarar who composed Tiruttonțar Tokai and his parents to the list of his Tiruttonțar Tiruvandadi formulating the popularly known canonical list of the sixty three nāyaṉmār with a brief description of their legend. Cēkkiḻār’s reference to Nampi Āṇṭār Nampi (PP. 50), Kāraikkal Ammaiyar (PP. 1721-1787) and Aiyaṭkal (PP. 4051- 4059) whose hymns are included in the eleventh Tirumuṟai, indicate that the entire collection of the Tirumuṟai proved decisive in the composition of the Periya Purāṇam and its mysticism of service and morality.

157  ‘... அதுற்குருக்கும் அதீயுள் அதீயுள் ஆதீஸால் காட்டவிளையானது...’ (பி. பீ. 930).
158  ‘...அதுற்குருக்கும் அதீயுள் அதீயுள் அதீயுள் ஆதீஸால் காட்டவிளையானது...’ (பி. பீ. 50)

‘...the famours poet to Nampi Āṇṭār Nampi sang the eternal praise of the servants...’(PP. 50)
Apart from the *Tiruttuṇṭar Tokai* and *Tiruttuṇṭar Tiruvandadi* which inspired the *Periya Purāṇam*, the anthology of *Tirumurai* as a ‘Tamil religious literature’ (Ebert, 2006, p. 221) embodies a vision of life that became integral to the devotion as shown in the *Periya Purāṇam*. This vision of life, proposed the possibility of a devotion to Śiva. It propagated *aṇpu* (அண்பு) or love as the basis of the religious life and the expression of it as highest form of religious activity. The propagation of this religion of love in the vernacular language brought the Śaivite religion closer to the heart of the Tamil tradition.

The *nāyaṉmār* inspired this devotion by drawing on a complexity of sources and elements from Vedic, *Āgamic*160, *Purāṇic*161 traditions and integrating these with local Tamil mythologies. Nowhere is this amalgam of different traditions in promotion of this religion of love or *aṇpu* more poignantly celebrated than in the hymns of *Tēvāram*:

He is of the empyrean, see Him!
He is far above the celestials, see Him!
He became Sanskrit of the North and the Southern Tamil
And the four Vedas; see Him!
He bathes in *Pañcakavviiyam*, see Him!
He is the sage, see Him!
He is the forester who holds fire in his hand and dance; see Him!
He graced the forester, see Him!
He is honey that springs from the lotus-hearts of those of him, See Him!
He is the wealthy one of unattainable treasure, see Him!

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159 The Vedas are considered as the divine manifestation of the eternal word i.e. vāk. Their origin is ‘non-human authorship’ (apauruṣya). Therefore, they are hailed as revealed text or Śruti that which is ‘seen’, ‘heard’ and ‘communicated’ by the ancient *rṣis* or teachers. They are different from *Smṛti* texts which are ‘remembered’ by tradition by teachers. The Vedas are four: the Ṛg-Veda (collection of mantras), Śāma-Veda (collection of liturgical melodies), Yahur-Veda (collection of sacrificial formulas for rituals) and *Atharva*-Veda (magical mantras and spells). These corpuses of the Vedas are further categorized into *Samās* (classification of mantras), *Brahmanas* (sacrificial text), *Āranyakas* (forest treatises) and Upanishads (philosophical text). For study of revelation and of the Vedas in Hinduism, see Staal, 2008, pp. 51-185.

160 The *Āgamas* is an authoritative scripture believed to have ‘come down to us’ (Dasgupta, 1955, p. 96) as a tradition or spiritual teachings independent of Vedas. They contain practical ‘religious details of the cult of Śaivism’ (Dasgupta, 1955, p. 20), guidelines for religious and social activities, manual for temple constructions and image-making, philosophical treatises on cosmology and ontology, various mantras and mythologies.

161 They are mythological works of ancient history that contains narratives, chronologies, genealogies and stories of gods and kings.
He is Śiva, see Him!
He is the opulent on of Śivapuram! (Tēv. 6.087.1).\textsuperscript{162}

The hymn to Śiva was sung by Tirunāvukkaracar at a shrine at Śivapuram (Śivapuram). His songs of devotion are often composed in moments of devotional encounter with Śiva particularly at temples and shrines he visited. Cēkkīḻar narrates many of these moments that gave birth to such hymns of the nāyaṉār and how Śiva hearing the sweetness of such hymns conferred the name ‘nāvukkaracar’ (நாவுக்கரசர்) on the nāyaṉār in the Periya Purāṇam (PP. 1344).\textsuperscript{163} Such hymns of devotion which sprung from their encounter with Śiva not only exemplify devotion but also articulate a vision of life that the nāyaṉmār intended to articulate through their devotion.

The first stanza of the poem is almost an imperative from the poet that one must ‘see Him! (காண: : kāṇ) i.e. Śiva. In the following stanzas in the poem, the nāyaṉār makes a sequence of identifications, by which he embeds Śiva within certain elements of the universe. The nāyaṉār insist that one must ‘see Him’ who became the languages of the religious scriptures – both in pan-Indian religious language of Sanskrit and local

\textsuperscript{162} In the citation while the first number - the Roman - refers to Tirumuṟai, the second and third number - the Arabic - refers to the Patikam i.e. the chapter and the hymn number.

\textsuperscript{163} 'At the moment, the Lord who dwells in Tiruvirāṭāṇam, a voice was heard from among the clouds of heaven. “Because you have sung garlands of sweet Tamil hymns, throughout the seven worlds you shall be known by the name ‘Nāvukkaracu’ (PP. 1344).
Tamil (‘He became Sanskrit of the North and the Southern Tamil And the four Vedas; see Him! – ‘வடமோலியுந்த் தந்தமிலும் மராகன் நாகும்’ : vatamoliyunt tântamilum maraikal nākum). Elsewhere, nāyaṉār identifies Śiva as ‘the sage’ (அனவன்: Ānavan), ‘one who holds fire in his hand and dance’ (‘உமுற்கையில் நட்டியுள்ள நாயானார்’ : iyankān kaiyilena lānti yātung) and ‘blesses the hunter saint’ (‘சன்னதிக்கப்பெறும் கணவனுக்கருல்வையும்’ : kunvakān kānavanukkarulcei tān) whose life is narrated in the Periya Purāṇam (PP. 650-835)164. According to the Periya Purāṇam, Śiva marvelled at the hunter saint’s devotion to sacrifice his own eyes to substitute it for Śiva’s bleeding eyes, He granted him the blessings to remain in Śiva’s right hand forever. So a lowly ‘hunter’ becomes a devotional paradigm for other devotees of Śiva. In this way the nāyaṉār asserts Śiva’s all-pervasiveness and presence in the world. However, the emphasis that Śiva ‘becoming the southern Tamil’ (நான்குறுத்தும் மராகன் நாகும் : tântamilum maraikal nākum) ‘introduces [the idea of ] a universal godhead into the Tamil ethos’ (Champakalakshmi, 2007, p. 50). This is a phenomenon which significantly alters the Tamil tradition in terms of religion and culture and shaped the theology of Cēkkilār as presented in the Periya Purāṇam. Cēkkilār too, as the nāyaṉār, affirms the presence of Śiva in the realities of the world and states Śiva as the Lord of the Vedas (PP. 101)165. Śiva is the innermost essence of everything in the universe.

164 For the life story of this nāyaṉār, see p. 50.
165 ‘ஒன்றுந்து வழங்குவோம் பெரிய வைத்தியத்தை கலந்து குண்டில்லான் புண்ணகத்தாக அவள நிகொண்டில் ரிசுத்தில் அன்னமொக்கையான குருதக அறுமக் வாருவான் புருஷாடேசமான’ (விசு. 101).
‘According to the rules laid down in the ancient texts, he made proper provision for the worship of the Lord of the Vedas, who is present everywhere yet deigns to dwell in the ant-hill’ (PP 101).
One significant iconic portrayal of Śiva in the hymn, is Śiva as the ‘dancer’ (ātum). This visual representation of Śiva is crucial to the understanding of the devotion as expressed in Tirumurai. It is rich in significance from aesthetic and theological point of view. Śiva makes himself present in anthropomorphic form as the ‘Lord of Dance’ in early temples and manifests his divine presence in diverse ways. It also explains how nāyaṃmār knitted Vedic, Purānic and Āgamic legends and myths in a theological exposition of Śiva and inspire aṭpū or love in union to Him in the local culture. In the Periya Purāṇam, Cēkkiḻār follows the standards set in the Tirumurai by drawing on elements of Vedic, Purānic and Āgamic sources to blend his vision of devotion. This could be cited from the narration of the life of Kaṇṇappar nāyaṉār (PP. 650-835), a hunter, who was ignorant of scripture but became an emblem of devotion and service. Kaṇṇappar nāyaṉār’s adoration of Śiva in the forms of linga-stone\(^{166}\) is an example of how the earliest modes of worship were reformulated in a new devotional setting of the Tirumurai so as to instil a deeper meaning to life and to motivate a personal relationship with Śiva. Likewise, in the devotion of Cākkiyar nāyaṉār (PP. 3641-3648)\(^{167}\) who threw pebbles as offerings of worship at Śiva-linga, the strength of mind displayed by Kaliyar

\(^{166}\) For the study of various myths in traditions, see Shulman, 1980; Peterson, 1991; O’Flaherty, 1975. One example of such myths which appear consistently in nāyaṃmār’s song is Śiva’s manifestation in linga as Brahman and Viṣṇu were in a debate as to prove who was the Supreme one and the source of all things. At that moment, Śiva manifested himself as linga of light, which stretched from the bottom of the ocean to high above the heavens, revealing his infinity and light of knowledge. As Brahman and Viṣṇu, puzzled by the splendour of the sight, began to find the beginning and the end of the linga of light. Viṣṇu took the form of a swan and flew upwards, while Brahma went deep in search for the bottom of the linga of light as the boar and failing in their quest worshipped Śiva as the linga of light, the Supreme Lord of all. The myth was used to introduce belief in Śiva as the Supreme Lord of all.

\(^{167}\) It is narrated that this nāyaṉār happily threw stones at the Śiva lingam with deliberate intent, and finally attained the feet of the Lord which free us from all ills. The nāyaṉār made it a daily rule not to eat until he had worshipped the lingam. So one day when he saw a Śiva lingam on open ground nearby, he was overjoyed. Beside himself with excitement, he picked up a stone and threw it at the lingam. Then one day, the devotee sat down to eat forgetting his usual custom. Realizing the mistake he had made, at once he got up, left his food and hurried off in love and longing mingled with anxiety, possessed by the single thought of reaching the Lord’s presence and there picking up a stone to throw at him. At that moment the Lord looked kindly upon him and granted him a share in the bliss of his realm with the devotees of former times.
nāyaṉār (PP. 4017-4043)\textsuperscript{168} who would cut his throat to keep the temple lamp burning must be examined in the light of the foreground of Purānic and Āgamic practices and Cēkkiḻār’s discursive intimacy with the Tirumūragai.

However, for the nāyaṉār, as noted in the ninth stanza of the poem under investigation, Śiva is the ‘honey that springs from the lotus-hearts of those of him’ and therefore one must see Him easily in the ‘lotus-hearts of those of him’ (கருதுவர் இதயறுத்துக்கும் கடவு காறு : karutuvār itayatuk kamalat turuth). Śiva becomes accessible to those who seek Him. Cēkkiḻār too expresses the same sentiments when he notes ‘...forever he abides in the hearts of the devotees’ (PP. 555)\textsuperscript{169}. He who is ‘inaccessible to Viṣṇu and Brahman is easily accessible to His devotees’ (PP. 1414)\textsuperscript{170}. The devotee’s heart is infused with Śiva’s presence, and becomes the reliable locus for seeing Him.

As a means of strengthening their religious ideal, the vision of realizing Śiva who is accessible to all, the nāyaṉmār proposed anpu (அன்பு) or love as a way to the Lord. This cultivated an inner attitude of reverence and gratitude that was manifested in an outward expression in songs, as a medium of direct communion with Śiva. This religious devotion combined with the Caṅkam literary conventions, inspired themes of love often fed into hymns that originated not only a novel ‘poetry of connections’ (Ramanujan, 1981, p. 166) but also a poetry of communion where the nāyaṉmār aspired to ‘See Śiva’.

\textsuperscript{168} For the life story of this nāyaṉār, see p. 50.

\textsuperscript{169} ‘...ஜோனாட்சியம் கல்யாணம் பிள்ளை கோராமல் மும்பியான் சீற்றுக் கல்விக்கு ஆர்த்தம் மறந்தாம்’ (PP. 555).

\textsuperscript{170} ‘அவியமல்கள் அம்பாமல்கள் ஆம்பாமல்கள் கூம்பாயல் ...’ (PP.1414).
In order to popularize the ideology of love or devotion, the nāyamār became peripatetic singers as they wandered from place to place and temple to temple singing the praises of Śiva in poetry. Their ‘conceptual orientation to pilgrimage’ made ‘pilgrimage as metaphor and motif’ (Peterson, 1982, p. 69) so as to affirm temples as the visible signs, which embody and mediate the vision of life. They exposed ethical, mythological, mystical and metaphysical aspects of Śiva’s cosmic and meta-cosmic presence in a holistic way through teachings and benevolent activities. The inner movement of their Śiva experience, which sprung-up on their journeys to shrines and sacred places, the contradictions and controversies encountered, and conversations and miracles performed, not only created the context for a spontaneous outpouring of their ‘songs of experience’ (Culter, 1987) but also because of the sacredness attached to the places they visited ‘helped to create a Śaiva sacred geography’ (Olson, 2004, p. 632).

The pilgrimages that the nāyamār made unified ‘the population and the land on a common religious platform’ (Olson, 2004, p. 632) in terms of ‘sacred geography’ and language, as their songs were sung in Tamil. This gave a new cultural identity promoting ‘a self-conscious affection for the [Tamil] culture and the sacredness of its language’ (Olson, 2004, p. 632). They redefined their religious ideologies in terms of devotion and religious living. In them as Peterson relates ‘we encounter a poetic iconography in which selection of details is governed not by the canons of temple sculpture but by the aesthetic of devotion’ (1991, p. 96).
In the sacred narrative of the *Periya Purāṇam*, Cēkkiḻār focuses on the aspect of pilgrimage and temple worship in recollecting the lives of Tiruṇāṭācampantar nāyaṅār (PP. 1904-3159) and Tirunāvukkaracar (PP. 1271-1699). In doing so, Cēkkiḻār cites authentic incidences related to their journeys, which forged historical, social and religious settings to the composition of various poems in the *Tēvāram* collections. Cēkkiḻār too, as did the nāyaṅmār sees pilgrimage and temple worship as an integral component of mysticism service and moral living. In Cēkkiḻār’s perception, through pilgrimage the nāyaṅmār grew into the love of Śiva. Their pilgrimages made places sacred and oriented their lives to Śiva. Above all, they inspired and instilled faith by promoting human interaction and service. Cēkkiḻār presents this image in his hagiography: ‘The Lord is all things. He is without form, and yet has form. He is the bridegroom of Umā of fragrant hair, and loves to dwell at Tiruvārūr. Those born there, perform service which goes beyond all human comprehension ... they having quelled their five senses and endowed with integrated consciousness concentrate their mind upon a single point and offer worship at his feet. Theirs is the noble path’ to follow’ (PP. 4163 - 4164)\(^\text{171}\).

2.5 Summary

This chapter provided evidence to show how Cēkkiḻār, the author of the *Periya Purāṇam* closely linked to the Tamil literary tradition, both in subject matter and literary genre, in order to formulate his ideal of Śaiva religiosity in the composition of the *Periya Purāṇam*. It shows that the study of the *Periya Purāṇam* necessitates an examination of

\(^{171}\) ‘அறிந்தியும் அறிந்தியும் அகாதம்சநித்தும் குப்பாத்திக்கும் மறைமுகாக ஏற்கவையும்... மார்பாட்டு பற்றிச் சீர்த்தம் செய்தினார்... விந்திவிள்ளி ஏனும் நீர் ஏனும் தந்திராயசர் விள் புனித அரசிராய்... அவர்கள்கு முன்னிலையில் என்னின்னும் என்னின்னும் குப்பாத்திக்கும் அரசிராயசர் மார்பாட்டு’ (மை 4163-4164).
its preceding literary history. This chapter points out that the aspiration to have communion with the ‘sacred power’ āṇaṅku in Caṅkam literature played an important role in shaping the manifestation of devotion in service and of moral living in the Periya Purāṇam. It demonstrated that the experience of this ‘sacred power’ manifested in the world was expressed in poetry. Though most of their poems were woven around the themes of love and heroism or spoken in terms of the literary genre of akam and puram, these literary works reflected the life of an ordinary people and gave importance and significance to things spiritual over material. Moreover, they set precedence to the lives of the nāyaṅmār’s religious expression.

Of all the literature that appeared in the post-Caṅkam era, the Tirukkuṟal, a treatise on morality had a significant appeal to the Tamils. The Tirukkuṟal was a moral treatise in the literary form of axioms, that contained a philosophy of merit that could be gained by the virtuous living of the three objectives of life – aram (ethics of family life), porul (ethics of wealth) and inpam (ethics of love). The proper pursuit of these details would lead one to the fourth called vīṭu i.e. liberation. It demonstrated that the influence of this moral text on the Periya Purāṇam cannot be dismissed as it makes a concerted effort to relate itself to the Tamil Saiva tradition.

The post-Caṅkam age is significant in terms of the appearance of much of the devotional literature. This devotional literature initiated a great change in Tamil literature, as it introduced a form of worship to a personal God Śīva. The hymns sung in praise of Śīva were collected and edited into a Tamil devotional poetry known as the
Tirumūr. The Tirumūr saw the evolution of Tamil Śaiva canonical literature. It included hymns in praise of Śiva, philosophical treatise concerning the Śaiva tradition and hagiographical information about the itinerant singers. Hence, the life of the poet-singer who propagated this faith was also sung in reverence, which in turn formed the basis for the composition of the Periya Purāṇam. It proves that the Periya Purāṇam did not originate without purpose: ‘it is a complex and sophisticated narrative in dialogue with a wide range of genres and sectarian traditions’ (Monius, 2004a, p. 166). Cēkkilār utilized the diversity of conventions already established in the Tamil literary tradition, in his composition to inspire devotion to Śiva and to formulate his own ideal of devotion. How Cēkkilār goes beyond these issues of interpolation and genre to formulate his vision of religiosity will be addressed in later chapters.
CHAPTER THREE
THE MYSTICAL QUEST OF THE EARLY TAMIL NĀYAṆMĀR

3.1 Introduction

The chapter focuses on the mystical quest of the early Tamil nāyaṆmār, whose devotion to Śiva had a great influence on Cēkkiḻār. While Cēkkiḻār was enriched by their insights, he went further in his interpretation and understanding of their devotional service and of moral living. In fact, in the introduction to his work, Cēkkiḻār highlighted the inspiration that he gained from the lives of nāyaṆmār. Cēkkiḻār was not only aware of this, but acknowledges it the Periya Purāṇam (PP. 49)172.

As indicated in the verses, it is certainly clear, that Cēkkiḻār closely followed the nāyaṆmār, who embodied a life of devotion manifested in their service and moral living. Subsequently, in the very next section of the Periya Purāṇam, Cēkkiḻār begins his narration with the life story of Cuntaramūrtti nāyaṆār, whose life was the basis for the entire narration of the Periya Purāṇam (PP. 27-29, 147-349, 3140-3374, 3752-3927, 4234-4286). It was around him that the lives of the other nāyaṆmār and especially two of ‘three masters’ or ‘mūvar mutalikal’ (நம்பி முதலிகள்) (Peterson, 1991, p. 269) of the Tirumurai i.e. Tirunāvukkaracar (PP. 1271-1699) and Tiruṇāṉacampantar (PP. 1904-3159) are narrated. The life of Tirumūlar nāyaṆār (PP. 3569-3596) and of Kāraikkāl ammaiyār (PP. 1722-1787) together with a host of other nāyaṆmār is also recalled within

172 'அருள் நம்பி முதலிகள் ஆவியிடம்
நூற்றில் முதல் அன்மார் பொற்றவல்லியளர் நூற்றை
பெரும் அண்மிகள் அவாகு அவத்தில்
அறிளவு அறிவிட திமுரித்திருந்தார்' (பெரியாறு, 49).
‘The divine servants who are venerated and listed with inner delight and divine grace by Nampi Āṇṭār Nampi Our leader - is for the good of the world.We shall follow his work closely’ (PP. 49).
the Periya Purāṇam. It is clear beyond doubt that Cēkkiḻār was not only influenced but was greatly charmed by the lives of the nāyaṉmār. This chapter will address how Cēkkiḻār imbibed the mystical quest of the Tirumūlar nāyaṉār and the ‘three masters’; they are significant exponents of Tamil Śaivism upon which Cēkkiḻār was able to base and formulate his own vision of devotion and mysticism. The chapter is therefore divided into four parts:

3.2 The Mystical Quest of Tirumūlar Nāyaṉār

3.3 The Mystical Quest of Tiruṉāṉacampantar Nāyaṉār

3.4 The Mystical Quest of Tirunāvukkaracar Nāyaṉār

3.5 The Mystical Quest of Cuntaramūtti Nāyaṉār

3.6 Summary

3.2 The Mystical Quest of Tirumūlar Nāyaṉār

Among the nāyaṉār who had a profound influence on Cēkkiḻār and whose life story is narrated in the Periya Purāṇam is Tirumūlar (TN) nāyaṉār. He is thought to have lived between the fourth and sixth centuries. As a poet, he is considered as a Cittar (CT) or ‘God realized being’ (Ganapathy, 1997, p. 232) who has attained this perfection through divine light (oli), power (cact: CT) and yōgic practices (TM

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173 The Periya Purāṇam is the saga of the sixty-three nāyaṉār or servitors of the Lord, who not only lived for Him but adored Him in delightfully distinct ways. However, Cēkkiḻār narrates extensively on four of the sixty-three nāyaṉār i.e. Tirumūlar Nāyaṉār, Tiruṉāṉacampantar Nāyaṉār, Tirunāvukkaracar Nāyaṉār and Cuntaramūtti Nāyaṉār. For the reason, it is their poems of Śiva that froms the first seven of the twelve books Tamil Śaiva scripture. It is important to study their poems of Śiva and the influence they had on Cēkkiḻār. It is, therefore, this chapter focuses on four of the most important saints of Tamil Śaivism.

174 There is considerable debate about the exact dating of Tirumūlar. Scholars such as Narayana Aiyar ascribe 6th century A.C.E as the actual period in which he lived (1974, p. 209). For Zvelebil the period is 7th century A.C.E (1974, p. 55); for Farquhar it is 8th century (1984, p. 93).

175 The Tamil literary tradition associates the origin of the cittar tradition to Tirumūlar. As Zvelebil notes, he is ‘undoubtedly one of the direct and one of the most influential forerunners’ of cittar tradition (1973, p. 221). A cittar is a yōgi.
Cēkkiḻār recounts Tirumūlar as a great ascetic who gained extraordinary powers through yōgic practices (PP. 3581) and as a result ‘attained eternal union with the Lord’s feet (PP. 3595). Cēkkiḻār notes that Tirumūlar received divine injunction to render his work Tirumantiram (திருமண்டிரம்) or ‘Sacred Utterance’ [tiru: திரு i.e. ‘Sacred’ and mantiram: மண்டிரம் i.e. mantra or utterance meaning ‘Sacred Utterance’] in Tamil (PP. 3591). The work written in an informative style is placed as the tenth book of Saiva canonical scriptures i.e. the Tirumuṟai. The Vedic tradition, the Āgamic cult and the path of devotion coalesced in Tirumantiram, which systematises the metaphysical, ethical and devotional aspects of Śaivism. Cēkkiḻār claims that the nāyaṉār wrote ‘the complete garland of three thousand stanzas in Tamil’ (PP. 3595) and that he shall recount the glorious deeds of Tirumūlar who in crystal clear Tamil expounded the noble path of yōga and inward realization (PP. 3568, 3596).
Amongst the scriptures that inspired Tamil Śaiva Siddhāntam\textsuperscript{182}, it is in the Tirumantiram, that one finds for the first time in concise form, the metaphysical and mystical principles that are central to the theology of Śaiva Siddhātam i.e. pati (咣詣) or Śiva, pacu (咣詣) or the soul and pācam: (咣詣) or bondage\textsuperscript{183}. Tirumūlar nāyaṉār describes these principles in a number of verses in the Tirumantiram (115, 328, 1577 and 2362 etc.).\textsuperscript{184} Of the three principles, in Tirumantiram, Śiva is portrayed as the ‘creator’ (咣詣; gilf;Fk; nghU s; : ulakam paṭaikkum poruḷ) (TM. 389), the ‘divine potter’ (-hover: Śivapurāṇam; ṵaṭhāṅkum ṵaṭhāṅkum; ṵaṭhāṅkum: kucavāṇaip pōlenkal kōṇanti) (TM. 443), ‘effulgent light’ (-hover: śivapurāṇam; ṵaṭhāṅkum ṵaṭhāṅkum; ṵaṭhāṅkum: cōti) (TM. 1872) and ‘omnipresence’ (-hover: parāmayam) (TM. 2076). Tirumūlar declares that Śiva is:

No female, no male, no neuter, 
Is the effulgent light inside the veil of ignorance, 
Shining within the core of the discerning mind. 
This reality has no eyes but sees, has no ears but hears; 
None can gauge this ability of this reality. 
Mature souls at the summit of experience have 
Investigated this reality’s greatness (TM. 1872)\textsuperscript{185}.

\textsuperscript{182} Śaiva Siddhāntam or Śaiva Siddhāanta in Sanskrit is the final reduction of the philosophical and the theological thoughts of Śaivite thinkers. It was systematized as a coherent thought by Maykandar Karulturai and his student Arulnanti in the 13\textsuperscript{th} century A.C.E. An entire system of thought draws on various elements from Śaiva Āgamas, Upanishads, Tirumurai, Meykanda Śastra and other ancient Tamil works. See Dhavamony, 1971, pp. 1-7.

\textsuperscript{183} For the influence and relationship of Tirumūlar to Śaiva Siddhāntam, see Siddalingai, 1979, pp. 50-51.

\textsuperscript{184} ‘பூச்சிற்ற பூச்சிற்ற வில்லான் வில்லான் குவாயுந்தாய குவாயுந்தாய குவாயுந்தாய 
பூச்சிற்ற பூச்சிற்ற வில்லான் வில்லான் குவாயுந்தாய குவாயுந்தாய குவாயுந்தாய குவாயுந்தாய (ஜுவி. 115).

‘They speak of the Three - Pati, Pasu and Pasa; Beginningless as Pati, Pasu and Pasa are: But the Pasu-Pasa nears not the Pati supreme: Let but Pati touch! The Pasu-Pasa is as naught’ (TM. 115).

\textsuperscript{185} ‘விருத்தியலை விருத்தியலை விருத்தியலை விருத்தியலை விருத்தியலை விருத்தியலை விருத்தியலை விருத்தியலை விருத்தியலை விருத்தியலை விருத்தியலை விருத்தியலை விருத்தியலை விருத்தியலை விருத்தியலை விருத்தியலை (ஜுவி. 1872).
In the first line of the stanza, Tirumūlar denies the known categories of male, female and neuter (நெருங்கிய முன்னையான் வெளியென்று: pennaḷa analla peṭalla) that are generally attributed to a God. In the very next line he affirms that this totally ‘Other’ reality – the effulgent light of knowledge is trapped inside the veil of ignorance ‘within the core of the intelligent mind’ (அனந்த இறுதி ஆராய்ச்சி முன்னையான்: unṅira cōṭi oruvarkku ariyōṇāk). Once again he describes, in paradoxical terms that Śiva ‘sees and hears without eyes or ears’ (அந்தீகரிந்த தாளம் காண்பிற்கு வெளியென்று: kaṇṭinīrik kānum ceviyīnik kēṭṭirum). These abilities of Śiva cannot be gauged by human comprehension. Yet, by declaring that Śiva is accessible to mature souls at the summit of their inner experience, it is in the last line, that Tirumūlar implicitly proclaims that Śiva can be both religiously experienced and known (அனந்தம் பாடத்தூண்டை அறியும் வழி: anṇal perumaiyai āyntatu mūppē).

Tirumūlar, furthermore, identifies Śiva as Paraparam (பரபரம்) i.e. God – the most High.186 It is He who manifests himself poignantly in the form of dance (அந்தீகாகம்: āṭum), imprinting himself everywhere (TM. 2757). Tirumūlar perceives the dance of Śiva everywhere. When Śiva danced ‘the Vedas danced, the Āgamas danced; the

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186 '...அல்லையென்று தோன்று அன்ற இறான் பாத்திரம் முன்னையான் முன்னையென்று குறிது' (கி. 3045).
187 'இன்றையது அையா குறைய்வைக் கை கொண்டே கொண்டே அப்படி... காற்றுத் தோன்று கொண்டே புரிந்து’ (கி. 2757).

He dances with the celestials. He dances in the Holy Temple ...He dances in Jivas. He, the Lord dances (TM. 2757).
melodious danced, and the entire world ...' (TM. 2729)\textsuperscript{188}. However, from this outward religious experience the \textit{nāyāṅmār} moves to one of introspection when he sings ‘...the holy \textit{Nandi} that thus danced is verily inside your heart’ (TM. 2781)\textsuperscript{189}. Therefore, the significance of the dance of Śiva is felt profoundly nowhere more immanently than ‘when it is realized that it takes place within the heart and self. Everywhere is God: ... everywhere is the heart’ (Coomaraswamy, 1985, p. 60). Hence the dance of Śiva is both a symbol of exterior and interior religious experience, of the wave of movement in the macrocosm to microcosm.

Since Śiva dances within the human self, the body is the temple of God (\textit{utampīḷē uttaṅg kōyilko}). Tirumūlar sings that there were times that he used to despise the body (\textit{utampinai munnam īluken tiruney}). The moment he saw the Lord within, he realized that the body is the Lord’s temple and he began to preserve it (\textit{utampinai yānirun tōmpukin rēnē}) (TM. 725)\textsuperscript{190}. The glory of individual body lies in the realization of presence of Śiva in it. The human body becomes the locus of religious experiences and practices: care of the body is a prerequisite for spiritual practices. Therefore most extraordinary power in life is the ability to preserve

\textsuperscript{188} `\textit{uṭampiḷē uttaṅg kōyilko}
\textit{nīyamantarkānam tīrunāmam yuṇirunām}
\textit{uṭampinai munnam īluken tiruney}
\textit{uṭampinai yānirun tōmpukin rēnē}
\textit{uṭampiḷē uttaṅg kōyilko}' (jpU. 2729).

\textsuperscript{189} ‘...\textit{uṭampiḷē uttaṅg kōyilko}
\textit{uṭampinai munnam īluken tiruney}
\textit{uṭampinai yānirun tōmpukin rēnē}
\textit{uṭampiḷē uttaṅg kōyilko}' (jpU. 2781).

\textsuperscript{190} For all the reference to \textit{Tirumāntiram}, see Tirumāntiram, 1991. It is, from this point, abbreviated as TM. For Texts in Tamil, see Panniru Tirumurai, n.d.
the body and extend life. It is achievable through *yōga* (TM. 715)\(^1\). The practice of *yōga* leads one through insights to the seat of bliss in the innermost depth of one’s true self. *Tirumūlar* lays great stress on the gravity of inner attitudes of devotees, whereby the heart and mind in unison can be directed to the light of Śiva to blossom in love. They shall experience Śiva wafted in the core of one’s being (TM. 1421)\(^2\). Therefore, in the practice *yōga* devotee’s hearts melts into love (TM. 272)\(^3\) and to the final realization of Śivam within. It stresses the inner worship of Śiva that disapproves any emotional type of devotion to Śiva but could be gained through *yōgic* practices.

It is in such a person Śiva enters to have communion (TM. 275)\(^4\). It is because Śiva himself is love. For *Tirumūlar* love is not a quality of Śiva; love is Śiva (அப்பே சிவம்: *appē Śivam*). Therefore, the liberation of the soul is possible only by the realization of the true nature of Śiva as love and love as Śiva (TM. 270)\(^5\). This realization of Śivam, as love, is a growth in human knowledge (அன்மய சிவபெஜனர்ம: *anāmay śivapejana*).

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1\(^{1}\) ‘பல்புமளதனி தமிழில் பிறந்து பிறப்பட்டன்
பல்புமளதனி தமிழில் அம்மன் அருளிதத்து...’
‘பல்புமளதனி தமிழில் கி.வேண் வரை’ (ஜபு. 715).

2\(^{2}\) ‘...வயச்சில கோவ கரியன்ற தோற்றகம்...நம்பிய சொன்னு வல்லவர் சொன்னு கல்லிரையானா’ (ஜபு. 1421). ‘Having practiced all *yōga* that have to be ... and so pass into the world of formless sound beyond; and there, rid of all impurities, envision the Supreme wafted in the core of one’s being’ (TM.1421). The usage of the word *tat param* (தமிழ்) is quite significant. The word denotes that which is highest in the Tamil.

3\(^{3}\) ‘...ஆன்மய சிவபெஜனர்ம காத்தவர் காத்தவர் காத்தவர் காத்தவர் காத்தவர்’ (ஜபு. 272).

4\(^{4}\) ‘...ஆன்மய சிவபெஜனர்ம காத்தவர் காத்தவர் காத்தவர் காத்தவர் காத்தவர்’ (ஜபு. 275).

5\(^{5}\) ‘...ஆன்மய சிவபெஜனர்ம காத்தவர் காத்தவர் காத்தவர் காத்தவர் காத்தவர்’ (ஜபு. 270).

The ignorant think that love and God are two; they do not know love is God. After knowing that love of God, they remain possessed of love which is God’ (TM. 270).
Here Tirumūlar equates love of Śiva with knowledge. It is for this reason it is stated in the poem ‘that the ignorant think that love and God are two’ (*āṟṟinta śivam iraṇṭu enpar arivilār*) (TM. 270). Put it differently, loving Śiva is to know him. The theme of love runs through this entire poem. The goal of life, therefore, is to ‘praise Śiva melting in love, to seek Him melting in love and He will bestow the love of union will grant is the gift of loving him alone’ (TM. 274). For those who trod on this path of love (*aṉpōṭurukal*), Śiva grants his gifts of love of undifferentiated union. Tirumūlar understands this love of union as a mystical state, where one gets assimilated into oneness in Śiva (TM. 2182). This realization occurs in human self; the whole of the human being becomes Śiva (TM. 2846). Therefore, for Tirumūlar, ‘becoming one with Śiva is the goal of Vedānta and Siddhānta’ (TM. 2393).

Tirumūlar’s appeal to Vedānta and Siddhānta as a central teaching to affirm his religious experience is quite significant. As the first poet to use such expression i.e.

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196 '...ngha;ahd MwhW ePf;fp newpepd;Wxd;W MfpNa epw;FNk' (jpU. 2182).
197 '...the primal one I become, he and I one will be' (TM. 2846).
198 '... In the holy way Jiva stood, and one with him union attained'.
199 'śivam āṟṟinta śivam iraṇṭu enpar arivilār’ (jpU. 274).

The Vedānta i.e. Upanishads are a continuation of thought found in the earlier Vedas and Brahmanas. They are sacred Hindu texts that are concerned with the perennial search for the essence of existence. Upanishadatic emphasis is on inwardness and spirituality and the differentiation between the self of the body and that of the true inner self or Atman. The word Vedānta is a combination of two words: ‘Veda’ which means ‘knowledge’ and ‘anta’ which means ‘the end of’ or ‘the goral’ of. Thus Vedānta means ‘the end of knowledge’. In this context the knowledge is not intellectual – the limited knowledge we acquire by reading books. Here it means the Self knowledge (Atmavidya), knowledge of the Absolute Truth (Brahmavidya). Vedānta teaches the real or essential nature of God, the universe, and the individual being (Self) and its oneness with God. See Flood, 1996, pp. 238-239.
**Vedānta Siddhānta, Tirumūlar** aims to synthesize both Vedānta path way to God realization and Siddhānta i.e. Saiva Āgamaic pathway. In this mystical state, one becomes one with Śiva yet without losing identity; indeed both God and the devotee are in a communion of love. Such yōgic insights of inner awareness, where the ‘seen’ disappears in the ‘seer’ are glorified in the *Tirumantiram*. Tirumūlar himself was one such devotee who attained that oneness, ‘with me and you’ obliterated; who experienced the truth of ‘I’ indeed is ‘You’. It is the highest realisation (TM. 1441)\(^2\). Tirumūlar was thus firmly rooted in the ‘unitive’ experience of becoming one with Śiva. His *Tirumantiram* is a Tamil classic which sees the unity of all things in Śiva, revealing their inter-links and inter-relationships, interacting in several gradations. This unity of the central theme of the *Tirumantiram* is based on Āgamic beliefs and practices on the philosophical level, while not ignoring the metaphysical levels of understanding of the fundamental truths of ‘Śiva-experience’ (cheng Āgama: Śiva-aṇupavam), ‘Śiva-knowledge’ (cheng Āgama: Śiva-arivu) and ‘Śiva-bliss’ (cheng Āgama: Śiva-ānantam) (TM. 1422)\(^2\). This experience of Tirumūlar gave a new understanding in terms of worship where even without the knowledge of scripture or temple devotion it is possible that one can have mystical experience of a loving union with Śiva.

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201 ‘ஹென்னுன் என்றும் பொருள் என்றும் பரதும் பாவு என்றும் மகுந்து அருகில் பாதுகாக்கையும் வாழ்க்கையும் தொழில்துடன் நின்று’ (jp.1441).

I sought Him in terms of I and You. But, He that knows not I from You. Taught me the truth, "I" indeed is "You". And now I talk not of I and You (TM. 1441).

202 ‘பெருமறுவின் துணையும் தொழில்துடன் வாழ்க்கையும் தொடர் புத்து பாது காக்கப்பட்டு வாழ்க்கையும் தொடர் அருகி பாதுகாக்கையும்’ (jp. 1442).

They who have scaled the heights of Siddhanta are the ones who had learned pure Vedānta. They have in truth had the unwavering vision; comprehending who is the inner meaning of life to the finite end of their knowledge, they become perfection in music. Thus they are the real searches of knowledge and experience the supreme bliss who is beyond themselves’ (TM. 1442).
Cēkkiḻār narrates the life of Tirumūlar as a symbol to portray the vitality of his devotion and to extol the greatness of Śiva (PP. 3564-3591). Cēkkiḻār coherently narrates Tirumūlar as a non-Tamil speaker, who gets localized in Tamil through transferring his life into the body of a herdsman. His aim was to render the sacred scriptures in Tamil (PP. 3591). Cēkkiḻār narrates ‘he lived happily in this world for three thousand years then reached the holy mountain of Kailāsa where he attained eternal union with Śiva yōga (PP. 3595). Cēkkiḻār exclaims; I pay tribute to the feet of Tirumūlar who expounded this noble path (PP. 3596). What is remarkable and enduring in Tirumūlar devotion i.e. realization of Śiva without the aid of institution through observance of strict discipline. Cēkkiḻār utilizes the unconventional path of devotion trod by Tirumūlar i.e. in his exemplification of devotion of the other nāyagmār in the Periya Purāṇam. For example, the narration of Caṇṭēcurar who cut off his father’s legs for kicking at his beloved icon linga (PP. 1211-1270), the story of Ceruttuṇai who cut off a queen’s nose for smelling a flower set aside for the worship of Śiva (PP. 4125-4131) are set within this unconventional pattern of expressing devotion to Śiva primarily expressed by Tirumūlar. What is worthy of emphasis is that Cēkkiḻār points out that I shall recount the glorious deeds of Tirumūlar who in crystal clear Tamil expounded the noble path of yōga.

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203 ‘கோழியுவமூரிய புராணம்போ liabilities குரும் குள்ளம் விளக்கக்கட்டும் இனங்கள் துண்ட்ரியும் வார்க்கக்கட்டும் கிளகொட்டும் ’ (ng.G.3591).
204 ‘முண்டையம் ஆனையும் வெளியிய வார்க்கக்கட்டும் திருத்தியும் ... குரும் குள்ளம் விளக்கக்கட்டும் துண்ட்ரியும் துண்ட்ரியும் துண்ட்ரியும் துண்ட்ரியும் துண்ட்ரியும் ’ (ng.G. 3588).
205 ‘முண்டையம் ஆனையும் வெளியிய வார்க்கக்கட்டும் துண்ட்ரியும் துண்ட்ரியும் துண்ட்ரியும் துண்ட்ரியும் துண்ட்ரியும் துண்ட்ரியும் துண்ட்ரியும் ’ (ng.G. 3596).
206 For brief narration of the life of this nāyagār, see p. 145.
207 This nāyagār was well known as a Śaivite truly devoted to the feet of the Lord, and was faithful in the path of service. This devotee used to perform notable acts of service in the court of the Lord’s temple at Tiruvārūr, which was thronged with gods and sages, and to offer worship at regular hours. In that way he enhanced the reputation of the Lord’s service. One day, the famous queen of Pallava king Singar picked up a flower which had fallen to the ground in the hall of flowers, and smelt it. When he saw this, Ceruttuṇai came rushing up with a bright sword in his hand. He seized the queen by her dark hair, pulled her to the ground and took hold of her nose and cut off the queen’s nose with his sword. Like a mighty lion among the devotees, he performed this act of service for all to see (PP. 4125-4131).
and inward realization (PP. 3568, 3596). It is clear that the yōgic path that is trodden by Tirumūlar had an effect of Cēkkiḻār.

3.3 The Mystical Quest of TiruṆañṆa Campantar Nāyaṉār

As we have stated, if Tirumūlar can be considered the foundation of the Šaivism as a religio-philosophical system, ‘the ‘three masters’ or ‘mūvar mutalikal’ (அம்மார் முதலிகள்), that is TiruṆañṆa Campantar, Tiruvavukkaracar, Cuntaramūrtti, are recognised as its pillars. One cannot undermine their legacy which had an impact on Cēkkiḻār. Among them TiruṆañṆa Campantar (சுவாகந்த தாம்பரமுருட்டி), also known as Campantar (சம்பந்தர்), is a pre-eminent nāyaṉār of Śiva, as his devotional hymns constitutes the first three books of the twelve Tirumurai. Most of his hymns appear to have been uttered impromptu when he visited shrines propagating a devotion to Śiva. All the hymns are said to contain the distilled essence of the Vedas and are militant in spirit. TiruṆañṆa Campantar is given the pride of place, as Cēkkiḻār narrates the entire history of him in the Periya Purāṇam. His life story that begins in the sixth chapter, occupies a considerable space in the narration of the Periya Purāṇam (PP. 1904-3159). TiruṆañṆa Campantar or the one who is ‘imbued with divine wisdom’ belongs to the first half of the seventh century (637 A.C.E – 653 A.C.E).

It is recounted in the Periya Purāṇam, that Campantar as a child frequently accompanied his father to the temple and, on one such occasion, his father left him on the steps of the sacred tank while he himself descended for a bath. Being hungry the child

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208 ‘... ஸ்ரீவாகந்தர் தாம்பரமுருட்டியின் சிறுகாலத்தில் சிவாலயத்தில் பேசுவதற்குச் சுற்றுக்கொண்டு வந்தார் மறுக்கின்றார் உள்ளேன் வந்தார்’ (பகுதி 3568).

‘மூலம் கிருஷ்ணர் தார்க்கர் விஞ்ஞான விசய செய்தார் வந்தார் நீரிலே கிருஷ்ணர் செய்துக் கூட்டார்...' (பகுதி 3596).
started crying, then ‘Śiva recalling how precious the gift of this child ... entrusted to his consort the task of bestowing on the child the divine wisdom...’ (PP. 1968)\(^{209}\). By virtue of this gift the child came to called ‘the child who is Śiva’s own possession’ (அடுக்கு விழாக்கம்பார்) and ‘jñāya Campantar’ (அஜாய சம்பந்தர்) i.e. ‘the one uniquely endowed with divine wisdom’ or ‘He who is related to God through divine knowledge’ (PP. 1972).\(^{210}\) With this gift of this knowledge (குறுக்கம்: jñāyappāl) from Śiva, the child began to sing a decade of praise of Śiva. The entire canon of Saivism begins with this song of this child (Tēv. 1.1.1)\(^{211}\).

It is obvious, the poem begins with symbolic description of Śiva, his ‘ridding on the bull’, ‘sacred ashes’, ‘crescent moon’ not only to express the inexpressible potency of Śiva but also to affirm that Śiva who gave the ‘milk of wisdom’ is no other than who lives in Piramapuram (பிரமாபுமரம்). Then the poet personalises Śiva, by addressing Śiva as ‘Him’ (இவன்: ivan) and revealing Śiva as the ‘stealer of hearts’ (இலங்கவரர்: uḷḷaṅkavarār) indicating the poets fondness to Śiva. Everything about Śiva, his conventional description of Śiva as presented in first two stanzas becomes beautiful, attractive, enchanting, because he ‘stole’ the devotees heart. The appeal is through the sense to the soul, from the aesthetic to the spiritual.

\(^{209}\) ‘...எல்லாசேவனால் கட்டுநீசியியங்கள் எழுத்துகால் காலியுமரத்துடன் பெருமையைச் செய்வதற்கு விளைவான உட்பொருள் தந்த தேவனுடைய’ (சிவத், 1968).

\(^{210}\) ‘...அந்தந்த பிரமாபுமரம் மலர்களுடன் குறிப்பிட்டு வந்த விழாக்காவார்’ (இந்து, 1972)

\(^{211}\) ‘தீவியிலும் காலியுமரம் எழுத்துக்கால் காற்றுகள் முடியும் விழாக்காவார் ஆக்கிரம் பெருமையைச் செய்வதற்கு விளைவான உட்பொருள் தந்த தேவனுடைய’ (இந்து, 1:1.1)

‘He wears a woman’s earing on one ear, riding on a bull, adorned with spotless white crescent moon, His boy smeared with the ash from the cremation ground. He is the thief who stole my heart. He is the Lord who lives in fine Piramapuram, where he once blessed with his grace. Brahmā of the lotus seat Who worshipped him in the distant past’ (Tev. 1.1.1).
Tiruṇāṇa Campantar did not concern himself with religious texts – nor did he give learned discourses or expound any philosophy. Instead, the surest response for him is genuine love for Śiva. Thus, the words, ‘He is’ the Lord (இவன் அறியுவின்: ivan aprē) not only emphasises poets affection for Śiva but also begin the phase of dynamic Śaivism as a living way of life with its appeal to realise the goal of human existence. Thus, Tiruṇāṇa Campantar was initiated in the experiential knowledge of Śiva and he began the mission of spreading the excellent truths and practices embodied in the Saiva way in Tamil.

As a devotee who followed the Śaiva path, Tiruṇāṇa Campantar, in his songs of praise, repeatedly affirms the primordial nature of Śiva when he says that just as the letter ‘a’ (அகரமுதலான: akaramutalāna) is the first and the most important of the alphabet so is Śiva (Tēv. 1.88.5)\textsuperscript{212}. Further, in referring to the qualities of Śiva, he says:

That it is the end and the only beginning, beyond the two gender differences of male and female, the three guṇas, the four Vedas, the five basic elements, the six tastes, the seven sounds, the eight directions and yet it is the totally other that exists by itself ... (Tēv. I.11.2).\textsuperscript{213}

Thus in single stanza, the mystic, by the usage of the words ‘He is the first being’ (அவன்: ivan; இரை முதலைராய்: irai mutalōrāi) affirms the primordial nature of Śiva. Then in trying assert the total ‘Otherness’ of the Śiva, the poet sings, that He is ‘beyond gender differences’ (இருபே ஆன்: irupē ān), ‘the five basic elements’ (ஏற்கனெ குண பி: enēru kaṇupī)
implying that it is from Him all thing have come into existence.

Again, at the end of stanza, the poet affirm the ‘Otherness’ of Śiva by noting ‘it is the totally other that exists by itself’ (varuputam aintāi).

After affirming the primordial qualities of Śiva, Tiruṇāṇa Campantar, sings of everything that he could conceive of attributing to Śiva in his poems (Tēv. I.16.6). In this poem, the poet sings of Śiva in a non-personal term when he speaks of Śiva as the ‘music’ (icai), ‘shower of rain’ (malaiyāgaya) and ‘light of the morning sun’ (ilaiyāyiṟṟiṉ cōti). What is more significant in this regard is the conception of Śiva in personal term of ‘He’; ‘He is my own’ (en āṉavaṟṟi). Thus, Tiruṇāṇa Campantar brings clarity, not only to the supremacy of the Śiva but also to its closeness to his devotees as a personal God.

Tiruṇāṇa Campantar’s closeness to Śiva is so profound and intimate – he address Śiva as ‘Mother and Father’ (tāyum tantaiyum) (Tēv. I.50.7). The poet further notes, that Śiva as a father and mother is accessible to those who seek him in

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214 The five great elements are water (jala), air/wind (vayu), fire (agni), earth (prithvi) and space (akasha). These elements are in fact accepted as the five basic elements or constituents of human body. The five basic elements relate directly to the five senses in order: hearing (ether), touch (wind), sight (fire), taste (water) and smell (earth). See Shiv Sharma, 2003, pp. 35-55.

215 He is the king, a shower of rain for the world. Pure Gold, first being. He is my own; He is music, He is like the light of the morning sun ...(Tēv. I.16.6).
It points to the fact that Tiruṇāṇa Campantar’s approach to Śiva or the attitude of the approach to Śiva, is an attitude of son to Śiva. It is Śiva himself conferred this role on Tiruṇāṇa Campantar the very moment he entrusted to his consort the task of bestowing on the child the divine wisdom. At the very moment Śiva accepted His role of fond parent. The nāyaṇar’s early pilgrimages and his movements from shrine resembled very closely the faltering and tottering steps which a child just learning to walk would take. This loving parental solitude was to be manifested very remarkably in the nāyaṇar’s life till the end of his life. Ĉēkkilār recounts this in the Periya Purāṇam ‘when the Lord saw the child chanting from Veda clapping with his hands, He bestowed on the child a pair of golden cymbals’ (PP. 2001). It is obvious Tiruṇāṇa Campantar’s approach to Śiva could be characterised by the acts of intimate service to God, such those that a son may render to his father, with the intimate goal of attaining the nearness of God. Tiruṇāṇa Campantar always sings of the Lord Śiva with filial feelings of a son.

The profound influence of Tiruṇāṇa Campantar on Ĉēkkilār cannot be underestimated, as we have seen in the introductory notes in this section; Ĉēkkilār devoted an entire section to Tiruṇāṇa Campantar entitled Tiruṇāṇa Campantar purāṇam in the sixth chapter of the Periya Purāṇam (PP. 1904-3159). The highest regard Ĉēkkilār gives to Tiruṇāṇa Campantar cannot be in any doubt. Thus Ĉēkkilār sings his praises in the Periya Purāṇam (PP. 1904).
In the other verse of his narration, Cēkkiḻār recalls Tiruñāṉa Campantar as a mystic, as the one who is completely possessed by Śiva (PP. 1972). Śiva has gifted Tiruñāṉa Campantar with unique divine wisdom which even the ‘gods and sages are not capable of achieving’ (PP. 1972). This true wisdom is the ‘wisdom which breaks the shackles of rebirth, wisdom which is hard to comprehend, the matchless wisdom of the arts and scriptures, and the true wisdom of the Lord Śiva’ (PP. 1973). Cēkkiḻār like Tiruñāṉa Campantar affirms Śiva as one who activates all things, and it is those possessed by Him are His true devotees. However, Cēkkiḻār observes, there are some ignorant folks who do not hold these truths and go their own way. It is to deliver them from darkness and to impart the true knowledge of Śiva that Tiruñāṉa Campantar came into the world (PP. 1974).

Cēkkiḻār reiterates that the Śiva-jñānam (Śiva-jñānam) that was bestowed on Tiruñāṉa Campantar was an inward experience of bliss and the experience of the infinite Śiva which is manifested in different forms (PP. 2064).

It is clear that Cēkkiḻār commended the selfless service and surrender of all the nāyāmār, while reserving for Tiruñāṉa Campantar the crown of Śiva-jñānam. The

\[\text{[Sanskrit text]}\]

For the Vedic pathway to prosper, In them, for the Śaivite way to splendour, For the good of all the generation, Cried in pure sublime verse, The one who hails from the fertile land of Pukali. Let us begin to narrate the essence of His sacred service by placing our heads On the feet of Tiruñāṉa Campantar (PP. 1904)

219 ‘...अ०मां ब्रम्हणपदवम्...ह्रदयावसंधिकः सिन्द्रस्तिः सप्तमनः सुप्रसनः’ (Gīlī. 1904).

220 ‘...विभবेकः केतृवाकः विद्याविदः दैवताः...’ (Gīlī.1972).

221 ‘रामामृतम् रिजितम् हानुमानं जीवनं पुनः अनेकसं अभयारामुपपार्थिकं भविष्यं कर्मवादं अविनाशितकारः अविनाशितकारः अविनाशितकारः अविनाशितकारः अविनाशितकारः’ (Gīlī.1973).

222 ‘अत्युग्मार्थं अंगदार्थं अविनाशितकारः अविनाशितकारः अविनाशितकारः अविनाशितकारः अविनाशितकारः अविनाशितकारः’ (Gīlī.1974).

223 "'You have bestowed upon me the inward experience of bliss, endless and divine”, he cried, “it has come in visible form, easy to apprehend with the senses” (PP. 2064).
supreme knowledge of Śiva that filled the core of his life as a result of his constant contemplation of the invincible power of Śiva’s arul (அருள்); or favours symbolised by the lotus feet of Him, to the exclusion of all the other preoccupations (PP. 2326-2327)\textsuperscript{225}. It is this awareness that led Tiruṉāya Campantar to carry his service – tiruthonṭu (திருத்தொண்டு). In order to amplify the exemplariness of Tiruṉāya

\textsuperscript{224} The Tamil word arul (அருள்) which has been frequently used by Čēkkiḷār in the Periya Purāṇam to mean all that Śiva undertakes. Čēkkiḷār uses the term to demonstrate, for instance, love, benevolence, favor, generosity that Śiva has for His devotees. The Tamil Lexicon of the University of Madras categorizes arul as meaning ‘to be gracious to’ (கிருபையோ : kirupaiyō), ‘to favor’, ‘to rejoice’ (மகிட்டல்: makittal), ‘to speak graciously’ (க Moderate மெட்டும்: tayavatun collutal), ‘to command’ (அச்சுநயம்: uttaravucetal), ‘to grant, bestow’ (அப்பிளல்: alittal). Its ostensible complementary terms are defined as ‘grace’ or ‘favor’ (கையாய்: karunai), ‘good deeds’ (செல்வுக்கு: nulviyai), ‘command’ and ‘order’ (ஏவல் : ēval). The etymology of the term arul (அருள்) is rather problematic. Don Handelman and David Shulman observe this difficulty of tracing the etymology of the term arul (அருள்) (2004, p. 41). George Hart identifies the root of the noun arul (அருள்) as stemming from the verbal root ār (அர்) i.e. ‘to become full’ (நியூட்: nîyūtd), ‘to spread over’ (பராவுதல்: paravutal), ‘to abide’ (யானுதல்: tankutal), ‘to wear’ (அனியல் : antial). The syllable ul (அல்) is used as a suffix to construct a noun from a verb (1975, p. 27). Thus, the term should be ārul (அருள்); however, the loss of the long vowel ‘A’ (அ) is puzzling and problematic as the word is customarily used as arul (அருள்) rather than ārul (அருள்). The complexity of the term’s theological tinge has forced a standardized translation into English that has the leaning to misinterpret the concept. That translation is ‘grace’. David Shulman and Don Handelman observes this exercise to equate and translate this complex and ‘critical’ term, often as ‘grace’ with its heavy Christian implication (2004, p. 40). However, O’Meara points out, the confusion is not so much the with the term ‘grace’ –though it carries its own nuances – it is the standardized identification of arul (அருள்) with a single term ‘grace’. Though, the term ‘grace’ in Christian theological usage carry different meanings; however, it is also used to indicate the presence of the divine, its activity and reality. It should be noted that in this study, the term grace which is loaded with philosophical and theological nuances is used in the latter sense to mean the presence of the divine, its activity and reality. This translation, however, is a bit unformulated because it presupposes a Śaiva theological structure to the concept. Given the nature of this study, it is difficult to translate all the nuances of a religious perspective in a single term, let alone divine activity of intention, the Śaiva authors themselves do not present a coherent presentation of the term arul free from contradiction. The Christian notion of grace too has changed overtime, presenting a complexity of ideas in different historical periods and interpreters. Thus, if we keep this fact at the background, understanding arul as ‘grace’ generally should be less troublesome. The interest here is to show how Čēkkiḷār used the term to arul, referred in this study to demonstrate, for instance, love, benevolence, favor, generosity that Śiva has for His devotees rather than elucidating the agreement and contradictions in the theological system of a particular Śaiva tradition. For discussion on the notion of ‘grace’, see O’Meara, 2005, pp. 3644-3648. For the elaboration of this concept of grace in the Periya Purāṇam, see Chapter 5, pp. 161-164.

\textsuperscript{225} ‘ஹவாஹ்வுன்ன் இந்தனம் என்பது நாயன்மார் இந்தையத்தின் கோவில்களில் காணப்படும் சிங்கம் அம்மாயிரம் அப்பா அசையில்லா அருள் அம்மாயிரம் அறியக்கூடவின்’. 

செவாய் சக்தியாதாரா பாரியாள் தலை சேர்க்க தான் மாற்றியிருக்கிறது பெருமாளையாட் கோவில் அம்மாயில்லா அருள் அம்மாயில்லா தமது சிங்கம் களப்பட்டிருக்கிறது’ (224-2232-2327).

‘On hearing his father’s request, the chief of Pukali remembered their previous conversation. “Are not the feet of our Father, Lord of Ávaṭuturai, and limitless treasure in themselves?”’ he reflected. With that thought, he went into the temple and standing before the divine presence praised the ruler of the gods in a Tamil hymn, “When my father asks me for huge sums of money,” he sang, “I have no resources but your feet.” In these words, he was in fact addressing a prayer to the Lord for a special gift’ (PP. 2326-2327).
Campantar’s devotion to Śiva, Cēkkilār gives examples of the transformation in a devotee that the devotional experience of Śiva-jñānam brings. They are the threefold experience; the experience of unity in the suffering of other beings; the experience of compassion towards others who are ignorant of the truth; the experience of the presence of the divine i.e. Śiva. In narrating the threefold experience through the life of Tiruñāga Campantar, Cēkkilār explains that when one is able to experience the suffering of all living beings in oneself, then one has the true experience of the unity of being in oneself. This was demonstrated in the Periya Purāṇam (PP. 2214-2230)²²⁶.

From the narration it is clear that the mystical oneness Tiruñāga Campantar achieved through an attitude of a son to his ‘Father’ i.e. Śiva aided by Śiva-jñānam which was bestowed on him led the nāyānmār to feel one with all the realities bringing joy to the world. Therefore, following the path of Śiva means living in his presence. Cēkkilār cities various examples and descriptions in the narration of the life of the nāyaṅār, all of which point clearly to the influence of the devotion of Tiruñāga Campantar had on Cēkkilār in elaborating the nāyaṅār’s devotional service and of moral living in the Periya Purāṇam. And the end of the narration Cēkkilār sings that he has recounted the

²²⁶ In this section Cēkkilār narrates first of the few services performed by Tiruñāga Campantar. It was the sheer compassion which impelled Tiruñāga Campantar to cure the virgin afflicted with catalepsy. By the power of being a ‘divine child’, he pleaded with his ‘Father’ and succeeded in persuading him to respond to his appeal. Cēkkilār narrates ‘to rid the girl of diseases, he sang in Tamil a poem of protest. “This girl is sick ....,” he sang, “Is this the doing of the Lord with the jewelled throat?” And if it is, how does that accord with his justice?” (PP. 2221).

‘...எளியால் கொட்டாக பல்லடாய் பால்கவலை அனியாயாக பல்கரையாக கல்லார் தல்லித்து புன்னாட்டு மனைவிகள் சிற்றிருந்து திற்று சென்று குறிப்பிட்டு தரும் தொன்மை பொழுது நாய்கர் புன்னாட்டு புன்னாட்டு மனைவிகள்’ (முறி. 2221).
history of *Campantar*, the repository of pure Tamil, as I have learnt it at his holy feet (PP. 3159)\(^{227}\).

### 3.4 The Mystical Quest of *Tirunāvukkaracar Nāyaṉār*

Another significant proponent of Tamil Śaivism who had a significant influence on *Cēkkilār* is *Tirunāvukkaracar* (திருநாவுக்கரசர்) or ‘King of Sacred Speech’. He was an older contemporary of *Tiruṉāya Campantar*. It was by the latter that the former was lovingly called ‘Appar’ (அப்பர்) or ‘my Father’ at their very first meeting; since then he has been known by that name\(^{228}\). He was born in 574 A.C.E died in 655 A.C.E. His composition of the hymns of Śiva are placed as the 4\(^{th}\), 5\(^{th}\) and 6\(^{th}\) of the *Tirumurai* compendium. In *Tirunāvukkaracar*, *Cēkkilār* sees a man of intense devotion and service. He notes that this sage and ascetic came into the world that the sacred service of the Lord might prosper (PP. 1266)\(^{229}\).

*Tirunāvukkaracar’s* life was full of events. It is paradoxical to understand that this poet who was so totally absorbed by his vision of Śiva, converted to Jainism in his life as a youth and became a master of Jain doctrine being popularly known as *Tarumacēṉar* (தருமசேனர்). *Cēkkilār* himself narrates that at the very early age this *nāyaṉār* set him to

\(^{227}\) ‘அதுவரைரால் கி கதே அவியல் திரு காஙார்
குழுவால் அதுவரை திருச்சிராட்டிர..’ (ப. 3159).

\(^{228}\) *Cēkkilār* narrates:
‘With deep affection *Tirunāvukkaracar* made obeisance at *Tiruṉāya Campantar’s* feet. He in turn, invoking the Lord in tears, and addressed *Tirunāvukkaracar* simply as ‘My father’. ‘I am your servant’, *Tirunāvukkaracar* replied’ (PP. 1452).

‘நான் அவியல் திருச்சிராட்டிர் தோன். எனக்கு ஆயிச்சுக்கை நீக்கிய இதனை தின்கல் தோன் போன்றே வருகையக்கணவை அமைத்தே இந்த எனக்கு பொருள் நீக்கி அவியல் மற்றும் அவியல் தோன் இருந்தே அந்த பொருளே மற்றும் அவியல் தோன் எனக்கு பொருள்’ (ப. 1452)

\(^{229}\) ‘திருச்சிராட்டிர் மனவுக்கு எனக்கு பொருள்ளானே போன் அவியல் காங்கர காங்கர்... (PP. 1271).
practice charity. He established centres where the poor could find lodging and so gain the wide reputation for generosity (PP. 1305). However, through realizing this world is impermanent, he gave up the practise of charity. After years of study of religion to understand which of them the best is, he embraced the Jain religion which forbids the killing of any creatures (PP.1307).

It must be pointed out that during Tirunāvukkaracar’s time Jainism had established itself as leading religious faith in Tamilnāṭu with the support of the Pallava kings who had been themselves been won over to that faith. Jainism whose chiefl doctrine is ahimsa – not harming any creature in the least manner – became a proselytizing religious using a method of coercion, including destruction of temples of Śaivism. Tiruṇāṭa Campantar’s, whose devotion is presented earlier, father was deeply disturbed in his heart at the state of religious affair in the country prayed Śiva to offer him a son who would put an end to the humiliation of Śaivism and restore its ancient glory. Śiva granted him a son. Tirunāvukkaracar came, as a fore-runner to

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230 ‘என்னுடைய எந்திருமுன்னை எம்மா உட்டே என்றேற்று முயற்சி செய்த கங்காரான் என்றுமாற்றித்து காட்டியுள்ளவர் காண்பதற்கு என்று அத்துவமாக குறிப்பிட்டு என்றும் ஆவியுடைய துணையை என்றும் என்னுடைய எந்திருமுன்னை என்றும் என்றும் ஓர் பதின்வளர்ந்த ஓரும் என்றும் ஓரும் என்றும் ஓரும் என்றும் ஓரும் என்றும்’ (நூ. 1305).

231 ‘நூயம் எந்திருமுன்னை எம்மா உட்டே என்றும் கங்காரான் என்றும் என்று அது முயற்சித்து துணைக்கு என்றும் என்றும் என்றும் என்றும் என்றும் என்றும் என்றும் என்றும் என்றும் என்றும் என்றும் என்றும் என்றும் என்றும் என்றும் என்றும் என்றும் என்றும் என்றும் என்றும் என்றும் என்றும் என்றும்’ (நூ.1307).

232 Cēkkilār points to this fact in the narration of Tantī Aṭkal. This nāyaṉār according to the Periya Purāṇam is blind from birth. He used to daily worship at the temple of Arūr. Now beside the tank on the west side of the temple, the Jains were extending their monastic buildings and causing serious congestion. When Tantī Aṭkal realized what was happening, he determined to counter it by a digging operation to widen the tank. Immediately the Jains raised uproar saying that digging into the earth would cause the death of many creatures buried in the mud. The saint went up to the gates of the temple, prayed for redress against the shame inflicted on him, went up to his mutt and sank into troubled sleep. Then the Lord appeared to him in the dream and consoled the saint saying: ‘do not let your heart give’, ‘you will receive your eye sight’. Then the saint rose to the surface praising the Lord and gained clear eye-sight and the Jains lost their eye sight (PP. 3597-3621).
Tiruṇāga Campantar. The missson was therefore to tour most of the shrines to prepare people.

Tirunāvukkaracar conversion from being a Samana (சமான) or Jain was not a consequence of his own deep devotional experience of Śiva, it is due to the acts of piety of his sister (PP. 1311)\textsuperscript{233}. Cēkkilār speaks of the several incidents and of trencherous plans of Jain monks to take revenge on Tirunāvukkaracar for his desertion (PP. 1351)\textsuperscript{234}. Many of Tirunāvukkaracar’s compositions offer intensely personal reflection on the religious journey that brought him to Śiva. They reveal how he has to overcome insurperable obstacles by his pledge of servitude to and unfailing love to the feet of Śiva in perfect self-surrender (Tēv. V.072.7)\textsuperscript{235}. The poems also treat domestic life, the perishable nature of human body, and the pleasure and luxuries of life that hamper the quest to be with Śiva. This is witnessed in one of his hymns (Tēv. VI.098.1)\textsuperscript{236} which ‘has become a kind of battle cry of Tamil Śaiva bhaktas’ (Zvelebil, 1974, p. 96).

\textsuperscript{233} ‘…என் குடும்பத்தின் ருது குருவின் பாடலை பிள்ளை அறியவேயில்லையால் கூடிய விளையாட்டு பாடல்கள் நேர்வல்லவ தென்பல நேர்வல்லவ’ (அங்கி.1316).

\textsuperscript{234} ‘…..வாகாலம் பாடற்பிள்ளை தலை நேர்வல்லவ ந்தோயடு புல்வது டானுக்கு கதை எருங்கள்’ (அங்கி.1351)

\textsuperscript{235} ‘நீவு சோலைத்தோன் பழுவ் படைத்தோன் வண்ணவை முல்லைமலை தோற்ற்சின்னல் நேர்வல் பாடற்பிள்ளை தலை நேர்வல்லவ தென்பல நேர்வல்லவ’ (Tēv. V.072.7).

‘Tying me to a stone column and throwing me into the sea with indecent haste, I chanted with my lips the name of the Lord…’ (Tēv. V.072.7).

\textsuperscript{236} ‘மோனாங்கற குகாகலஞ்சவ தோற்ற்சின்னலை தென்பல வாகாலம் பாடத்தோன் புயலித்தோன் நேர்வல்லவ தென்பல நேர்வல்லவ ந்தோயடு புல்வது டானுக்கு கதை எருங்கள் தென்பல நேர்வல்லவ தென்பல நேர்வல்லவ’ (அங்கி. VI.098.1)

‘We are slaves to no man, Nor do we fear death. Hell holds no torments for us, We know no deceit. We rejoice, we are strangers to disease, We bow to none.

Joy alone is ours, not sorrow, for we belong forever to Śankara, who is the supreme Lord’ (Tēv. VI.098.1)
Most of Tirunāvukkaracar’s poems generally rejoice in the beauty of Śiva. These poems are devotionally charged and bristle with metaphors and symbols calling Śiva as ‘milk’ (ग्ही: ghy: pāḷ) or ‘honey’ (तें: tēṉ) (Tēv. VI.024.1)237. Śiva is also spoken of purely in subjective terms, calling Him, ‘father’, ‘mother’, ‘brother’ and ‘uncle’ (Tēv.VI.095.1)238; He is of all the things that are loved and treasured in the world. Tirunāvukkaracar’s poems reveal that he employed localized form of pan-Hindu myths to affirm the presence of pan-Indian deity Śiva in Tamil places as a ‘local god’. The appeal to the story of Śiva wanderings about for alms is peculiar to Tamil country (Tēv. IV.019.5)239. Elsewhere, Tirunāvukkaracar also uses purely local myths i.e. myths which have no correspondence or versions outside Tamiḻnāṭu. A fine example such a local myth with cosmic dimensions is Śiva’s reincarnating as devout spider as king Köcceṅkaṭ Cōḷan (Tēv. IV.046. 3 and 8). Cēkkilār dedicates whole section to narrate this episode in the Periya Purāṇam (PP. 4202-4219)240. Every manifestation is a work of Śiva’s love. It is Śiva’s love that pours out in abundance in every fulfilment of life.

237  `... கருவிப் கருவிகள்கள் கருவியன் பெருக்கியே... ’ (Tēv.VI.024.1).
238  `உங்களுக்கு உணர்வாய வெவ்வேறு அளமையப்பெருக்கும் வளர்க்கி முறுகியால்...’ (Tēv.VI.095.1).
239  `நான் விளைந்த எல்லாவண்டும் பெருந்தில் விளையாட மத்தியானாட்டகிறேன்...’ (Tēv. VI.095.5).
240  For the story of this nāyāṉār, see p. 144.
If Śiva is everywhere ‘seeing Him’ in everything is the ultimate significance of human life (Tēv. 6.087.1). Significantly, one has to ‘see Him’ in one’s mind and heart. This Śiva ‘within’ is the God Tirunāvukkaracar (Tev. VI.08.5). This realization allowed the nāyagār, who once considered the ‘world as impermanent’ (PP. 1307), to consider birth as a human being is worthwhile (Tēv. IV. 081. 4). Appar commands every one of his organs and limbs to worship and adore his God (Tēv. IV.09.1).

However, such a search is possible only for the humble and repentant person who begins to acknowledge his or her own ignorance of the true nature of Śiva and the cosmic realities (Tēv. IV.079.1). Śiva will grant his assistance to such a repentant person and remove the veil of ignorance and allow him to possess a true knowledge of Him and of all realities. Therefore, Tirunāvukkaracar in many of his hymns implores divine assistance that leads to this profound experience of being united to the Śiva (Tēv. IV.095.6). Even before wickedness overpowers him, the Lord in benevolence must

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241 ‘‘... in my mind’s core is He, (with His feet) on my head is He, in speech is He, and in the hearts of the clan of devotees’’ (Tēv. VI.08.5).
242 ‘‘... in my mind’s core is He, (with His feet) on my head is He, in speech is He, and in the hearts of the clan of devotees’’ (Tēv. 6.087.1).
243 ‘‘... in my mind’s core is He, (with His feet) on my head is He, in speech is He, and in the hearts of the clan of devotees’’ (Tēv. VI.08.5).
244 ‘‘... in my mind’s core is He, (with His feet) on my head is He, in speech is He, and in the hearts of the clan of devotees’’ (Tēv. 6.087.1).
245 ‘‘... in my mind’s core is He, (with His feet) on my head is He, in speech is He, and in the hearts of the clan of devotees’’ (Tēv. VI.08.5).
246 ‘‘... in my mind’s core is He, (with His feet) on my head is He, in speech is He, and in the hearts of the clan of devotees’’ (Tēv. IV.081.4).
247 ‘‘... in my mind’s core is He, (with His feet) on my head is He, in speech is He, and in the hearts of the clan of devotees’’ (Tēv. IV.095.6).
imprint his feet, on his heart. In the absence of the Lord granting him this favour, he paradoxically suggests that the Lord’s auspiciousness will be “doubted” as a Lord (Tēv. IV. 097.6)\(^\text{248}\).

Later, Tirunāvukkaracar who sought divine assistance declares that the Lord has been benevolent to him and granted him the gift of the mystical experience of being united to the Lord’s ‘sweet gold foot’ (Tēv. IV. 81.4).\(^\text{249}\) This union of the devotee to Šiva is compared to the conjugal union of man and woman, which lasts forever without separation. Šiva owns the devotee as the lover owns his beloved and the beloved surrenders to Šiva as his protection and love. Tirunāvukkaracar sings of this experience in the persona of the female lover of classical poetry and gives a fine and powerful expression to the emotional aspect of Tamil Šaiva religion.

In this state of having received the assistance of the Lord, after having the mystical experience of being one with him, Tirunāvukkaracar searches for words to express his mystical experience. The ineffability of such an experience leads him to various expressions of delight. One such expression of delight is found in the narration of Tirunāvukkaracar’s vision of Šiva seated at mount Kailāsa. Čekkilēr narrates that after ‘seeing the inexpressible yearning with the blissful sight, he held his hand above his head and fell to the ground. Then he rose to his feet, sang, danced, and wept before the

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\(^{248}\) ‘Lying in the womb, I thought only of your feet. Committing it to memory, I recited your name. Through your grace, I chanted “Hail Šiva,” And wore the sacred ash as the sign of my blessing. O Arāy of Pātirippuliyaṟ, Give me your own state of Šiva!’ (Tēv. IV. 095.6)

\(^{249}\) ‘...claration ṣaman senīṟṟū ṣamaiṟṟū ṣaman senīṟṟū’ (Tēv. IV.097.6).

‘...senaiṟṟū ṣamaiṟṟū samaiṟṟū samaiṟṟū’ (Tēv. IV.081.4).
presence of the Lord’ (PP. 1650)\textsuperscript{250}, ‘tears poured like rain’ (PP. 1657)\textsuperscript{251}. Such expressions of the experience of divine assistance, also includes expressions of courage and fearlessness before the power of evil and suffering.

Tirunāvukkaracar also compares the experience of joy that is achieved in seeing Śiva in everything, to that of the soothing effects of the experience of nature (Tēv. V.014.10)\textsuperscript{252}. Thus, in poetic imagery and diction, the comparison made between the ineffable experiences of joy, to the experience of nature indicates the profoundness of Tirunāvukkaracar’s experience of Śiva. Such an experience for Tirunāvukkaracar is a gift of the divine and the profundity of such an experience is felt because of its ineffability. However, what is clear is that, these divine experiences are pēyiripam (பெயிரிபம்) or a great delight which is far beyond all other joyful experiences that the world can offer. This experience of great delight is an inner experience because Śiva manifests Himself in the very depth of oneself (Tēv. VI. 028.10)\textsuperscript{253}. Such a mystical experience is a dialogical process between Śiva and the devotee. It is Śiva’s duty on the

\textsuperscript{250}‘... என்றாலும் தன்னால் காட்டுவதால் பக்தர்கள் நூற்றர்கள் மூட்டித் திருமரியாலும் இருந்து நம்பிக்கையை உண்டாக்கிய அன்னியர் வைத்து குறிப்பிட்டு பொருள்தான் தம் அச்சாகையாக்’ (நுண்டு 1650).

\textsuperscript{251}‘... ஆனாலும் தன்னால் மேலும் அனுதானம்...’ (நுண்டு 1657).

\textsuperscript{252}‘சிலை குருவிகள் மலராம் காய்த்திருந்த பக்தர்கள் போர்க்காக போர்க்காக நான் வந்து வருகிறேன் முடிய எங்கே காணக்கூடிய சிலையிலே காட்டுவது தொன்மையே’ (நுண்டு. 5.014.10).

‘Sweeter than sweet fruit, raw cane sugar, Lovely women with fresh flowers in their hair, Sweeter than sole dominion over vast lands, Is Itaimarutu’s Lord To those who reach him’

\textsuperscript{253}‘I hold no one who deserve me. Than myself; yet within myself. There is one dear to me – Inyampar’s Lord Who is the breath of life, Which enters and leaves me, Abides within’ (Tēv. VI. 028.10)
one hand to hold to his devotee, and on the other hand it is the duty of the devotee to completely surrender to Śiva’s protection (Tēv. V.164.1).254

The profound experience of the Śiva’s presence in one’s self effects transformation in life, prompting a desire for service of Him. Service to Śiva is the motto followed by Tirunāvukkaracar. He carried a hoe with him as a symbol of this service. Therefore, Tirunāvukkaracar wandered from temple to temple singing the praise of Śiva, proclaiming the futility of pilgrimage to sacred palces and the need to have a deep and abiding love for Śiva. He performed menial service in the shrines – washing and sweeping the temple floors, gathering flowers and making garland of various types, cutting grass to clear the path for Śiva devotees. He approached Śiva as a humble servant. Śiva is the master; the devotee is the servant ever alert to obey his Lord by loving and submissive service. He never forgot his daily duties to Śiva (Tēv. V.019.9, IV.01.6)255. Tirunāvukkaracar in the course of his life spiritualized this ‘Śiva-tontu’ (இந்த ஊர்களில்), work as worship for Śiva and enlighten many seekers to experience divine love as the goal and the fulfilment of life.

What is worth noting is that Cēkkiḻar in exquisite imagery and poetic diction makes one witness coalescence of the two brilliant seers Tirunāṭya Campantar and Tirunāvukkaracar at the sacred temple of Vedaranyam hollowed by the Vedas. It is not a mere confrontation of a younger truth-seer meeting an older servitor of Śiva. Their spiritual animation and love of Śiva blazed in radiance in their gleaning countenance

254 ‘Once he sought me out, came to me, and gave me his sign. The dear Lord ... asks me to come to him there’ (Tēv. V.161.1)

255 ‘...தொழில் தொழில் பெண்காட்டு கால்செங்கூறு என்று பெண்காட்டு பெண்காட்டு தொழில்’ (Tēv. V.019.9).
covered with holy ash in the ‘Five Letters’ they chanted continuously connoting the divine name, and in the vivifying currents of the faith of the devotees who followed them. The self fulfilment seen in Tirunāṇa Campantar and the self-denial of Tirunāvukkaracar converged in mid-point, and blazed a trail of complete interaction of two-in-one love is Śiva. In a beautiful stanza, Cēkkilār delianates the evolving world with it dense obscurities and the two most intimate lovers of Śiva, Tirunāṇa Campantar and Tirunāvukkaracar in the one pointed consciousness. The love-energy of Śiva in Sakti, the moving principle of divine assistance, clears the clouds of unknowing before the the unifying and unanimous vision of truth perceived by the ‘child of wisdom’ i.e. Tirunāṇa Campantar and noble Tirunāvukkaracar (PP. 1446-1458). Truly both the nāyaṉmār stepped into divine omnipresence in a upsurge of love ineffable and experienced the bliss of Śivan (śiva-āṇvantam) i.e. the bliss of being in Śiva.

Cēkkilār even narrates the nāyaṉār as one, who never grew tired of seeking the Lord’s assitence and records the time when the Lord did not bestow his kindness; he remonstrated with Śiva in his desolation. He expostulates the Lord as one ‘without mercy’ (irakkam onru illiār) (PP. 1538). He takes a further step by demanding from the ‘Lord of the Vedas, who has vanished in the heavens, to bestow the favour to draw near to him and thereby to behold his form with his own eyes’

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256 The five letter prayer is (Gāthā) ‘na ma si va ya’ (NB in roman script, this is five syllables of two letter each, but in Tamil script each syllable is a single letter). The syllables ‘na’ (n) and ‘ma’ (m) represent the bondage in which the human soul is trapped, ‘si’ (ś) and ‘va’ (v) represent Śiva and his Sakti, and ‘ya’ (y) represents the soul in between the two.

257 ‘…கோணத்தில் அமையும் குப்பூட்டப் பேரியால் தூக்குக் பெண் பதிகம் கையில் கையில் காலம் மறாம்’ (சபரி, 1538). Cēkkilār uses the word ‘irakkam’ i.e. ‘mercy’ to mean that the nāyaṉār sought Śiva as a merciful God.
Cēkkiḻār portrays Tirunāvukkaracar as the one who tirelessly begged for Śiva’s favour, and continued to assert that even before a favour was granted it was received because he was confident the Lord was sure to grant him what he desired. Cēkkiḻār uses the actual words of Tirunāvukkaracar ‘not only has he saved my life, but he has also showered his favour on me’ and “I have done such wrong” but yet ‘his flood tide of kindness reached even me’ (PP. 1341-1342). Cēkkiḻār narrates various transformations that occurred in Tirunāvukkaracar as the result of receiving divine favour (PP. 1290 -1699).

However, it must be emphasised that, Cēkkiḻār does equate the experience of favour to the expression of emotion or the experience of worldly reality. Drawing congruence between the external expressions, enjoyment of worldly realities and the experience of favour, Cēkkiḻār expresses the ineffability of the experience of support. As a result, he states that the experience of benevolence is beyond all the pleasures that are gained from experiencing worldly realities. It makes one crave to be in the presence of the Lord (PP. 1648-1670). Cēkkiḻār in narrating the life of Tirunāvukkaracar honours him as the one who ‘was transformed in the likeness of Śiva’s joy and wisdom, the ultimate attainment’ (PP. 1697).

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Śiva in everything and everything in Śiva. His mysticism had a profound influence on Cēkkiḻār. He acknowledges this in his work (PP. 1455)261.

3.5 The Mystical Quest of Cuntaramūrtti Nāyaṉār

Apart from the nāyaṉmār mentioned above, another nāyaṉār whose mystical legacy influenced the shaping of the devotionalism of the Periya Purāṇam is Nampi Ārūraṅ (ஜேக்கிள அருங்கள்), popularly known or Cuntaramūrtti (குந்தரமுருத்தி) nāyaṉār. Cuntaramutti or ‘Handsome Lord’ lived in the ninth century after the Common Era. Though his life span was short, his contribution to the Tamil Śaivism equalled that of other nāyaṉmār. His composition of songs of praise of Śiva, one thousand and twenty six of them, are canonized as the seventh of the twelve Tirumuṟai. He initiated the tradition of hagiographical literature in Tamil Śaivism by listing the exemplary worshippers of Śiva. His hagiography which was known as the Tiruttoṇṭar Tokai (திருடுண்டர் தொகை) or the ‘Roll of the Holy Servants of the Lord’ was used by Cēkkiḻār as a primary source for his master piece i.e. for the mystical narrative of the Periya Purāṇam (PP.48)262.

261 ‘அன்று ஸ்வா ராண்டிராவின் தலேகுன்காலமாக ஏற்கனே காவில் அனைவிலாமல் விசால பொயிலின் பெருங்காலத்தில் நூற்றாண்டில் புராணம் காப்பாடை கையில் தன்னை சித்திரால் அறிந்த காலனின் நூற்றாண்டில் ரெண்டு பொயிலின் பெருங்காலத்தில் காப்பாடை அறிந்த நூற்றாண்டில் புராணம் காப்பாடை என்பது அறிந்து’ (கலை, 1455).

They are a unique ocean of grace, inseparable and incomparable, a sea of love ever expanding; they are a pair of eyes, the essence of Śaiva pathway. They are the embodiment of the grace of the one who drank poison to grant life eternal, whose consort is her who gave life to all that exists. They are to be emulated (PP. 1455).

262 ‘பெருந்தொய்க்கு பெணும் தொய்க்கு பொயிலின் பெருங்காலத்தில் தன்னை சித்திரால் அறிந்த காலனின் நூற்றாண்டில் புராணம் காப்பாடை என்பது அறிந்தே’ (கலை 48).

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In the prologue to his work the *Periya Purāṇam*, Cēkkilār recounts the circumstances which led *Cuntaramūrtti* to sing poems in praise of devotees who had melted in love for him and their matchless servitutde to Him (PP. 11-50)\(^{263}\). In end of the narration Cēkkilār notes, willed by Śiva, and ‘that the whole world might find salvation and the Śaiva religion flourish, the famous poet Nampi sang the glory of the servants of the Lord’ (PP. 49)\(^{264}\). *Cuntaramūrtti* thus composes the garland of verses, listing the well recognised servitors of Śiva in his famous *Tiruttoṇṭar Tokai*\(^{265}\) which forms an authentic source for Cēkkilār’s *Periya Purāṇam*. It is through *Tiruttoṇṭar Tokai*, *Cuntaramūrtti* initiates a tradition of venerating the servitors of Śiva and composing poems about them.

What makes this work distinct from the rest of the *nāyaṉmār*, apart from the poetic excellence and musical quality of the poems which were in varing degree common to all the poets, is the biographical dimension which emerges involuntarily.

This biographical aspect may be taken for granted as a natural outcome, though his intention was only to celebrate them as commissioned by Śiva and not to write their lives. Armed with humility and integrity, he tunes himself joyfully in worshipful reverence to carry out Śiva’s injuction and sees in it a flawless pathway to rid himself of

\(^{263}\) Cēkkilār makes Upamanyu Muni, a famous hermit, relate the account. It is narrated that one day, Upamanyu Muni and his disciples saw a beam of light streak across the sky. The disciples requested the Muni to explain the effulgence. He replied “Nampi Ārūraṉ! indeed a noble man who had conquered the five senses”. “He is worthy of worship”. Upamanyu concluded that Cuntaramūrtti, once lived as Ālālacuntarar, an attendant of Śiva, in his celestial abode, Kailāsa. Śiva sent him to live on earth to fulfil his love for two damsels and serve Śiva as a human devotee.

\(^{264}\) ‘In order the the South country where the penances abound might prosper, and the faultless ‘Roll of the Holy Servants of the Lord’ be given to the world, aided by divine favour Cuntaṉ’s attention lit upon them. “His is returning after enjoying in the guise of a human person the company of damsels”.

\(^{265}\) For *Cuntaramūrtti’s Tiruttoṇṭar Tokai*, see Appendix II.
pain and imperfection. He is filled with melting love towards the holy band of Śiva devotees and takes the pledge of loyal service to each of these mighty warriors. These two strands – one, worshiping of the servitors of Śiva, and two, the biographical account in his work – were picked up by Ĉekkilār. Ĉekkilār enlarges upon the tradition set by Cuntaramūrtti and gives him due recognition as the originator of these two strands of the celebrated tradition making Cuntaramūrtti the ‘hero’ or ‘jiyṭḍ;’ of his work and constantly repeating his indebtedness to Him.

The influence of the servitors of Śiva on Cuntararmūrtti’s life is further evidence, as he makes use of many of their ideas, metaphors and similarities to present his own experience of Śiva. However two significant events mark him out among the nāyaymār. These were the experience of Śiva taking him captive as his servant (āṭkoḷ: ஆட்கொள்) by obstructing (taṭuttu: தாட்டுத்து) his marriage266, and his sending of Śiva as a messenger to settle his domestic dispute267. Cuntararmūrtti’s differing yet familiar relationship with Śiva earned him the name ‘harsh devotee’ or ‘violent servant’ (vaṉṟoṇṭaṉ: வாண்டொண்டான்) (PP. 216)268, while his casual loving companionship as a friend (ிட்டான்: itṭaṉ)268 It is narrated in the Periya Purāṇam on Cuntarar’s wedding day Śiva appeared in the assembly disguised as an old man, showed the bridegroom a contract of bondage, and claimed that Cuntarar had been promised to him as his slave since generations past. Cuntarar denied the claim calling the old man “madman” (pittay: பிட்டாய்), but the old man persisted, and the argument erupted into a violent quarrel. When the old man suddenly disappeared into the aruṭṭaiṟai (‘shrine of grace’) temple at Venneynallūr, Cuntarar realized the true identity of the old man as Śiva, he sang a hymn declaring that he would forever be the slave of ‘the madman’ (PP. 147-227). The Lord called Cuntarar his ‘rude or aggressive devotee’ (vaṇṇoṇṭāṉ) and commanded him to sing a song addressed to Him as “madman” (pittay: பிட்டாய்).

267 On another occasion Cuntarar sought Śiva’s help in marrying yet another women, Cāṅkili. Śiva punished him with blindness when the poet broke his promise to Cāṅkili and restored it in response to his pleas. Śiva infact served as Cuntarar’s messenger to appease Cuntarar’s first wife’s anger at the saints infidelity

268 ‘புல்லும் லாகலன் இந்த உட்பொருள்காலன் வாண்டொண்டான காம்பு மன்கள் கூர்பல் ஆகர்ந்தே’ (PP 216), “because you spoke such violent words, you have earned the nickname ‘Vaṇṇoṇṭar’, or violent servant’ (PP 216).
tōlay) (Tēv. VII.51.9) with Śiva made him known as ‘the Lord’s comrade’ (tampirāṅ tōlar: தம்பிராங் தொளர்) (Staal, 1988, p. x).

Initiated into a life by a transformative event in which he was claimed as Śiva’s ‘harsh devotee’, Cuntaramūrtti embarks on his journey to sing poems of devotion to Śiva. Just as other nāyaṉmār, Cuntaramūrtti too sings in praise of Śiva. Śiva is praised as the ‘utaman’ (அட்டணன்) (Tēv. VII. 100.2-10). In Tamil the word ‘utaman’ (அட்டணன்) is used to cannote an excellent or virtuous or great ‘man’. An excellent or virtuous women is refered as ‘utami’ (அட்டமி). This excellent man i.e. Śiva for Cuntaramūrtti is also loving father. Most of Cuntaramūrtti poems sing of Śiva as a father in the masculine personal pronoun sense (Tēv.VII.34.1).

For Cuntaramūrtti Śiva as a father is also a good friend (என்றும்:tōlay) who knows the heart of his friend. Hence, Cuntarar willed to be ever closer in an intimate friendship with the Lord. It was for this reason at every juncture of his life, when subjected to conflict and deprivation he turned to his faithful friend (என்றும்: tōlay) i.e. the Śiva (Tēv. VII. 51.10). Such friendship for Cuntarar dispels the inner darkness that

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269 'அறிவுறவின் எல்லந்தாமண்ணம் என்றும் எண்ணாமண்ணம் கண்டுபாட்டம் விளக்கும் மாண்ணால் துற்றுக்கள் தண்டாமண்ணம் தண்டாமண்ணம் மாண்ணால் தண்டாமண்ணம் விளக்கும்... (Tēv. VII.051.10).

‘I am an ignorant wretch, parted from my God Ārūr, from him who is the seven notes of music, the fruit of my song, my sweet ambrosia, the dear friend who aided me in my crimes...’(Tēv. VII.051.10).

270 ‘...எனின்றும் சிறொப்பொருள்தார் என்றும் காதலோலை அட்டணனின்’ (Tēv. VII.100.1).

‘...He elevated my body and life within it. How great is He! (Tēv. VII.100.1).

271 ‘பொது பெற்று நோயோ வெண்ணோ ஓர்வோ துர்காமண்ணம் கச்சாயம் தென்றும் பாடல் செய்துவழியும் பாடல் உட்பட்டீஸ்கு பாடல் உட்பட்டீஸ்கு பாடல்’ (Tēv. VII.51.1).

‘Poets! Though you speak flattering words praising them and though you are always by their side. Without praising the hypocrites who are bundle of lies and who are slaves to worldly pleasures praise the greatness of pukalūr of our father’ (Tēv. VII.51.1).

272 ‘அறிவுறவின் எல்லந்தாமண்ணம் என்றும் எண்ணாமண்ணம் கண்டுபாட்டம் விளக்கும் மாண்ணால் தண்டாமண்ணம் விளக்கும்...’ (Tēv. VII.51.10).

‘From him who is the seven notes of music, The fruit of my song, my sweet ambrosia,
prevents that perfect union with the Lord and impels one to constantly yearn for Him (Tēv. VII.51.1)\textsuperscript{273}. It is because as a friend Śiva is in love with his devotee. For his love for his devotee, Cuntaramūrtti makes a point of calling Śiva as ‘the mad one’ (pittā pirāticūṭi: பிட்டா பிராதிசுத்தி) (Tēv. VII.1.1)\textsuperscript{274}. Hence, like his predecessors, repeatedly but uniquely, speaks of the Śiva as love. Cuntaramūrtti, therefore, enacted a vast range of incredible acts and subjected himself to immense obscuriations but as a faithful servant of Śiva, severd Him as a loving companion. In one of the poems, he sings that his relationship with the world was not to split but to unify and harmonise in love (Tēv. VII. 51.1)\textsuperscript{275}.

This intimate companionship, which is so often a single-minded devotion, is fostered by the constant remembrance of his presence, by the constant calling of him and by the constant recital of his name within the innermost self; it was a means by which one can ever remain in blissful union with the Lord (Tēv. VII. 48.1)\textsuperscript{276}. Hence, single-minded love to Śiva is one of the recurring themes in the hymns of Cuntaramūrtti (Tēv.
The nāyāṉār pleads guilty to his many failings in expressing this single-minded devotion to Śiva. He sings that, showing no gratitude to Śiva and his devotees, he has been wasting his life ‘wandering, committing crimes and insulting other men true to Him alone (Tēv. VII. 69.1). He regrets ‘having gone astray from the right path and spoken only lies (Tēv. VII. 001.4). With deep sense of regret and humility, openly calling himself lower than a ‘nāyēn’ (nāyēn) meaning dog, he considers himself as the lowest of the devotees (Tēv. VII.069.8).

This sense of lowliness does not prevent an optimism that results from the placing his full trust in the forgiving of Śiva (विलायलाणाः परूढ़ितुवारः : pilaiyallaṇa poruttītuvar) (Tēv. VII.89.1). He bodily asserts his confidence in Śiva. The source of his optimism is his faith that the devotee has Śiva for support refuge (Tēv. VII. 54.1).

Cuntaramürtti further sings ‘I worship no god other than you. I am blind, but if you would give vision, it is you that I want to see. You who can make the blind see!’ (Tēv. VII.051.9).
VII. 92.8)²⁸³. The higher experience of this love of Śiva is expressed by in terms of delicate affection and Cuntaramūrtti too compares the experience of the Śiva to the enjoyment of matrival objects and taste and sweetness that accrues by eating various edibles (Tēv. VII. 24.1)²⁸⁴.

What should be noted is that the path followed by Cuntaramūrtti is the path of a friend. One of the well-known names of Cuntaramūrtti is ‘tōlar’ (தூலர்) (Tēv. VII.51.9)²⁸⁵ which means the friend of the Lord. Cuntaramūrtti obeyed the dictum of entering into a diologic relationship with Śiva and exemplified, in his realisation that relationship of a friend with Śiva as a boon companion. Śiva was his best friend. Although he won friendship of the Lord and took liberties with Him that one normally takes with a friend, he never forgot the supremacy of the Lord. His frineship was rooted in Śiva’s supremacy, and it is not of the usual commonplace variety. Śiva was his friend and at the same time his Lord. In one of the verses of his poem, he expresses his intense longing for union with him and asks, “When can I approach Thee O Lord?” (Tēv.
The poems composed by Cuntaramūrtti reveals a sense of friendly familiarity and at the same time they are inspired by a deep devotion. Just as the other nāyaṁār who influenced his vision of mysticism, Ėkkilār devoted considerable attention to Cuntaramūrtti nāyanār. His life story is narrated in the form of a biography and is used as a single plot that unifies the other biographies of the nāyaṁār in the Periya Purāṇam. This is evident in Ėkkilār’s clear placement and praise of the life story of the Cuntaramūrtti in the narration. His life story appears in verses 22-29, 147-349, 3160-3374, 3753-3927 and 4234-4286 and forms the centrifugal force around which Periya Purāṇam is created. This admiration of Ėkkilār is easily discerned by his constant referrals to the Cuntaramūrtti in various other places (PP. 550, 972, 1270). Ėkkilār venerates Cuntaramūrtti as a ‘devotee of the feet of the Lord’, as the one ‘who had the Lord in his heart’, a ‘great man’ and a one ‘worthy of imitation’ (PP. 29).

What is even more significant in the Periya Purāṇam, in the biography of Cuntaramūrtti, is that such a Śiva manifests himself in human form (PP. 231), to claim friendship with his devotees. His spiritual essence comes in human form to dispel the

286 ‘...குருப்பீரசை போட்டும் ஓன்துசுவரை சாக்கையும் சூக்கலே தாக்கலே ...’ (குன்ற. VII.084.9).
287 ‘...பூம்பக்கு சைவன்முனை செந்தலும் பார்வையும் பள்ளட்டு போட்டும் கோவைன் சுந்தரப் பகுதி போக்கும் கோவையும் கோவையும் பார்வையும் கோவையும் கோவையும் பார்வையும் பார்வையும்’ (ப்ப்ப. 550).
288 ‘For the salvation of the world, the Lord ... produced the ancient deed of ownership at Tiruvenneynallūr, and there took possession of his servant. Now we place our head beneath his servant’s feet and meditate upon them’ (PP. 550).
289 ‘...போக்கும் கோவை போக்கும் கோவையும் கோவையும் பார்வையும் பார்வையும்’ (குன்ற. 29)
290 ‘Seeing this, the Lord ... unknow to all entered the monastery. There he made as if to lie down to sleep with his lotus feet ...’ (PP. 231).
darkness of his devotees and to claim oneness with him (PP. 407). This spiritual essence of God is a redemptive grace (arul) of His love. When a devotee gets entangled by this love, the Lord abides in this love (PP. 337). The influence of Cuntaramūrtti on shaping the composition of the Periya Purāṇam is very evident when Cēkkiḻar sings of the nāyaṉār, in the state of being possessed by the Lord (PP. 252).

### 3.6 Summary

The Periya Purāṇam of Cēkkiḻar is an invaluable hagiography of the Śiva-tonṭar (śiva-ṉṟṟuṉṟṟai) or servitors of Śiva. It gives information about the sixty-three nāyaṉār of whom the major four, Tirumūlar nāyaṉār, Tiruṉāṉacampantar, Tirunāvukkaracar and Cuntaramūrtti nāyaṉār, together account for well over half of the total length of the Periya Purāṇam. It is their lives that form the basis for the entire composition of the Periya Purāṇam; of 4286 poems almost 2409 of them are on these nāyaṉār. For each of these four, Cēkkiḻar narrates the circumstances of their birth and early life, the way in
which they became Śiva devotees, the pilgrimages from temple to temples, their service to Śiva, and the end of their mortal life.

It is discernable in the narratives each of the four nāyagyāṛ emerges with a distinct personality and they each followed a specific mode of reaching Śiva as if it is a unique manner of devotion to Śiva. There are four manifestation of the life of devotion that can be affirmed in their pathway to Śiva. The first is yōgam (all actions yoked to bodily discipline and meditation), which implies internal worship, a path followed by Tirumūlar nāyaṉār. This leads to attain the form of Śiva as Tirumūlar notes ‘becoming Śiva’ is the goal of Vedanta-Siddhanta (TM. 2393). The second is intimate service to Śiva in temples as a good son. This takes the devotee nearer to Śiva. This is the path followed by Tiruṅāṉacampantar often referred to by Cēkkilār as the child of God, and is regarded as the one who dedicated himself to the service of Śiva in the temple and therefore as the good exemplar of the path of a good son. The third is a way of Śiva-realization through dedicated physical activity. It implies all work as service to the Lord. It consists in external acts of worship like cleaning the temple, gathering flowers for the deity. This is called the path of a servant. This leads one to reside in Śiva’s abode. It is this path Tirunāvukkaracar followed, a path as the Lord’s servitor. Thus by virtue of habitual practice of wielding the hoe to get rid of grass and weeds from temple precincts, Tirunāvukkaracar is portrayed as the exemplar of one who followed the path of the servant. The fourth is the path of a friend. Cuntaramūrtti nāyaṉār considered Śiva as his friend and as loving companion of Śiva. He earned the nickname ‘vanṭoṇṭar of the ‘the
violent servant’ (PP. 216) because of his stormy friendship with Śiva, but by the same token he was known as ‘the companion of the Śiva’ or ‘tampirāṭ tōḷaḥ’ (ொருள்வாள் வழியுடைத்து பேசுவாள்) (Staal, 2008, p.x). So Cēkkilār presents Cuntaramūrtti as an exemplar of the path of companionship with Śiva. For these vocal devotees of Śiva, singing in praise of Śiva is love-abounding and joy-abiding.

These four loom immense as the poet protagonists of the unfolding drama of devotion enacted in Cēkkilār’s Periya Purāṇam. Cēkkilār immortalizes the lives and works of the illustrious ones. The beauty of the love of these nāyaṉār who made self-discipline and self-knowledge as the basis for experiencing Śiva as love was enshrined in their soulful songs on Śiva (PP. 4). The four classical nāyaṉmār have in common is this steadfast and unsullied love in their service and devotion to Śiva through songs. What inspired devotion in them is the indwelling presence of Śivam. These saints sought to march the presence of Śiva by the perfect surrender of their lives to His feet with immeasurable love, as revealed in the nāyaṉmār lives. Their experiences originate from above, within and without. The assistance of Śiva works from above as in the case of Tiruñāṉacampantar being fed by the divine milk. The experience of Tirunāṉvakkaracar and most of the devotees of Śiva spring by reflectively turning towards the self within. There is another kind of experience that originates from the beauty of the world without, the beauty of nature and the beauty of the many-faceted temples, to gaze into the heart of

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294 ‘மெய்ப் தாம் நாயகள் நீதி நாயாச்சாரிகள் நூற்றண் நூற்றண் நூற்றண் உரையாள் உரையாள்’ (டால் 216), ‘because you spoke such violent words, you have earned the nickname ‘Vaṇṭṭar’, or violent servant’ (PP 216).

295 ‘மெய்ப் தாம் நாயகள் நீதி நாயாச்சாரிகள் நூற்றண் நூற்றண் நூற்றண் உரையாள் உரையாள் உரையாள் உரையாள் உரையாள் ... உரையாள் உரையாள் உரையாள் உரையாள் உரையாள் உரையாள் உரையாள்’ (டால் 4). ‘In days of old the poet saints extolled in song the Lord dances in the sacred court ... To their assembly, be all due honour and success!’ (PP. 4).
things as testified to in the experience of Tirumālar nāyaṉār and Cuntaramūrtti nāyaṉār. All that they perceived externally in diversity was essentially one.

What is even more note worthy in relation to these nāyaṉmār is that they identified and spoke of Śiva as love. Therefore, the goal of human existence is to ‘see Him’ (Tēv. 6.087.1). Such a pursuit is possible only for those who melt in love for Śiva; for such devotees who worship Śiva, will be given the true knowledge of knowing Him and all the realities that exist. It is this true knowledge which leads one to experience of the undifferentiated unity of all the realities in Śivam (TM. 270). The source of such experience may vary but the goal of the human soul is to abide in absolute union with Śiva and to identify oneself in union with Śiva (TM. 2393). This was the devotional experience of the early Tamil nāyaṉmār.

Cēkkilār true to the Tamil Śaiva tradition followed by the nāyaṉmār considers them as saving acts and forms of devotion. Cēkkilār was a product of his own tradition; he followed the path set by the early Tamil nāyaṉmār and considered them as devotional giants. Their quest for a mystical union enkindled in him a deeper search for the meaning in life and of Śiva. Cēkkilār faithfully recounted the lives of these saints and the path of

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296 'He is far above the celestials, see Him! He became Sanskrit of the North and the Southern Tamil And the four Vedas; see Him!' (Tēv. 6.087.1).
297 'The ignorant think that love and God are two; they do not know love is God. After knowing that love of God. They remain possessed of love which is God' (TM. 270).
298 'They remain possessed of love which is God...’ (TM. 2393).
devotion and knowledge shown by them (PP. 6)\textsuperscript{299}. Like the early nāyāmār, Cēkkilār positions the divine-human i.e. the Śiva-devotee relationship at the heart of the narration. He acclaimed the greatness of Śiva as a God of love, and as ‘Father’ (appan: அப்பன்), ‘Mother’ (ammai: அம்மா) and ‘Friend’ (tōlay: தோலை). Cēkkilār’s passion, as inspired by the early Tamil nāyāmār, was to posit a new type of devotion i.e. manifestation of devotion in service and moral living as communion with Śiva ... unsullied realization of Śivan, possession of Śivan, union in knowledge, and union in love while actively engaging with the world (PP. 14\textsuperscript{300}). In other words he wanted to communicate that self stands clothed in Śiva’s form. In conclusion Cēkkilār, as he himself acknowledged was heavily influenced by the tradition into which he was born and brought up (PP.5)\textsuperscript{301}. He goes beyond these early nāyāmār to produce his own contribution to Tamil Śaivism that sets him apart from other saints. This matter will be subject of discussion in later chapters.

\textsuperscript{299} ‘ஒரு மரம் செட்டிக்குறி சுமைக்கோடியானது மகள் இவ்வுன்னு கேள் முகுரல் முன் கடும் தீமுனையை முரையான வன்னச் செய்யும் செட்டிக்கோடி விளையாடும்’ (கல்லூர் 6).

‘Like a thirsty dog that tries to drink up the mighty ocean, I have set myself the task of setting forth the matchless glory of the holy servants of the Lord, although it lies beyond all human understanding’ (PP. 6).

\textsuperscript{300} ‘மேலும் அருளற்பிள்ளை முறை செம்மன்னிச் செருமையில் மருத்துவ குடிக்கோடி மகள் மலர்கள் தூய்மை உவர்கள் கூறியென்று அதேபோல முரையான வி முரையான வி’ (கல்லூர் 143).

‘...They do not seek heaven for themselves, but are content to be born into the world and to worship the Lord in love. That is the measure of their victory’ (PP. 143).

\textsuperscript{301} ‘அடுத்த வராய் விளைக்கோடியானது மகள் அடுத்த வராய் விளைக்கோடியானது அருளற்பிள்ளையான அதேபோல உவர்கள் அதேபோல உவர்கள் அதேபோல வி முரையான வி’ (கல்லூர் 5).

‘The greatness of the devotees is beyond measure; beyond measure too their fame, which I am going to relate. Although to tell even the smallest measure of it is impossible, measureless zeal will spur me on to the endeavour’ (PP. 5).
CHAPTER FOUR
THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF THE PERIYA PURĀṆAM

4.1 Introduction
This chapter will address, in brief, the historical context i.e. the political, religious and social climate in which the Periya Purāṇam was created. An author’s composition generally reflects his or her society. It is his or her historical environment that informs an author’s perspective for a deeper reflection and adaptation of the changing demands of life. This is equally significant, in the case of those authors who stand as catalysts for their generation, who by their critique of their historical settings, offer alternative value systems during times of transitions.

In the case of the Periya Purāṇam, however, it is widely held by scholars, that Cēkkilār authored his work to divert his king AnapāyaṆ i.e. KulōtuṆga II (1133 A.C.E-1150 A.C.E)\textsuperscript{302} from his preoccupation with the Jain epic Čīvakacitāmani (ቸዕቃዕ ዳጉጫማን)\textsuperscript{303} i.e. ‘wish fulfilling fabulous gem’, which was more erotic in its nature and literary genre than religious or devotional in belief\textsuperscript{304}. This motive of Cēkkilār, is first to

\textsuperscript{302} For more about king AnapāyaṆ, see p. 26.
\textsuperscript{303} The text Čīvakacitāmani is the most illustrious epic in the Tamil literature. It is considered to have originated within a Jain context dated between the second and the fifth centuries. The work is about a hero i.e. Čīvaka from his birth to the attainment of bliss. Čīvaka combined heroics with exotics to marry a series of seven women and to gain a kingdom. In the end he realized the transiency of possessions, renounced the kingship, took refuge in a Jain way of life as a monk. The work credited to Tiruttakkadevar (తిరుతాక్కడేవర) is generally recognised as preeminent because it exhibits a literary excellence, rich in religious sentiment, full of reflection and remarks on the grounds of human action, and replete with information about the condition of the arts and customs of social life at the period of its composition. See. Pūrṇālingam Pillai, 1994, pp. 126-127; Hudson, 1989, pp. 373-374.
\textsuperscript{304} For the suggested motive, see Ryan, 1999, p. 360; Monius 2004b, p. 126.
have been suggested by Umāpati Civācārya (උමපාති විකාශාරය), a Śaivite theologian of the fourteenth century, in his work Cēkkiḷār Nāyaṉār Purāṇam (චීක්කිලාර නායනාර් පුරාණය) or ‘The Story of Cēkkiḷār Nāyaṉār’ which is also known as Tiruttonṭar Purāṇa Varalāru (තිරුතෝන්තර පුරාණ ස්වරලුරු) or ‘History of the Story of the Holy Servants of the Lord’.

In Cēkkiḷār Nāyaṉār Purāṇam (චීක්කිලාර නායනාර් පුරාණය), Umāpati relates that the king Anapāyaṉ was enthralled by reading the Jain classic Cīvakacitāmaṇi, Cēkkiḷār was deeply offended over his king’s engrossment in the mundane stories which would yield only to momentary pleasures not real solace since they perpetuate earthly pleasures. Therefore, Cēkkiḷār advised the king to study instead the valuable historical accounts of lives of nāyaṉāmār to give meaning to life leading to eternal bliss. The king then commanded Cēkkiḷār to write down an account of their lives for him to study. Accordingly Cēkkiḷār after receiving royal imperative to bring to limelight the heroic deeds of the nāyaṉāmār as model of devotion to Śiva made his way to the temple at

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305 Umāpati Civācārya, who dates himself in the introduction to his Cankarpanirākaraṇam in A.C.E. 1313 tells with great gusto in his Cēkkiḷārnāyaṉār purāṇam how Cēkkiḷār came to write the Periya Purāṇam. See. Zvelebil, 1975, pp. 178-179. Umāpati was a great Śaiva philosopher and one of the most prolific of the authors of Śaiva siddhānta canonical texts in Tamil; this great Śaivate is credited with eight of the fourteen Sastras. They are (i) Civappirakācam (චිවප්පිරකාම) (1306 A.C.E), Tiruvarat payaṇ (තිරුවාරත් ස්වරාණය) (1307 A.C.E), Viṅgā venpā (විංගා මුළම) (1308 A.C.E), Pōṟṟṟṟṟṟṟai (පොළැමාලිය) (1309), Koṭikkavi (කෝෂිකාවී) (1309 A.C.E), Neṉcivuitutu (නෙළුශිවුශෞතු) (1311 A.C.E), Uṉmai nerī vilakkam (ුණෙමා නැරි ශිලක්කම) (1312 A.C.E), Cankarpa nirākaraṇam (කංකරපා නිරාකරණම) (1313 A.C.E). Apart from these he wrote (i) Tiruttonṭar purāṇa cāram (තිරුතෝන්තර පුරාණ ස්වරලුරු), (ii) Cēkkiḷār purāṇam (චීක්කිලාර පුරාණය), (iii) Kōṉṇirūṉām (කෝෂ්ණිර෍ුෂණාම), (iv) Tirumurai kanta purāṇam (තිරුමුරයි විශ්වකම්), (v) Tiruppatik kōvai (තිරුප්පතිකකොෂේය). See. Prentiss, 1996, p. 237.

Citamparam\textsuperscript{307}, and was in a state of confusion as to how to begin such an important hagiography. He prayed to Śiva for the commencement of his work. To the surprise of everyone assembled there, an oracular voice with the ‘Ulakellam’ (அழகைலம்) meaning ‘all the worlds’ was heard commanding him to begin his work. When it was finished, the king himself came to Citamparam and Cēkkilār expounded the Purāṇam for the king and the priest of the temple daily for a whole year. The king who listened to the exposition of the biographies of the nāyanmār was overwhelmed with joy. It was then wrapped in silk, put in a golden casket upon the head of an elephant; Cēkkilār was honoured with the title Tonṭarcīrparavurār (உண்மையில் இருந்து) i.e. ‘the singer of the glories of the servants’.

In investigating the Umāpati Civācārya’s claim, Anne E. Monius notes that Tamil scholars seemed to agree with the Umāpati’s claim but ‘explored in depth by none’.

\textsuperscript{307} The temple at Citamparam (சின்னபளம்) is regarded as one of the important shrines for Tamil Śaivism. The word Citamparam, which refers to name of the town, comes from the Tamil word Cīṟṟampalam (சிர்றம்பளம்), which is also spelled as Citampalam (சின்னபளம்), meaning a ‘lesser or smaller’. The word Citamparam is also formed by the combination of two words Cīṟṟam (சிர்றம்) i.e. refers to heart, seat of affection or consciousness and ampalam (அம்பளம்) i.e. ‘open space’. Hence, Citamparam means ‘consciousness or affection of open hall’. Within the temple there are two structures: the golden court or hall of the shrine which is known as Poṉṉampalam (பொன்னம்பளம்) and adjacent to it, the lesser court or hall Cīṟṟampalam (சிர்றம்பளம்). Cēkkilār sings that golden court ‘holds the special place in the heart of devotees as the beginning, the middle and the end of the message of the Vedas’ (அகாதாரக் குறுகிய நூற்றுணர்கள் ஆண்டவர் நூற்றுணர்கள் அடைக்கு குறுகியக்குறுகிய தொடர் குறுகியக்குறுகிய தொடர்) (PP.250). Umapati’s history of the Citamparam temple, i.e. the ‘Koyil Purāṇam’ (கோயில் புராணம்), is one of the most important sources for the history of the Citamparam temple in general, and the priests there in particular. In that edition Citamparam is referred to as Koyil (கோயில்) meaning ‘the temple’. Cēkkilār dedicates a whole section in praise of the priests at Citamparam title ‘The Brahmins of Tillai’ (PP. 350-549). The word Tillai (தில்லை) alludes to the environment of the temple’s location. The mangrove of ancient Tillai tress of the forest surrounding the temple when it was first built. Śiva is captured here as குதகன் or Naṭarācaṉ (குதகன் or Naṭarācaṉ: ‘Dancer’) performing the ‘Dance of light’ in the golden hall of temple. It is for this reason the temple is also popularly venerated as ‘சிற்றம்பளம் குதகன் நாடராசன் சின்னபளம்’ (Citamparam Tillai Kūthān Koyil). It must be noted that Cēkkilār composed his work here at Citamparam. Although the temple has been the centre of attraction of many scholarly books and articles that describe the mythology of the Dancing Śiva, the temple’s art and architecture, and the lore surrounding this renowned temple town, only recently has there been a detailed attempt to reconstruct its very complicated history. See. Younger,1995.

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By examining Umāpati’s claim through the ‘problem’ of ‘violence’ as perpetuated in the Periya Purāṇam, she argued that the Periya Purāṇam has a ‘complex pattern of engagement through narrative of resistance accompanied by borrowing and adaptation’ (2004b, p. 166) from various texts. For her, the point of contention between the two texts i.e. Cīvakacitāmaṇi and the Periya Purāṇam lies in aesthetic and not in doctrinal disputes (2004b, p.127). Hence, for Monius the purpose of the Periya Purāṇam is to reconstitute the notion of love tainted by the Jain epic which for her could be easily understood as polemic against devotion ‘through the cultivation of a new kind of aesthetic: love mixed with vīra, the “heroic”. In so reconstituting the literary notion of loving devotion, Cēkkilār champions a new definition of love, of anpu for the Lord that befits a king who must act decisively in the world’ (2004b, pp. 139-140).

On the other hand, Dennis Hudson, believes, that the composition was not to distract the king of his attachment to Jainism but to distract him from his unholy desire for erotic literature (1989, p. 374). In contrast to this erotic literature, the Periya Purāṇam is a hagiography about the nāyaṅmār whose devotion to Śiva is infused with the flavour of love called anpu (அப்பு). In the Cīvakacitāmaṇi the driving forces is a hero i.e. Cīvaka who stands stand in the foreground exciting the audience with his heroic and erotic adventures. In the Periya Purāṇam the driving force is Śiva who stands in the background as paternal figure, protecting his devotees as well as stirring up things to elicit responses from the nāyaṅmār (Hudson, 1989, pp. 373-374). Therefore, in taking his responsibility seriously as a moral custodian, as expected of a minister in the Cōla court,
Cēkkilār composed his work, based on the lives of the nāyaṅmār, as models for service and moral living\(^\text{308}\).

These views appear not to be tenable, for nowhere in the Periya Purāṇam does Cēkkilār mention the incident and king Anapāyan’s request for the composition of the Periya Purāṇam. Nonetheless, it suggests that Cēkkilār’s Periya Purāṇam arose at the background of the devotion to Śiva propagated by the nāyaṅmār and at the same time out of a situation where the competing religious traditions sought kingly patronage for textual composition and existence. Hence, the Periya Purāṇam is more than a hagiography aimed at spiritual conversion of the king. It aims to provide an ideology based on the lives of the nāyaṅmār as an account of establishing Śaivism along the devotional pathway manifested in service and moral living that will enable Tamil society to adapt to emerging circumstance that began to define Tamil culture and identity, though the author’s ulterior intention may have been the conversion of the king Kulōttunga II. Thus, this chapter highlights the realities that formed the perspectives of Cēkkilār which eventually led to

\(^{308}\) Peterson notes, ‘since Cekkilar chose the lives of the Tamil Saivite saints for his subject, he obviously intended to provide Tamil Saivite hagiographical images and patterns against the ones expressed in Buddhist and Jaina hagiographical texts’ (1983, p. 341). In fact the Jaina work in Sanskrit called the Mahāpurāṇa speaks of sixty three great men of ancient time. Both the number sixty three and the title, which is the Sanskrit equivalent of the Tamil ‘Periya Purāṇam’ - both mean ‘the great epic’ – suggests that Cēkkilār regarded the Jain work as a rival which he sought to outdo. It cannot be alleged, however, that he actually derived the number sixty three from the Jain work, because he has another source for that figure, to which as noted Cēkkilār himself make frequent reference i.e. Cuntarar’s Tiru tonṭar toaki (‘The Roll of the Holy Servants’ of the Lord (PP. 48).

’The Roll of the Holy Servants of the Lord is the principal source of this present work. Its author was Nampi …’(PP 48).
the creation of the *Periya Purāṇam*. This chapter is therefore divided into the following parts.

4.2 *Chālukya- Cōla* Dynasty: The Reign of King *Kulōttuṅga* II (1133 A.C.E – 1150 A.C.E)

4.3 The *Nāyaṇmār*’s Encounter with Other Religious Traditions

4.4 The *Nāyaṇmār* and the Temple Centred Worship

4.5 Summary

**4.2 Chālukya-Cōla Dynasty: Reign of King Kulōttuṅga II**

As a significant and unique piece of Tamil literature, the *Periya Purāṇam* is credited as a noble achievement of Cēkkiḻār under the patronage of King Kulōttuṅga II of the *Chālukya-Cōla* dynasty. According to Cēkkiḻār it was this ‘who wished to receive his work i.e. *Periya Purāṇam* (PP. 8). This dynasty was formed as a coalition force amalgamating the Eastern *Chālukya* dynasty, who ruled the *Vengi* region from ca. 700 A.C.E to ca. 1130, and of the *Cōla* dynasty, who ruled the Tamil land from ca. 235 – 1170 A.C.E. The amalgamation was to seal the political void created by the death of the king *Ati Rajendra Cōla* (ca. 1070 A.C.E). In the lineage of his grandfather Kulōttuṅga I (ca. 1170 A.C.E – ca. 1120) who was the first king of the newly formed *Chālukya-Cōla* dynasty and as an heir apparent to his father *Vikram Cōla* (ca. 1118 A.C.E – ca. 1133.

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309 The timeline history of the Cōla dynasty who ruled the Tamil lands up to 13th century is divided into these periods:

   i. The early Cōla period : ca. 235 B.C.E – ca. 161 A.C.E
   ii. The interregnum : ca. 200 A.C.E – 848 A.C.E
   iii. Medieval Cōla period : ca. 848 A.C.E – 1070 A.C.E

310 ‘...’ (NG.8).
A.C.E), Kulōttunga II (ca. 1133 A.C.E – ca. 1150 A.C.E) inherited much of the political, social, cultural and religious veracities of both the Chālukya and Cōḷa dynasties.

King Kulōttunga II was considered a patron of letters (Kumar, 2008, p. 116), and it was he ‘who wished to receive’ his minister’s i.e. Ėkkilăr’s work (PP. 8). Although its literacy style is based on the humanism of the early work of the Caṅkam Tamil classics and the devotionism of the nāyagmār, it reflected the pinnacle of Tamil literary culture under the rule of the king Kolōttunga II. In his reign, the medieval Tamil land enjoyed not only peace and prosperity but it also saw abundant religious and literary activities. Ėkkilăr notes, in all the places where the ‘Tamil language flourishes’ the king ruled the land as his ‘exclusively own’ so that ‘all subjects could find protection under him’ (PP. 85).

Ĉēkkiḻār’s admiration of Kulōttunga II could be further observed in the praises he lavished on the king for his command over the people and Ėkkilăr refers to Kulōttunga II as ‘fearless king’ (‘நந்திருந்து நெற்றை அரங்கம்’ : venri venkūṭai anapāyam) who wields the righteous sceptre i.e. Ceṅkōl (‘பெருமைக்குறிய அம்பா’ : ceyyakōl apaya) (PP.

311 In his reign renowned Tamil poets such as Ėkkilăr, Kamban (கம்பன்), Oṭṭakkūtān (டாக்குத்தான்) and Puglēndī (புருளண்டி) found a peaceful environment in which to create their compositions. Their works include Ėkkilăr’s Periya Purāṇam, Kamban’s Kambaraṅyanaṟam (கம்பன் கம்பராயன) and Oṭṭakkūtān’s Uttara Kandam (உள்ளம் காண்டம்) i.e. the last stanza of Rāmayanaṟam (பெருமானம்); Puglēndī rendered the Tamil version of Mahābaratham (மகாபாரதம்). It can be discerned that the works like Kalingattu Parani (காங்கட்டு பராணி) war poetry, composed in the Caṅkam literary style, was created in this period by Ĉayam Čōntār.

312 ‘நந்திருந்து நெற்றை அரங்கம் மேற்பட்டு திருமாரதான் செய்யக்கூறு அரங்கம் ஆன்னர் அரங்கம் ஆன்னர் அரங்கம்’ (GLL.8).

313 ‘The Cōḷa king, Anapāyam ... wishes to receive this book of mine’ (PP. 8).

123
22)314. By drawing attention to the king as belonging to the Sūrya-vaṃśa (सूर्यवंश) or the Cōla dynasty and as the one who hails from the race of Maṇu (PP. 98)315, Cēkkilār affirms not only the ‘justness’ but also the ‘divine kingship’ of Kulōttuṅga II. The king was not only a secular ruler who established order on earth, but he was also a manifestation of a deity who offered sacrifice for the benefit of those who dwelt in the heavenly abode (PP. 99)316. In this identification, Cēkkilār pays respect to Kulōttuṅga II both as a deity and as a king or god-king; it is further affirmed in reference to the king i.e. Anapāyaṅ has the one who roofed in gold the sacred hall at Tillai (PP. 1218)317. In this way, the king’s ‘rank’ in society was determined not only in the secular realm of governance but also as, Venkatasubramanian notes, in the ‘devotional context’ (2010, p. 35). The king in essence was seen as the ‘symbol of unity’ and ‘pillar of the state’ (Veluthat, 2010, p. 38) i.e. one to be acknowledged as deity. What should be emphasised is that the king’s greatness mentioned in the the Periya Purāṇam is

314 ‘...henceforth all will treat him as the son of Vivasan...’ (Gl.4. 22). ‘...It rises high like the spirit of the fearless Cōla, Anapāyaṅ, who bore the sceptre of justice and the white parasol of victory’ (PP. 22).

315 ‘...Maṇu... was descended from the sun, and ... forbearers of Anapāyaṅ’ (PP 98). Here Cēkkilār affirms king’s role on earth was similar to that of gods. As it is clear, their proposition is advanced in relating the monarch to the first king, Maṇu, the son of Vivasan, the Sun god. Hence, Maṇu, who is thought to have lived at the time of the origin of the world, the first ruler, was belived not only a descendent of a deity but also the primal man, progenitor of all humanity and also the primal king. The noun nīti : नीति (justice, rightenousness) is added to the Cōla king’s name in honour of his achievements as in Cēkkilār’s Periya Purāṇam (PP. 100).

316 ‘...for the benefit of the dwellers in heaven also, he offered worship’ (PP. 99).

317 For the explanation of the sacred hall at Tillai, see p. 122.
in contrary to what is normally understood of the king Kulōttuṅga II as one who was lost in his affection to Jain epic i.e. Cīvakacitāmaṇi and that Čēkkilār authored his work to divert his king Kulōttuṅga II from his preoccupation with the Jain epic.

The remarkable achievements of king Kulōttuṅga II were also celebrated in other significant works of Tamil literature, known as the Kulōttuṅga Cōḷan Ula (குளோட்டுங்க கூளனுழகம்), and in the Tukkayāgapparaṇi (துக்கையாகப்பரணி) composed by Ottakutar who was a court poet of Kulōttuṅga II (Natarajan, Venkataraman and Ramachandran, 1994, pp. 80-81). The only derogatory statement discovered by scholars, other than the one highlighted by Umāpati of the king’s addiction to the erotic epic Cīvakacitāmaṇi, is the king’s intolerance towards Vaisnavism (Manninezhath, 1993, p. 23; Hudson, 1989, p. 398); this devotional phenomenon centred on devotion to the God Viṣṇu. The king is portrayed as a Śaivite fundamentalist, who forcibly removed the icon of the Viṣṇu from

318 In parallel to Śaivism, there emerged a similar kind of devotional religiosity within Vaisnavism propagating a devotion to Viṣṇu-Nārāyana. The proponents of these devotion were known as Āḷvārs (அல்வார்கள்) or ‘those immersed’ in the ‘seas of divine bliss’ or ‘God-intoxicated’ ones (Devasenapathi, 1997, p. 97). Their hymns, which are sublime songs, sung in praise of Viṣṇu in all his aspects were edited into a collection known as Nālāyira-Divya-Prabandham (நாலையறை திவ்யப்பிரப்பணம்) or the ‘Four Thousand Garland of Verses to God’. They contain teaching related to the Vaisnava theology. Their understanding of Viṣṇu, as a personal God of their devotion allowed the Āḷvārs to teach Viṣṇu as a tangible personal Lord who is to be reached through devotion. Hence, they saw unceasing mediation with the discipline of loving devotion, as an ideal way to achieve liberation or mōksha (Kesarodi-Watson, 1992, p. 118). The Āḷvārs, therefore, envisaged love as the emotion of human as of having a divine purpose. The nature of devotion in the religiosity of the Āḷvārs was to be erotically in love with God. For Āḷvārs, a true devotee does not love God because she seeks something from God, but she, the devotee, loves Him because she is romantically or passionately in love with Him, the Lord. Hence, they the Āḷvārs exemplified an affection to Viṣṇu through religious devotion and love poetry. They, above all expressed this devotion in passionate and erotic expressions. An example of this erotic imagery is to be found in the poem of Āṇṭāl, a female Āḷvār of the ninth-century:

My soul melts in anguish – he cares not
If I live or die. If I see the Lord of Govardhana
That looting thief, that plunderer,
I shall pluck by their roots these useless breasts,
I shall fling them at his chest; I shall cool the raging fire within me. (Translation from Dehejia, 1990, pp. 125-126).

Nonetheless, their erotic but sacred metaphors used in the poems ends with full consummation or in the union of the Divine and Human relationship.
the courtyard of the Naṭarācaṇ temple at Citamparam (Aiyangar, 2004, p. 319). However, such a claim can possibly be ignored in the light of the rationale that the king wanted to have his father’s wish fulfilled, for the purpose of the renovation and embellishment of the temple (Reddy, 2009, pp. 109-110).

At the concrete level, the temple at Citamparam at the time of Kulōttuṅga was at the heart of the Cōla dynasty. Temples were ‘integrative central institution[s]’ (Mukund, 1999, p. 31) for cultural and social activities and they ‘created an interlocked social system, a synthesis of religious merit, social control and economic power’ (Mukund, 1999, p. 27). The temple also housed the emblem of the Cōla dynasty i.e. Naṭarāca Śivan. It was at this temple that the coronation of king Kulōttuṅga II took place (Aiyangar, 2004, p. 319). Therefore, the renovation of the temple was to ‘legitimize the status and the authority of the ruler’ (Mukund, 1999, p. 27) as much as to fulfil the work started by his father. Such renovations were an exemplification of devotion to the God of the temple. These actions not only brought honour to the king but also acted as a social recognition of the king. This may have been the motive that led to the removal of the statues of minor gods, other than Śiva; He is not only the deity of the temple but also the very emblem of the Cōla dynasty. This may have been interpreted by the adherents of Vaisnavites as intolerance and persecution by the king.

What is significant to the study at a deeper level is that the account of the reign of Kulōttuṅga II, as recounted in the Periya Purāṇam portrays the king as an ardent devotee of Śiva and a faithful adherent of the Šaiva pathway; it was he who renovated the temple
of Citamparam ‘with a gold roof’ restoring it to its pristine glory (PP.1218)\textsuperscript{319}. This suggests that the kingship was defined by its relation to the temple, ritual worship and allegiance to the Śaivism. Therefore, the suggested motive of Cēkkilār for the composition of the Periya Purāṇam was to convert the king, is a matter of some doubt. In the absence of Cēkkilār explicitly making any reference to the king’s preoccupation with Jaina erotic literature, which was for Śaivites a heretical text (Nilakanta Sastri and Srinivasachari, 1971, pp. 312-313) or the forcible removal of the image of Viṣṇu, then a more valid hypothesis is that this is deeper reason for the composition of the Periya Purāṇam.

However, what is significant in the account of king Kulōttuṅga II in the Periya Purāṇam is that it affirms the powerful presence of other religious traditions and of their influence especially of Jainism in Tamilnātu. The stories of controversies and contest between nāyāṃmār and others belonging to different faith traditions which are narrated in the Periya Purāṇam (PP. 1349-1416, 2502-2757, 2810-2828); these contests certainly form the the high point of the conflict as Cēkkilār recorded them in his work. Cēkkilār also mentions debates and controversies apart from what is mentioned by nāyāṃmār themselves in their songs, sometimes at length and with considerable theological detail (PP. 2803-2824). Buddhism and Jainism are derogatorily referred to to as ‘false’ and ‘alien’ or ‘foreign’ (‘’nēḻmekkattavai ṛ⃣⃣kmpanai paṭṭavai’; poittavā camānca⃣⃣kkiyār paṭṭavai) religions (PP. 2979)\textsuperscript{320}, as though they have no rightful place on Tamil soil.

\textsuperscript{319} ‘’nēḻmekkattavai ṛ⃣⃣kmpanai paṭṭavai tamakku ṛ⃣⃣kmpanai paṭṭavai (pp. 1218).

\textsuperscript{320} ‘’nēḻmekkattavai ṛ⃣⃣kmpanai paṭṭavai tamakku ṛ⃣⃣kmpanai paṭṭavai (pp. 1218).
Whenever the Jains in particular are mentioned, it is to the accompaniment of disparaging epithets, and their religious observances are held up to scorn (PP. 2940). Similarly, the Buddhist belief is reported unflatteringly, as not only false, but also overly intellectual, dry and lifeless (PP. 2828). This leads us to investigate further the presence of these two religions and those controversies between nāyaṁmār and others belonging to different faith traditions as presented in the Periya Purāṇam, so as to understand events that might have had an impact on Čēkkilār’s motives in the creation of the Periya Purāṇam.

4.3 The Nāyaṁmār’s Encounters with Other Religious Traditions

At the time when the Periya Purāṇam was created, the two religions i.e. Jainism and Buddhism had their influence in Tamilnāṭu due to the royal patronage they enjoyed earlier when nāyaṁmār were active in propagating devotion to Śiva (PP. 980, 1358).
Further, these two religions were also popular due to their better organisational skills and scholarly instructions of their leaders. Jain monasteries and Buddhist centres flourished as integrating places of their religion and learning (PP. 1308-1309, 2807). The wide acceptance of Jain belief and social practices is also evident by the conversions took place as narrated in the *Periya Purāṇam* (PP. 1305-1307). In fact Cēkkilār’s narration presents the dilemma of a man i.e. *Tirunāvukkaracar* caught between his desire to live a life full and the contrary tendency of renunciation. Thus two parallel movement towards life in all its variety, passion and the wish for the fulfilment of erotic and material desires;

‘When he heard that, that Pallava king, with his scented garland rose to his feet in anger, “the blackguard!” he exclaimed, “On the pretext of some nonexistent illness, he has delivered a fatal blow to our noble religion! What can we do about it?” (PP. 1358).

Cēkkilār notes that at the time when *Tirunāvukkaracar* was exemplifying his devotion to Śiva the king himself practised Jainism and shielded the practitioners of Jainism as his own.

'...he travelled on to the Buddhist centre of Pāṭaliputtira, and there joined a Jain seminary. The Jain scholars instructed him and his fellow students in their religion, as though this was the one true way to heaven.’ (PP. 1308). ‘With the Jains, Marulnīkkiyār studied all their religious texts and distinguished himself by his learning. The Jains were so pleased they awarded him the title of “Dharmasēnar”’. (PP. 1309).

‘...Marulnīkkiyār’s grief abated. As he grew up, he realized the impermanence of worldly life and set himself to practise charity. He established centres where the poor could find lodging, food and drink, and so gained a wide reputation for generosity’ (PP. 1305).

'He planted gardens, dug tanks, practised hospitality, supported poets, and freely met the needs of the deserving poor who came to him for help. He gave to all far and wide, without fear or favour’ (PP. 1306).

‘Through realizing that this world is impermanent, Marulnīkkiyār eventually came to feel that he had to put in such a life. So he gave up his practise of charity and turned to the study of religion, to determine which of them was the best. Because at this time Śiva not yet bestowed on his arul, Marulnīkkiyār embraced the Jain religion, which forbids the killing of any creature’ (PP. 1307).
and a tradition of renunciation, a moving away from life. The story of Tirunāvukkaracar embracing Jainism is an indication that Jainism had its appeal in Tamiḻnāṭu.326

Besides, Buddhism and Jainism which excised deep influence in the minds of the Tamils of that time took away from them many elements of religious practices that is familiar to Tamiḻnāṭu and introduced refined taste in religious matter (PP. 2818). They did not attach so much serious importance to the Vedas (PP. 1982)328 and offered a mode

326 The life of Tirunāvukkaracar is one of the poignant stories related in the Periya Purāṇam (PP. 1270-1348). It is related seeing the sudden demise of his parents the nāyaṉāṟ and realizing there impermanent nature of human life turned to Jainism. However, for Cēkkiḻār, the apparent reason is the ‘non - bestowal of Śiva arul’ (புர்வ என்ற கைழுலையலரா) (PP. 1307). Owing to the serious efforts of his sister Tilakavati, he dissociated himself with the Jain and became protagonist of Śiva devotion. The Jain monk unaware of the fact that it was Śiva who enacted such conversion blamed the nāyaṉāṟ of his audacious behaviour and accused him as an imposter. They prevailed on the Pallava king to persecute the nāyaṉāṟ. The monks made the king believe that the nāyaṉāṟ had denounced Jain way of life which was a serious offence to be viewed as breach of trust which was to be met with severe punishment. In the narration Cēkkiḻār presents the nāyaṉāṟ adopting a passive resistance. This passive non-violent resistance against overwhelming odds appears to have been inspired by the Jain ideal of non-violence. Cēkkiḻār brings out this ideal of Jains in Taṇṭ Aṭikaḷ Purāṇam (PP. 3602).

327 This is shown in the first verse of the debate opened by Cāri Puttaṉ has presented in the Periya Purāṇam.

328 ‘He also warned that the way of the Jains and Buddhist led to destruction. For they did not follow the way of the Lord, the author of the Vedas...’ (PP. 1982).
of deliverance through an austere path of non-violence, yoga and charity (PP. 2812) as against elaborated ritualism and temple worship. This rejection is evident in the narration of the life of Tirunāvukkaracar and in places where Čēkkiḷār exclaimed that it was they who hindered the nāyamār’s worship of Śiva in the temples and ridiculed their manifestation of this devotion in service (PP. 991). Hence, the exigencies of Jainism and Buddhism were felt by the people who did not observe the ritualism of ancient scripture (PP. 1921). These two religions were hailed as exemplifying man-centred religious practices rather than God-centred devotion as it is reiterated in the story of Tirunāvukkaracar (PP. 1307). Čēkkiḷār’s reference to a well-known Jain formula ‘Atti nātti’ (‘�ன் – meaning  ஐந்தாக்கி, ஐந் i.e. ‘there is’ and ‘அன் – meaning ஐன்றாக்கி, ஐன் i.e. ‘there is not’) (PP. 2717) shows that Jain philosophy did not attach so much significance to speculative metaphysics. Nevertheless, as presented in the story, Jainism especially attracted a significant number of followers because of its

329 ‘...தானுகள் தன்னை பாத்திரத்தில் பற்றியது பொருளாயிருக்கிறது...’ (குல குழு 2818).

330 Čēkkiḷār affirms Jainism as a heterodox tradition that sprang up as a reaction to ritualism. This he affirms while relating the story of King Vaṭuka Karunāṭars as the tyrant who cut off the supply of sandal wood for making paste for temple ritualism (PP. 991).

331 Čēkkiḷār records, the ‘religions of Jainism and Buddhism were flourishing in the world, the way of life enjoined by the ancient scriptures was in decline, and the ritual of the holy was not observed even by the devotees of Śiva’ (PP. 1921).

332 ‘குறித்து உண்மையான தனியுருவம் எல்லாதையும் வருமாறு அள்ளத்தக்க அள்ளத்தக்கவை உண்மையான நியமனம் வருமாறு அள்ளத்தக்க நியமனம் உண்மையான நியமனம் உண்மையான...’ (குல குழு 1921).

333 ‘Through realizing that this world is impermanent, Marulnikiyār eventually came to feel that he had to put in such a life. So he gave up his practise of charity and turned to the study of religion, to determine which of them the best was. Because at this time Śiva had not yet bestowed on his arul (grace), Marulnikiyār embraced the Jain religion, which forbids the killing of any creature’ (PP. 1307)

334 ‘...அவ்வுடம் உண்மையான அன்று உண்மையான அன்று அள்ளாய்...’ (குல குழு 2717).

335 ‘...they wrote their formula Atti nātti...’ (PP. 2717).
philosophy of renunciation and non-violence. The ramification of this faith, their widespread movements and popularity was unchecked in the Tamiḻnāṭu for a long time.

At this point it may be questions as to why, even much longer after the age of the nāyānmār, Cēkkiḻār still did treat these religious as ‘alien’ (புராட்டூரை: puratturai) (PP. 2979)334 ‘false’ (போயிகுன்ற: poimikunta) (PP.1921)335, and makes strenuous efforts to curb their growth as he makes engraved attacks on these beliefs, particularly on Jainism. Cēkkiḻār makes vituperative attack to call Jain monks as those ‘treacherous’ people (கையர் வாங்கக்க: kaiyar vañcakar) (PP. 986)336, ‘stout persons’ (குன்றகல்: kunṟarkal) (PP. 990)337, ‘ignorant’ of what is good (நானூறு அரியார்: nanṟu arivār) (PP.1328)338, ‘senseless’ (உனர்வு இல்ல: unarvu il) (PP. 1370)339 and ‘black-hearted’ (அறு அற்பளியமல் ஆறுவர: al iru anvavar) (PP. 1392)340.

Though highly contemptuous, these terms express the mind of Cēkkiḻār. Presumably, the reason for this is that in every tenth poem of Tiruṅāṭa Campantar’s songs one find his polemics and scathing attack against and critical appraisal of Jainism

334 ‘போயிகுன்ற மூளைச்சங்கமார் யூருதுகு அரியம்...’(நல்ல. 2979).
335 ‘...that the alien Jainism and Buddhist would be rooted out...’ (PP. 2979).
336 ‘Because of the false religions of Jains and Buddhist were flourishing...’(PP. 1921).
337 ‘...the alien Jainism and Buddhist would be rooted out...’ (PP. 986).
338 ‘The wicked spends all his time with stout Jain...’ (PP. 990).
339 ‘...enter the monastery of those ignorant Jain...’ (PP. 1328).
340 ‘...one day he called the senseless Jains...’ (PP. 1370).
341 ‘...one day he called the senseless Jains...’ (PP. 1392).
and Buddhism (Tēv. I.2.10): He is a nāyaṉār whom Cēkkilār adores as ‘our master, the prince of Canpai’s favour’ (‘அமாக்களில் அமர்க் கோடிக் உடனும் நாயான்மார்’ : eṅkalpirān canpaiyār kōṅ arulīnālē) (PP. 4194), and ‘our master Canpai’ (‘அமாக்கள் அமர்க் கோடிக் உடனும்’ : eṅkal canpaiyār āntaikayār) (PP. 2381). Cēkkilār maintains that Tiruṇāṇa Campantar was born due to the penances performed by his parents to foster and sustain Śaivism and to dethrone the overriding alien faiths. The very birth the nāyaṉmār is attributed to restrict the undue influence of the as ‘alien’ (புராதனை: puratturai) faiths and to stabilize the Śaiva faith throughout the world, according to Cēkkilār (PP. 1928). For Peterson such polemics i.e. the ‘negative representation of the Jains was an important part of a process of self-definition and consolidation of power for the Tamil Śaiva sect,’ as a strategy of a greater cohesion among Tamils ‘a communal identity for Tamils, based on the celebration of Śaiva sectarian ideals and the exclusion of non-Śaiva ones’ (1998, p. 164-165).

On the other hand, what could be inferred from Cēkkilār’s narrative is that, he was concerned that Jainism and Buddhism are anti-theistic in their religious frame-work, hardly do they accept a devotion to a God and their soetrilogical way was incompatible with the devotion of the nāyaṉmār, their asceticism is thought to be antithetical to the strong naturalism of Tamils, i.e. Tamil’s love of the landscape rooted on Caṅkam poerty and the belief that Śiva dwells in them and through which devotional encounter with Śiva

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341 ‘நூற்றருக்கும் செலுத்தியன் நூற்றருக்கும் நாயான்மார்களுக்கும் தொண்டும்’ (Tēv. I.2.10).
342 ‘நூற்றருக்கும் செலுத்தியன் நூற்றருக்கும் நாயான்மார்களுக்கும் தொண்டும் தொண்டும் நாயான்மார்களுக்கும் தொண்டும் தொண்டும் தொண்டும் (நூற்றருக்கும் செலுத்தியன் நூற்றருக்கும் நாயான்மார்களுக்கும் தொண்டும்)’ (பு. 1929).
343 ‘So it came about the child of God was born at Canpai, where austerities were practised in abundance from age to age. Through him all creatures were to attain Śiva, and Jainism and those other base religions which propagate falsehood and cause sin to abound came to their downfall’ (PP. 1929).
is made possible. As the nāyaṉmār, whom Cēkkilār venerates, brought up with religious zeal admitting a devotion to Śiva heavily rooted in Caṅkan classics which served to connect them with through their travels to the Tamil region as a ‘sacred geography’ and the Lord whom they approached as Tamil God on intimate terms as child, friend or slave to control and guide their lives, Cēkkilār could not patronise other religions which were not intimately connected to the Tamil land. In narrating the re-conversion of Tirunāvukkaracar to Śaivism, Cēkkilār states, Jainism is a system that neither believed in the possibility of divine intervention nor in a God who is at work within the human soul. It is a religion that trusted in the ‘magical art’ (ῶσεὶ ήγεία: mantira cātakam) of their mantras to cure sickness and disease and thereby to establish their foreign ideology (PP. 1372)\(^{343}\) with suspect influence in royal courts. Their religious ethos is world-denying and renunciation, making them theatricaley impossible to be as intimately connected with Tamil culture as of the nāyaṉmār.

Cēkkilār concludes Jainism is a path that is ‘devoid of personal piety’ (PP. 3603)\(^{344}\). The path of deliverance for them rests with the individual. Whereas the nāyaṉmār composed poems in praise of their deity Śiva, frequently using poems accessible to the masses. For Cēkkilār there is nothing in early Jain religious practices that comes closer to the devotional aestheticism of nāyaṉmār, its exaltation of the personal, ecstatic experience of Śiva and in the exuberant expression of love, nāyaṉmār

\(^{343}\) ‘அருவாப் அருள் முடி பலகை சமவை யாதாகும் மிர்த்தின் வான் வாரி பலப்புக் குட்டுகள்...’ (G.I. 1372).

‘This is not a surprise. He has survived by means of the magic arts he used to practise in the Jain religion...’ (PP. 1372.).

\(^{344}\) ‘...இடக்கூடிய புத்திய மருத்து வான் பாத்திகு புரசன்குத் துத்துவின்...’ (G.II. 3603).
expressions of devotion contained characteristics which were uniquely bound with the classical culture and aesthetic of the Tamils. The religious and cultural contexts of Śiva were more congenial to the spirit of a new personal religion in the framework of Tamil civilization than Buddhism and Janism.

It is noteworthy that a religion can flourish and sustain any ordeal provided it has spiritually awakened scholars, illumined saints like that of nāyaṉmār and the lofty ideals to be adhered to devotedly. Instead, if violent and coercive methods are freely adopted to spread the ideals, then that religion would decline naturally. For Cēkkiḻar Jain monks adopted maligned ways to establish their religion and propagate their doctrines by making use of dubious means and royal patronage. This is clearly evident of the story of Campantar as narrated in the Periya Purāṇam. Cēkkiḻar mocks at the Jain for

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345 ‘The Jains, according to the Cēkkiḻar’s narrative, lost two contest with Campantar, after he cured the Pāṇṭiya king of his sickness by singing praises to Śiva. One had to do with a test of fire, and another of water. In the first test, the nāyaṉ’s palm script on which was inscribed the glory of Śiva, survived the fire, while the palm leaves containing the tenets of Jain creed were consumed in a fire. In the second test, known as the contest by water, yet another poem of Campantar’s verses was successfully drifted upstream against the powerful current of the vaikai river, while the Jain inscribed leaves were hopelessly washed downstream. This is after these two losses that the Jain were impaled. However the scene of the contest between the two opposing forces contending for supremacy in Tamiḻnäṭu is one of great significance. It marked the turning point of the ascendancy of Śaivism. Campantar inscribed on the palm leaves the first verses of the Tiruppācuram Ode:

‘May enlightened Antanar prosper: Hail gods and cows as well,
May refreshing showers of rain increase the land’s plenitude!
May the upright king reign supreme! Let evil force perish;
May all reflect on Haran’s Name, that the world be free from fearful woes’ (Tēv. III. 054.1)

‘அன்பு ஏற்றுள் அரசன் பிரசொ அன்பில் தமிழன் மூக்குடிய வழிகாட்டு
ஆன் கிடுவின் வண்ணத்தில் தமிழன் மலர் கால்கள் விருவறி வழிகாட்டு’ (செக்கி. III. 054.1)

The ten scintillating verses commended on in great detail by Cēkkiḻar in the Periya Purāṇam (PP. 2725-2746) sum up the fulfilment of the Śiva way of life, and his closing line is indeed memorable:

‘The one who tasted the milk of wisdom proclaims that the
Highest illumination is attainable by those who are full of the
Love of Śiva’ (PP.2746)

‘...அன்பும் கவல்தும் சன்னிதிய நந்தியும் சன்னிதிய தமிழ் வழிகாட்டு’ (செக்கி.2746).

The animosity which again these religion which one find in the poems of Campantar and Tirunāvukkaracar is not found in the poems of Cuntaramūrti nāyaṉ and hence the occasion does not arise for Cēkkiḻar to describe Cuntaramūrti’s efforts for the extinction of other faith in Tamiḻnäṭu. This saint finds more comfort and leisure in worshipping Śiva at several temples without any
hypocrites, since contrary to their preaching of non-killing and refraining from falsehood; they indulged in evil deeds (PP. 2537). Cēkkilār narrates with deep revulsion of the Jain ascetic practices of nudity, tonsure, and unhygienic practices such as abstaining from bathing and cleaning the teeth (PP. 2538). Their religious ethos is characterised in this account as pessimistic, anti-social, puritanical, and un-Tamil; it serves, as Cēkkilār presents as backdrop for nāyāṃmār’s reaction – a joyful, inclusive, world affirming, and wholly Tamil devotional pathway to Śiva (PP. 1462).

The hagiographical account of Cēkkilār suggests that the nāyāṃmār had to compete with not only Jainism but also with Buddhism to popularize their devotion to Śiva. While narrating a heated argument between a Buddhist monk, Cāri Putṭag and Campantar, Cēkkilār reveals his poignancy of debate focusing of the splendour of Śaivism, while pointing out the inefficient and inadequate nature of Buddhist doctrine (PP. 2805-2829) from a devotional perspective. Buddhism is presented through this debate as a system that believed in the principle of continuous flux, in a cycle of rebirth (pp. 2818). The deliverance from this cycle of rebirth is possible tension whatso ever. For the Tirupasuram (திருப்பாசுரம்) and for Cēkkilār’s commentary on it, see Appendix IV.
through ‘charity, austerity and yōga’ (தற்போது விளை த்திர்பு பிற்றுற்று ஏற்படும்: 
tāgamē tavamē tānmai pāintilai yōkamē). The one who taught this path is the one Buddhist ‘worship’ as ‘person of noble character’ (தலும் பொழுது: tollum paramay). The nature of such deliverance is the ‘annihilation of all the five faculties’ (PP. 2819). The one who taught this path ‘with the disappearance of the body’ ... ‘rests totally absorbed in a state of deliverance’ ... ‘he can have no perception’ (PP. 2816).

However, such understanding and explanation of Cāri Puttan about the ‘one who taught’ the path as one who ‘rests totally absorbed in a state of deliverance’ posed a fundamental problem for Campantar. He wonders how could one build a temple, make an image of him and offer ritual worship to such a person. If one were to believe that all five senses including wisdom cease to operate in the path of deliverance; If ‘one who taught’ this path has no organs of senses in his state of deliverance, and if he has no

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350 Cāri Puttan’s reference to the one who taught this path as ‘упасок’ (paramay) is quite puzzling. The word ‘упасок’ in Tamil is used to signify a ‘person of noble of character’ and in reference to ‘supreme being’ (Tamil Lexicon University of Madras, pp. 983, 2501). Since, Buddhist do not consider the one who taught the path of deliverance as a God, Cāri Putta’s must used the word ‘упасок’ in reference to the one who taught that path as a ‘person of noble of character’. However, the usage of the word ‘worship’(ஜோத்ரம்) is a sign that there might have risen a devotional cult centred on the one who taught the path of deliverance to whom Cāri Puttan makes reference.

351 ‘...பொழுது விளை த்திர்பு பிற்றுற்று ஏற்படும் பொழுது த்திர்பு பிற்றுற்று ஏற்படும் பொழுது த்திர்பு பிற்றுற்று ஏற்படும்...’ (GLM. 2819).

352 ‘நெருங்குதல் விளை விளை விளை விளை த்திர்பு த்திர்பு த்திர்பு த்திர்பு ஏற்படும் பொழுது த்திர்பு பிற்றுற்று ஏற்படும் பொழுது த்திர்பு பிற்றுற்று ஏற்படும்...’ (GLM. 2821).
perception and is indifferent to all that is happening, who then will receive the worship of a devotee? How could one develop a deeper union with such a person? (PP. 2820).\(^{353}\)

The response to such dilemmas of \textit{Campantar} is provided in the counter argument of \textit{Cāri Puttan}. He explains that when a person is in a deep sleep, he is bereft of consciousness; if a person disturbs him, it is the one who disturbs the one who is asleep who receives the fruit of the action. In this same way \textit{Cāri Puttan} argued, someone who worships the ‘one who taught the path of deliverance’ and in the ‘state of bliss’, even though he has no perception through the senses, will gain his due reward. Even if the one, who disturbed the sleeper was to kill the one who is asleep, although the sleeper is in a state of total indifference, his life would be extinguished and the one who disturbed him would be guilty of murder. So it is with in the ‘state of bliss’: he is affected by all that happens to him, although he lacks all perception like the sleeper (PP. 2821-2822)\(^{354}\).

Yet again for \textit{Campantar} as recalled in the \textit{Periya Purāṇam}, such an example fails to present the truth. If one were to believe that one who is in the state of bliss will be affected, as argued by \textit{Cāri Puttan} in the example, one needs bodily senses to respond, even if he is asleep. So it is with one who is the state of bliss. If the five senses were not

\(^{353}\) ‘...\textit{\ldots fe;jk;Mk; tpid clk;G ePq;fp vk;Nfhd; fye;Jsd; Kj;jpapy; vd;whd; vd;df; fhDk;},e;jphpaq; fz;Kjy; Mk; fuzk; jhDk; ,y;iyNay; mtd; czh;r;rp ,y;iy vd;whh; Ke;ij mwpT,yd; Mfp cwq;fpdhid epe;jpj;J nkhope;J cly;kPJ Mbdhh;f;F te;jtpidg; gad;Nghy topgl; lhh;f;Fk; tUk; md;Nw ed;ik vd kWj;Jr; nrhd;dhd; ‘(\textit{\ldots ng.G. 2820}).

\(^{354}\) ‘\textit{\ldots Ngha;f;nfhiy MfpKbe;jJ md;Nwh},g;gbahy; vk;,iwthw;F va;Jk; vd;whd; ‘(\textit{\ldots ng.G. 2822}).
functioning, the one who is the state of bliss would not have attained everlasting deliverance. Therefore, whereas human senses are devoid of consciousness, there can be no enjoyment of the bliss of deliverance (PP. 2823). Such persuasive reasoning makes Campantar believe that there is no substance in such a belief. He concluded that the Buddhist belief system relies on human intelligence rather than in the truth conveyed in the Vedas (PP. 2828). The Buddhists emphasis on the annihilation of the senses denies the aspects of devotion and the meaningfulness of such practices.

Through the narration of this philosophical dispute Cēkkilār notes that the truth of Śaivism was established conclusively which made several Buddhists too converted them into the Śaiva fold (PP. 2827). That the debates and controversies with Jainism and Buddhism was intense is evidenced by the numerous derogatory references, as noted, Cēkkilār himself makes to Jainism and Buddhism in his work. In several places Cēkkilār approvingly narrates the biographies of the nāyamār who would die, surrender everything to spread their devotion to Śiva. Beneath their pleasant, sounding surface, therefore, the Periya Purāṇam attest to a self-conscious and aggressive Śaivism in times of nāyamār.

355 ‘‘அப்பெரியாவராக மார்காந்தரான நீதிவாதிகளின் நிகாப்தும் முன்னைய முப்புரூபத்தால் மன்னர் நாவியானவர் ராமான் முல்லியார் வன்மலை வென்றுக் குறிப்பிட்டு கூறியுள்ளார் முடிக்காக வணங்கி ஆச்சரியாக இல்லைத் தொகையுள்ளன வேதம் அலங்காராக கூறியபடி இல்லையால் கூறியார்’’ (சில. 2823).

356 ‘‘அப்பெரியாவராக மார்காந்தரான நீதிவாதிகளின் நாவியானவர் முல்லியாருக்கு வந்துக் குறிப்பிட்டு கூறியுள்ளார் முடிக்காக வணங்கி ஆச்சரியாக இல்லைத் தொகையுள்ளன வேதம் அலங்காராக கூறியார் தொகையுள்ளார் வேதம் அலங்காராக கூறியார்’’ (சில. 2828).

357 ‘‘...அப்பெரியாவராக மார்காந்தரான நீதிவாதிகளின் நாவியானவர் முல்லியாருக்கு வந்துக் குறிப்பிட்டு கூறியுள்ளார் முடிக்காக வணங்கி ஆச்சரியாக இல்லைத் தொகையுள்ளார் வேதம் அலங்காராக கூறியார்’’ (சில. 2827). ‘‘...Buddhist too bowed low before his lotus feet’’ (PP. 2827).
What is remarkable for Čekkiḻār, however, the nāyāmār did not find any personal gain in their resistance to other religious traditions. They intended that their own inherited religious faith should not be driven to oblivion, but should regain and natural aspiration since it is an aspiration not born out of a heated brain but from the hearts of the ones who had experienced love of Śiva. Their attempt to exterminate the other religious traditions may be attributed to their noble gesture that the bliss which they enjoyed in their devotion to Śiva should be equally enjoyed by all for which sincere devotion become essential. Hence, it is not merely the intensity of the controversy with Jainsim and Buddhism but it is the way that was adopted by the nāyāmār both in form and content of their poems that reveals their concern for the ordinary people as opposite to the ideals of both Jainism and Buddhism, which are first and foremost monastic traditions devoid of personal devotion.

The resulting literary works i.e. the devotional literature which developed out of their spontaneous expression of the divine experience contain a rich theological and philosophical teaching related to their belief system i.e. in the case of nāyāmār; Śaivism. They were intended not only to revive the temple ritualism but also propagate a new ideology by drawing on elements from Tamil culture. They drew on Purānas, Āgamas and especially Vedānta as taught in the Upanishads to create ‘intensely human religious awareness’ (Hardy, 1983, p. iii) among the ordinary people through their common language Tamil.
The dominant theme of their ideology, however, was devotion specific to a personal God. With their songs in Tamil ‘for the first time ... devotion was expressed in a mother tongue’ (Carman and Narayanan, 1989, p. 14); the religious life became independent of the burden of knowledge of Sanskrit (Mittal and Thursby, 2006, p. 27) and ‘the lower classes to whom the ambiguities of Vedānticism and their hair-splitting obscurities of the theologians and the philosophers were too much, readily accepted a cult which opened the way to salvation’ (Chavan, 1991, p. 7). Through the medium of Tamil, which unlike Sanskrit was a spoken language identified with powerful emotions, the inaccessible God of the Upanishads was brought closer to ordinary devotees, irrespective of their caste and creed. They were directed to an accessible personal Lord i.e. Śiva with expressions ‘fraught with tender words used for beloved ones’ (Carman and Narayanan, 1989, p. 14). Humans were equated in the temple of God and were considered worthy instruments to realize the highest reality. Thus, infused by devotion and love of God, vernacular religions began to flourish in Tamil society.

The devotional ideology that was propagated by the nāyāṉmār is intened to make Śaivism the religion of the people as against Buddhism and Jainism. They insisted on making devotion as the emblem of Tamil culture and the spirit of Tamil religion. It did bring a ‘great, many-sided shift’ (Ramanujan, 1981, p. 3) to temple worship in a latter period and rituals were reworked to include an iconography especially in the mystical poems as pathways to union with the divine. In the course of time, as society was restructured along the path of devotion, the devotional poems of these nāyāṉmār were
collected into anthologies; they were canonized as *Tirumulai* or sacred scriptures and were elevated to the status of Vedas, equal to that of Sanskrit Vedas.

The impact created by the poet saints was so great; they became champions of culture and religion whose lives were considered worthy of emulation. It is their lives that became central to the composition of the *Periya Purāṇam*, whose stories were utilized by *Cēkkiḻār* to elucidate the manifestation of this devotion in service and moral living. These saints were also considered as divine in origin and were instruments in God’s hands and showed the unity that existed between them and God. It conveyed that the religious experience of the saints as vehicles through which one could attain God. The songs of the poets became vehicles for the ordinary people to identify their own religious experience. They became a medium of expression of one’s devotion, expressed in the vernacular language.

It should be mentioned that in the absence of the unified order, and not having even fraternity of monks like the Buddhist and the Jains had in Śaivism, *Cēkkiḻār* also emphasises that the *nāyamār* took recourse to creating a bond between the ‘servitors of Śiva’ or ‘aityarkal’ (அய்யர்கள்) - by this means there evolved a new feeling of community, to wean the people from the more organised Buddhist and Jains. It is by understanding this phenomenon that one can understand *Cēkkiḻār* narration of Śiva commanding *Cuntaramūrti nāyaṉār* to compose the hymns in honour of the nature of the

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358 For Peterson these poems which are expressions of the divine experience of God are examples of their relationship with god. In this way they help to establish a relationship between the audience for whom the poems were intended and the deity in whose glory the songs were sung (1982, p. 81).
service which the devotees perform and their greatness (PP. 343)\textsuperscript{359}. In response to request of Śiva he sang the famous Tirut Toṇṭar Tokai (திருத்தோண்ட்டார்தூகை) i.e. ‘The Roll of the Holy Servants’ in praise of all the devotees of Śiva. Hence the grouping of the ‘servitors of the Śiva’ and of temple they visited acted as sacred networks of communication providing an indefinable bond in an otherwise nebulous faith system.

The Periya Purāṇam specially acclaims the glory of such men and women mentioned in Tirut Toṇṭar Tokai. They came from every caste; Gananāta nāyaṉār from the Brāmin caste (PP. 3928-3924); Kanampulla from the outcastes (PP. 4060-4068); Kalikkapa from the merchant class (PP. 4017 - 4026) and chieftain of piety called Kūṟṟuvaṉār (PP. 3935-3943). They included people who followed menial occupations such as a hunter called Kaṇṇappar (PP. 650-830) and weavers such as Nēca nāyaṉār (PP. 4197-4201). They included men such as Appūti Aṭikal (PP. 1788-1832) and women such as Icaiṉāi Ammaiṉār (PP. 4233)\textsuperscript{360}.

Though the hymns of the nāyaṉmār did not propagate a specific form of temple ritual worship, many episodes of the nāyaṉmār frequenting temples as narrated by Cēkkiḻār suggest the significance of the temple in times of the composition of his work (PP. 1585-1586)\textsuperscript{361}. This tension between personal devotion to Śiva as propagated by the

\textsuperscript{359} நகரசு அதிகம் செய்ய மகிய மன்னர் அலை நீடிய தம்மிஜ்வ கூடம் மறுக்கையோ கூடம் மறுக்கையோ செய்யும் வருணியில் காண்டு கூடம் அலையோ கூடம் மறுக்கையோ செய்யும் வருணியில் காண்டு கூடம் மறுக்கையோ செய்யும் வருணியில் காண்டு கூடம் மறுக்கையோ செய்யும் வருணியில் காண்டு கூடம் மறுக்கையோ செய்யும் வருணியில் காண்டு கூடம் மறுக்கையோ செய்யும் வருணியில் காண்டு கூடம் மறுக்கையோ செய்யும் வருணியில் காண்டு கூடம் மறுக்கையோ செய்யும் வருணியில் காண்டு கூடம் மறுக்கையோ செய்யும் வருணியில் காண்டு கூடம் மறுக்கையோ செய்யும் வருணியில் காண்டு கூடம் மறுக்கையோ செய்யும் வருணியில் காண்டு கூடம் மறுக்கையோ செய்யும் \\n
\textsuperscript{360} For the complete details of the caste affiliation of the nāyaṉmār, see Appendix I.

\textsuperscript{361} நெசா நாயானார் கன்னப்பார் கன்னப்பார் கன்னப்பார் மறுக்கையோ மறுக்கையோ மறுக்கையோ மறுக்கையோ மறுக்கையோ மறுக்கையோ மறுக்கையோ மறுக்கையோ மறுக்கையோ மறுக்கையோ மறுக்கையோ மறுக்கையோ மறுக்கையோ மறுக்கையோ மறுக்கையோ \\n
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nāyaṃmār and temple ritualism is very much evident in the Čēkkilār’s work. Hence, this needs investigation.

4.4 The Nāyaṃmār and the Temple Worship

Many of the episodes of the nāyaṃmār frequenting temples as narrated by Čēkkilār prove the nāyaṃmār wished to propagate their devotion to Śiva centred around the temples (PP. 4202-4219)\(^{362}\). The nāyaṃmār’s lives, as envisaged by Čēkkilār, commence, proceed with and culminate in a Śiva temple; large part of the stories are devoted to the account of their journeys to worship at shrines. Thus we see that temples are inextricably interwoven in the lives of the nāyaṃmār (PP. 2522-2580)\(^{363}\). They made temple worship a popular movement and promoted goodwill among masses, exalting the attributes of Śiva (PP. 1516)\(^{364}\) in exquisite poetry, music and dance (PP. 1442)\(^{365}\). The nāyaṃmār did not

\(^{362}\) In the narration of the life of Köccenkaṭa Cōla Čēkkilār records that this king ruled the earth in the path of virtue and devotion. In his kingdom, there was an elephant that offered worship to the Lord with flowers. There was also a spider that worshiped God faithfully according to its merit. One day, the spider stood worshipping the Lord. It spun a web over the Lord’s head to protect him from falling leaves from the trees and from the rays of the sun. When the elephant saw what the spider had done, it found it unholy and destroyed the web. The spider was indignant and in anger entered the trunk of the elephant causing its death. The Lord Śiva moved by the devotion shown by these two animals blessed them in grace. In the same episode Čēkkilār narrates the spider came to be born as a king. The king went on to construct temples and gave donations for the maintenance with a heart full of devotion.

\(^{363}\) Campantar reached Madurai on the invitation of the queen to arrest the religious intrusion and the political interference of the Jains who were overpowering the region. The moment he reached the vicinity of Madurai the first thing he did was to enquire about the Tiruvālavāy temple. As soon as he entered the temple, he worshipped the Lord with ever increasing love and praised Him with inspiring hymns. Before he launched his challenge with his religious opponents, he paid a second visit to the temples to seek the blessings of his beloved Lord to triumph over them. After the successful completion of his laudable mission, he worshipped the Lord again in the temple expressing gratitude. At Čīrkaḷi temple the young saint drank divine milk and became the very embodiment of wisdom. Finally he attained liberation with his follower men at Nallūrperumaṇ temple (PP. 2522-2580).

\(^{364}\) '‘இத்நிலைத்திரும்புக்கரசருக்கு பள்ளிப்புச்சம்பல் கண்டவை குறுகின்றார் அம்மாரச் செய்துகிறார்கள் பெரிய விளக்கத்திற்கு நேராக வேளன் பல பிரதான வேளலுக்கு அத்துடன் அப்போது தான் என்னியம் அவ்வேளையே நோக்கினார் தொன்மையே அவ்வேளையே’ (பப. 1516).
deliver discourses on the temples through their poems but they sang sweetly and spontaneously on Śiva. Cēkkīḷār demonstrates many acts of lowly service in the temples precincts performed by the nāyaṁmār with the spirit of sacrifice, love and service as offering to the Lord whose patronage they enjoyed in the temples (PP. 1440). Their experience have proved beyond doubt the efficacy of temple centred worship, the incantation of the name of Śiva and service leading to joy of being with Śiva enhancing the ennobling devotion that actuated these receptive nāyaṁmār.

Nonetheless, the nāyaṁmār themselves did not propagate a specific form of temple ritualism but rather practices based on instinctive, aesthetic, and moral values (PP. 1211-1270). It is the temple priest, whose ritualism was considered heredity and

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‘Tirunīlanakkar, Cīṟutontar, Murukaṅgar and other distinguished devotees took leave and went their way. In a spirit of close accord Piḷḷaiyār and Tirunāvukkaracar went off to Tiruvampar together, and there offered worship’ (PP. 1516)

365 ‘நீலகிங் மறைய தமிழ் மொழியல் புராணம் செய்த பக்தர் துலாகரம் தியேஸ்வரை கருவாக மருந்து வருந்து கோர்ப்பு குடையர் மறைய பெருமாள் பெருமாள் மருந்து மருந்து பெருமாள் மருந்து பெருமாள் மருந்து பெருமாள்’ (தில். 1442).

‘There he fell at the feet of the Lord, and sang the hymn “Her pretty coral-red lips murmur, ‘he is the ruler of the gods’, and other hymns like it, in language inspired by his devotion. While staying there engaged in worship and in service, his thoughts turned again to Tiruppuliyūr’ (PP. 1442).

366 ‘...அவர் பாரம்பரிய சோமுருக்கு அருளில் தன்னுடைய வ்வளாம் பழமுடு பாசிரியமாக பாசிரியமாக பாசிரியமாக சோமுருக்கு சோமுருக்கு சோமுருக்கு’ (தில். 1440)

‘...Tirunāvukkaracar performed what service he could, as enjoined by the hymn that he himself sang, and made worship as daily occupation’ (PP. 1440).

367 This is observed in the narration of the life of Cāntēcura Purāṇam (PP. 1211-1270) in the Periya Purāṇam. It is narrated, that the city of Cēyñalūr was the home of the temple priests. They were of one mind in their worship and ritual practices. There lived a man called Eccatattaṉ who had a child named Vicāra Carumaṉ.  For the glory of the Vedas and for the good of the Brāhmins, the child blossomed into the practice of chanting the Vedas and Tirumurai. Such devotional discipline increased his love and awe for Śiva. The fascination led him in truthful love to construct an image of the Lord out of sand. As that longing, love and worship grew to full measure; the Lord himself became fully present in the abode and accepted the worship offered to him. When the temple priest, who had become accustomed to ritualism, complained to the boy’s father about the profanity of such worship, he, the father of the boy in anger destroyed the pot of milk prepared for worship. When the boy realized what had happened, he cut off his father’s legs with an axe felling him to the ground. It is narrated, that the axe was used as a means of removing the obstacles to his prayer. It was by the Lord’s grace such an act was carried out to show the importance of the personal relationship with God which transcends mere ritualism. The boy taught the entire world, the significance of proper devotion rather than mere ritualism. Practices promulgated by the nāyaṁmār based on scripture, aesthetic, instinctive and moral would be discussed later.
professional according to the traditional values\textsuperscript{368}, had the right to perform ritual worship. Those who were not worthy of performing such rituals, because of the norms established by tradition, were denied entrance to the temple – a central concern in the narration of the life of Tirunāḷaippōvār in the Periya Purāṇam (PP. 1046-1082)\textsuperscript{369}.

Such a demarcation though religious in nature as James Heitzman points out also reflects the significance given to individuals within the political and the economical climate of the time (1991, p. 24). As illustrated in the story of Tirunāḷaippōvār in the Periya Purāṇam, rituals centred on temple worship became symbolic expressions of actual social relations i.e. to the extent of defining the status of the role of the individual in the temple. As Heitzman comments, such symbolic functions of the rituals are to be considered as ‘patterns of ritual integration’ build on the ‘idea of ritual polity’ (1991, p. 24). In fact, they not only legitimized the activities of the ruling class but also classified into different levels, the participation of and the stratification of the society i.e. into ‘segmentary states’ (Stein, 1980, pp. 264-285) according to the political and economic significance of participants in the ritual action (Heitzman, 1991, p. 24)\textsuperscript{370}. Hence, the temple and ritual actions became a testimony to the vested political power of the rulers as well as to the economic interest of the temple priests.

\textsuperscript{368} Vincentnathan suggests that participation in temple ritualism and ritual behaviour demanded of an individual within the Tamil community was fixed by traditional rules, found in varnāśramadharma i.e. ‘religious-moral system of caste duties based on caste structure’ (Vincentnathan, 1993, p. 161). Though, the origin of this traditional rule found in varnāśramadharma is not known, certainly it could be assumed that it served to legitimize variation based on family ritual practices, racial differences and occupational specializations.

\textsuperscript{369} For brief narration of the life of this nāyagār, see p.13.

\textsuperscript{370} While describing the town planning system of Kāñchi town, Čēkkilār vividly shows that the people lived in their respective provinces as groups stipulated by their conception of superior or inferior nature of the caste into which they were born. The types of arrangement of social set up have a bearing on duties based on one’s station (PP. 1183-1191).
Significantly, these temple priests are given pride of place in Cēkkilār’s Periya Purāṇam. Cēkkilār dedicates a whole section in praise of the priest who live in Tillai - ‘the Brahmins of Tillai’ (தினாலைப்பொன் ஆண்மை புராணம்: tillaiyāl antayar purāṇam). Cēkkilār not only praise and honour them but also emphasises that these priests at Tillai distinguished and differentiated themselves in several ways. They are zealous in fulfilling the service proper to their caste and the duties of their office in the temple (PP. 353)^371; their lineage is unblemished (PP. 355)^372; they serve the Dancing Śiva who wears the sacred ash by the knowledge of their Vedic scriptures (PP. 352)^373; they count their love for the Lord Śiva as the greatest blessing of their lives (PP. 355)^374; the maintain the three fires for the betterment of living creatures (PP. 354)^375; they remain without rival, without peer (PP. 357)^376. Cēkkilār even emphasises that there is nothing greater can be said of them beyond the fact that they have been placed first in Cuntarar’s Tirut Toṇṭar Tokai i.e. ‘The Roll of the Holy Servants of the Lord’ poem (PP. 358)^377.

What should be noted however, all what is said of these priests at Tillai is not of praise, Cēkkilār present them as the ones who obstructed the devotion of Tirunālaippōvār to the Dancing Śiva at Tillai. In that story as related, it is the priests at Tillai who instilled fear in the untouchable saint. The priests were compelled by the order of Śiva himself to

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^371 ‘...கெக்கிலார் எழுதிய வரலை விளக்காவில் கோவிலின் ஆந்தி எள்ளானை விளக்கம் மூன்று வரலை விளக்கத்தில் நூற்றாண்டு நூற்றாண்டு’ (நூற்றாண்டு 353).

^372 ‘...பென்னை வரலை என்னை வரலை வரலை புறாண்டு...’ (நூற்றாண்டு 355).

^373 ‘பேரையு பெரங்க பேரையு பேரையு பேரையு பேரையு பேரையு பேரையு பேரையு பேரையு பேரையு பேரையு...’ (நூற்றாண்டு 352).

^374 ‘...கெக்கிலார் எழுதிய வரலை வரலை வரலை வரலை...’ (நூற்றாண்டு 355).

^375 ‘வனாசிக எழுதிய வரலை வரலை வரலை வரலை...’ (நூற்றாண்டு 354).

^376 ‘...கெக்கிலார் எழுதிய வரலை வரலை வரலை வரலை வரலை வரலை...’ (நூற்றாண்டு 357).

^377 ‘...கெக்கிலார் எழுதிய வரலை வரலை வரலை வரலை வரலை வரலை வரலை வரலை வரலை வரலை...’ (நூற்றாண்டு 358).

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circumvent the tradition of prohibiting an untouchable from entering the temple (PP. 1073)\textsuperscript{378}. Even though the priests did follow Śiva's command, the Tillai priests in this story represent an obstacle to, not representatives of devotion. Cēkkiḻār believes that the difference among the priests and other devotees can be subdued when the hereditary pursuits are fused in the worship of and service to Śiva.

This makes clear, that Cēkkiḻār, simultaneously tries to link the nāyamār and yet distinguished them from the temple priests as practitioners of religion; the nāyamār propagated their ideal of devotion moving from place to place exemplifying practices based on instinctive, aesthetic, and moral, but they strove not to identify themselves as religionists as of the temple priests. This tension between these two groups was ultimately crystallized in the composition of the Tirut Toṇṭar Tokai i.e. ‘The Roll of the Holy Servants of the Lord’ who performed acts of service in extraordinary manner (PP. 335-349)\textsuperscript{379}. Through this story Cēkkiḻār not only suggest the distance between the devotion expressed by nāyamār and the ritualism of the Tillai priests but also gives a concrete expression in his hagiographical literature, the simultaneously an association and of break of the nāyamār with that of Tillai priests. This suggests that Cēkkiḻār was willing to abandon the idea that the temple ritualism was the most efficacious way to reach Śiva. This does not mean that Cēkkiḻār rejected and scorns temple praxis and the priests; he rather proposes practices based aesthetic, instinctive and moral.

\textsuperscript{378} ‘...அப்பொழுது கொண்டையது அதுக்குரியது என அவரது நம்பியல் முறையாய் அதன்னுள் அவரச் சொக்கு நீதியாய்’ (pill. 1073).

\textsuperscript{379} It is narrated in this section that Cuntarar drew near to the temple of the Lord. Within the temple, a great number of devotees were gathered. When the nāyaṉār saw them, wishing he shall become their servant, he passed on the Lord. The Lord commanded that Cuntarar should begin to sing a song of praise in honour of the priests of Tillai. In response, the nāyaṉār not only repeatedly bowed down and greeted each devotee with the word’s ‘I am your servant’ but also composed ‘The Roll of the Holy Servants of the Lord’ who exemplified devotion to Śiva in every manner of service.
Cēkkiḷār’s interest in Śiva devotion was to chronicle the development of the poems and the stories of the lives of the nāyaṉmār across different and their religious services practices based on instinctive, aesthetic and moral. This he does it at Temple of Tillai which shows Cēkkiḷār seen to have had a continuing concern for the temple at Tillai as a locus of the Dancing Śiva while pointing a model of social cohesion based on devotion to Śiva across caste affiliations, but did not cast aspersions on nāyaṉmār on any account. The galaxy of devotees includes tradesman, kings, chieftains, washer man and other who received equal treatment.

The instinctive mode of worship of Śiva as exemplified by the nāyaṉmār in the Periya Purāṇam, makes one understand the manifestation of divine fervour should be executed spontaneously as the uncontrolled demonstration of the spiritual intuitions and not under any compulsion or rules set by tradition. According to Cēkkiḷār, Umādevi, Śiva’s consort has preached to the world the method of instinctive worship by way of forming a Śiva-linga out of sand in a river and did worship it. When Śiva intended to test Her steadfastness, He made the river in floods and she embraced the Lord (PP. 1132-1156). Caṇṭēcurar constructed a Śiva-linga out of sand and poured the cow’s milk as sacred bath and expressed his instinctive way of worship. When his father, without knowing the inner propensity of his son, suspected the propriety of his worship and

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380 Cēkkiḷār portrays Amarnīti as one who hailed from the merchant clan and he generously distributed clothes for the worshippers of the Lord. Yet on another occasion, it is narrated that Tirukurippu Toṇṭar (PP 1083-1210) washed the clothes of the devotees of the temple. This too, was a mode of participation in the temple centred worship. He washed all the dirt and stains and by doing so Cēkkiḷār relates that he washed away all the impurities of the ego. This indicates that Cēkkiḷār transcends ritual action to emphasize the significance of service and moral living.
attempted to damage the Śiva-linga, the nāyānār who was in deep ecstasy threw a straw which became a dagger and chapped off the legs of his father (PP. 1211-1270).

Further, instinctive worship culminates in offering a few objects which have not been prescribed as having religious value. Cākkiya nāyānār threw a piece of stone on the Śiva-linga and the Lord accepted it as the object of adoration as if it is a flower and blessed him (PP. 3641-3658). When Mūrthy nāyānār was chosen to be the king by the royal elephant, he had determined to rule his dynasty with the following things: sacred ashes as anointment, the kingily ornaments representing Śiva emblems, and matted locks as the crown (PP. 1013). The same saint, before he was chosen as the ruler, was offering sandal paste to Śiva worship regularly. But due to non-availability of sandal wood, there was likely to be black mark in his offering. But instinctively he realized that he could offer his hand itself as sandal and dashed his hand against the stone and was instantly blessed by Śiva (PP. 973-1021). The feature of this instinctive worship is that their routine service to the temple and even to the devotees, the un-hesitantly fond out the solution by way of sacrificing either a part of the body or the whole of their life (PP. 4060-4068). This uncommon trend of worship as presented in the Periya Purāṇam may be attributed to many nāyagmār who seldom cared to own anything as theirs.

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381 ‘நாயக்கர் பூச்சிய வானம் அல்லது கோலம் காயில் கீழ் ஜெய்ஜெய் தொடும்பு என்றே என்றன் என்றே கூறியுள்ளது மேலும் பரப்பவார் என்று பரப்பவார் என்று பரப்பவார் என்று’
(குரு கிளிக் 1013).

382 Kananpullar nāyānār felt that the best course to deposit wealth was to burn lamps in the temple continuously. He regularly cut grass and after selling it, purchased oil and continued his service. But God’s will was otherwise, probably, to show the greatness of His devotees, that owing to draught situation nowhere did grass grow. The devotee did not lose heart. As he did not get grass to sell and get oil, he held up his hair in the flame and set it ablaze.
Aesthetic worship of the nāyamār as presented by Cēkkilār comprises of the splendid worship performed by the nāyamār to satisfy their tendency of appreciation i.e. the resplendent beauty of Śiva is enjoyed in every one of His creations and hence the nāyamār feels abundant joy in offering the objects of worship. In their devotional outpourings the nāyamār express the beauty of Śiva as they have experienced and one can discern the aesthetic fervour implied in them. Tirunāvukkaracar exclaims to behold Śiva at Tillai who dances with bent eyebrows, smile in the rosy lips, tresses of hair, and smearing white ashes in the pearl-like body (PP.1438). If one is gifted to gaze at the lifted leg with admiration, even human birth is blessed (PP.1441). Among the major characteristic of the nāyamār, joy is said to be the expression of aesthetic sense. The Lord reveals his beauty, while the devout souls receive such cosmic visions and rejoices at the ecstatic state and, in turn, offer worship to the Lord by praising His physical form, condescension, mythical role etc (PP. 2059).

The moral sphere of worship signifies the purgation of the mind and spirit. As worship requires a proper blending of both metaphysics and psychology i.e. essential unity between moral ideal and virtuous living, it is to be done more on a practical way than on a purely theoretical basis. The external way of discharging one’s obligatory

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383 ‘…நாடிக்கு தத் கூட்டாக யாது மன்னரா தெளிய உண்மை கல் வந்தது அல்லாஹ்வ கோஷியர் கூட்டாக வரும்செய்துட்டே’ (பொல் 1443).
384 ‘…இணைந்த உள்ளே காடல் பதிவுகளின் தூரத்திலுள்ள மூன்று செங்குத்தராக கூட்டாக வரும்செய்துட்டே’ (பொல் 1441).
385 ‘செட்டியில் காடல்களை பிறவிக்குறி உந்துள்ளது செட்டியிலே அல்லாஹ்வ தூரத்திலுள்ள மூன்று செங்குத்தராக வரும்செய்துட்டே’ (பொல் 2064).

“You have bestowed upon me the inward experience of bliss, endless and divine,” he cried, “it has come in visible form, easy to apprehend with the senses.” He praised the Lord’s ineffable grace in a hymn set to a sweet melody, he sang, he danced, he wept” (PP. 2064).
duties in the religious sphere constitutes objective morality, while the psychological basis of virtues constitutes reflective morality. While portraying the characteristic features of every nāyaṉmār’s religious life, Čēkkiḷār finds pleasure in delineating their virtuous mould. The nāyaṉmār have desisted from the fundamental blemishes like, wealth, desires and sensuous pleasures which are definitely detrimental to religious assignments and progress. But they preferred a life of devotion characterised by service and sacrifice. The nāyaṉmār were fond of offering sacrifices which means submission of sacred things to the worship of Śiva. The attitude implies the surrendering of sensuality and selfishness. The steadfastness in performing sacrifices despite the ordeals the nāyaṉmār endured has been explained picturesquely by Čēkkiḷār.386

4.5 Summary

The scrutiny of the history of the period suggests that at the time the Periya Purāṇam was created great upheavals had taken place in Tamil culture and identity. Čēkkiḷār’s treatise reflects on various new ideologies that emerged to re-examine the social order. Two major ideologies emerged to provide alternatives to the reform of Tamil society; one emerged from within, as an orthodox tradition and the other as a heterodox tradition. One such significant phenomenon to emerge within the Tamil tradition, as an orthodox tradition, was the devotional movement.

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386 Kanampulla nayannar felt that the best course to deposit wealth was to burn the lamps in the temple continuously. He regularly cut grass and after selling it, purchased oil and continued his service. But God’s will was otherwise, probably, to show the greatness of his devotees, that owing to draught situation nowhere did grass grow,. The devotee did not lose heart. As he did get grass to sell and get oil, he held up his hair to the flame and set it ablaze. Čēkkiḷār cleverly incorporates the truth of Śaivism with the actual life of the nayannar that the aspirants have clung fast to the sacred feet of the Lord as the real substance and resort to divine service.
Apart from the orthodox traditions, emerged heterodox traditions such as Buddhism and Jainism. These two religions did not follow the way of the Vedas or its ritualism. For Čēkkilār, these two religions did not present idea of a personal God whom the ordinary people could seek in times of trouble. It was rather, a dogmatically individualistic, introspective system that had no basis in reality. On the other hand, Jainism offered a path foreign to Tamil ethos. It was a path that was devoid of personal piety.

For Čēkkilār it is nāyānmār who preached a personal God and loving devotion to Him. What is more significant is that through the frequent travels that the leaders undertook from temple to temple singing the praises of Śiva the enkindled the love of Śiva. By these they created a sacred geography of their own comprising of the numerous temples of towns and villages and rivers. They sang devotional poems in Tamil, in their mother tongue. It is for this reason, Tamil Śaivism flourished mainly because of the active role the nāyānmār played in forging ideological links between various aspects of Tamil culture earlier dominanted by the those of indigenous war heroes – the celebration of the Tamil land and language, the ethos of the indigenous Tamil civilization and literature, and the values of the region’s dominant non-priestly caste-groups, in terms of emotional devotion to Śiva. The resultant cultural identify was presented as distinctly ‘Tamil’ as opposed to the ideologies of rival sects such as the Jains and Buddhism.

In his medieval hagiography Čēkkilār extends and synthesis the same broad themes, this time in the context of religious completion to win royal patronage, and in
terms of the lives of the nāyaṁmār. Devotion of these nāyaṁmār – ‘servitors of the Lord’, contempt and intolerant towards the Jainis, and Buddhism are traits of all the nāyaṁmār, Cēkkilār composition of Periya Purāṇam, offering obeisance to each of the nāyaṁmār, by naming every one as an example of devotion and service. Its appeal was to the heart. Such was the context of Cēkkilār’s composition. The songs are composed in a spirit of protest against conventional rituals and the intercession of priests between man and god. Each nāyaṁmār worship a personal God i.e. Śiva and their poems explore the relationship of the self with Śiva. In emphasizing the creation of his work of such great men and women due to royal and divine mandates, of the authoritative vernacular hagiographical text, its presentation as a countertext to a Jain and Buddhist world, and its canonization as a text equal to the Sanskrit Vedas in sanctity, the twelfth century narrative of the composition of the Periya Purāṇam reveals that the not only the author Cēkkilār but also the Tamil Śaiva tradition, was keenly aware of the political, social and cultural implication of the hagiographical project.
PART II

THE THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE PERIYA PURĀŅAM
CHAPTER FIVE

CĒKKIĻĀR’S VISION OF ŚIVA

5.1 Introduction

This chapter examines Cēkkilār’s theological vision. Specifically, his vision of Śiva. It is this vision that proved pivotal in his emphasis of devotion that manifested in service and moral living of the nāyaṅmār. Since Cēkkilār was not a systematic philosopher or a theologian, his treatise does not present his thoughts in a systematic logical sequence. As a hagiographer and a poet, he couches his fundamental theological concepts in plain symbolic and poetic imagery. This chapter will attempt to present Cēkkilār’s thought in an analytic, logical and interpretative way. The contention is that Cēkkilār had a deep concern to transform the consciousness of the Tamil society based on this theological vision of Śiva. He shapes this image of Śiva by selectively drawing upon and integrating the myths and doctrines found in the Vedas, Āgamās and Purāṇās. The whole fabric of his emphasis on devotion manifested in service and moral living rests on this image of Śiva. The chapter is divided into the following components.

5.2 Cēkkilār’s Perception of Śiva

5.2.1 Release (Vīṭu: வித்து)

5.2.2 Grace (Aruḷ: அருள்)

5.2.3 Madness (Pittan: பித்தன்)

5.3 Philosophical Notions and Local Myths

5.4 Summary
5.2 Cēkkīlār’s Perception of Śīva

In simplistic term Cēkkīlār’s image of Śīva is the Śīva acknowledged publically in Vedas, Āgamās, Purāṇās and Epics, and the icons of the temples, shrines and most specifically the Śīva of the Tamil nāyaṉmār. Cēkkīlār selectively draws upon the features and stories of Śīva found in these scriptures and indigenous tradition and integrates them so as to form his own image or perception of Śīva. In the Periya Purāṇam one finds the complete integration of these myths, philosophical concepts and the personal experience of the nāyaṉmār. They all correlate and eventually unite to form one coherent image of Śīva.

To understand this image of Śīva, there are three closely related aspects of nāyaṉmār’s personal experience of Śīva or three facets of Śīva’s reaction to the nāyaṉmār one need to know which Cēkkīlār relates. These facets imply and develop from each other. They could be categorised as release (vīṭu: விடு), grace (aruḷ: அருள்) and madness (pīṭan: பிட்டன்). They are key to nāyaṉmār’s experience of Śīva which is important to Cēkkīlār’s image of Śīva. Let us examine in turn each of these characteristics of the Śīva experienced by the nāyaṉmār along with their public counterparts i.e. the image of Śīva found in scriptures and indigenous tradition.

5.2.1 Release (vīṭu : விடு)

For the nāyaṉmār as Cēkkīlār points out, Śīva is the greatest conferrer of release (vīṭu: விடு), particularly understood as release from repeated births (perumpiravī: பெரும்பிரவி) and bondage (pantam: பான்றம்). Cēkkīlār does not tire of pointing to the
fact that it is Śiva who prevented the nāyaṇmār from walking in the ‘path of wickedness’ (ताम'माइणिनाउ माचु: tam'maivिनाउ mācu) (PP.1081) or ‘evil deeds’ (ष्टिविन: tīvāi)’ (PP. 225); once the darkness of deluded deeds (वाँच वालविनाइक करुप्पु: va'ṇca valvinaik karuppu) has been severed, the feet of the Lord is ever present in the heart of the devotees (PP. 509). The use of same gracious verbs (e.g., अरुणाइय: maruṉai kūrnta i.e. in mercy) as well as martial verbs (e.g., तातुत्त: taṭuttu i.e. prevent, अरुत्त: aruttu i.e. severe) also describes Śiva’s action against entailment of sins ('भास्यित: भास्यित अनाव’: pāvattiy mungaic cărpu) (PP. 753) and bondage. Bondage or pantam (पांतम) later becomes a important term in the Tamil Śaiva Siddhanta philosophical tradition, although Cēkkilār uses it much less frequently than the ever-recurrent ‘repeated births’ (पुरुषपतिम: perum piraṉi) and ‘evil deeds’ (ष्टिविन: tīvāi) (PP. 225, 1196).

Saiva Siddhanta believes in the three eternal entities of God, Soul and Bondage (materials of bondage). These are called Pati, Pasu and Pasam respectively in Siddhanta philosophy. Pati means Lord or master (of the souls) who is God. The Jiva or human soul is called Pasu or animal because it is tied up by Pasam or rope of bondage. Pasam means bondage. Pasu means that which is under bondage. All things known and perceived are included in these three categories. According to Saiva Siddhanta God is one, Souls are many and Pasam consists of three impurities (maλāms: मलाम) called Anava (anavam: अनाव) which is due to primordial ignorance, Karma (कामम: कामम) which accrues from the good and bad deeds of the human soul and Maya (माय: माय) which is considered as impurity arising from the attachment to the world. Like Pati who is real and eternal, Pasu and Pasam are also real and eternal. Existence of God and other eternal entities is established by various epistemological means. Though Cēkkilār does not deal in detail of any of these impurities, nonetheless he mentions them as pattam (पांतम) i.e. bondage and emphasises that it the feet of the Lord is the source of bondage and release, therefore the Tamil saints engaged in serving the feet of the Lord.
Thus, Cēkkiḻār points to the fact that Śiva is the source of bondage and release and as one who initiates a change in nāyānmār’s life (PP. 300)\(^{398}\). The nāyānmār’s attitude to the fundamental process of life of birth, death, and bondage is significantly altered. In a sense, a significant changed has occurred in which Śiva has caught the attention of the nāyānmār from the ‘path of wickedness’ that obstruct human living. Cēkkiḻār notes that the Lord freed his servants there from the taint of deeds, and favoured them in such a way to adore his feet (PP. 1081)\(^{399}\). Remarkably, this free intervention and interaction of Śiva with the nāyānmār reflects various traditional and local myths that are related about Śiva to which Cēkkiḻār alludes to, so as to form a coherent image of Śiva. In this way Cēkkiḻār tries to establish the idea that the Śiva of the nāyānmār is identical with pan-Indian Śiva and that nāyānmār in their devotional poems blended indigenous mythology of Śiva that is peculiar to Tamils with pan-Hindu myths of Śiva.

One of the principle pan-Indian myths that are frequently referred to in the Periya Purāṇam about Śiva is the destruction of the three cities: by the force of their austerities, a family of demons had been enabled to build three impregnable cities, and from them they tyrannized both gods and mortals. When the time span of a thousand years allotted to the demons was over, the gods went to Śiva and asked him for help. Assenting to their plea, Śiva mounted a specially constructed celestial chariot, and with Brahman as his charioteer he set off to attack the three cities. As he approached, the three cities merged into one. Then using mount Meru as his bow, Śiva shot a single miraculous arrow which

\(^{398}\) ‘...பெரியா பிராந்தியம்...’ (Gīlā. 1196).
\(^{399}\) ‘...பெரியா பிராந்தியம்...’ (Gīlā. 300).
\(^{399}\) ‘...பெரியா பிராந்தியம்...’ (Gīlā. 1081)
transfixed the cities and destroyed them. This myth is one of many in which Ėkkiḻar recounts Śiva as agent of triumph of good. In essence, this is an act of release from bondage. Ėkkiḻar frequently mentions the place i.e. Vīraṭṭāṇam as the place where Śiva is believed to have performed His cosmic deeds and destroyed the cities and addresses Śiva as the Lord of Vīraṭṭāṇam (PP. 1400)\(^400\). The world is saved from the demons just as the nāyagmār’s bondage is severed by Śiva. The resemblance is clearly visible when Ėkkiḻar narrates that the nāyagmār journeyed to this place i.e. Vīraṭṭāṇam in view of seeing Śiva (PP. 1307)\(^401\), and in that place, their former deeds and attachments lose their hold (PP. 1415)\(^402\).

Another pan-Indian myth that is alluded to by Ėkkiḻar is that of Śiva as the ‘Tiru nilankāṇṭam (திரு நிலந்தாந்தம்) or Dark or Blue-Throated one’ (PP. 363)\(^403\). Ėkkiḻar records that for the good of the world the Lord drank the poison from the sea of milk, it might have seemed as if it was the force of human penances that prevented Him from swallowing it. In fact it was the Lord Himself who checked the poison and held it in his throat (PP.363)\(^404\). Though, this is a myth, Ėkkiḻar uses it to shape his theological vision,

\(^400\) ‘...என்று நட்பும் மிக்க திருக்கதோப்பு...’ (G.I.1405). Cosmic deeds of Śiva which are eight in numbers is said to have been mostly in a place called Tanjore. These were collectively known as the ‘Attavīraṭṭāṇam’ i.e. the places of the eight heroic deeds. For a list of the eight heroic deeds of Śiva at Vīraṭṭāṇam and the sites of the eight Vīraṭṭāṇam shrines, see Dorai Rangaswamy, 1990, p. 374.

\(^401\) ‘...நீண்டொளிவில் தெற்கியது கீழே குளம்படுதிய மீத்தமிழ் விளக்கும்…’ (G.I. 1312).

\(^402\) ‘...மடிக்கல்வு மற்றும் உண்மை அருணான நீண்டொளி அல்லது போற்றி ஆர்வல் அருணானம் விளக்கும்...’ (G. I. 1415).

\(^403\) ‘...சீவன் காட்டுதல் காட்டுதல் தெற்கியது நீண்டொளிய விளக்கும் வங்கையின்...’ (G.I. 363).

\(^404\) ‘அனைத் தெற்கியது நீண்டொளிய அருணான தெற்கியது காட்டுதல் காட்டுதல் நீண்டொளி விளக்கும் வங்கையின் காட்டுதல் தெற்கியது நீண்டொளிய விளக்கும் வங்கையின்...’ (G.I. 363).

This narration resonates with the legend where it is noted that the gods and demons who craved for the nectar of immortality, churned the cosmic ocean which lay at the bottom of the cosmos. However, before they could attain the nectar of immortality, a deadly poison emerged and threatened to destroy the entire cosmos. In a state of helplessness, the gods and demons turned to Śiva for his intervention. On hearing their cry, Śiva, for the good of the entire world swallowed the poison so as to save the world. As a reminder of his eternal goodness, He held the poison in this throat, which made his throat appear blue.
and to present Śiva acting in a benign role as protector and preserver of the universe. Cēkkilār draws attention to this image in a number of places in the Periya Purāṇam (PP. 2379)\(^{405}\). Parallels are drawn between nāyaṇmār’s situation and that of those saved by Śiva’s drinking of the poison: ‘By favour of dark-throated one, Nampi put on the guard that befitted the Śaivite path, with sandal paste and garlands of beads and flowers. The effect was so impressive people hailed him as the prince of ascetics. So he spent this time joyfully singing the praise of the Lord who dwells in the ant-ill’ (PP. 276)\(^{406}\). On another occasion Cēkkilār narrates ‘in order to dispel illusion, Eripattar (அரிப்பாரு) used to worship the Holy One in that temple and to perform acts of service for those who belonged to the Dark-throated Lord’ (PP. 556)\(^{407}\).

Another myth that is of interest that is referred to by Cēkkilār is one of Śiva’s acts i.e. his catching of the falling Ganges in his hair. At a time of drought, by dint of fierce penances the King Bhagiratha prevailed upon Brahmān to grant him a boon. He requested that the river Ganges should be allowed to descend from heaven to water the earth. Brahmān acceded to this request, but advised the king that the weight of the river’s water falling unchecked upon the earth would do incalculable damage. So the king had to go to a peak in the Himalayas where Śiva was engaged in meditation. There by the performances of further penances, he persuaded Śiva to lend his aid. Eventually, Śiva

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\(^{405}\) ‘அம்மாரிசும் செக்கிலாரும் கல்லூரில் மாட்டென் விளைந்துள்ளன நூற்றடிகள் ஆனலியர்...’ (அல்ல. 2379).

\(^{406}\) ‘Sweet Lord, to save your heavenly servants, you drank the poison from the wave-tossed sea’ (PP. 2379)

\(^{407}\) ‘...எம்மாரிசும் செக்கிலாரும் கல்லூரில் மாட்டென் விளைந்துள்ளன நூற்றடிகள் ஆனலியர் ஆனலியர் ஆனலியர்...’ (அல்ல. 556).
allowed the river to fall upon his own head, and thus to flow gently downward through his hair to the earth. Here Śiva again is represented as the divine ascetic, and in a beneficent role. Śiva’s function as the one who holds the river Ganges is simply cited along with His other physical features in the very first verses of the Periya Purāṇam (PP. 1)\textsuperscript{408}. In one verse, however, the rationale for Śiva’s action and is significance to nāyaṅmār’s life is stated: ‘They who do not make him their own, with his hair in matted locks, make their own the way of wickedness’ (PP. 1518)\textsuperscript{409}. Again, Śiva guards the nāyaṅmār from the path of wickedness just as he saves the earth from destruction.

5.2.2 Grace (aruḷ : அழுள்)

Turning from the portrayal of Śiva as one who delivered the nāyaṅmār from repeated births (முடிகம் பிளிதின் : perumpiravi) and bondage (பஞ்சம்: pantam), one begins to notice in the Periya Purāṇam subjective transformation that is brought into the life of nāyaṅmār by Śiva’s interaction with them. Śiva grants His aruḷ (அழுள்) i.e. grace on the nāyaṅmār, and while in one sense it indicates the already stated release from repeated births (முடிகம் பிளிதின்: perumpiravi) and bondage (பஞ்சம்: pantam), it also implies much more. In addition, the very frequent references to Śiva’s bestowal of His aruḷ (grace) on the nāyaṅmār are often accompanied by descriptions of how Śiva enters and enslaves them (PP. 147-349)\textsuperscript{410}. Therefore, the consequence of Śiva’s aruḷ (grace), is that it makes

\textsuperscript{408} ‘...எனவென்றால் குறிப்பிட்டு அடைத்து விளக்குவது விளக்கியலில் விளக்கியலில் விளக்கியலில் விளக்கியலில் விளக்கியலில் விளக்கியலில் விளக்கியலில் விளக்கியலில் விளக்கியலில்...’ (அலு. 1).

\textsuperscript{409} ‘...எனவென்றால் குறிப்பிட்டு விளக்குவது விளக்கியலில் விளக்கியலில் விளக்கியலில் விளக்கியலில் விளக்கியலில்...’ (அலு. 1523).

\textsuperscript{410} In this section title ‘The Taking of a Captive’, Cēkkilār narrates how Śiva took possession of Cuntara. Cēkkilār clearly relates that ‘on mount Kailāsa amid the chanting of the scriptures, in his grace the Lord had promised to take Ālāla Cuntarag as his servant. Now the one and only Lord, whom Tirumāl and Ayaṉ could not find although the one flew up high the other dug deep in the earth, came to fulfil his promise’ (PP. 174).

'அழுள் வாழு ஆண்டு கருப்பு வாழு அழுள் வாழு ஆண்டு கருப்பு வாழு
one to melt in love for Śiva, with an urge and with a purpose to ‘continue to sing His praise in varied strains throughout the world’ (PP. 222). For Cēkkiḻar, Śiva’s bestowal of arul (grace) ‘grants the privilege of being with him forever in love that knows no parting’ (PP. 648). It is for this reason Cēkkiḻar describes Śiva’s arul (grace) as ‘miraculous’ (‘ஆறுதம்’ : arputam) and even alleviates one from affliction (PP. 286).

For Cēkkiḻar, arul (grace) is a synonym of Śiva (PP. 1748). He ‘appears in arul (grace)’ (காய் கிண்மூர் ருப்புவை: etir ninrum elantarul) (PP. 260), and His ‘arul (grace) is boundless’ (தன் ஆண் விடுக்கணடாம் : taṉ arul iruntavanṉam) (PP. 850). This arul (grace) of Śiva is ‘ineffable’ (PP 648) and ‘incomprehensible’ (PP. 1641).

It is interesting to note that Cēkkiḻar frequently mentions that Śiva’s inability to be known by the gods, for that Cēkkiḻar repetitively combines depiction of nāyamār’s own reception of Śiva’s arul (grace) with references to the gods’ lack of success in comprehending Śiva. It is stated ‘in his arul (grace) the Lord had promised to take Ālāla Cuntaraṉ as his servant. Now the one and only Lord, whom Tirumāl and Ayāṉ could not find although the one flew up high and the other dug deep in the earth, came to fulfil his

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411 ‘ஏதும் கிண்மூர் மூச்சலாம் மூடுகல் அவர் வடும் வல்லவர்’ (Gīla. 174).
412 ‘...பிறவு விளையாடும் பொருள் காற்றவர்கள் இக்கூட்டு உண்டன் தூர்றானது ஒருவரைப் பொருள் தலையாக உண்டு வந்து விளையாடும் பொருள் காற்றாவர்கள் இல்லாவும் ’ (Gīla. 222).
413 ‘...அமூக்கோட்டம் கொன்ற அதிகாள் உற்பை வடந்து’ (Gīla. 286).
414 ‘He stood amazed. “What can this be?” He wondered ... or perhaps it is a miracle of Śiva’s grace’ (PP. 286).
415 ‘... “He is of all grace,” she thought, “It is not my place to explain the working of grace”...’ (PP. 1748)
416 ‘... “அமூக்கோட்டம் கொன்ற அதிகாள் உற்பை வடந்து’ (Gīla. 648).
promise’ (PP. 174)\(^{417}\). To affirm such favour of Śiva granted to the nāyaṁmār, Cēkkilār also cites the myth and recounts the failure of Tirumāl and Ayaṅ to comprehend Śiva’s manifestation as the fiery lingam or pillar of light (PP. 18)\(^{418}\). Repeatedly, Cēkkilār contrasts the nāyaṁmār’s own undeserved fortuity with Śiva keeping himself hidden from Tirumāl and Ayaṅ (PP. 183)\(^{419}\). In this context it is clear Cēkkilār by repeatedly mentioning the myth tries to bring out several aspects of Śiva and his relation to the nāyaṁmār: first, it affirms Śiva’s supremacy; second, it attests His absolute freedom and unpredictability in revealing himself to his devotee; and third, it makes clear the paradox of Śiva’s arul (grace), i.e. a gift not revealed to the likes of Tirumāl and Ayaṅ is granted to lowly nāyaṁmār.

It must be noted that to explain poignantly the nature of Śiva’s arul (grace), Cēkkilār also points to the feminine side of the Śiva. It is stated that Śiva is the one ‘who is the origin and the end of all things’ (पञ्चसत्ताक वशयवेशवर्ण: तेषां तेषां प्रबन्धनोऽः

\(\text{muññāki epporuṭkum muṭivu āki niṉṟañai}, \) ‘who includes Umā within himself’ (ढ़ी}

\(^{417}\) ‘असुरम् शोच अभंधकियाः कर्म अरुणारूपी रागं नदिमाण नदिमाण सापेक्षीयै उपयोगम्

\(\text{चतुःपत्रेण चिरोध्यायत यद्यपि भवेत् अरुणारूपी रागं उपयोगम् कर्म अरुणारूपी रागं}

\(\text{असुरम् शोच अभंधकियाः कर्म अरुणारूपी रागं नदिमाण नदिमाण सापेक्षीयै उपयोगम्} \) (Gītā 174).

\(^{418}\) ‘कर्मवर्गकार्यसंबंधं अरुणारूपी रागं नदिमाण नदिमाण सापेक्षीयै उपयोगम्

\(\text{असुरम् शोच अभंधकियाः कर्म अरुणारूपी रागं नदिमाण नदिमाण सापेक्षीयै उपयोगम्} \) (Gītā 18).

In this myth Cēkkilār narrates that Tirumāl and Ayaṅ, the two gods proceed to argue about which is the supreme God and creator of the world. At that moment Śiva manifests himself as a towering lingam of fire, which stretches from the ocean up into the heavens. The two gods seek to measure its extent, Ayaṅ by flying upwards as a swan, and Tirumāl by digging downwards as a boar. Their attempt ends in failure, and the cosmic lingam bursts open to reveal none other than the Lord Śiva. As the two rivals bow before him, Śiva proclaims himself to be the Lord of all. The myth is often cited by Cēkkilār Śiva’s matchless nature, and in particular his pre-eminence over Tirumāl and Ayaṅ.

\(^{419}\) Here the Lord addresses the Brahmins “this man of Nāvalūr is my slave. That is what I have come to tell you.” Of course, all the gods, including Tirumāl and Ayaṅ, and all the people of the world however wealthy are in fact no more than his slaves’ (PP. 183).

\(\text{‘असुरम् शोच अभंधकियाः कर्म अरुणारूपी रागं नदिमाण नदिमाण सापेक्षीयै उपयोगम्}

\(\text{असुरम् शोच अभंधकियाः कर्म अरुणारूपी रागं नदिमाण नदिमाण सापेक्षीयै उपयोगम्} \) (Gītā 183).

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She is ‘the mother rich in mercy to all living beings’ (sahajātā viressudha viśvaṁ ājñātaṁ: tañī ākattu uṭātipākam koñṭai) (PP. 1421), the ‘embodiment of arul (grace)' (vīraññāti: inpattig arulkarū) (PP.1138). This image of Śiva bestowing favours on the nāyaṁmār with His consort Umā is a prominent image in Cēkkīlār’s hagiography.

The nāyaṁmār’s fascination to the union of Śiva and His spouse Umā interconnect with their personal situation in different ways, two of which are important here. First, Umā is beautifully portrayed as accomplice in Śiva’s bestowal of arul (grace): both graciously came to save the world. Cēkkīlār’s relates ‘looking at the weeping child with compassion, the Lord then instructed his consort whom the entire world adores to give him milk to drink’ (PP. 1969). On another occasion it is re-stated it is the devotees of Śiva who is saved by the combined action of Śiva with his consort Umā (PP. 1995). Therefore, Śiva is spoken of as ammai (mother) and appan (father): forming in himself all the qualities of mother and father (PP. 1404). Though this term may appear symbolic, it carries a mystic significance so far as to affirm that whoever reaches Śiva’s feet would listen to his grace as a child listens to its parent (PP. 2737). Secondly, more
remarkable perhaps, Umā relationship to Śiva becomes a kind of paradigm for the nāyaṇmār's own attitude vis-a-vis Śiva. Hence, Cēkkiḷar underlines that the nāyaṇmār approached Śiva as a child, friend, and father; and Śiva's indwelling with Umā becomes exemplary for the type of union which the nāyaṇmār yearned with Śiva and with other devotees of Śiva.

5.2.3 Madness (pittan: பிட்டன்)

If Śiva releases the nāyaṇmār from their path of wickedness granting them arul (grace) and taking them captive (துட்டுத்தல்: taṭṭatā kollal) or taking control of their very self (PP 147-349)\(^{427}\), the subjective result is that Śiva makes the nāyaṇmār fanatical or mad (PP. 3588)\(^{428}\). This arul (grace) captures and enslaves the nāyaṇmār: ‘it is he who has come and taken me by force to be your own’ (PP. 214)\(^{429}\), “He has made me well and truly His slave” (PP. 295)\(^{430}\). Indeed, the melting of the nāyaṇmār’s mind and heart, occasioned by Śiva’s conferral of arul (grace), possibly be viewed as one aspect of the madness which Śiva inducts in the nāyaṇmār. Perhaps it is for this reason, when Śiva gave his vision to Tirunāvukkaracar, Cēkkiḷar describes the nāyaṇmār's behaviours as follows: ‘with melting heart and streaming tears, Appar poured out a stream of poetic song (PP. 1456)\(^{431}\). That Śiva is the reason of such a transformation in

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\(^{427}\) Cēkkiḷar dedicates and entre section i.e. verses 147-349 so as to explain how Śiva took captive of Cuntarar as His servant.

\(^{428}\) ‘பிட்டனேவேல் அலகு பிள்ளை குறுக்கப் ப்படுத்த அலகு சிறகு கையேற்றும் கலக்கர் ப்பெற்றும் இலக்கியது’ (கிலிக் 3588).

\(^{427}\) He is not mad or mentally deranged, nor suffering from any other malady,” they said, “He has attained freedom from all mental instability, and his attention has become clearly focused on Śiva...” (PP. 3588).

\(^{429}\) ‘...முன்னேரி வெதித்தவ கோயில் அடைய உண்டு போர்க்காக காண்தவ’ (கிலிக் 214).

\(^{430}\) ‘...இன்னொருசெய்திகள் முரண்டு காலம் எண்ணும்...’ (கிலிக் 295).

\(^{431}\) ‘...போர்க்கும் முரண்டு முரண்டு அடைய உண்டு முரண்டு காலம் எண்ணும் காலம்...’ (கிலிக் 1456).
nāyaṇār’s life is certain as Cēkkiḷār narrates: “All this time,” he said, “I have been deliberately doing wrong. Is this now to be my reward?” ‘Thus he came to understand the true nature of aruḷ (grace)’ (PP. 1345)\textsuperscript{432}. Hence, as presented by Cēkkiḷār is the cause of such a change in the nāyaṇār’s life.

In fact, the nature of change or transformation itself is characterised in the Periya Purāṇam by sense of ‘violence’ i.e. to be madly in service to the Lord (PP. 929)\textsuperscript{433} and gentleness i.e. to engage in gentle service to Śiva (PP. 869)\textsuperscript{434}. Thus, it is remarkable, that one result of Śiva’s aruḷ (grace) is the nāyaṇār became vaṭṭonṭar (வட்டொங்களனே) or ‘violent’ servant of the Lord and the others mentoṭar (மெஞ்சொல்களனே) or ‘friendly’ servants of the Lord. The former were prepared to sacrifice everything and everybody in the absolute devotion to Śiva, to an extent that others could not be expected to emulate, whereas the latter offered an ideal and an example of service to God in devotees which anyone could follow within the circumstance of their own everyday lives.

In brief, to be captivated by Śiva is to become like Him; and to become like Śiva is to become mad i.e. to be madly in love with Him or fanatical about their service to

\textsuperscript{432} ‘அருள் கொண்ட மன்னர் வாரிசு வேலை வளத்துவார் அவன் ஐக்கிய விஷ்ணுவன் ஆர்யத்தை வானிருந்து வேலை வளத்துவாரும் அதுவும் நெய்திய கொண்டு வானிருந்து அது அவர் காற்றுக்கு கொண்டு வானிருந்து வேலை வளத்துவாரும் அவர்கள் கொண்டு வானிருந்து வேலை வளத்துவார்’ (ஸ்ப். 1345).

\textsuperscript{433} Here Cēkkiḷār narrates that ‘when this loving devotee was deprived of privilege of feeding the Lord, he tried to cut his throat with his sickle, until he heard the crunching of the mango pickle and the voice telling him not to give up...’ (PP. 929).

‘ஏனெனில் கொண்ட மன்னர் வாரிசு வேலை வளத்துவார்கள் அவன் ஐக்கிய விஷ்ணுவன் ஆர்யத்தை வானிருந்து வேலை வளத்துவார்களும் அவர் காற்றுக்கு கொண்டு வானிருந்து வேலை வளத்துவார்கள் அவர்கள்...’ (ஸ்ப். 929).

\textsuperscript{434} ‘என்று வ௒ங்கித்து வாரிசு வேலை வளத்துவார் அவன் காற்றுக்கு கொண்டு வானிருந்து வேலை வளத்துவார்கள் அவர் காற்றுக்கு கொண்டு வானிருந்து வேலை வளத்துவார்கள் அவர்கள்’ (ஸ்ப். 869).

‘Kalayar’s heart was truly devoted to the Lord. From then on he remained at Katavūr, performing many acts of service with ever-increasing love and longing, until at last he attained the shade of Śiva’s feet’ (PP. 869).
Him. Although there is no attempt on Cēkkiḻār’s part to portray the nāyaṉmār’s desire to imitate the details of Śiva’s behaviour as related in the myths about Him, it is easy to point out a continuum between the madness of Śiva Himself and the bliss that He instils in the nāyaṉmār. Cēkkiḻār portrays Śiva as one who acts with a sense of ‘madness’; ‘Śiva is the ‘madman, crowned with crescent moon’ (பிட்டார்: pitta piraičūṭi) (PP. 220). That Śiva is spoken as ‘mad’ is affirmed by the application to him of the same epithet which elsewhere refers to the nāyaṉmār, namely, madman (பிட்டார்: pittay) (PP. 3588). Without describing the several narration in the Periya Purāṇam upon which Śiva’s reputation as a madman (பிட்டார்: pittay) is founded, here is a instance from the Periya Purāṇam which acknowledges the nāyaṉmār’s mocking of Śiva as a madman (பிட்டார்: pittay)

‘The Lord with the beautiful eye looked in grace upon his devotee, and answered, “You called me ‘madman’. So let that be my name. Call me ‘madman’ in your song.”’ (PP. 219).

Cēkkiḻār also points to other of Śiva’s characters or bizarre behaviours which might be thought contributory to His image of madness. Śiva’s conduct at Daksa’s sacrifice is clearly referred to in the Periya Purāṇam (PP. 2057). A somewhat similar
episode, although only rarely referred, is Śiva’s burning of Kāma (PP. 2192). Some of the appellations Cēkkilār attributes to Śiva are just as instructive as the incidents drawn from mythology. They can be viewed as features of both the unpredictable public Śiva of the myths as found in the tradition and the unpredictable Śiva of the nāyaṃmār’s personal experience. Such description of Śiva include ‘deceiver’ (PP. 407), ‘both medicine and mantra’ (PP. 2198), and is ‘the [one who took the] form of an old man’ to take possession of His devotee (PP. 407) and the one who appeared as a ‘student’ to bestow His arul (grace) (PP. 507).

Though there is no clear evidence to prove that the nāyaṃmār imitated Śiva, however, Cēkkilār narrates there is a certain sense of ‘madness’ created by ecstatic awareness instilled by Śiva’s arul of all that the world offers. In this ecstatic awareness the nāyaṃmār co-mingled in the divine madness of Śiva; His devotees also appear to be mad with ardent desire to be at His service. What is important to note is primarily that Śiva both represent in himself and offers His devotees participation in a

attacked and disrupted the proceedings. He beheaded Daksa and cast his head into the fire. When the gods begged for mercy, Śiva restored the sacrifice and revived Daksa, giving the head as of a goat. This myth also seems to reflect the process whereby from the position of an outsider, Śiva was accepted as a member of the post-Vedic pantheon.

439 ‘...பைதுச்சுக்கமுக்கட்ட மன்னிய கோவில்லேயங்கு அணைக்கை...’ (NG.2192). The place Tiruvirattānam (Tiruvirattānam) referred here is the place where Śiva incinerated Kāman. According to the myth the demons were causing trouble to the gods, Brahma revealed that the demons could only be defeated by a son of Śiva. Then gods then had to devise a way to induce Śiva and Pārvati to get together to produce a son. So they sent the love god, Kāman, with instructions to use his bow and flower arrows to enkindle desire in the couple. Śiva was seated in a meditative trance when Kāman found him. Displeased at being disturbed, and suspicious of Kāman’s intentions, Śiva opened his third eye and burnt Kāman to ashes. Pārvati was not happy with this outcome, and at her intercession Śiva restored Kāman to life. In this myth, Kāman is portrayed as a great ascetic, and besides the familiar tension between god and demons, we see here another tension, that between the ascetic and erotic.

440 ‘...பைதுச்சுக்கமுக்கட்ட மன்னிய கோவில்லேயங்கு நாற்றான் மானிய கோவில்லேயங்கு கொடை என்று...’ (NG. 407).

441 ‘...பைதுச்சுக்கமுக்கட்ட பைதுச்சுக்கமுக்கட்ட வாய் என்று...’ (NG. 507).
new kind of awareness, a type of realization opposed to ordinary modes of experience. We might call it a mystical state of consciousness where not just social segregation based on caste system is abandoned, but a sense of being in His service is instilled. Such utter spontaneity is unintelligible, and perhaps madness is a profound image of what it must be like. At one instance Cēkkiḻār shows that the nāyaṅār addressed Śiva in the following way:

‘Śiva clothed in the elephant’s skin! Śiva, strength of the defenceless! Śiva wisdom of your devotees! Śiva, nectar of the enlightened!... The flowers to adorn your matted locks, the elephant has scattered in the street! Śiva in your wrath you burnt the cities of your enemies’ (PP. 566-567)442.

In another occasion that the Kāraikkal nāyaṅār with full conviction prayed to the Lord:

“If this is where he stands, may I now lay aside this comeliness and the burden of the flesh which I have borne for his sake. Grant me to your servant that I may come and worship at your feet in the form of a disembodied wrath. By the grace of the divine dancer ... she received the boon for which she prayed. Immersed in the rising tide of heavenly wisdom and ever more conscious of the divine she sang “I have become one of the heavenly hosts, which worships his red lotus feet” (PP. 1770-1773)443.

Although in these narrations Śiva is perceived and presented conceptually as ‘wisdom of your devotees’ (அஞ்சியர் அதியார் அதியி: aliyaṟ atiyār atiyē) and the ‘nectar of the enlightened’ (நரள் தைவர் தையர்: telivār atē Śivatā) as a mode of ‘wisdom’ opposed to ordinary consciousness, knowledge and intellect, by reference to Kāraikkal nāyaṅār’s realization of Śiva as ‘wisdom’ (உர்பவித்து எளுன்றநாலுட்டு: urpavittu elunta nālattu); ‘wisdom’ is objectified, concretized in Śiva who in His ‘wrath

442 'அஞ்சியர் அதியார் அதியியை எம் கி.ம். கிக்கர் கிக்கர் அதியார் அதியாரியை எம் கி.ம். கிக்கர் கிக்கர்... அதியார் அதியியை எம் கி.ம். கிக்கர் கிக்கர் கிக்கர்... கைகைகைகைகைகை கைகைகைகைகை கைகைகைகைகை கைகைகைகை... (குறுகி, 566-567).

443 'அஞ்சியர் அதியார் அதியியை எம் கி.ம். கிக்கர் கிக்கர் அதியார் அதியியை எம் கி.ம். கிக்கர் கிக்கர்... கைகைகைகைகைகை கைகைகைகைகை கைகைகைகை... கைகைகைகைகை... (குறுகி, 1770-1773).
burnt the cities of [His] enemies’ (வீரு’ல் நினைவுர் புராணவுடன் அம்மல் சிறிய விழா செய்யப்பட்டது:  vēru’l niṇaivār puramventu aviyac cūrum cilaiyāva). Two aspects of Cēkkiḻār’s vision of Śiva is clear: first, an abstract philosophical notion of Him as ‘Wisdom of devotees’, and second, myth relating to the ‘popular’ manifestation of Śiva, for example, Śiva as one who in His ‘wrath burnt the cities of [His] enemies’. These aspects link the distinction between Śiva of nāyaṉmār’s personal experience and the more ‘popular’ images of Śiva presented in myths and epics. The philosophical notions and local myths can be understood as expressions of both the Śiva public personality and the nāyaṉmār’s personal comprehension of Śiva. We shall next attend to these other additional aspects of Cēkkiḻār’s image of Siva.

5.3 The Philosophical Notions and Indigenous Myths

In the Periya Purāṇam there are numerous quasi–philosophical names attributed to Śiva centred around the ideas of lordship. The single-word titles of Him i.e. Śiva which are presented in the Periya Purāṇam suggests His dominion, for example, nāyan (நாயான்) –‘master’ or ‘leader’ (PP. 3487)444, īca (இஸ்வா) –‘Lord’ (PP. 1750)445, iṟaiyav (இறைவா) –‘supreme one’ (PP. 1249)446, Tēvartēva (தேவர்த்தேவா) - God of gods (PP. 2981)447. To these one-word title phrases also are dedicated which specify Śiva as the creator and the foundation of the universe. In single verse in the Periya Purāṇam Śiva is clearly spoken

444 நாயான் புராணகதேஸ் அதிசயம் ஆழ்மத் சார்க்கக் கேளேத் செய்யப்பட்டுள்ளது.. (掴. 3487).
445 According to the Tamil Lexicon of Madras University the word īca (இஸ்வா) has several meaning. It is used to denote Śiva. Śiva has (i) Supreme Lord of the universe; இஸ்வா; (ii) King, ruler; அரசன்; (iii) Lord, master; ராசியல்; (iv) Preceptor; பாடல்; (v) Eldest brother; புராணகதேஸ்.
446 The word iṟaiyav (இறைவா) is derived from the root iṟu (இறை) meaning all-abiding. One who abides i.e. abiding is spoken of as iṟai (இறை) meaning moment of time. The same word is used to address someone who is (i) chief, master, superior; இஸ்வா; (ii) Supreme God; இஸ்வா; (iii) King; இஸ்வா; (iv) Husband; lord, in relation to a wife; இஸ்வா; (v) Elder, venerable person; இஸ்வா; (vi) preceptor; இஸ்வா.
447 இசார்தேவா இஸ்வார்த்தேவா ஆழ்மத் சார்க்கக் கேளேத் செய்யப்பட்டுள்ளது.. (掴. 2981).
of as ‘the beginning and the middle’ (अतीय तत्त्व: ātīyā naṭṭuvam), ‘measure without measure’ (आयुर्वील आयुर्व: ālavu’ilā ālavum), ‘light that illumines the human understanding’ (विद्यायुर्व अर्जुर्व: cōṭīyā uṇavum); ‘all created matter’ (काल्युर्व नामसु: tōnriya porulm), ‘one without division’ (षेतिया अय: pētiyā ēkam) and ‘male and female’ (मनुष्य अय: pennum āy ānum) (PP. 350).

In the hagiography, Cēkkilār also speaks of Śiva as one who is beyond human vision; he is ‘hard to see’ or He is ‘seldom to be seen’ (‘अर्जुर्व अर्जुर्व: ariya kāṭciyār) (PP. 2728). Yet Cēkkilār notes, ‘He is great – apart from those symbols, the universe, the five elements, the heavenly bodies and untold myriad souls constitute his visible form’ (PP. 2730). Then Cēkkilār wonders ‘who can know what he is like?’... ‘His eternal nature is limitless, beyond reach of human knowledge’ (PP. 2731). Furthermore Cēkkilār asserts that ‘he has neither father nor mother’ it implies Cēkkilār notes ‘He is he creates all things in the world. Then when they pass away, they are reabsorbed into him in a moment of time, before he brings them to birth once more. But He is not subject to repeated births (PP. 2732).

Cēkkilār pronounces that ‘the primal Lord bestows in arul (grace) on those whom he has made his own’ – on enquiry, the glory of the Lord proves to be without end or...
limit. Therefore no purpose is served by investigation’ (PP. 2735). ‘By logic – there is nothing in the world that can be compared to him’. His ‘character cannot be measured by logic or analogy’ (PP. 2737). He is ‘primal Lord of the Vedas’ (vētamutalvay) (PP. 2743); His ‘dancing feet dispel the troubles of the people of the world as they engage in praising Him’ (PP. 2743). In short, for Cēkkilār, Śiva is the ‘rare’ one (ariyavan) (PP. 1) who is ‘hard to see’ (ariya kāṭciyār) (PP. 2728).

A clear philosophical verse which combines notions of transcendence and immanence of Śiva in Periya Purāṇam is found on the narration of the Brahmins of Tillai. It is stated:

‘He is light imaginable, the embodiment of compassion, whose form is wonderful; He dwells in the sacred court, the divine space that transcends the summit of Vedas; there he performs his exquisite dance. All praise to his flowers anklet (PP. 351). He stands teaching in the sacred court at Tillai. All praise to his sacred dance!’ (PP.350).

It is clear Cēkkilār contrasts philosophical concepts with mention of local sacred places i.e. sacred court at Tillai which had great personal significance in nāyaṉmār’s life. With
this Cēkkilār also mentions ‘Śiva is all in all’ (PP. 2750). Therefore, ‘by meditating on him alone as the one true, shining light, he dispels the darkness of falsehood and of actions good and bad’ (PP. 2733).

Further Cēkkilār proclaims Śiva as the ‘endless one’ or ‘eternal one’ (antam illavar) (PP.2275), ‘essence of the Vedas’ (vētamūlam) (PP. 43), ‘true’ (meimai) (PP. 2641) and ‘eternal truth’ (meipporu) (PP. 2687). These fairly intellectual apprehensions of Śiva, remarkably, more commonly encountered in Cēkkilār’s hagiography than the nāyamār’s more sensual, personal experience of Śiva as light (PP. 1902) and bliss (PP. 272). To these less abstract attributes Cēkkilār adds images which are Tamil in character in which Śiva is presented as ‘nectar of those who have attained clarity of mind’ (PP. 816) and ‘He is gentle and sweet to those who know him’ (PP. 2305). In another instance, Cēkkilār sings of Śiva: ‘His sacred feet, like the red lotus, blossom in the heart of those who love Him. Around those feet, like beetles round the lotus flower, resound the

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461 ‘...mēppērum cēkkilārCUDA CVT...’ (Gum. 2750).
462 ‘...mēppērum cēkkilārCUDA CVT...’ (Gum. 2733).
463 ‘...mēppērum cēkkilārCUDA CVT...’ (Gum. 2275).
464 ‘...mēppērum cēkkilārCUDA CVT...’ (Gum. 43).
465 ‘...mēppērum cēkkilārCUDA CVT...’ (Gum. 2641).
466 ‘...mēppērum cēkkilārCUDA CVT...’ (Gum. 2687).
467 ‘...mēppērum cēkkilārCUDA CVT...’ (Gum. 1902).
468 ‘...mēppērum cēkkilārCUDA CVT...’ (Gum. 272).
469 ‘...mēppērum cēkkilārCUDA CVT...’ (Gum. 816).
470 ‘...mēppērum cēkkilārCUDA CVT...’ (Gum. 2305).
everlasting Vedas, now those feet stand before me unworthy as I am, and have vouchsafed to me the wine of heavenly bliss’ (PP. 337).471

It must be noted Cēkkiḷār is fond of the language of paradox, which when presented in philosophical concepts resonates the images of the Śiva based on His mythology and the nāyamār’s personal experience of Him. The methodology is generally to see Śiva both something and its contrary or neither. Thus, Śiva is presented has ‘beginning, middle and the end’ (அந்தம் யுந்தம் குறி: āti‘āya naṭuvum āki) (PP. 350), ‘male and female’ (அல்லாமலை யுந்தம் குறி: peṇnumāy ānum ākip) (PP. 350).472

In addition to such titles of Śiva, He is also identified as the Lord of the Tamils. In several places Cēkkiḷār makes references to the Cāṅkam assemblies (PP. 977)473 and emphasis that it was Śiva who presided over this academy of Tamil and expounded the true meaning of the Tamil texts (PP. 1673).474 Most concrete association of Śiva with the Tamilnāṭu is found in the narration which present Him as peculiarly related to or identified with specific temple and sacred places through Tamilnāṭu which had a great

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471 ‘‘மாநிக்கருக்கும் முடியது கொரையும் சுருக்கு தொகுதிய மத்தியார் தொகுதிய பார்மோக் கொரையும் அய்யகம் தொகுதிய நிறுவனம்’’ (ப. 337).
472 ‘அந்தம் யுந்தம் குறி அனதமையான தொகுதிய குறி ... நேருமன்ற குறி குறியிட்டு குறி ...’ (ப. 350).
473 ‘... காத்ரு காத்ரும் காத்ரு அங்கு இன்னும் இன்னும் பார்வோக் கொரையும் கொரையும் பார்வோக் கொரையும் கொரையும் பார்வோக் கொரையும் கொரையும் கொரையும் கொரையும்’ (ப. 977).
474 ‘... மத்ரோய், தமிழ் குறியை குறியை குறியை குறியை ...’ (ப. 1673).
474 ‘He moved in and came to the shrine of the Lord, who presided over the academy of Tamil...’ (PP. 1673).
personal significance to the nāyāṃmar (PP. 496). The remarkable religiosity and the ability of the nāyāṃmar to give concrete spatial attention to their devotion as delineated in this narration is testimony to their love of Śiva.

However, the place that received special attention in the Periya Purāṇam, which had an impact of the nāyāṃmar’s religiosity, is the ‘Sacred Court at Tillai’ (PP. 1065). It is here at Tillai (தில்லை), it is narrated, that Śiva ‘performs his exquisite dance’ (PP. 351). In another verse Cēkkiḻār notes that he performs His dance ‘beyond the bounds of space and time’ (PP. 251). Though this dance of Śiva is primarily cosmic, it is believed that it is located in place called Tillai, which is considered as the centre of the universe. ‘The dancer’ or ‘Lord of the Dance’ (่นநாயனாத்துக்கின்றரை) is indeed the favourite attribute used to denote Śiva in the Periya Purāṇam. For the nāyāṃmar as Cēkkiḻār notes Tillai is the place of conversion and the place of final consummation: He notes ‘those who worship here are freed from the three...’

476 ‘...in this way he passed through the hill country and traversed the whole sea-grit world, strengthening the devotees in the path of Śiva. So he came to Tiruvārūr, and worshipped the Lord who used Mount Mēru as his bow in the destruction of the three cities’ (PP. 496).

478 ‘...in the same way he journeyed to many shrines where God is pleased to dwell. At each one he offered worship and with heartfelt devotion performed his acts of service. One day a burning desire arose in Nantaṅār’s heart to go to the temple at Tillai and offer worship there. Once the great longing had arisen, it would not go away’ (PP. 1065).

479 According to tradition, it is claimed that there lived some false sages in a thick forest who decided to destroy the Śiva by means of evil mantras. They created a tiger and rushed upon Śiva; the Lord gently killed it and wrapped himself with the skin of the tiger. Unshaken by what had happened, they then sent a serpent, but Śiva kindly took it and put it around his neck like a garland. Next, they then sent a dwarf; the Śiva broke began its back. Śiva resumed his dance again.
defilements and granted entry into heaven’ (PP. 238)\(^\text{480}\). As can be seen in the *Periya Purañam*, the *nāyaṉmār* travelled as extensively to propagate their devotion; one such famous journey is that of the *Kāraikkāl Ammaiṉār* to *Tillai* (PP. 1725-1787)\(^\text{481}\).

In order to establish further the notion of Śiva’s act of madness or one may call a fanatical, His spontaneous action which appear to be ‘violent’, which is an attribute that

\(^{480}\)‘...அப்போது மூச்சுப்பக்கத்தில் அதுமடிய ஆடிய சிலையை...’ (יצירה 238).

\(^{481}\)This *nāyaṉmār* was the only daughter of a very rich merchant in *Karaikkal*. She was christened at birth as *punithavathi* (புனிதவதி) i.e. ‘saintly one’) but was later reverently hailed as by no less a person than Lord Śiva Himself as ‘ammaiye’ (அம்மையே) – ‘O Mother of Mine!’ and not so reverently referred to by *Cuntarar* in his poem by the single word ‘peyār’ (பெயார் : ghost), unadorned by any adjectives, was an exception. She was full of all the house-wifely virtues. If devotee of the Lord came, she served them good unpolluted food and gave them gold and gems whichever they needed. One day, her husband sent from his shop two mangoes with instructions to keep them for his dinner. But before he could come, a devotee came and she, as was her custom, respectfully invited him to partake of food in her house. But, as the vegetable curry was not yet ready, it occurred to her that the mango would be suitable side-dish for the devotee and, accordingly, served him one of the two, which he ate with relish and went, is way. In due course, the husband came and sat for his dinner. When he was taking his food, she brought the remaining mango and served it to him. The fruit was so delicious that he asked her to serve him the other one too! She left place as if she was going to fetch it. She became lost in thought, but the moment she recollected in her mind the feet of the Lord astride the bull who helps one in distress, in her hand reposed an extraordinary sweet fruit. When the husband heard that it was by God’s grace, he would not believe it. Overcome with fear and his mind in a whirl, he thought the lady of bejeweled tresses was some strange goddess, and deciding to leave her, did not tell anyone about it, but lived apart without relationship with her. Very soon, the husband equipped a ship for a mercantile expedition and departed from *Karaikkal* to a country he had in mind. There he prospered exceedingly well and in course of time, he married the daughter of a local merchant and had a daughter by whom he named ‘*punithavathi*’ (புனிதவதி) i.e. ‘saintly one’) in memory of his godly wife. Words reached the father of our lady that her husband was living thus in a town in *Pāṇtināṭu*, and he forthwith, collected some his relatives and took her down to that town with the intention of confronting his son-in-law with his wronged wife. When *punithavathi*’s estranged husband saw them along with his new wife and toddler bowed to the feet of the doe-like wife and said:

‘I am leading my life here by your grace only, and, on that account, this little child bears your name,’ he fell prostrate before her. Further he replied:

‘she i.e. *punithavathi* is not a human being: after I learnt of her being a very great god I left her, and I have named after her this child which I later begot; this is why I fell at her golden feet; do you too similarly worship her’

Then *punithavathi* said with a heart surcharged with emotion:

‘This mass of beauty-laden flesh, which I endured for this man’s sake, I should discard here, and I should get an appropriate wraith’s form with which I may pay obeisance to your feet there’ Saying so, she meditated on the feet of the Lord. She was filled with an overpowering desire to go to the *Kailās* mountain, the abode of Śivan. Crossing all the mountain, giving up walking on her feet, she ascended to the mountain *Kailās* walking on her head. When the Lord Śiva saw this, he exclaimed ‘Oh! My Mother! and proclaimed ‘that the world may be redeemed’. And he graciously commanded her to go to the ancient town of ālangkātu and witness His great dance, and, ever filled with bliss, sing His praises. Even so, she walked back to ālangkātu and there abode and sang in several poems the praises of the Lord. There has been no one else among the devotees of Śivan who reached the *Kailās* mountain and came back. She was an ideal wife, an ideal devotee of God. Love of the Lord was her equipment, love was her craving, love was her life, and love was her boon.

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is often stressed in, by Cēkkiḷār, it would be useful to refer to local myths that are alluded to in the Periya Purāṇam. They should give us ample evidence of Śiva’s act of madness. For instance, the myth of Śiva’s reincarnation as a Kōcēnkaṭ Cōla (PP. 4205-4219)\(^{482}\) differ from the myth about Śiva’s incineration and restoration of Kāmaṉ. A good example of local myth which has a cosmic dimension myths associated with stories of the origin and establishment of a shrine is that of the temple of Cīkāḷi which survives the cosmic deluge (PP. 260)\(^{483}\) and the appearance of the lingam in the ant-hill at Tiruvārūr (PP. 271)\(^{484}\). Hence, in the Periya Purāṇam there is an attempt to link the cosmic deeds and forms of Śiva with his local acts and persona.

It is interesting note in the Periya Purāṇam, Cēkkiḷār while emphasising the cosmic acts of Śiva also emphasises of His acts with those that he performed out of compassion for the nāyaṉmār such as Kaṇṇappar nāyaṉār (PP. 650-830)\(^{485}\). The story of the Kaṇṇappar nāyaṉār is interspersed with the myths found in epics and Purāṇās for example Bhagīratha\(^{486}\), a myth mentioned above, who is considered by Tamil Śaivites to be paradigmatic of certain attitudes of devotion to Śiva. Śiva is the one who rescues

\(^{482}\) For the story of this devotee, see p.144.

\(^{483}\) ‘When the Lord appeared in grace before him, Nampi was filled with fear. As his fear subsided, the desire to press on to Tiruvārūr returned. So having venerated the shrine of Cīkāḷi from a distance, he journeyed on to Tirukōḷakkā, where he offered worship and sung garlands of Tamil song’ (PP. 260).

\(^{484}\) ‘There before the sanctum, he fell to the ground in adoration, worshipping the ancient one who made his dwelling in the ant-hill, the Lord who dwells in the Flower Temple, the Supreme who offer refuge to all, the one of whom Pārvati is a part, the great one who in grace allows his devotees to worship at his lotus feet’ (PP. 271).

\(^{485}\) For the story of this devotee, see p.50.

\(^{486}\) For details on this myth, see. p. 160-161
Tirunāvukkaracar from persecution from the others (PP. 1271-1699). He is the one who conferred arul (grace) upon Caṇṭēcurar who has cut off his own father's leg because he kicked at the Śiva-lingam that the nāyaṉār was worshipping (PP. 1211-1270). Śiva is the one who conferred arul upon Caṇṭēcurar who has cut off his own father's leg because he kicked at the Śiva-lingam that the nāyaṉār was worshipping (PP. 1211-1270). He is the one who conferred arul (grace) upon Caṇṭēcurar who has cut off his own father's leg because he kicked at the Śiva-lingam that the nāyaṉār was worshipping (PP. 1211-1270).

Śiva is the one who shown His gracious acts or deeds towards Kōcceṅkaṭ Cōlar, the spider-turned-king, and Kaṇṇappar the hunter who gave Śiva his eye. Śiva destroys the triple city of the demons (PP. 1307). He bears the Ganges on his head (PP. 1). Furthermore, Śiva is presented as one who goes so far as to suffer for his devotees. Evermore is the fact, it highlights the fact that Śiva is a god of arul (grace) who acts in sense of ‘madness’ due to His love for His devotees. He is ‘supreme the one whom Umā is a part, the great one who in arul (grace) allows his devotees to worship at his lotus feet’ (PP. 271).

It is clear in virtually every place where Śiva is referred to in Cēkkilār’s work, as shown above, one or more conventional attributes together with ingenious ones drawn from rich iconography of Śiva are mentioned. So they become pointers to him, or shorthand ways of recalling the visual memories of a familiar beloved image. An often stated

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487 For the story of this devotee, see p. 145.
488 ‘...’ (Gll. 1312).
489 ‘...’ (Gll. 1).
490 ‘...’ (Gll. 18).

In this myth Cēkkilār narrates that Tirumāl and Ayag, the two gods proceed to argue about which is the supreme God and creator of the world. At that moment Śiva manifests himself as a towering lingam of fire, which stretches from the ocean up into the heavens. The two gods seek to measure its extent, Ayag by flying upwards as a swan, and Tirumāl by digging downwards as a boar. Their attempt ends in failure, and the cosmic lingam bursts open to reveal none other than the Lord Śiva. As the two rivals bow before him, Śiva proclaims himself to be the Lord of all. The myth is often cited by Cēkkilār Śiva’s matchless nature, and in particular his pre-eminence over Tirumāl and Ayag.

491 ‘...’ (Gll. 271).

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aim of religious pilgrimage in nāyaṇār’s religiosity is to see Śiva at a given shrine, and the very sight of him can give untold joy. This highlights the fact that the nāyaṇār’s devotion relies on the sense of sight of Śiva which for them give untold joy. Neither the local myths nor the philosophical concepts alter the nāyaṇār’s experientially based image previously discussed; they merely serve to broaden and deepen it. Hence, it is obvious that the Periya Purāṇam presents a richly textured image of Śiva drawn from pan-Indian myths, symbol, local tradition, and philosophical concept and the above all the nāyaṇār’s experientially based image of Śiva.

5.4 Summary

Cēkkiḻār’s Periya Purāṇam is not a systematic treatise on philosophy or theology. It is a hagiography. It does not argue or analyse; rather it praise the life of the nāyaṇmār whose devotion was manifested in service and their moral living. Nonetheless, it is in those narrations philosophical ways of addressing Śiva are founded. This philosophy of Cēkkiḻār or rather his philosophical understanding of Śiva’s nature can be understood as a philosophy by appellation rather than a philosophy by logical reasoning. It is clear that Cēkkiḻār uses images and metaphors to present his theological vision of Śiva rather than abstract and discursive rational thought.

By doing so, Cēkkiḻār affirms Śiva as ‘dancer’ (nāṭarācaṇṭ) as a dominant feature. It is this which underlies, bonds, and animates the various other aspects of Him; all converge around the image of His ‘dance’. Whatever Śiva does, He does out of His ‘madness’ – with a sense of fanatical love He has for His devotees. Release (vīṭu: vīṭ), grace (arul: āruḷ) and ‘madness’ (pittan: pittan) are all aspects of Śiva’s
dance. To be released, to be free of bondage, is to join Śiva in a realm transcending purposive action, effort, and the nexus of cause and effect. Likewise, Śiva’s arul (grace) is undeserved and free. This makes Śiva the ultimate significance of the nāyaṇmār’s life who is experienced and expressed in devotion as a personal God. The significant feature of Cēkkilār’s Śiva as a personal God is that He is the God of love. Śiva’s deeds, incarnation and compassion, are all centred on the image of Śiva. Śiva is madly in love with his devotees.

It is also significant that Cēkkilār often identifies the dance of Śiva with the Naṭarācaṇ-Śiva of Tillai. This cosmic dance is interpreted as Śiva’s cosmic deed of creation. It is, in this deed the nāyaṇmār long to participate. Śiva’s granting of arul (grace), intervention and possession of his devotees, are accomplished as a part of his deeds. It should also be noted that Śiva, as presented in the Periya Purāṇam, acts out of purpose which is to be noted in Cēkkilār’s theological vision. This vision offers a distinct image of Śiva as the personal God of the nāyaṇmār’s devotion. This generates a new kind of realization, a transformation of consciousness of the nāyaṇmār which makes one engage in service so as to transform the ordinary mode of existence into an extraordinary living in Śiva. The total spontaneity of Śiva dance can be an enormously powerful and attractive image of what Śiva is like-and, by extension, of what it must be like to be possessed by, saved by, transformed by, such a God i.e. Śiva: for the nāyaṇmār and Cēkkilār to be in Śiva is to be in his service.
CHAPTER SIX
THE GOAL OF NĀYĀNMĀR’S LIFE IN THE PERIYA PURĀṆAM

6.1 Introduction

This chapter will focus on the goal of the nāyānmār as presented in the Periya Purāṇam i.e. the ultimate goal of their existence. The goal of life for nāyānmār is to get rid of, wash away or to cleanse i.e. to free them from the clutches of taints or impurities (māsu, malam) that obscure the innate purity of their self (PP. 4201) and prevent one from embracing the feet of the Śiva (PP. 3995). As a result, as a noteworthy aspect of his emphasis on devotion manifested in nāyānmār’s service and moral living, Cēkkiḻār draws attention to ‘three impurities’ (mummalam) (PP. 238) that stands as greater hindrances to the realization of Śiva. Aside from this

492 The word māsu (māsu) in Tamil has many meanings apart from the sense in which it is used primarily by Cēkkiḻār i.e. stain, taint, tarnish (mōr; alukku). The word also communicates meanings such as (i) spot (mār; mār), (ii) defect, fault, flaw (kum: kuṟam) (iv) blackness (kum: karumai) (v) darkness (iru) (vi) cloud (mēham), (vii) cord of a net (vāla; valai vadam) in Tamil. Cēkkiḻār also uses frequently the word malam to convey the idea of taint.

493 ‘...We have worshipped the feet of Nēcar who to reach that goal severed the bondage of besetting deeds...’ (PP. 4201).

494 ‘...Thus day by day the prince followed the path of service, with a pure heart and flawless love. So by his genuine devotion he attained the shade of Śiva’s feet that state from which there is no return’ (PP. 3995).

495 ‘...Those who worship here are freed from the three defilements and granted entry into heaven ...’ (PP. 238). The three defilements – the three bonds which separate the soul (pati) from God and entail rebirth; they are āṉavam (āṉavam) (A sense of ‘I’ ness, ego-centeredness), karmam or viṉvai (viṉvai) (deeds good and evil and their fruit) and māyai (māyai) (entrapped in the material world). They were later systematized in the Siddhanta philosophy. These three defilements or bonds are delusive in essence and character. These impurities produce false enjoyment and lead the souls (pasu) towards bondage (pantam). Among them, ‘āṉavam’ is the natural ‘taint’ that affects the soul and promotes a false sense. It blocks the unlimited intelligence of the soul. As a result, the soul is driven to a state of imperfection and ‘āṉavam’ causes detrimental effects to the soul. As long as the human soul develops a sense of pride and resorts to unfair means to achieve its unethical ends, rarely can the soul attain emancipation. Under the influence of ‘āṉavam’ however, the thoughts, words, and deeds of the
 paramount need for the washing away of ‘taints’ (māsu), there is ‘positive’ good to
be gained from consorting with other devotees of Śiva as exemplified in the Periya
Purāṇam (PP. 4046). Those who have overcome the impurities, hence not caught in
the current of self-centred predicaments praise Śiva and His devotees; they are the people
of pre-eminence (PP. 4154). Ĉekkīḻar relates that the nāyaṉmār performed conducts
that ranged from simple chanting of the Five-Letter-Formula (PP. 4199), from
incessant mental prayer to feeding the devotees of God unceasingly in days of plenty and
in days of poverty (PP. 4071), from having the honour of being the parent of a devotee
to the laying down one’s life rather than harm a devotee (PP. 4233). This chapter
investigates, first the goal of nāyaṉmār’s existence as presented by Ĉekkīḻar, and

souls are also corrupted. Viani is all these three. Insofar as thoughts, words, and deeds arise from a
false sense of “I” and “mine,” they become an impurity or bond. Māyai (khia) is the primordial stuff or
matter out of which all worlds, physical objects, and the sensory and internal faculties of souls are made.
These are meant for giving some enlightenment to souls, partially redeeming them from the darkness of
ignorance. But here again, under the influence of ‘āṉavam’ (Mz), these products are used for one’s
selfish enjoyment and they thus become a bond. In brief, ‘āṉavam’ in its nominative aspect prompts a
wrong sense of “I” and thus makes vinai an impurity or bond; ‘āṉavam’ in its possessive aspect, by making
the soul claim the fruits of its vinai and all objects of enjoyment exclusively for itself, also makes māyai an
impurity of bond. Vinai, the twin deeds of good and evil, birth after birth, actually helps the soul in its
struggle to gain freedom from the bonds of the cycle of deaths and rebirths. See. Devasenapathi, 1997, p.
90-93. It must be pointed out here that Ĉekkīḻar does not explicitly mentions or names the three impurities.
He only refers to them collectively as three impurities.

496 ‘...māsu nityam maṇḍalā, āśeṣanāmā, nāiṉmārā nīcchāntvamā avānām...’ (GPPP. 4046).

497 ‘...avatāram maṇḍalā, āṭvānām, yatrābhāvatāmā śatamā, māyam āvām...’ (GPPP. 4154).

498 For example, Ĉekkīḻar presents Nēca nāyaṉmār as one who dedicated his thoughts to flower feet of
Haran, his words to the Five-Letter-formula and his works to the servant of the Lord.

499 Ĉekkīḻar presents as one who by his kindly words, gave pleasure to all, and was more generous in his
donations to the servants of Śiva.

500 Praise of Icaiñāṉiyār the mother of Nampi, the servant of Śiva.

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secondly it affirms that for Čēkkilār the goal of the nāyaṉmār is to gain release from encumbrances of the impurities and to be a servant to the servant of the Śiva (PP. 345)\textsuperscript{501}. This chapter explores the following concerns.

6.2. The Goal of Life of the Nāyaṉmār.


6.5 Summary

6.2 The Goal of Life of the Nāyaṉmār

In the Periya Purāṇam, Čēkkilār eulogizes the Tamil spiritual leaders i.e. nāyaṉmār who have unilaterally considered Śiva as their master and themselves as slaves (PP. 4162)\textsuperscript{502}. At the same time Čēkkilār extols that this ‘sages have gained release from the three eternal impurities and abide by the moral duties of their caste’ (PP.4173)\textsuperscript{503}. Elsewhere Čēkkilār points out that ‘it is the feet of Śiva that are the source of bondage and release’ (PP. 300)\textsuperscript{504}. The goal of nāyaṉmār or their ardent desire is to ‘attain bliss in the shadow of the Lord’s feet’ (PP. 1034)\textsuperscript{505} which would ‘release them from all impurities that thwarts the vision of seeing and serving Śiva’ (PP. 238)\textsuperscript{506}. ‘Even if the whole created

\textsuperscript{501} ‘...\textit{முடியும் கைதுக்கு ஆயுக்கலாம் அமிர்தம்}’ (G.I.I. 345).
\textsuperscript{502} ‘...\textit{பூமியே பாத்தையும் மறைத்து என்முற்றது மரண்கலையை நோடும் ஆசை முறையுள்ள கவிகிண்ணத்தின் ஆசை விளையாட்டின் ஆல் வானிலாய்}’ (G.I.I. 4162).
\textsuperscript{503} ‘...\textit{நூற்றுகள் தருமையும் அந்தோய் காட்டாம் அழகுகளை வெள்ளைத் தமிழிலுள்ள ஆகையை}’ (G.I.I. 4173)
\textsuperscript{504} ‘பூமியே முடியும் கைது மறைத்து என்முற்ற ஆல் வானிலாய் முறையை!’ (G.I.I. 300).
\textsuperscript{505} ‘நூற்றுகள் தருமையும் அந்தோய் காட்டாம் ஆட்சு முறையை! (G.I.I. 1034).
\textsuperscript{506} ‘...\textit{நூற்றுகள் தருமையும் கைது என்முற்ற ஆட்சுகளை அழகு முறையை}’ (G.I.I. 238).
order falls into chaos, these devotees will never forget the flower feet of him. They will stand fast in the path of love, rock-like in virtue!’ (PP. 142)\textsuperscript{507}. In another instant Cēkkilār recounts:

‘Just as he spent his time washing the dust and dirt out of the clothes of the devotees of the Lord, he attempted to expunge the taint of former deeds and the three impurities which lead to repeated births’ (PP. 1196)\textsuperscript{508}.

What should be noted here in these verses is the reference to nāyaymār as ones who attempted to ‘expunge the taint of former deeds and the three impurities which leads to repeated births’ (PP. 1196)\textsuperscript{509} in order to embrace the feet of Śiva. Here the words the ‘taint’ (मासु: māsu) meaning ‘stains’ or ‘spots’ of ‘deeds’ (विणी: vīnī) and the ‘three impurities’ (मल्लम मुंद्रम: mallam mūndrum) which is also referred to by Cēkkilār as eternal (आतिवरुम: ātivarum) (PP. 4173)\textsuperscript{510} is spoken as tollai (तोलाई) literally meaning ‘troublesome’ or ‘obstruction’ which are delusive in character and essence and leads one to perform ‘two-fold deeds’ (इरु-विनाई: iru-vīnai) (PP. 4168)\textsuperscript{511} of good and evil and entail repeated births (परुम पिरवी: perum piravi). Though Cēkkilār does not explicitly mentions or names the three impurities\textsuperscript{512}, as stated in the verse, it is these impurities which produce false enjoyments and leads one towards bondage (पांतम: paṇṭam) and create the capacity for experience and repeated births (परुम पिरवी: perum piravi).

\textsuperscript{507} ‘पुरुष ऊपरी भक्तिमानली साधनमात्रा नष्टे जीतमात्रा माहितीय भक्ते भक्तिमात्रा जीतमात्रा जीताय कालिकमात्रा जीताय जीताय...’ (GīG. 142).
\textsuperscript{508} ‘चेक्किलार ब्रह्मेश्वरस्वाम्य विचारमात्रा अवयवात्मिकता तथा अवयवात्मिकता तथा अवयवात्मिकता तथा...’ (GīG. 1196).
\textsuperscript{509} ‘लल्लाम मुंद्रायमात्रा माहितीय भक्ते भक्ते भक्ते भक्ते...’ (GīG. 1196).
\textsuperscript{510} ‘...अतिवरुम अतिवरुम...’ (GīG. 4173)
\textsuperscript{511} ‘...तोलाई तोलाई तोलाई...’ (GīG. 4168).
\textsuperscript{512} For the description of the three impurities, see p. 00
Here, the word *viṉai* (-actions) etymologically means ‘action’. The words ‘two-fold deeds’ [*இறு-viṉai* (PP. 4168)] or *irumai viṉaikkum oruvadivam* : [*இறு-ma* *viṉai* *_oruvadivam* (PP. 1220)] referred implies the fruits of acts as good and bad, and ‘oruvadivam’ (oruvadivam) signifies the equipoise of mind to take the fruits of and good deeds, alike. The ‘two-fold deeds’ of good and bad (*இறு-viṉai*) as Cēkkiḻār notes ‘like a snake that can produce rare jewels or deadly poison; Eccatattāya was capable of deeds of good and ill’ (PP. 1220). Cēkkiḻār points out that the sense organs prevent the one from proceeding towards the spiritual path, while one is already suffering and oscillating in the net of ‘two-fold deeds’ (*இறு-viṉai*).

According to Cēkkiḻār the acts of good and bad in one are like the precious stone as well as the poison of a snake respectively (PP. 734. 1215). Actions, either good or bad along with their results, lead one towards ‘bondage’ (*paṇṭam*: பஞ்சம்). Good acts produce merits and subsequently pleasures, while the evil acts demerits and suffering. Till the fruits of these acts are exhausted there would be births, the best way to reduce the residual impression of the past births is to attain the permanent bliss by performing service to Śiva. Cēkkiḻār recalls that Iyarpakaiyār, in every respect, was for to attain release (*vīṭu* : விடு) but this tiny bit of attachment to his wife stood in his way. Śiva

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513 ‘...இறு-viṉai ஒருவாதியம் அருங்குறையும்’ (க.4168).
514 ‘...இறு-கை அருங்குறை அண்டவாத் அருங்குறையும் அண்டவாத் பிறந்த இறு-கைகளும் ஒருவாதிய அளஞ்சுயம்’ (க.1220).
515 ‘...இறு-கை அருங்குறையும் அண்டவாத் அளஞ்சுயம் அண்டவாத் பிறந்த இறு-கைகளும் ஒருவாதிய அளஞ்சுயம்’ (க.1220).
516 ‘...அண்டவாத் ஸ்வாத்து முன்னலையும் முன்னலையும் முன்னலையும் முன்னலையும் பிறந்த இறு-கைகளும்...இறு-கைகளும் ஒருவாதிய அளஞ்சுயம் அண்டவாத் பிறந்த இறு-கைகளும் அண்டவாத் அளஞ்சுயம் அண்டவாத் பிறந்த இறு-கைகளும்’ (க.734).
wanted to cleanse the nāyakār of the small stain (malam) which stood in the way of his gaining release (PP. 404-439)\textsuperscript{517}. It also must be pointed out that the notion of ‘irumai vigaikkum oruvadivam’ (PP. 1220)\textsuperscript{518} involves the three phases of time; past, present, and future. In the present life the aspirant has to experience the result or the fruits of his past deeds (munviṇaippayan) so that he can prevent the future births. She (Tilakavati) prayed, Cēkkiḷār notes, ‘as the result of the past misdeeds, my brother has fallen into the trap of a false religion’ (PP. 1316)\textsuperscript{519}. The Lord replied ‘in a previous birth your brother was a hermit performed penances enough to gain my feet’ (PP. 1318)\textsuperscript{520}. Hence, the notion of rebirth (perumpiravī) is linked with the notion of vīgai, for Cēkkiḷār one cannot think of the one without the other. It is the firm understanding that the present behavioral patterns of an individual are the reflection of the deeds of previous birth.

It is for this reason Cēkkiḷār while recounting the story of each nāyakār describes austerities, heritage, and penances of the nāyakār in their previous births. While narrating the life of Tirunāvukkaracar, Cēkkiḷār notes that the nāyakār was proceeding towards Tillai, he saw the cuckoos addressing each other: ‘Forsake the way that leads hated rebirth! Deeds both good and bad enchain you. Break your bonds and

\textsuperscript{517} For the story of the life of Iyarpakaiyār nāyakār, see p. 238.
\textsuperscript{518} ‘...அந்தான் பவிர்வு அர்த்தமான குறுகாய் ஆகியவற்றுக்கான அர்த்தப்படுத்தும் நான் பார்க்கிறேன் விளக்காய் வளர்ச்சியான பக்கத்தில் நூற்றாண்டு மடக்கிறேன்’ (கோவில் 1220).
\textsuperscript{519} ‘... குருகாய் காட்டமுதல் ... அர்த்தமான பக்கமும் குத்திரையும்’ (கோவில் 1316).
\textsuperscript{520} ‘... காற்றுடன் வளர்ச்சியம் அடங்கும் அர்த்தமும் காற்றுடன் குத்திரையும் கோவிள் காற்றுடன் குத்திரையும்...’ (கோவில் 1318).
draw near!’ (PP. 1429)\textsuperscript{521} i.e. one should go to Tillai to get rid of the enmity caused by births (پരபகای: piravippakaineri) to diminish the increasing two-fold activity (iruvigai perukithe) and to reduce the bonds. The nāyaṁmār had as their objective in life to dismiss or ‘expunge the taint of former deeds and the three impurities which lead to repeated births’ (PP. 1196)\textsuperscript{522} and enjoy the bliss derived from the submission to the feet of Śiva (PP. 1034)\textsuperscript{523}.

Remarkably, Čēkkiḻār brings forth in the Cākkiya nāyaṉār\textsuperscript{524} purāṇam an aspect of Śiva which is interesting. Čēkkiḻār points out that ‘the act, the agent, the fruit of action and the one who binds the fruits of action to the agent: he learnt that these four basic elements constitute reality, and that no other religion but Śaivism held this teaching. By virtue of the penances which he performed, this devotee was enlightened by the grace (arul) of Śiva and came to see Śiva as Supreme’ (PP. 3645)\textsuperscript{525}. Therefore, the real object to be realized on earth is Śiva and the nāyaṁār realized this truth by Śiva’s arul (grace). Therefore, the bondage and release are caused by Śiva Himself and it is His arul (grace) which enabled the nāyaṁmār to cast off their impurities and attain the feet of the Lord.

Śiva annihilates the impediments and makes the nāyaṁmār shine in their pristine purity. Śiva directs the impurities to His benevolence to the nāyaṁmār during the

\textsuperscript{521} ‘...பெருவிப்பகையினர் வேறின் திகைகளை விளர்க்கும் வேறுப் பொருள்களுடன் மூன்றுடன் பொருளைத் தன்னை பொருடமாகும்...’ (వிள. 1429).
\textsuperscript{522} ‘சத்ர ராமதூரியால விழாவின் அம்மனால் குத்ர் ராமம் குரும்பாழக அம்மனால் விளர்க்கும் சிறு திகையால் கிளையால் ஓவி ராமம் கூறும் அம்மனால் செய்வதிகையில் காணாமல் நோய் கொள்ள தையால் அம்மனுக்கு ஆக்க எக் பொருட்’ (விள. 1196).
\textsuperscript{523} ‘விளையாடும் முக்கியமான அடுங்கும் விழாவின் தொடர்குறியின்’ (விள. 1034).
\textsuperscript{524} For the life of story of this nāyaṁār, see p. 70
\textsuperscript{525} ‘எஞ்சியாலாம் வேறுப் பொருளுக்கு வேறிய வேறுப் பொருள்களைத் தன்னை பொருடமாக அம்மனத்தில் பொருட்கள் நோய் கொள்ள தையால் அம்மனுக்கு ஆக்க எக் பொருட்’ (விள. 3645).
stage of their bondage. Hence, Čēkkitār assert that the medicine offered by Śiva alone can cure the disease of birth: ‘He is both medicine and mantra’ (PP. 2198)\(^{526}\) and ‘for those who in their present birth meditate on him as the one true shining light, he dispels the darkness of falsehood and of actions, good and bad’ (PP. 2733)\(^{527}\). Tirunāvukkaracar did not succumb to the tortures of the king, since he was resolute that Śiva was there to offer the appropriate effects, and rescue him (PP. 2601-2671). Čēkkitār speaks of the evils of deeds or viṇai (அியாயம்) and Śiva’s justification of eradicating them. He maintains that the foremost duty of Śiva is to annihilate the influence of viṇai (அியாயம்) of those who surrender to His holy Feet (PP. 1034)\(^{528}\).

It should be noted, Čēkkitār, after invocatory verses, describes ‘the greatness of the holy mountain’ (‘துருக்களைச்சிபுரம்’ : tirumalaicciṟapu) i.e. Sacred-Hill of Śiva (PP.11-50), ‘the greatness of the holy land’ (‘துருந்துச்சிபுரம்’ : tirunāṭṭucciṟapu) i.e. Cōla-country (PP. 51-85) and ‘the glory of the holy city’ (‘திருநாகரச்சிபுரம்’ : tirunakaraccipu) i.e. Tiruvārur in succession. Čēkkitār uses the prefix ‘Tiru’ (திரு) or ‘Holy’ before the three places, notably, hill, country, and city – to indicate the admirable nature of these three places. While explaining the beauty of these places, Čēkkitār infuses religious fervor in every verse that the earth is the sacred place where in one can realize oneself. For example while singing the greatness of the city Čēkkitār notes ‘…it is the dwelling place of the Lord’ (PP. 86)\(^{529}\).

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\(^{526}\) ’...துருந்துச்சிபுரம்...’ (ng.G. 2198).

\(^{527}\) ‘திருக்கோவில் திருக்கோவில் திருக்கோவில் திருமலைச்சிபுரத்தில் அலட்சிமல் செய்தும் அல்லாஹ்நின் மது முக்கோவில் திருக்கோவில் திருமலைச்சிபுரத்தில் அலட்சிமல் செய்தும் அல்லாஹ்நின் மது முக்கோவில் திருமலைச்சிபுரத்தில் அலட்சிமல் செய்தும் அல்லாஹ்நின் மது முக்கோவில்’ (ng.G. 2733).

\(^{528}\) ‘திருக்கோவில் திருக்கோவில் திருக்கோவில் திருமலைச்சிபுரத்தில் திருக்கோவில்’ (ng.G. 1034).

\(^{529}\) ‘திருக்கோவில் திருக்கோவில் திருக்கோவில் திருமலைச்சிபுரத்தில் திருக்கோவில் திருக்கோவில் திருக்கோவில் திருக்கோவில் திருக்கோவில்’ (ng.G. 86).
What should be pointed is that all the constituent elements of the earth have been sanctified by the Cēkkiḻār so as to make the readers feel the thrill of divinity at every verse. This view makes clear that the world has been created by Śiva out of his abundant love towards the imperfect nāyaṁmār to provide them an opportunity to think, speak and act in terms of Śiva, to cleanse the stains of impurities or the impressions of binding viṇai (திக்கு) and become perfect. The benevolence of Śiva has brought the suffering selves of the nāyaṁmār into light from the darkness. Cēkkiḻār points to this when he notes that the nāyaṁmār sang:

‘O Lord, you say I am to leave your fair golden feet and become subject to delusion in a human body. Then, Lord, when I lose my senses, worthless as I am, in grace make me your own’ (PP. 38)

Therefore, the foremost duty of Śiva is annihilate the influence of actions of good and bad of the nāyaṁmār who surrender to the feet of Him. As presented in this verse, it also must be noted, that the human body is the instrument of knowledge, and that the world of enjoyment are created not to make the nāyaṁmār go astray but to perpetuate them in the right spirit and strive for release. The life histories of the nāyaṁmār show the impoverished condition of their life under the empirical circumstances like, family, clan, profession, etc., and also their hectic efforts to vanquish such ensnaring impurities that attaches to their self. As soon as the impediments which hitherto were tantalizing them fade away, the nāyaṁmār shine in effulgence and enter into a state of unalloyed bliss (PP. 1020)

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530 ‘...if my built-in expectations of attaining any material advantage fail to come true, then attain the spiritual realm above’ (PP. 38).

531 ‘...Finally he attained the feet of the Lord, and received the special boon of ruling in the spiritual realm above’ (PP. 1020).
The moment the nāyamṉār become recipients of Śiva’s arul (grace) and wash away all the ‘taints of deeds’, they wish that everyone to enjoy the fruits of religious life like themselves. Cēkkilār describes the laudable venture of Cambandar in offering release to the entire human-folk who have gathered to witness his wedding proceedings. Cēkkilār notes that the nāyamṉār recited the Five-Letter-Prayer as the true path of wisdom to everyone and made an appeal to the gathering: ‘everyone should enter into the effulgent light so as to cast off the evils of birth’ (PP. 3151). The nāyamṉār’s close associates, his parents, relatives, and other entered into the huge effulgent light sent by Śiva so escaped the cycle of rebirth. The ascetics, devotees and sages who chanted the Vedas, those had come to worship and other whom arul (grace) has brought to that place that they might win release; all entered the infinite pillar of light (PP. 3155). Cambandar with his newly wedded spouse had made a around the beauteous light and entered. He entered the light; he became the very embodiment of wisdom and became ‘one with the Lord’ (‘ṉṟiʻuṭaṉ āṉār’ (PP. 3156). The lives of Tirunāvukkaracar, Campantar and others who had been bestowed with arul (grace) are highly remarkable in the sense that till they attained the final released they served the people (PP. 2214-2230), imparted divine message (PP. 2282-2287), eradicated evils (PP. 2231-2240), poverty (PP. 2325-2347), famine (PP. 1510 - 1527) etc.; curtailed the belligerent nature of other religious cults, and above all showed the pathway to perfection to the entire humanity through life of devotion manifested in service and moral living.
The release of one from these impurities also implies union with Śiva. They nāyamṉār ‘became one with Śiva’ (‘நேயம்நார் ஆனார்’ : onri’utag ānār) (PP. 3156), attuning to the nature of Śiva (PP. 1697). Such a ‘unitive’ experience will annihilate the bonds of the life and the nāyamṉār attain the arul (grace) of endlessly serving the Śiva in the eternal abode. They attain equanimity, i.e. they begin to perceive the good and bad alike. Cēkkilār poignantly refers to this as ‘irumai viṉaikkum oruvadivam’ (இருமை வினங்கும் ஊவதெயும்) (PP. 1220); ‘oruvadivam’ (ஊவதெயும்) signifies the equipoise of mind to take the fruits of and good deeds, alike. At this stage, the nāyamṉār simply invoke the presence of Śiva and perform deeds in a disinterested manner. When the equipoise between the good and activities arises, there prevails neither fascination by the worldly charms or dejection by worldly misfortunes. The nāyamṉār shall not experience the fruit of their actions, since they have performed them in the states of ‘Servants of Śiva’ (tiruṭonṭar: திருஷ்டோன்‌டர்). When the qualities like pleasure and pain, and delight and harm, like and dislikes have been stabilized, the individual is one freed from attractive of self-oriented activities. There arises, then, an equilibrium of acts and the nāyamṉār came to feel that they are not the agent of actions and the thoughts of self-assertion gradually wither away. Cēkkilār narrates Tirukkurpputtoṇṭar did the service of washing the clothes of devotees which cleansed the blemishes of the two-fold activity, mitigated the force of the impurities and stopped the sources of rebirth (PP. 1196).
Throughout his work, Cēkkilār successfully elucidates the means by which the nāyamṅār annihilated the forces of their impurities and prepared them to imbibe the benevolence of Śiva.

The nāyamṅār turn their attention towards Śiva, fostering a great reverence, thereby gaining true knowledge. Therefore, the change that is initiated by Śiva, infuses an ontological change in the ‘objective’ nature or state of the nāyamṅār. This release, therefore, is not a negative liberation of the individual from bondage. Rather, the nāyaṅṅār is radically changed from all that entangles them, to a positive state of existence of the self in the Śiva-realms; this is the enlightening bliss of serving the Lord. Śiva captures the nāyamṅār with his arul (grace) from the forces of impurities that impede their human existence. The nāyamṅār invariably acknowledges that they had been enslaved by Śiva (PP. 225)\(^{539}\). Cuntarar was rescued by Śiva himself in the former’s wedding hall when he was about to be caught in the maladies of family life. Śiva appeared in the guise of an old sage and teased the nāyaṅṅār and finally revealed his identity. Thus if one relinquishes attachment and leads a life of detachment, release becomes imminent. Towards the end of every narration of the life story of the nāyamṅār, Cēkkilār says that the nāyamṅār had either reached the golden feet of the Śiva or became the chief attendant of Him at Kailās (PP. 970, 1020)\(^{540}\).

\(^{539}\) ‘Just as he spent his time washing the dust and dirt out of the clothes of the devotees of the Lord, he attempted to expunge the taint of former deeds and the three impurities which lead to repeated births’ (PP. 1196).

\(^{540}\) ‘...the Lord then said “Come just as you are, and live with us”...’ (PP. 970).
Cēkkilār also explains the state of nāyamṉār who had realized the feet of Śiva.

He narrates the nāyaṉār was serving Śiva by way removing the waste materials inside the precincts of the temple, Śiva tested him by placing valuable stones. The nāyaṉār did not discriminate among grass, stone, gold, pearls and dwindled not in his utterance and hence he threw them in the pond. The divine damsels intended metrically to meddle with his mystical state of unified consciousness, but in vain. As the nāyaṉār was immersed in the feet of Śiva with inseparable thought, glowing love and austere nature, he stood firm in his service with divine illumination and with undivided consciousness. He made an earnest appeal to Śiva through his mellifluous hymns to keep him under his feet, since he had submitted everything to him (PP. 1686-703). At the end of the narration Cēkkilār points out that:

‘Tirunāvukkaracar was transformed into the likeness of Śiva’s joy and wisdom, the ultimate attainment, and he reposed beneath the feet of the great God’ (PP. 1697).541

Here the nāyaṉār is presented as one enjoyed exclusively Śiva’s joy and wisdom (‘Śivāṉanta nāṉavaṭivē’: Śivāṉanta nāṉavaṭivē). So the nāyaṉār had attained the very gracious form of Śiva i.e. Śivananda (‘Śivāṉanta’: Śivananda) or Śiva-bliss: sublimely blissful experience of Śiva. Hence, the nāyaṉār is presented as one who fully lives Śiva; someone who has gained Śiva, firmly assimilated knowledge of the self and is released from all the entails them while living in a human body, free from rebirth. The same view

In another occasion Cēkkilār recounts:

‘...Finally he attained the feet of the Lord, and received the special boon of ruling in the spiritual realm above’ (PP. 1020).

541 “...Finally he attained the feet of the Lord, and received the special boon of ruling in the spiritual realm above’ (PP. 1020).
had been held by Cēkkiḻār in the life account of the Murukar nāyaṉār (PP. 1022-1035)\(^{542}\), Tirunāḷaiippoōvār (PP. 1046-1077)\(^{543}\) and Āṉāyar nāyaṉār Purāṇam (PP. 931-972)\(^{544}\).

Hence, all those who bow before Śiva as sincere devotees will enjoy the fruits of their deed devoid of distress, since they perform austerities as devout ‘persons’ of Śiva.

6.3 The Pathways to Release: Various Means of Release followed by the Nāyaṉmār

The unshakable conviction in the efficacy of Śiva cutting the root of action that leads to bondage, the nāyaṉmār also simply invoked the blessings of Śiva and performed the deeds of service. They declared that even the very name of Śiva when chanted is sufficient to subdue the viñai (viñai) i.e. action good and bad. Hence, as a necessary source of inspiration, chanting the Five-letter-Prayer became part and parcel of every aspect of the nāyaṉmār life. While describing the birth place of Caṇṭēcurar, Cēkkiḻār, beautifully narrated it with divine fervor and religious inspiration thus: ‘the end product

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\(^{542}\) This nāyaṉār was aware that loyalty to the holy ash of the primal Lord was indeed true riches. Accordingly he invariably followed the customs of not taking food himself until he had prepared food for the devotee of the Lord and seen them eat. As from day to day he took pleasure in performing loving service of this kind, with the number of devotees that flocked to his door, all his inherited wealth was soon exhausted. He sold his slaves, his land and all that he possessed in order to continue feeding the needy devotees, but still he was not satisfied. Eventually, when he could find no further resources in that town to carry on this service, he was himself reduced to poverty and dejection. This devotee had formerly learnt the art of gambling as a means of making money, by practicing of gambling, he was able to perform the service there which was his chief aim. The nāyaṉār would keep his conscience clear by not handling personally any of the gains which thus accrued. To keep the process free from taint, all his gains would go straight to the cooks. Then after all the devotees had eaten, he himself would eat with the last sitting so as to be above suspicion.

\(^{543}\) For the life of the devotee, see p. 13.

\(^{544}\) This nāyaṉār is an example for a person leading a very simple life reaching the highest state of yōga - getting released and becoming one with Śiva - just by the whole hearted love for God. The nāyaṉār worshipped the Lord with the music. He served only the Lord who dances with his words, body, mind and action. His love for the Lord flowed from his heart. He selected a bamboo which had all the superior qualities that are said in the scriptures and made a flute as per the rules. He played the Five Letter Prayer of the Lord on the flute. His love made him see Śiva in the world and stay with Him in bliss forever.
of music is melody; of milk, sweetness; of the eye, sight; of thought, the Five-Letter-Prayer; of the sky rain; of the Vedas, Śaivism’ (PP. 1219).545

The nāyāṉār rarely forget to recite the Five-Letter-Prayers. Ĉēkkilār often mentions with admiration about the reciting of the Five-Letter-Prayer by the nāyāṉmār. Ĉēkkilār praises Campantar as the one who pointed to the recital of the Five-Letter-Prayer as the path of true wisdom to all humankind (PP. 3151). Campantar, according to Ĉēkkilār is the one who explained the deep intricacies of the Five-Letter-Prayer as the source of all the original mantras (PP. 2169). Ĉēkkilār also praises Campantar as the one who realized the benefit of chanting the Five-Letter-Prayer i.e. the ultimate benefit of chanting is to attain release (PP. 1981).548

In the narration of the life of Cōmōci māṟaṉ, Ĉēkkilār opines that the serious contemplation of the Five-Letter-Prayer by the nāyāṉmār as an obligatory duty is for the enlightenment of one’s inner faculty; he was steadfast in the daily discipline of reciting Śiva’s Five-Letter-Prayer as the means of gaining insight (PP. 3637). During the time of inner turmoil and mental restlessness, the recital of the Five-Letter-Prayer is believed to offer solace. In the pursuit of release, surrendering oneself to the feet of the Lord is the major device. Importantly in crucial circumstances the nāyāṉmār completely depend

545 ‘பாதிக்கம் பெரும் தீர்மானம், பெரும் பெரும் தீர்மானம் தீர்மானம் தீர்மானம் ஒருமு தீர்மானம் அதிகாரம் தீர்மானம் தீர்மானம் தீர்மானம் ஒருமு தீர்மானம் தீர்மானம் தீர்மானம் அதிகாரம் தீர்மானம் அதிகாரம்...’ (இலங்கை 1219).
546 ‘முடிவுகூற்றுச் சாகச் சாகச் சாகச் சாகச் சாகச் சாகச் சாகச் சாகச் சாகச் சாகச் சாகச்...’ (இலங்கை 3151).
547 ‘...அதிகாரம் தீர்மானம் என்றுங்கள் என்று அதிகாரம் என்று அதிகாரம்...’ (இலங்கை 2169).
548 ‘... தீர்மானம் என்றுங்கள் என்று தீர்மானம் தீர்மானம் அதிகாரம்...’ (இலங்கை 1981).
549 ‘... தீர்மானம் என்றுங்கள் என்று தீர்மானம் தீர்மானம் என்று அதிகாரம்...’ (இலங்கை 3637).
upon Śiva to lead them by reciting the Five-Letter-Prayer. Tanṭi Aṭkal nāyaṉär recited the Five-Letter-Prayer while cleansing the temple pond as divine service. He pronounced that he would gain vision to his blind eye if his service and submission were too acceptable to Śiva (PP. 3599)\textsuperscript{550}. As ever, conscious of Śiva he had a dip in the pond chanting the Five-Letter prayer. Pukaleccōlar entered into a blazing fire by uttering the Five-Letter-Prayer as self-infliction to compensate for the injustice done to a Śiva-devotee. These narrations point to the fact that singing of the prayer, and thinking of Śiva’s gracious nature will solve perplexities of life (PP. 3985)\textsuperscript{551}. Physical disabilities, social inequalities, birth restrictions cannot prevent one from the recitation of the Five-Letter-Prayer as envisaged in the life histories of the nāyaṉmār.

Cēkkilār also shows that the recital of this prayer will promote one from the earthly life to divine abode. A life of virtue and spirit rather than the life of senses require a thorough realization of one’s true nature. It is the human body that is responsible for thought, word, and deeds either to direct them towards the path of religious intuition or towards obscenity. If one has to illumine the consciousness and extricate self-centeredness, it should be filled with divine fervor. For this the recital of the Five-Letter-Prayer helps one to great extent. Cēramān Perumāl, though a king, due to his divine dispensations, was able to direct his horse to take him to Kaiās before Cuntarar could reach there, by the recital of this prayer in the horses ears (PP. 4264)\textsuperscript{552}. As Cēramān

\textsuperscript{550} ‘...சூவான்கிணன் சோஹித்குருமி கோவல் சன்னதின் நோக்குமுகம் தடந்தவுடன் பதில் பூசகர் பாதிக்கப் பட்டு அனுப்பிய சிக்குவது...’ (நூற்று 3599).

\textsuperscript{551} ‘...சோரான் நீதிக்கு தலைமுகம் அனுப்பிப்பதில் அய்யன்குருமி அதிகரிக்கும் சுற்றுக்கு முடிவியும் தவர் என்றுக்குருமி அனுப்பிய...’ (நூற்று 3985).

\textsuperscript{552} ‘சோரான் நீதிக்கு தலைமுகம் அனுப்பிப்பதில் அய்யன்குருமி அதிகரிக்கும் சுற்றிலும் முடிவியும் தவர் என்றுக்குருமி அனுப்பிய...’ (நூற்று 4264).
Perumāḷ was immersed in the contemplation of the noble and auspicious qualities of Śiva all the time; it was easy for him to invoke Śiva’s blessings.

The distinctive mark recognized by the nāyaṉmār and highlighted by Cēkkilār to adore Śiva may be classified as external and internal. The Five-Letter-Prayer is purely internal and subjective while smearing of sacred ashes is external and objective. The latter two are efficacious and sanctified because of their emanation from the body of Śiva (PP. 892). Śiva produces the sacred ashes from His body and the sacred beads form His eyes so that wearers are rewarded with the expulsion of darkness and the attainment of purity – it delivers his devotees from rebirth (PP. 893). The white ashes of Śiva bestows refreshment and pure delight upon all living creatures (PP. 308). Therefore, true life is found in cherishing the Holy Ash (PP. 488). In one narration Cēkkilār states ‘in that town the sacred ash worn as a protection by devotees shone pure white like their hearts, and but its light the darkness of the night was turned to day’ (PP. 1023). The nāyaṉmār wears white ashes as an important duty so as to derive the inspiration to worship Śiva; they treasure above all else the sacred ash (PP. 355). They were people of constant devotion to the sacred ash (PP. 610). They even rendered service to all who

\[\text{(Gītā. 4269).}\]

‘To that end, he recited in the horse’s ear the much-loved Śaiva prayer in the prescribed manner. At once the horse rose in the air and galloped off across the skies...’ (PP. 4269).

\[\text{553} \quad \text{‘(poɔm;m nhw; kpiel ke;jk;edj;j ke;jwdh;j fe;jw;jd;f fe;jw;jd;f)’ (Gītā. 892).}\]

\[\text{554} \quad \text{‘...he;j;jk; fe;jw;jd;f 保洁; he;j;jk; fe;jw;jd;f fe;jw;jd;f fe;jw;jd;f...’ (Gītā. 893).}\]

\[\text{555} \quad \text{‘he;j;jk; fe;jw;jd;f fe;jw;jd;f fe;jw;jd;f fe;jw;jd;f ke;jwdj;j fe;jw;jd;f fe;jw;jd;f fe;jw;jd;f fe;jw;jd;f fe;jw;jd;f fe;jw;jd;f fe;fj;jk; fe;jw;jd;f fe;}
wore the pure white holy ash (PP. 939). Čekkilār states that the nāyaṉār ‘reached the conclusion that commitment to the sacred ash was the true end of life’ (PP. 1875).

According to Čekkilār, it is Śiva who gives the sacred ashes in the three forms: karpam (கற்பம்), anukarpam (அனுகற்பம்), upakarpam (அப்பகற்பம்) devoid of akarpam (அகற்பம்) or blemishes. Čekkilār states that these three forms of sacred ash given by Śiva, which may be used, frees one from the guilt of lust and other sins. He further sings: ‘as we now extol the sacred ash, may that free us from the bondage of two-fold deeds’ (PP. 4168). Pukalcōla nāyaṉār shuddered at the sight of a slain having braided hair and was dispirited about his rule which had the path of the sacred ashes. He felt sore and bade his minister’s crown and his son and as a mark of reparation and he descended into a pit of fire by smearing his body with holy ashes. The holy ashes sanctify the wearer though they are otherwise irreligious (PP.3947-3987). This idea has been well brought out by Čekkilār in Narasinga Muṉaiyaraiyar purāṇam (PP. 3988-3996). When the nāyaṉār was offering gold coins, as usual, to the devotees who wear the holy ashes on the occasion of Tiruvādirai festival, a man with physical disability came there with sacred ash. While others looked at him with annoyance, the king received him too and offered gifts. Enātinādar (PP. 608-649) and Meypporuḷ nāyanār (PP. 467-490) sacrificed their lives for the noble cause of admitting even traitors and enemies into the realm of devotees of Śiva, since they were seen with sacred ashes over their forehead and body. Enātinādar declared that his enemy had become a Śaivite. Meypporuḷ noted that the man who slashed...
him was really one of his own i.e. to be treated as his kith and kin and not an enemy (PP. 482)\textsuperscript{563}. In the pursuit of release, the sacred ash took a prominent role by way of purifying the nāyanmār both externally and internally. In other words in the religious pursuits both the physically manifested marks and the psychical inspirations play a vital role.

It also should be noted the nāyaṉmār also followed other means of reaching the feet of the Śiva. Cēkkilār noted that he wishes to bow down before the sacred feet of Tirumūlar nāyanār who expounded in verses the well-ordained path of jñānam (ஜோனாம்), yōga (யோகம்), kriyai (க்கிரியம்) and caryai (சக்குரும்) (PP. 3596)\textsuperscript{564}. Among them for Cēkkilār caryai (சக்குரும்) external observances or acts of service of the nāyaṉmār such as cleaning the temple premises, gathering flowers for weaving garlands to adorn the deity; honouring the devotees and preparing oneself for their service at any moment; befittingly keeping the temple precincts, nurturing flower garden, neatly maintaining water tanks, preserving sculptures, monuments, inscriptions and so forth is the initial stage of Śiva-worship: a pathway followed by the nāyaṉmār to reach the feet of Śiva. This pathway comprises of temple worship as a preparatory ground to actively participate in daily worship. It has been replenished with religious fervour which in turn culminates in regular worship. Further, the external modes of service and worship should not create any kind of pride by claiming agency for the activities and strengthen the self-worth. As long as the aspirant is under the sway of the dragging forces like sensualism, hardly can one enter the domain of Śiva, which in fact, is the effort of following this path. It for this for

\textsuperscript{563} ‘...தெய்வப்படம் இந்த வாய்ந்த முதலைகள் விளக்க மிகுதியாம’ (சி.பி. 482).

\textsuperscript{564} ‘என்ன தெய்வப்படம் இந்த வாய்ந்த முதலைகள் விளக்க மிகுதியாம் தெய்வப்படம் பெருக்கவார் என்னனும்’ (சி.பி. 3596).
this reason Cēkkiḻār dedicates entire section of his work to honour ‘those who attend the person of Lord three times a day’ (PP. 4165-4167)\textsuperscript{565}.

In the introductory section of his work Cēkkiḻār narrates that the ‘holy servants of Śiva dispel the darkness in the hearts of men’ (PP. 10)\textsuperscript{566}. From the life narration of the nāyaṉmār, Cēkkiḻār illustrates the sublimation of their self-centered passions i.e. forces which lead one from light to darkness such as anger, lust and jealousy towards the attainment of Śiva. It is obvious in the Periya Purāṇam the lustful enjoyment of Tirunīlakaṇṭar was later transformed into sincere adoration of Śiva through selfless service (PP. 360-403). Anger is said to be the pernicious passion of humankind. The only way to overcome this destructive phenomenon is to canalize it towards righteous indignation, as was done by Eripattar in directing his wrath the impediments in obstructing the efforts to worship Śiva (PP. 550-607). Jealousy can be sublimated towards the rightful claim of getting equal opportunity in worshipping Śiva. This point may be substantiated from the lives of Campantar and Appar. When there was acute famine at Tirvīḻimiḻalai and its suburbs, these two saints intended to eradicate poverty for which they sought the merciful help of Śiva. As a result of disinterested service, self-centredness becomes subdued and consequently the three impurities are gradually annihilated, the devotee freely moves into a new domain i.e. to Śiva’s abode. There Śiva is conceived as the master to whom the devout devotee becomes a subservient agent and loyal servant.

\textsuperscript{565} ‘நூலில் கி வைல்பிள்ளை யுனை புராணம்...’ (பித்த், 4165-4167)

\textsuperscript{566} ‘...பாரக்கோ சென்கும்பே சைத்து கிளை சைத்து இரண்டு கள்மா புத்திய முக்கியா சைத்து கிளை யுனை புராணம்... கி வைல்பிள்ளை யுனை புராணம் வளம்’ (பித்த் 10).
Some other nāyaṉmār followed the path of an obedient son. The nāyaṉmār considered themselves as the son of the ‘Father’ i.e. Śiva (PP. 1404)\textsuperscript{567}. The dedication of the nāyaṉār (son) towards Śiva (father) results in worshipping the Lord, singing His glory out of increasing love and establishing an intimate relationship. Śiva, the father takes His responsibility to educate the nāyaṉār make them wise and virtuous. Cēkkiḻār narrates, though Campantar was subjected to troubles by the Jains, earlier he had the benefit of drinking the milk of divine wisdom and receiving the palanquin, umbrella made up of pearls through the grace of Śiva. By fulfilling the wishes of the Father, the son has the privilege of going near His residence with affection. In his onward march the nāyaṉmār departs from his temporary house i.e. the world to the house of Śiva (PP. 147-349). The sense of ‘I’ and ‘mine’ will have no power due to the actions of various kinds as mentioned above and the nāyaṉmār freely approached Śiva in his domain. Hence this is an intimate path which leads one closer to Śiva which if further seen to be fulfilled in Kannappar’s life who had been asked by Śiva ‘Take your place at my right hand’ (PP. 834)\textsuperscript{568}.

Further, worship in this path is being related to Śiva-lingam and the devotee has to perform the five kinds of purificatory rituals with flowers, incense, light, water and food. The aspirant has to chant the particular formula for a given number of times. As narrated in the Periya Purāṇam, Canṭeswarar and Umādevi worshipped the Śiva-liṅgam made up of sand by them and Cākkiya nāyaṉār turned to be a Śaivite by spontaneously worshipping a Śiva-lingam (PP. 1211-1270). The worship of Śiva-liṅgam and chanting

\textsuperscript{567} ‘சுருக்கோவாய் கச்சு குறச்சைறு அல்ல்...’ (குலை 140).
‘He is the mother who bore me, and my father too.’ (PP. 1404).
\textsuperscript{568} ‘... உயர் உயர்ந்து பார் கோதேர் சிக்கி மையன்...’ (குலை 834).
the sacred syllables had become part and parcel of the nāyaṁmār’s life. This path subsequently leads to the practice of yōga; another path that was followed by the nāyaṁmār.

According to Cēkkiḻār some other nāyaṁmār chose a more austere path i.e. the path of yōgam (இய்மா) to attain the feet of Śiva. According to Cēkkiḻār, Tirumūlar was steeped in Śiva-yōgam after the cessation of the impediments (PP. 3593). As a first thing, one has to relinquish the worldly bearings and move towards Śiva. For Cēkkiḻār those who followed this path even recognized themselves as an intimate friend of God on the basis of love. The discipline is an internal exercise, the fruit of which is the attainment of divine attributes. The followers of this path were blessed with the attainment of Śiva’s forms along with the extinction of impurities and its inflictions. In the Periya Purāṇam, Cuntarar is the typical exponent of this path, not so much of his systematic practices of yōgam but for his propensity and spiritual aspirations even while in family life. The expression by Cēkkiḻār will illustrate this point: ‘…for many days, he wished to master yōgam and its age old tradition’ (PP. 327). The practice of yōgam, according Cēkkiḻār, leading to release is found in the narration of the life of the following nāyaṁmār such as Perumiḻalaik Kuṟumpar (PP. 1711-1721), Tirumūlar (PP. 3569-3596) and those who set their hearts on Śiva (PP. 4162). Perumiḻalaik Kuṟumpar was an ardent devotee of both Śiva and His devotee Cuntarar. By virtue of his daily chanting of Cuntarar’s name, he

569 Etymologically the word yōga means ‘yoking’ the mind towards God which results in supreme delight. The term generally means ‘union’ and is referred to in Tamil as sērkkai (சேர்க்கை). See Tamil Lexicon of the Madras University. The union of mind and body and the subsequent union of the soul and God are claimed to be the fruits of yogic practices. As a method of release, yōga practices make the body and mind function harmoniously where the bodily movements are controlled and mental modifications are arrested so as to create fusion of the body and mind prior to the union of God.

570 ‘…இய்மாவில் கூருக்கள் பார்க்கிற நம்பிக்கை உண்பெற்று போட்டியியல்களில் என்று உரையாற்றது’ (நூற்ற் 3593).
571 ‘…இய்மாவில் பார்க்கிற நம்பிக்கை உண்பெற்று போட்டியியல்களில் என்று உரையாற்றது…” (நூற்ற் 327).
mastered the eight-fold yōgic powers. As his devotion grew even more intense, he attained that state in which the Five-Letter-Prayer of Śiva became for him family, riches and the content of very thought. He saw through his yōgic vision Cuntarar’s march towards Mount Kailās on a white elephant. He immediately exercised his yōgic powers and reached Kailās even before Cuntarar (PP. 1711-1721). At this stage the nāyaṉmār claims fraternity with Śiva for reason that the nāyaṉmār, the Śiva yōgins are those who have realized the reality that underlines the universe in the depth of their inner self (PP. 3101). The cordial friendship between Śiva and His devotees is seen in the friendly succour of Śiva to Campantar and the latter’s demand of friendship on the former. Cēkkilār describes that Śiva Himself went as an errand for this nāyaṉār, as a beggar to appease his appetite and in turn the nāyaṉār scolds his friend i.e., Śiva out of loveable fraternity (PP. 507).

Another path that is highlighted by Cēkkilār is the path of jñānam (இந்து) or wisdom. The path of jñānam (இந்து) or wisdom is the saving wisdom of Śiva i.e. Śiva-jñānam (இந்து) which Campantar experienced. The wisdom which was imparted on the nāyaṉār consists of wisdom which made the nāyaṉār focus singularly, and ceaselessly conscious of the feet of Śiva. It is wisdom at once the infallible and divine and the unparalleled wisdom of all science (PP. 1973)572. Such wisdom enables one to cleanse all impurities. Cēkkilār as the verse indicates calls this wisdom as intuitive knowledge i.e., mei-jñānam (மைய இந்து) or ariya-mei-jñānam (ஆரிய மைய இந்து) (PP.

572 ‘செக்கிலார் சுத்திக்கல் இந்துச் சார்க்கையும் சிலையும் மாறாத அருள்மிகு பரமானது தேவமு தேவ மாணவேற்று மாலையான தேவரும் அசைப்பாதிருமான தேவாசாஸ்வாமி செருநூறு சுத்திக்கல் இந்துச் சார்க்கையும் ஆரிய மைய இந்து’ (கி.பி. 1973).
i.e., wisdom which is rare, the knowledge of reality or truth i.e. *mei-poruḷ* (மீபொறுள்) (PP. 2029). Therefore, this path of *jñānam* (ஜ்ஞானம்) or wisdom is designated as *mei-yuṇarvu* (மீயுணரு) the knowledge of the true nature of self that can be obtained in this life. Such wisdom enables one to unite the knot of ignorance. In the *Periya Purāṇam*, Čekkîḷār narrates, Kaṇṇappar was praised by Śiva whose knowledge was directed to know Him and whose activities were admired by Him (PP. 806). Once the wisdom of Śiva imparted on the nāyaṉmār, they surrender themselves in gratitude to Śiva: the magnetization of their selves towards Godly ways of conception and contemplation culminates in the enlightenment that it is Śiva who knows, who makes others know, and becomes the very embodiment of knowledge itself. The nāyaṉmār at this stage with the inflow of grace loves Śiva in perfect wisdom (PP. 1973).

Čekkîḷār declares the true knowledge of Śiva is the love towards Him (அறிமுகம் பார்க்கவும்) and his contention is illustrated in the life of Muruga nāyaṉār. The nāyaṉār had the spotless heart which melts in perfect love towards Śiva’s feet and thus gained wisdom (PP. 1026). Therefore, Śiva-jñānam (சிவஞானம்) is Śivananda (சிவஞானம்) or endless bliss which is not alien to the one but is the sustaining life principle in one. Čekkîḷār narrates that the Cīruttonṭar after mastering all the arts, comes

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573 ‘... என் அம்மையே எழும்பேற்கவாடம்...' (நூற்ற. 1973)
574 ‘பீனானழுநர் என்பிட்டாங்...' (நூற்ற. 2029).
575 ‘ஏனையோம் வருக வந்தவையின் மலர்கள் அனிதர் கம்பும்
ஆளவுள்ளவர் அன்றியுள்ளவர் தோன்றி அறிமுக அன்றியுள்ளவர்
அளவுள்ளவர் விளையாடிய கம்புகள் கொண்டவர்
அளவுள்ளவர் தோன்றி திகழ்த்தும் அன்றி கொண்டு வெவ்வேறும்’ (நூற்ற. 806).
‘His whole being is filled with love for me. His whole mind is set on me alone;
All he does is pleasing in my sight; you have to understand, that is the way he is’ (PP. 806).
577 ‘...நீனே அருள்மிக அருளும் என்னிகள் ஆன்மை காண்கள் பெருநின்று தண்ணீர் தங்கியுள்ள மீதும் காண்கள் பெருநின்று’ (நூற்ற. 1026).
to the conclusion that the perfect objective in life is to enlighten oneself with Śiva-jñānam (Śiva-jñāna) (PP. 3668)\(^{578}\); intuitive knowledge of Śiva will make one enjoy Śiva’s bliss.

It is clear then that in the Periya Purāṇam each nāyaṉmār has seriously engaged himself in removing the taints of their self and laboriously sought Śiva with single minded devotion. They adhered to the life of renunciation and sacrifice. Their acts were Śiva-centered rather than self-centered. They did worship regularly in the temples and moved affectionately with the Śiva-devotees. They were fond of either serving the cause of the Lord or their fellow devotees. Serving the fellow devotees of nāyaṉmār is a remarkable aspect in the devotion of the nāyaṉmār in the Periya Purāṇam. It is the latter that is studied in the next section.

6.4 Consorting with Other Devotees: The Nāyaṉmār as Servant of the Servants of the Lord

The very structure of the of Cēkkiḻār’s work demonstrates the importance given to the fellowship of devotees and of the nāyaṉmār. To emphasise this it is narrated that the sage Upamanyu worshipped the effulgence caused by the arrival of Cuntarar from the earth to Kailas, the dwelling place of place Śiva. Astonishment struck the fellow sages of Upamanyu who had not seen him in such a situation. When his companions enquired the reason for his behaviour of worshipping the nāyaṉār, other than Śiva the Upamanyu

\(^{578}\) ‘...எட்டுமுன்று கோண்ட குருக்கள் எறிக்கும் உறுதியால் அந்தாயம் நூற்று நூற்று ஆழ்ந்தையல் ஒருமக்கள் நீட்டிய முறையால் கூறுக்கும் நாயக்கவன் வாத்யானை உடலின் போது மூவும் மறுக்கும் அல்லது ஆடிய’ (பாக. 3668).
replied that since the nāyaṉār had Śiva as his friend, he had qualified himself to be worshipped by them (PP. 29).579

In the verse, it must be pointed out, which has been skilfully composed by Čēkkiḻār the word ‘نامم’ (nām)’ (we) is noteworthy in three respects: (i) Upamanyu, out of humility utters ‘We worship him who is worthy’ (‘نامم تولاشم اسماءهم’; ‘nām tomalum um'maiyān’) instead of addressing the first person as ‘I’ to avoid self-assertion, (ii) Upamanyu, ‘the famous hermit of deep devotion’ (PP. 23), pays homage to the nāyaṉār i.e. Cuntarar with a view to ascertain that the nāyaṉār to be adored by everyone in the assembly including himself, (iii) and through the mouth Upamanyu, Čēkkiḻār announces his personal reverence he has for the nāyaṉār that he is to be honoured by all.

In his monumental work Čēkkiḻār also expresses his submission to every nāyaṉmār at end of every narration of the life of the each one of nāyaṉmār. As Cuntarar, who in his Tirut Toṇṭar Tokai (திருத்தோண்டர் தொகை) eulogies the great men and women who had exemplified the life of devotion to Śiva and expressed his submission at every stage to these leaders or nāyaṉmār, Čēkkiḻār too poignantly states: ‘Now we place our head beneath his servant’s feet and meditate upon them. That is the way of life which we esteem above all others’ (PP. 550).581 As Cuntarar, Čēkkiḻār also expresses his submission to nine group devotees. They are (i) the Brahmins of Tillai (PP. 350-359), (ii)

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579 ‘ناما منج ناجترا لا يك انا اوما وكيون انيسما ماجين نا ماجين انا عنا ماجين نا ماجين’ (pp. 29).

580 ‘...انجتو ناجترا لا يك انا’ (pp. 23).

581 ‘...انجتو ناجترا لا يك انا انيسما ماجين نا ماجين انيسما ماجين انا’ (pp. 550).
those who worship with true devotion (PP. 4152-4159), (iii) those who sing exclusively of the glory of Śiva, (PP. 4160-4161) (iv) those who have set their hearts on Śiva (PP. 4162) (v) those who are born at Tiruvārūr (PP. 4163-4164), (vi) those who attend the person of the Lord three times a day (PP. 4165-4167) (vii) sages who wear the holy ash (PP. 4168-4173) (viii) devotees from far and wide (PP. 4169) (ix) those who are not included in the catalogue of the nāyaṉmār (PP. 4170).

To emphasis on the fellowship of devotees Cēkkilār states that once Cuntarar set his heart on the sacred feet of Śiva and was deeply contemplating of His presence; he failed to notice the group of devotees gathered at Tiruvārūr temple and who came out to meet Cuntarar with unfeigned affection. On seeing this, Virāṇmiṇṭar nāyaṉmār not only proscribe Cuntarar for his inadvertent behaviour but to declare Cuntarar excluded from the company of devotees (PP. 497). Cēkkilār notes when Virāṇmiṇṭar declared Cuntarar excluded for avoiding the gathering of devotees, he was also excluding him from keeping company with Śiva (PP. 498). This made Cuntarar apologetic and beseeched Śiva to come to his rescue. Śiva helped Cuntarar with the first sentences which formed the first statement of his work Tiru Toṇṭar Tokai and the first descriptive exposition by Cēkkilār: ‘I am servant to the servants of the Brahmins who live at Tillai’ (PP. 345). Cēkkilār like Cuntarar mentions a number of nāyaṉmār and hails them for their service to Śiva and his fellow devotees which has enabled him to crave for becoming a humble devotee.

582 ‘இத்தருளும் உயர் செல்ல வெள்ளனையென்று திருநூல் அடிப்தூண்டல் விளைவான உயர்ச்சியை நீக்கும் பின்னர் இதற்கு வெள்ளருத்து கைத்து அர்ப்பணப்பட்டுள்ள புக்கு வாழ்க்கை விளைவைப் பெற்று ஏற்றியுள்ளார் ஆனால் வாழ்க்கையில் என்று பூட்டார் தீர்த்தாம் அழகாமா’ (கிறி. 498).

583 ‘...இந்தகைய அர்ப்பணப்பட்டு தீர்த்துவான் அமர்வியா’ (கிறி. 345).
to them too (PP. 4099). In a more distinctive manner, Cēkkilār observes: ‘For the benefit of the world, Cuntarar sang “The Roll of the Holy Servants of the Lord.” So if the Lord who is beyond all understanding declared his very existence to be bound up with his devotees, how great must be those devotees!’ (PP. 499).

In this manner, Cēkkilār considers service to the devotees of the Lord as a veneration that equals or even beyond the devotion to God. In them i.e. in his devotees Śiva binds his very existence to enrich the world; they are the embodiment of his divine compassion (கருணை: karunai) - ‘compassion in human form’ (PP. 1411); ‘their life is a life of worship and penance offered in love at the feet of the Lord’ (PP. 352). They count their love for Śiva ‘as the greatest blessing of their lives’ (PP.355). Cēkkilār extols of the nāyaṁmār rendering service to the devotees of the Lord, in varying degrees according to their propensity.

The sole objects of his concern were the devotees of the Lord Śiva. Apart from them, he knew no other loyalty. He held the conviction that the wealth that had come down to him properly belonged to those devotees. So when any one of the nāyaṁmār approached him, he found great joy in giving alms to meet their needs (PP. 469-470).
In the fellowship of the nāyaṅmār it is clear there are an unstinted devotion as well as unswerving affinity and the absence of resentment. Even if they had indignation it might have been for good reason. One of the few incidents that can be cited to authenticate this claim in the Periya Purāṇam is found in the narration of the life of Ėripattar (PP. 550-607). This nāyaṅār’s devotion towards the devotees and interception to punish the evil designers took violent shape. He killed not only the royal elephant since the elephant not only damaged the flower basket meant for Śiva by sage Sivakāmiyāntār but also its keepers who were witnessing the cruelty of elephant instead of preventing it. Since such acts are performed assisted by Śiva, the essence of such a life of service has a deeper conviction and eagerness. It is an eagerness which impels the nāyaṅmār, with the desire to engage in the service of the devotees of the Lord and thereby it becomes a mystical experience of Śiva.

‘The Lord is enshrined in the minds of true devotees, poised in love ... and service; ... Śiva abides forever. Forever he abides in the hearts of his loving devotees. In order to dispel the illusion, Ėripatter ... performed acts of service for those who belonged to the Lord’ (PP. 556).590

In another instance Ėkkilār narrates that Ėyarkōṅ Kalikkār harshly condemned the attitude of Ĉuntarar for sending Śiva on an errand to set right the love-squabble between the nāyaṅār and his wife – an act decrying the persona of Śiva (PP. 3167).591 Even though Ėyarkōṅ Kalikkār suffered from violent stomach pain, the nāyaṅār was reluctant to meet Ĉuntarar for he send Śiva as a his messenger to settle the quarrel with

590 ’砭తகுடத வயலார் குறு பயின்றும் முட்டி அகரமையும் வாழாளவும் ஓருங்காட அருளமும் தேவாயரை உறுதிய கால் திருத்தாக்கும் வாழ்க்கை புள்ளியளிக்கும் அறியவரே தேவாயரே அவர்’ (ஏற். 556).

591 ’ஏற்றும் வெள்ளை தெளிவு நோக்குகள் அனுப்புகும் வாழ்க்கை முடிவுகள் கூற வேண்டும் உடல் முடிவு ஓருங்கிய அறியவரே தேவாயரே அவருடைய வாழ்க்கை புள்ளியளிக்கும் அறியவரே தேவாயரே அவர்’ (ஏற். 3167).
his wife (PP. 3555)\textsuperscript{592}. Not willing to be cured by Cuntarar, Ėyarkōṅ Kalikkār took out his dagger and stabbed it into his stomach. The moment Cuntarar saw Ėyarkōṅ Kalikkār dead, he then sized the dagger determined to do away with his life. Śīva timely intervened and at that moment Ėyarkōṅ Kalikkār came to life (PP. 3563)\textsuperscript{593}. This story reveals that (i) a devotee of Śīva may have the audacity to condemn a fellow-devotee if one goes against the tradition, (ii) the devotee has the privilege to end his life rather than receiving help from the irreligious (iii) the nāyaṉār had to endure the trials and tribulations launched by benevolent Śīva to shape their character at a time of turmoil. Cēkkilār records that it is Śīva who send the Ėyarkōṅ Kalikkār a stomach pain as a way of effecting a reconciliation between Cuntarar and Ėyarkōṅ Kalikkār (PP. 3548)\textsuperscript{594}.

It is a natural human tendency to avert abuse, injury, defilement done to one’s dear ones. But in religious life this attitude is viewed seriously. In the Periya Purāṇam any harm is inflicted on Śīva devotees, the evil doers will not be spared for the simple reason that the devotees have been treated on par with Śīva. So Cēkkilār supplements the idea of service to fellowmen which has the implicit connotation ‘service to Śīva’. To illustrate this point Cēkkilār narrates the story of Mangayatkkarasiyār and Kulacciṟaiyār, the queen and the minister of the Pāṇṭian king, made strenuous efforts to extend royal protection to Campantar from the persecutions of the Jains at Madurai. At one stage, they

\textsuperscript{592} ‘...)ங்கடேசிதிய் குன்றி மூக்குபட்டப் பண்பாளை போரியவர் தூத்துக்கோய் இளையாளியொன்று வாழ்க்கை வாழ்க்கை பாடல் கைவழியை குருள் டால்கு’ (Gull. 3555).
\textsuperscript{593} ‘சீலாந்தாம் போர்க்கோய் குன்றி வாழ்க்கை வாழ்க்கை மூக்குப்பட்டப் பண்பாளை தூத்துக்கோய் இளையாளியொன்று வாழ்க்கை வாழ்க்கை பாடல் கைவழியை குருள் டால்கு’ (Gull. 3563).
\textsuperscript{594} ‘பாண்டியன் பார்மீன் விஜயந்த குன்றி வாழ்க்கை வாழ்க்கை மூக்குப்பட்டப் பண்பாளை தூத்துக்கோய் இளையாளியொன்று வாழ்க்கை வாழ்க்கை பாடல் கைவழியை குருள் டால்கு’ (Gull. 3548).
had even resolved to lay down their lives first if the nāyaṇār’s life was threatened, according to Cēkkilār (PP. 2581-2679).

Such exemplary service and companionship is at the innermost quintessence of the real love of Śiva which paves the way for religious coalescence which gets translated in a life of sincerity and self-less service. One must never speculate on anything disgraceful rather one must engage irresistibly in the service of the devotees of the Śiva in a spirit of service; then life will naturally become one of virtue, humility and living in the presence of Him within and without. Service to devotees of the Lord is the highest expression of one’s devotion to Śiva. It’s very essence lie in their willingness to die to their human personality and to discover and indentify themselves with their true nature. It is such service that reveals the knowledge of Śiva to the mundane mind. In relating the story of Ėṉātinātar:

‘Day by day all the gain accruing from his work ... he is freely devoted to the support of the servant of the Lord. Even his enemies, had to respect his unswerving practice of virtue which was beyond reproach’ (PP. 611-612)595.

The familiarity and association of the nāyaṃmār at Pāmpuhālūr is considered by Cēkkilār as a boon to Tirunāvukkaracar to move and have his self with them whose minds were one with the love of Śiva. This worship of devotees of the Lord even goes beyond the caste divisions and social status that divided the society of the time.

595 ‘ஏது என்னின்றி எ

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Whether they were members of one of the four recognized castes or not, provided only that they were devotees of Śiva, he would humbly pay homage with all his heart’ (PP. 1702).596

This services of the nāyaṅmār for Cēkkilār impeled them to awaken to Śiva. It liberates the person from conditioned ignorance of darkness in the inner self and bestows to the person, perfection of bliss that leads the self from the unreal to the real. It is for this reason, Cēkkilār recounts ‘that the nāyaṅār considered all of their wealth to belong as of right to those who enjoyed the true riches of being servants to the Lord’ (PP.879). Cēramān Perumāl nāyaṅmār worshipped a washerman just because his body was drenched in rain and dried up which appeared as if he had smeared white ashes. The king’s touching of the feet of washerman is highly remarkable. But the idea that Cēkkilār communicates is that the mere appearance of the human body in sacred ashes makes the true aspirant bow before him. Again, the love shown towards a fellow devotee does not require status not dignity but divinity. As Cēkkilār depicts Cēramān’s fraternal movements with Cuntarar did not continue only on earth. The former was prepared to offer his kingdom to the latter as a token of his love towards him. However, Cuntarar safely refused the offer since material wealth is inferior to the true love he had for the king (PP. 3753-3928).

Further, Cēkkilār’s literary creativity is shown whenever he describes the meeting of the devotees, particularly on places where Cuntarar and Campantar meet. Cēkkilār exquisitely depicts their physical movements, spiritual exertions and religious experience

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596 ‘நாய்க்கர் காட்சியுடைய அவர்கள் காவலில் அவர் தவிர் நம்பிக்கை அவர் கருநாயிகள் நாய் அவர்களுடைய அவர்கள் நம்பிக்கை அவர்களின் முறல் விளக்கம்’ (கி.பி. 1702).

597 ‘இராமான் போர்மல் நாய்க்கர் அவர் இயல் பற்றிய அவர் மதம் மதத்துறையார் எதிர்கோள் செம்புருங்கு பாவநிலையில் பாவநிலையில் உடன் பாவநிலையில் செம்புருங்கு பாவநிலையில் உடன் பாவநிலையில் செம்புருங்கு பாவநிலையில் உடன் பாவநிலையில் செம்புருங்கு பாவநிலையில்’ (கி.பி. 879).
Appūti Aṭikaḷ even without having a glimpse of Tirunāvukkaracar was devoted to the feet of Tirunāvukkaracar (PP. 1788). Everything in his house from the weights and measures to his cattle and his children bore Tirunāvukkaracar’s name (PP.1789). When Tirunāvukkaracar approached him without in disguised and enquired about why he has inscribed on this fountain someone else’s name rather than his own, Appūti Aṭikaḷ was wild and expressed his displeasure in such enquiry (PP. 1799-1780).

When he came to know that the very person standing before him was none other than his beloved adorer his joy overflew the measure. For the nāyaṇmār contemplating the holy feet of Śiva is the criterion to confirm anyone as their fellow devotee. Love of Śiva is the foundation of very forms of Śiva worship, which again forms the basis of the fellowship of devotees. Meagre importance had been given to the social status, political leadership, birth etc., in determining the nature of service of the nāyaṇmār. Ĉekkiḷār also appreciates Narasiṅga Munaiyaraiyar nāyanār who would not turn away even the sinful devotees because of their allegiance to the tradition of the white ashes (PP. 3988-3996).
Cēkkiḻār communicates that all religious experiences are based on engagements in the right spiritual activity or service. Such services always had to be practiced and perfected. They are the guarantee of illumination and divine perfection in the here and now. Cēkkiḻār notes ‘with unwavering love and joy they delight in worshipping God and his servants’ (PP. 4154), ‘nothing can frighten such servants of the devotee of the Lord’ (PP. 1386). Therefore, Cēkkiḻār exclaims that it is a ‘pleasure to recount at length the history of the sacred history of the sacred service performed by the leaders of the ancient time’ (PP. 47). This service is nothing else but a great privilege of loving the Lord. It seeks nothing but only Śiva himself. To illustrate this point the life of Kalikkamba nāyanār as narrated in Cēkkiḻār’s work is quite important. The nāyanār’s wife showed disdain and looked down on devotees of Śiva who was once their servant. However, Kalikkampa deplored seriously her attitude and he himself revered the sage (PP. 4017-4026).

It has to be noted here as it is presented by Cēkkiḻār, Tirunāvukkaracar once carried the palanquin in which Campantar was sitting. Both of them went together to several temples of Śiva and engaged in social services, thereby dispelling the distress of the people. Campantar addressed Tirunāvukkaracar as “Apparē” (அப்பாரே) meaning ‘father’ and latter responded to saying “Aṭiyēn” (அடியேன்) i.e. your servant (PP.1452). The lives of these nāyanār’s give us a luminous picture of friendship and fellowship

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602 ‘அப்பாரே அப்பாரே அப்பாரே அப்பாரே அப்பாரே அப்பாரே அப்பாரே...’ (Goll.4154).
603 ‘...அப்பாரே அப்பாரே அப்பாரே அப்பாரே அப்பாரே அப்பாரே அப்பாரே...’ (Goll. 1386).
604 ‘அப்பாரே அப்பாரே அப்பாரே அப்பாரே அப்பாரே அப்பாரே அப்பாரே...’ (Goll. 47).
605 ‘...அப்பாரே அப்பாரே அப்பாரே அப்பாரே அப்பாரே அப்பாரே அப்பாரே...’ (Goll. 1452).
cutting across the barriers of cast and age. Perfect freedom lies for the nāyamār in revering a devotee of Śiva and serving Him. Love of Śiva is the foundation of every form of worship, which again forms the basis of the fellowship of devotee.

6.5 Summary:

The Periya Purāṇam is an inestimable hagiography of the seers of truth i.e., the nāyamār. The goal of life for this nāyamār as presented in the Periya Purāṇam is release from all impurities that thwarts the vision of seeing, serving Śiva and His devotees (PP. 753). This view of release is addressed throughout the Periya Purāṇam (PP. 343). In describing the nature of the release, Cēkkiḻār explains, the nāyamār became one with Śiva (PP. 752). Such realization itself is the supreme bliss (Śivāṉantam). In other words, it is a state of release where the nāyamār enjoy in realizing their true natural essence in Śiva.

The ultimate goal of existence, however, is eternal service to Śiva in His eternal abode. Therefore, the theological vision of release for Cēkkiḻār is not a simple vision of a negative notion of the cessation of bondage but it is a divine state of existence for the

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606 'ஹோஸ்கோவின் வீரர்கள் வாழ்க்கை என்பதை வாழ்க்கையின் அரேயல் காய்த்த கற்று ஐயன் ஸ்வாரகம் முன்னாண் உள்ள நூற்றாண்டு நான் என் மாரியமல் வேறு வேறு வேறு காற்றை என்று என்னையும் என்னையும் என்று என்னையும் என்று என்னையும்... (G. 753).

607 ‘என்படி என் குழல் குழல் குழல் குழல் குழல் குழல் குழல் குழல் குழல் குழல் குழல் குழல் குழல் குழல் குழல் குழல் குழல் குழல் குழல் குழல் குழல் குழல் குழல் குழல் குழல் குழல் குழல் குழல் குழல் குழல் குழல் குழல்... (G. 343).

608 ‘செப்பல் நாயனார் உள்ளே கோஷ்டையே உள்ளே நாயனார் உள்ளே நாயனார் உள்ளே நாயனார் உள்ளே நாயனார் உள்ளே நாயனார் உள்ளே நாயனார் உள்ளே நாயனார் உள்ளே நாயனார் உள்ளே நாயனார் உள்ளே... (G. 752).

‘Just as the devotee climbs the path of the elements step by step and finally becomes one with Śiva, who in turn is one with his Sakti, so Tinnāṉar the embodiment of love climbed the lofty mountain of the Lord...’ (PP. 752).
nāyamār who are totally free from all impurities, enjoy the full vision of Śiva in the His
realm and engage in divine service to Him. There are a number of hymns in which the
Periya Purāṇam shows the nāyamār appealing to Śiva to grant them the grace to
perform in love the eternal divine service (PP. 3514, 1948). By this, Cēkkilār
emphasized the nāyamār’s preference of service to the Śiva.

While affirming the divine service to the Lord Śiva as the end goal of life,
Cēkkilār frequently refers to the feet of Śiva. Cēkkilār mentions service to the feet as a
means of attaining the supreme desire of life. In singing the glory of the holy mountain
the Brahmīns, while still wanting to dispel their doubts asked, ‘Sir, you worship nothing
else but the lotus feet of the Lord. Please tells us what this portent means’ (PP. 29).
Cēkkilār notes ‘it is the feet of Śiva that are the source of bondage and release and it was
on those feet that I once set my mind’ (PP. 300). Ultimately, it is Śiva who will lead
the nāyamār to understand their true nature as well as that of Śiva himself. When the
nāyamār reaches this realisation, they attain the grace of endlessly serving the Lord in
His eternal abode. This release, therefore, is not a negative liberation of the individual
self of the nāyamār from bondage. Rather, the nāyamār are radically changed from all
the impurities that entangle them, to a positive state of existence in the Śiva-realms. Śiva
captures the nāyamār with his grace from the forces of impurities that impede human
existence.

609 ‘...பெரிய புராணத்தில் காணப்படும் காலம் என்பது என் வாழ்நாள் போல் கூறியது...’ (PP. 3514).
609 ‘...அவ்வாறே போல் பெரிய புராணத்தில் காணப்படும் காலம் என்பது என் வாழ்நாள் போல் கூறியது...’ (PP. 1948).
609 ‘Years ago in grace you made me your servant’ (PP. 3514). ‘We are committed to nothing but to the service
of the Lord Śiva’ (PP. 1948).
610 ‘பரிய புராணத்தில் காணப்படும் காலம் என்பது என் வாழ்நாள் போல் கூறியது என்பது என் வாழ்நாள் போல் கூறியது...’ (PP. 29).
611 ‘பரிய புராணத்தில் காணப்படும் காலம் என்பது...’ (PP. 300).
The references to the feet of the Śiva indicate that this nāyānmār with great humility, considered divine service as the supreme goal in life. This aspect of service had a great influence on Cēkkilār. It is for this reason at the end of every narration Cēkkilār makes the point of praising the service performed by the nāyānmār. e.g. at the end of the narration on the life of Iyarpakaiyār, Cēkkilār praises him, stating 'I have recounted the great deeds of this servant of the Lord, who tirelessly relived distress and reckoned his wife too to be a friend of God. Now I shall tell the noble story of Māṟray who won eternal praise by the loving service which he offered to the devotees of the Lord' (PP. 439).

Further, to reach the feet of Śiva, the nāyānmār also consorted with other devotees. This was their wish and they worshiped the devotees as verily as Śiva himself. When they did not worship the devotee themselves as Śiva, they worshipped the temple of Śiva as the Lord Himself. Service of every kind, from sweeping the premises and keeping it free of dirt and weeds, to the providing of oil for the lamps of the temple, to the providing of wicks for those lamps, to the providing of incense, all these and more services were the forms the worship of the temple as Śiva himself took. With Śiva, worship of the devotees and worship at the temple, both countered as worship of Himself. By this Cēkkilār leads one not only to understand the paths followed by the nāyānmār i.e., Cariya, Kriya, Yōgam and Jñānam which amplified the efforts of the nāyānmār to hold together in thought and worship the different aspect of Śiva-worship but also to the core of the nāyānmār’s self awareness of Śiva as the subject implying knowledge or continues memory i.e., Jñānam, virtuous conduct or self-submission to Śiva i.e., kriyai.
dedicated action and service to fellow devotees i.e., *Cariya* and discipline to achieve such attitudes i.e., *Yōga*. These acts won release for the *nāyaṁmār* and led them to wash away all the impurities and to be at service of Śiva. However, Śiva did not just go by acts, but looked into the hearts of the devotees and found that the love throbbing therein was the fountain which led the *nāyaṁmār* to be with Śiva. Such is the greatness of the chronicles recorded by Cēkkiḻar in the *Periya Purāṇam*: *nāyaṁmār* are true examples of servants of Śiva.
PART III

THE IDEAL OF SERVICE AND MORALITY IN THE PERIYA PURĀṆAM
CHAPTER SEVEN

THE IDEAL OF SERVICE IN THE PERIYA PURĀṆAM

7.1 Introduction

The ideal of service (தொன்று: toṇṭu) as a path of devotion and a spiritual discipline to be pursued which the nāyaṉmār demonstrated as ‘servants’ (தொன்றர்: toṇṭar) or ‘slaves’ (ஏற்பாளர்: āṟiyār; literally, ‘one who is at the feet’ of the Lord) for the attainment of Śiva is at the heart of the entire composition of the Periya Purāṇam. It is noted by Cēkkilār that ‘when Nampi had finished his song, Śiva wished to grant him the boon which he desired. So he explained to Nampi the nature of the service which the devotees perform, and the secret of their greatness’ (PP. 341). In the subsequent narration, Cēkkilār reiterate the entire spirit of service and the secret of the nāyaṉmār’s greatness in the Periya Purāṇam (PP. 342).

Service (தொன்று: toṇṭu), then, infused with the zest of love called anpu (அன்பு) which the nāyaṉmār had for Śiva is at the centre of the nāyaṉmār’s life, their shared motif and it is a central theme that unifies the stories of the nāyaṉmār in the Periya Purāṇam (PP. 342). It is this undeviating service to Śiva and to his devotees is the

613 ‘ஹூழகத்தில் குடைவில் தேவரசன்று நற்பனையை அண்டையன் கொண்டையை அண்டையன் வருவாயில் போன வருவாயில் மூலவன் ஏகாணல் பூர்வவாயில் மூலவன் அண்டையன் பலகர்’ (கப். 341).

614 ‘பலகரமல்லல் குடைவில் தேவரசன்று நற்பனையை அண்டையன் அண்டையன் வருவாயில் போன வருவாயில் மூலவன் ஏகாணல் பூர்வவாயில் மூலவன் அண்டையன் பலகர்’ (கப். 342).

“There is no one who can compare them,” he said, “By their devotion they have attained me. By their single-minded service, they have conquered the world. They have no imperfection. No one else could reach a state like theirs. Their love for me has brought them untold bliss. They have passed beyond the play of opposites” (PP. 342).

615 ‘...ஹூழகத்தில் குடைவில் தேவரசன்று அண்டையன் மூலவன் ஏகாணல் பூர்வவாயில் அண்டையன் பலகர்’ (கப். 342).
highest qualification for becoming a toṇṭar ( söyledi) i.e. ‘servant’ or atiyār (水利工程) i.e. the ‘slave’ of Śiva. One could see, therefore, that Čēkkiḻār wrote his hagiography as a model for this elevating subject of the nāyaṉmār’s devotion to Śiva and of his devotees. This is further evidence in the title which Čēkkiḻār himself gave to his epic Tirut Toṇṭar Purāṇam (ஜெசுது புராணம்) or the ‘History of the Holy Servants’. Indeed all of the nāyaṉmār were in one way or another committed themselves to Śiva’s service (Śiva Toṇṭu: சிவா கொழுநூற்) and treated the devotees of Śiva as manifestation of Śiva himself. Čēkkiḻār himself clearly held the loftiest estimation of nāyaṉmār’s service (toṇṭu: கொழுநூற்), its sanctity and sublimity. It is this ideal of service which is embodied in his beautiful narrative of the acts of the nāyaṉmār, ‘the Holy Servants’ (ஜெசுது திறு: tirut toṇṭair), in the Periya Purāṇam. This chapter, therefore, explores the various facets of the ideal of service as presented in the Periya Purāṇam. It seeks to study the emergence of this fundamental ideal of life which must be the basis of all genuine religious experiences. Indeed, to be in Śiva is to be in Śiva’s service and His devotees. The chapter is divided into the following parts:

7.2 The Ideal of Service in the Periya Purāṇam
7.3 The Inner Motives for Service in the Periya Purāṇam
7.4 The Varieties of Service in the Periya Purāṇam
7.5 Summary

‘... By their single-minded service, they have conquered the world ... Their love for me has brought them untold bliss’ (PP. 342).
7.2 The Ideal of Service in the Periya Purṇam

Service or *tonṭu* (டொன்று) is an integral ideal in the Periya Purṇam’s worldview. To serve Śiva (சிவா; Śiva *tonṭu*) and to be His ‘servants’ or ‘slaves’ (aṭiyār: அடியார்; or *tonṭar*: டொன்றர்) is both the means and end of the nāyaṅmār’s religious life. It is predominant in the personality and magnetism of the nāyaṅmār as portrayed in the Periya Purṇam. Such is the greatness of their service (ஜீவா; *tonṭu*) ‘no one else could reach a state like theirs’ (PP. 342)\(^\text{616}\). However, it is highly significant as fundamental for the progression of one’s religiosity and mysticism – to wash away all the ‘taints of deeds’ and to be at the service of Śiva and His devotees (PP. 648)\(^\text{617}\). It is declared ‘it was the grace of the dancing Lord that made the elephant to scatter the flowers in the street. His purpose was that the entire world should see how noble the service that you render is’ (PP. 598)\(^\text{618}\). It is also narrated: ‘though for many days there was no food to eat, Tāyaṅār’s wife suffered no loss of the love of the Lord; she would gather green leaves from the garden, cook and serve them to her husband, while he dutifully continued his service for the Lord’ (PP. 919)\(^\text{619}\).

\(\text{\textsuperscript{616}}\) ‘... அக்ரமிகம் கச்சூட் குகைகள் அத்தரம் கொன்று சூட்டம் போதரும் போரர்கள்...’ (குரு. 342).

\(\text{\textsuperscript{617}}\) நெறு நெற்றுக்குரு நிறுவுகுச்சூட்டு அதிர்ச்சிப் புர்வஸப்போர்கள் கொன்று கச்சூட்டம் போர்ரங்கு அதிர்ச்சிக்கு நெறு நெற்று கச்சூட்டு போர்கள் அதிர்ச்சிக்கு நெறு நெற்றுக்கு நெறு நெற்று கச்சூட்டு போர்கள் அதிர்ச்சிக்கு நெறு நெற்று கச்சூட்டு போர்கள் அதிர்ச்சிக்கு...’ (குரு. 648).

‘What more can we say in praise of his ineffable grace? To sever the bonds of attachment, he made use of the sword in the hand of one who owed him no loyalty. To the one who looked to him for help, he granted the privilege of being with him forever in love that knows no parting...’ (PP. 648)

\(\text{\textsuperscript{618}}\) ‘நெறு நெற்று கச்சூட் குகைகள் அத்தரம் கொன்று குகை விமங்கம் போரியுள்ள அதிர்ச்சிக்கு கச்சூட் குகை விமங்கம் போரியுள்ள அதிர்ச்சிக்கு கச்சூட் குகை விமங்கம் போரியுள்ள அதிர்ச்சிக்கு கச்சூட் குகை விமங்கம் போரியுள்ள அதிர்ச்சிக்கு கச்சூட் குகை விமங்கம் போரியுள்ள அதிர்ச்சிக்கு...’ (குரு. 598).

‘அவ்வாறு நெறு நெறுக்குரு நிறுவுக்கு நெறுத்துக்கு நெறுத்து கச்சூட்டு போர்ரங்கு அதிர்ச்சிக்கு நெறு நெறு கச்சூட்டு போர்ரங்கு அதிர்ச்சிக்கு நெறு நெறு கச்சூட்டு போர்ரங்கு அதிர்ச்சிக்கு நெறு நெறு கச்சூட்டு போர்ரங்கு அதிர்ச்சிக்கு...’ (குரு. 919).

\(\text{\textsuperscript{619}}\)
It is made obvious that the service is a coercive force which attains its wholeness in nāyaṉmār’s life and religiosity, specifically in its mystical feature; this is a service which is spontaneously at once unconditional, unhindered, unstructured, benevolent and humble which are characteristic of deep devotion. As suggested, the very vision of Śiva which so deepened the nāyaṉmār’s mystical life, far from attracting them to a life of aloofness, asceticism or isolation, plunged them into a greater service of Śiva on whom they fixed their eyes with respectful love (PP. 494).

It is certain that this religious ideal of service (toṇṭu), which was ingrained in the nāyaṉmār’s religious perception and consciousness, moved these Tamil spiritual giants to consider all forms of service to Śiva (toṇṭu) and His devotees (toṇṭar) as a form of worship. No worship or devotion, however magnanimous is imaginable without service. Cēkkilār was keen to instil this ideal of service. It is highlighted in the phrase: ‘I shall recount the glorious service rendered by those devotees’ (PP. 349). The ideal of service is portrayed in distinct form; it is deeply embedded in all of the narration of the Periya Purāṇam from the beginning to the end. Indeed the entire narration of the life of the nāyaṉmār in the Periya Purāṇam depicts their mystical experience as based and founded on ‘service’ (toṇṭu: toṇṭar). It is for this reason Cēkkilār exclaims that the religious expression of these spiritual leaders can only be explained in terms of service (toṇṭu) as in ‘The History of the Holy Servants’...

620 ‘...he was devoted to the feet of the Lord and to the loving service of his devotees’ (PP. 494)
621 ‘...he was devoted to the feet of the Lord and to the loving service of his devotees’ (PP. 494)
Cēkkiḻār uses the term service as a nuanced theological term; it is portrayed as more than a mere external action or activity. It has an inner, mystical dynamism; it absorbs the person at all levels, irrespective of caste difference; it has a mystical orientation in the light of religious expression, commitment and experience.

This imagery of service – as a comprehensive reality of service to Śiva – sparkles clearly in the life of the nāyaṉmār. The pilgrim poets, like a candle light guiding them in different ways yet inexplicably unseen, on their unique journey of service, when the nāyaṉmār moved from sacred shrine to shrine, glorifying Śiva (PP. 1445), and addressing the anxieties, miseries and turmoil in the life of the people whilst forming...
strong friendships and communality (PP. 1469-1480)\textsuperscript{628}. They performed miracles (PP. 2214-2230)\textsuperscript{629} and restored the natural order (PP. 1515-1532)\textsuperscript{630} wherever primeval righteousness was lacking. As, Peterson notes, as ‘first leaders’ they gave ‘coherent and powerful expression to their experience of God in all the places familiar to Tamil devotees of Śiva’ (1982, p. 72) unifying the Tamil country into a ‘sacred geography where everything else has meaning with reference to something else’ (1982, p. 74).

At the beginning of the narration of the life of Tiruṉāṇacampantar, Cēkkiḷār construed the ideal of service in much the same way as that of a divine consort, Umā, might have perceived of her service to the Śiva; ‘looking at the weeping child with compassion, the Lord instructed his consort whom all the worlds adore to give him milk to drink’ (PP. 1969)\textsuperscript{631}. ‘‘Drink this’’ she said, as she wiped the tears from his eyes and

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{628} In this narration Cēkkiḷār describes Tiruṉāvukkaracar’s encounter with renowned devotee Appūti, their friendship and companionship.

\textsuperscript{629} It should be pointed out that in the Periya Purāṇam the power of miracle in the nāyaṉmār’s life is seen as springing from the nāyaṉmār hymns themselves; their poems of praise of Śiva are the channels of miracles and active agents of Śiva’s arul. In the narration of the miracle of the temple door, one of the events to which Cēkkiḷār’s alludes to in his hagiography, the nāyaṉmār i.e. Tiruṉāvukkaracar sings a hymn, making the closed door of the temple to open, so that those gathered in the temple might delight in seeing Śiva for which they have gathered there. But then the time comes to close the door again, Campantar out does Tiruṉāvukkaracar by causing the door to shut with a single verse of hymns (PP.1533-1560). The nāyaṉmār’s hymns have the power to cause supernatural events, but in this case the efficacy arises not from occult powers but from the intensity of their devotion, their relationship to Śiva himself, embodied in the hymns. It is intensity of devotion that too stirs Śiva to respond to his, or the community’s need, overturning the laws of nature in favour of the devotee’s interests. This appears to be the principal motif of the miracles Tiruṉāvukkaracar performs when the Jains tortured him. Campantar too performs a number of miracles against acts of his Jain opponents as narrated in the Periya Purāṇam. However, what should be pointed is that this type of miracle derives its meaning from a context of sectarian rivalry in which consecrated power of the Śiva, the nāyaṉmār, and their sacred songs are proven to be superior to the ‘black magic’ of heretical sects. The extraordinary devotion to Śiva manifested in their immensely powerful songs, nowhere is more vividly presented than in the narratives of the miracle of healing and raising of the dead (PP. 2214-2238).

\textsuperscript{630} This is made clear in the narration of the famine at Tiruvīḻimalai where the two nāyaṉmār i.e. Campantar and Tiruṉāvukkaracar offered a garland of praise at the feet of the Lord imploring His assistance. It is narrated that in consequence of their plea, the Lord bestowed on them enough to spare. Twice a day they made a public announcement for people come and eat what the Lord had provided an in this way, they distributed food and relieved the hardship of those in want.

\textsuperscript{631} ‘அழுதும் பிறந்து முற்றிலும் கொண்டு கைதியர் அதிகார நூற்றில் இயக்கத்துறு

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put into his hands the golden cup. Thus, the Lord who is the father of all, in his grace comforted the weeping child’ (PP. 1971). In addition, Čekkilār narrates ‘by virtue of his gift, the child came to be called “the child who is Śiva’s possession”... the one uniquely endowed with divine wisdom, wisdom which breaks the cycle of rebirth’ (PP 1972-1974). In reply, Čekkilār suggests, that the child began to sing the greatness of the Lord and to yield benefit to all, who dwell on earth and made pilgrimages singing the gloriousness of divine service (PP. 1976-1979). His whole ambition was to serve Śiva – the Lord and His devotees.

Čekkilār, later narrates, that the nāyaṉār, after having the experience of being possessed by the Lord as His ‘servants’ (tontar: தொண்டார்) or ‘slaves’ (atiyār : அதியார்) went onto worship and serve Śiva (PP. 2003). When the Lord of heaven saw the child singing his praise, He graciously bestowed on the child divine arul (grace): it was Śiva who would specify and show the places of the child’s pilgrimage. The child concluded this as the will of Śiva (PP. 2045). This child experienced an even more
uncompromising conversion through divine wisdom (Śiva-jñānam: நீர்வவானம்) and guidance and the child came to an awakening that there was yet a more flawless, a more loving way of serving Śiva: From then on, the child embarked on journey of incredible religious service. This was to travel from sacred shrine to sacred shrine, temple to temple, sacred place to sacred place singing the inexplicable service to the Lord. On this pilgrimage, the child, who had drunk the milk of divine wisdom, began to realize what it meant to pursue oneself, in the unreserved service of Śiva and that is to be at his humble service in the fullness of life. Thus, Čekkilār remarks, that the child began to sing; “you have bestowed upon me the inward experience of bliss, endless and divine”, “it has come in visible form easy to apprehend with the senses ... this hymn of the child begins with the words ‘through sacred learning and the tending of the sacred fire”, they, “the devotee at Tillai offer special service to the Lord” (PP. 2065).

Čekkilār narrates from that instant, the child would deliberate all thoughts and desires on travelling to varying places to spread this ideal of service (PP. 2245). However, his pilgrimage was not without turmoil because he had to endure and protect himself from the winter cold (PP. 2236-2244), summer heat (PP. 2282-2301),...

On the completion of his worship, Campantar left the temple and set out once more. He visited Tiruvālantuṟai, Tiruccentuṟai and many other temples as well ... at each offered service ...” (PP. 2245). Čekkilār describes that the weather in the surrounding hills turned cold, and the season of the early dew set in. This was the season for the cold North wind to prevail. While this child of true wisdom was staying
famine (PP. 2465-2475), face a contest of water with the Jains (PP. 2698-2755) and a conflict with Buddhists (PP 2805-2830), nor was it limited to a particular time, temple, place or shrine. His conscious effort was to show fidelity to the Śiva, by doing service to Him and His devotees. It is against this background that one needs to understand the miracles that were performed by the nāyaṉār i.e. healing of the chieftain’s daughter by Tiruṉāṉacampantar (PP. 2214-2230), reliving the distress of the people caused by famine (PP. 2465-2475), opening the temple door at Maṟaikkāṭ (PP. 2476-2520) and all of his service to the people. At the end of the narration of the life of Tiruṉāṉacampantar, Cēkkilār elaborates, ‘I have recounted the history of Campantar, the repository of pure Tamil’ (PP. 3159), ‘he walked around in the beauteous light of the Lord and became one with the Lord’ (PP. 3156). It is clear, that through the narration of the life of Tiruṉāṉacampantar, Cēkkilār wants to emphasize the inspiration of the life

at Koṭimāṭu Ceṅkuṟṟū, his companions became fearful that they would fall prey to the local epidemic of fever, by the reason of their prolonged stay in the country. Accordingly they approached Campantar and made known to him their fears. In response, he first invoked the grace of God. That very day the fever epidemic abated and disappeared, not just in that town itself, but throughout the whole country. While Campantar was enjoying his stay at Valañcuḻi, the bright sun etered the sign of Gemini and shed abroad its burning rays with such a vengeance that the waters of the seven seas began to dwindle. In that hot summer season, there was no relief from the burning heat of the sun. It was during this time the child born at Canpai offered worship to the Lord at Valañcuḻi. At that instance to provide relief from the heat of the summer sun, heavenly attendants of Śiva brought a pearl entrusted canopy to set up over the head of the master of the three kinds of Tamil.

In those days, the land was afflicted by a drought. This caused great concern to Aracar and the child whose lips had tasted the milk of wisdom from the breast of Pārvati. He prayed to the Lord, eventually the time came for rain to return.

This contest with Jains and the conflict with Buddhists are sufficiently dealt with, in chapter four of the thesis pages 105-111.

In a town there lived a chieftain called Kolli Maḷavay, who had an unmarried daughter. She was afflicted with a kind of chronic epilepsy which had proved incurable. This caused her father such sorrow that he was in despair. So to find some relief from his sorrow, he took the girl to the temple of the Lord, and laid her there before the divine presence. At that moment, Campantar to rid the girl of her disease sang in Tamil a hymn of protest to the Lord. When he finished singing his hym and concluded it with auspicious invocation, at once the daughter of the chieftain was healed of her sickness.

It is narrated that Campantar went to the temple at Maṟaikkāṭ and approached the golden entrance to the inner shrine, where once the Vedas had offered worship and then sealed the doors. In consequence, from that day forward an entrance constructed on one side of the building had been in use. So the devotee pleaded the Lord and at last the seal was broken and the doors opened.

‘...’ (Pāḷg. 3159).

‘...’ (Pāḷg. 3156).
of the *nāyaṁmār* was one of a dynamism of service; it was a significant mystical expression, existentially expressed in a life of pilgrimage.

The vision of pilgrimage can provoke different interpretations. In its literal sense, as Peterson points out, it can mean the idea of a ‘journey’ or of ‘being there at the destination, the desired place’ (1982, p. 71). The *nāyanmār*’s purpose of such journeys is ‘their intense desire to experience Śiva in all his variety ... [in] specific places and forms; and to express this experience at its fullest, by singing of it in the same, specific, concrete terms’ (Peterson, 1982, p. 73). Similarly, pilgrimage can also be conceived, in a symbolic way, to a journey of life through darkness, distress and anxiety into a life of love, bliss and reassurance. It is suggested by Peterson, ‘the travel of the *nāyaṁmār* as expressed in the songs bring together in one framework, the isolated shrines and local mythologies of the region, and thus serve to integrate politically ... and religiously the fragmented landscape of the Tamil country into a unified sacred geography’ (1982, pp. 73-74). One can observe the fact, that in its spiritual meaning, pilgrimage can also mean an inner quest for participation in Śiva, the quest for mystical wisdom.

What is significant to observe here is the fact that *Cēkkilār* presents the ideal of pilgrimage or journey as an inner advancement or movement. A process or spiritual evolution – where *Cēkkilār* presents the life of *Tiruṇāyacampanṭar* as the history of a pilgrim (PP. 1904-3159), learning as a ‘child possessed by divine wisdom’ (PP. 1972)\(^{647}\) and growing into that mystical union with Śiva (PP. 3156)\(^{648}\) for whom Śiva was

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\(^{647}\) ‘...எழுந்தும் விட்டுவல்லவும் ... யனவித்தவில் கிளைக்கையும் பூர்ப்பும் அர்த்தம்...’

\(^{648}\) ‘...முற்றிலும் கும்பட்டகரதும் புத்தை மனிதனுடன் கூற்றும்...’ (PP. 3156).

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immanently present and leading to the establishment of the Śiva faith as against Buddhism and Jainism. This image of pilgrimage became for Cēkkilār an ideal that formed the lives of nāyaymār into a life of service. The goal of the pilgrimage for the nāyaymār was to increase and grow into a mystical consciousness and a growth in Śiva-awareness and wisdom (Śiva-jñānam: அதியானம்); it is that kind of unreserved human insight of the self and the Śiva-experience (‘செக்கிளர் கிருத்தியம் திருமண்டலம்’; Śivaṇṭiyē cintikkum tirupperuku Śivaṉāṇam) which Cēkkilār understands as true wisdom of the self or rare mei-jñānam (‘அரியமையானம்’; ariyameiṉānam) or true knowledge; this results in the bliss of mei-jñānam (‘அமையானம்’) – awareness and availability for service (PP. 1972)649.

Every pilgrimage process as narrated through the life of the nāyaymār is therefore not only something that is to be accepted and admired, but it is an invitation to assimilate. Only when one is immersed in ‘mei-jñānam’ (‘அமையானம்’)650 or ‘true understanding of the self’ – does one attain true experiential knowledge of oneself from within, and one experiences a process or a movement which nāyaymār exemplified in their lives. This

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649 ‘... As he drew near to enter it, all human wisdom was transcended. He entered the light and became one with the Lord’ (PP. 3156).
650 According to the Tamil Lexicon of the Madras University the word mei (உள்ள) denotes that which is true. The real truth of all reality is highlighted as meipporuḷ (உள்ளமயையுள்ள). It also means ‘to be true; to be faithful’ (உள்ளமயையுள்ள; unmeiyathal), ‘to exhibit one’s strength’ (உள்ளமயையுள்ள; oruvag tag palattai kattugal). A person who has realised the true of all reality or a person of true spiritual wisdom is spoken as meiṉāği (உள்ளமயையுள்ளம்) and the true knowledge or spiritual wisdom that he poses is spoken of as meiṉānam (உள்ளமயையுள்ளம்). They, by means of their spiritual wisdom have the ability to speak the truth mey-kūral (உள்ளமயையுள்ளம்).
The essence of insight has been unfolded in exquisite form by Cēkkiḻār in the narration of the life of Meypporul nāyaṉār (PP. 467-490). In the narration Cēkkiḻār sings: ‘The sole objects of his concern were the devotees of the Lord Śiva. Apart from them, he knew no other loyalty...So when any of the saints approached him, he found great joy in giving alms to meet their needs’ (PP. 469-470). At the end Cēkkiḻār notes ‘Śiva ... stood before the king his servant, and granted him a vision of himself ... He also gave him grace to worship without ceasing, so that the servant might find refuge at his feet’ (PP.489). Here is an experience of instantaneous perception of the power-centre, Śiva in dwelling in one’s consciousness. Cēkkiḻār takes one to the core of the nāyaṉmār’s self-awareness of Śiva as the subject, implying continuous memory - the self-submission to Śiva – service i.e. tonṭu (顶尖: tonṭu) and its unstinted devotion. The nāyaṉmār represent the collective wisdom and the unfurling of the path of service - dedicated action and conduct. The ‘mei-jñāgam’ (_dicp̄er) or true knowledge of the self leads the nāyaṉmār to embrace the life of service in Śiva. It was awareness and a unifying consciousness in which the nāyaṉmār grew into the reality of Śiva and by which they grew into a depth of life and service (PP. 3165).

The purpose of ‘mei-jñāgam’ (Dicp̄er) was preliminary, to have a mystical knowledge and intimacy with Śiva’s arul (grace) within oneself, but arul (grace) is always from Śiva, and is of the self and for the self. It is the experience of the arul

651 ‘...ภูนิจ ภูมิภวัตถุภูมิ ภูมิจุติ ภูมิจุติ ภูมิจุติ ภูมิจุติ ภูมิจุติ ภูมิจุติ ภูมิจุติ ภูมิจุติ ภูมิจุติ ภูมิจุติ ภูมิจุติ ภูมิจุติ ภูมิจุติ ภูมิจุติ ภูมิจุตि, (Qiīq. 469-470).

652 ‘ภูนิจ ภูมิภวัตุภูมิภูมิ ภูมิจุติ ภูมิจุติ ภูมิจุติ ภูมิจุติ ภูมิจุติ ภูมิจุติ ภูมิจุติ ภูมิจุติ ภูมิจุติ ภูมิจุติ ภูมิจุติ ภูมิจุติ ภูมิจุติ ภูมิจุติ ภูมิจุติ ภูมิจุติ ภูมิจุติ ภูมิจุติ ภูมิจุติ ภูมิจุติ ภูมิจุติ ภูมิจุติ ภูมิจุติ ภูมิจุติ ภูมิจุติ ภูมิจุติ ภูมิจุติ ภูมิจุติ ภูมิจุติ ภูมิจุติ ภูมิจุติ ภูมิจุติ ภูมิจุติ ภูมิจุติ ภูมิจุติ ภูมิจุติ ภูมิจุติ ภูมิจุติ ภูมิจุติ ภูมิจุติ ภูมิจุติ ภูมิจุติ ภูมิจุติ ภูมิจุติ ภูมิจุติ ภูมิจุติ ภูมิจุติ ภูมิจุตि, (Qiīq. 489).

653 ‘...ภูนิจ ภูมิภวัตุภูมิภูมิ ภู�ิภวัตุภูมิ ภูมิจุตि, (Qiīq. 3156).

‘He walked around in the beauteous light of the Lord and became one with the Lord’ (PP. 3156).
(grace) of Śiva in its benevolence. The phenomenal reality was a realisation, an understanding that arul (grace) is from Śiva. This ‘mei-jñānam’, as narrated in the account of the meypporul nāyaṉār (PP. 467-490) contains a significant principle. This is an understanding that human reality is encapsulated in Śiva’s arul (grace). In this realization, emerges the desire for service. The result of being graced by Śiva is radically an inter-personal activity towards him. This makes Cēkkiḷar believe that service cannot be forced. It springs from the experience of being one with Śiva. It is a growth into a mystical perception and intimacy culminating in service. Living in ‘mei-jñānam’ (‘நேர்முனையல்’) and engaging in pilgrimage service becomes an outgrowth of right perspicacity. By the intensity of ‘mei-jñānam’ (‘நேர்முனையல்’), a person possessed of divine knowledge grows in holistic affection or sensitivity and thirsts to have the vision of what the grateful Śiva reveals in his immanence and in his work to deliver souls from bondage\(^\text{654}\).

This ideal of service which is a religious expression of the nāyaṉār in the Periya Purāṇam and the mode of praise of this service in Cēkkiḷar’s narration is not simply carved onto religious genre but more specifically, it is a natural development from conception about warrior-heroes, kingship and the sacred in early Tamil literature. According to classical Tamil caṅkam literature, poetry was organized into two fundamental division, aham (அஹம்) or ‘interior’, ‘inner/domestic matters’, and puram

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\(^{654}\) In the Periya Purāṇam, Śiva’s aim is expressed in different, but more or less synonymous, ways: e.g. to free the devotee from bondage (Ēṉātināṭ PP. 648), to grant release to his devotee (Tirunāḷaiippōvār PP. 1067f), to bestow grace upon him (Tirukkuṟippu PP. 1197). In two instances, what might seem a more self-regarding motive is given for the Lord’s testing of his devotees, viz. He wished himself thus to enjoy the proven sweetness of his servant’s love (Ciṟuttoṭṭar PP. 3689, Atipattar PP. 4010). It may be no accident that both these accounts involve the devotee making a supremely costly, edible offering to the Lord, in Atipattar’s case a fish, Ciṟuttoṭṭar’s the flesh of his own son.
or ‘exterior’, ‘public matters’ corresponding to the categorization of human experience itself. Of the types of poetic genres *aham* (*அஹம்*) or ‘interior’, which are love poems, speaks clearly in abstract types of a love-struggle of the person, rather than historical persons, Tamil landscape in general rather than having its focus on a particular place.

On the contrary to this ‘impersonal’ *aham* (*அஹம்*) poetry, the *puram* (*புரம்*) or ‘exterior’ categories of poem is more concentrated on historical persons, circumstances in a real society, history, even to the extent of the celebration of historical personages their virtue of heroism, often seen as an act of exemplification of an all-embracing love of family. The act of service to the nation (தேசத்து : *tēcattonṭu*) i.e. of the warrior heroes and kings is seen primarily as an act for the intensification of the act of love expressed in domestic living (ஏற்றமுதிர் : *akampatitonṭu*): their service is embodiment of the unification of emotion and ritual, *aham* (*அஹம்*) and *puram* (*புரம்*), the experience of love and its expression. To serve, whether in the realm of domestic life or public, is seen as an essential factor to evoke and control ‘an anonymous impersonal power’ (Zvelebil, 1981, p. 21) i.e. *анаṅku* (*அனாங்கு*) that seems to have manifested in the cosmos. Kings and women were considered as significant persons who could be possessed by this ‘sacred power’. However, it is the bards who acted as mediators and controllers of the sacred power. The two divisions of *aham* (*அஹம்*) and *puram* (*புரம்*) were both sacred conditions in which persons were likely to be highly charged with the ‘sacred power’.
Several aspects of the early Tamil conception of the sacred, heroic deeds of warrior-kings and the role of the bards as ‘servitors’ to control these ‘sacred power’ come together in the relationship between Śiva and his nāyāmār as it is narrated the Periya Purāṇam. In the narration of the initiation into the Śiva-tonṭu (ṉāyāṭṭu), Śiva claims Campantar as His ‘slave’ or ‘servant’ (PP. 2003). In other words, Śiva takes possession of His devotees as His servants (tonṭar: ănttakku). Čekkilār’s model for the image of service was the warrior-kings and bards who were considered to be ‘servitors’ who were employed by kings to control the ‘sacred power’ for the proper functioning of society. In the Caṅkam literature, the bards sing the heroic deeds and exploits of the warrior-heroes; Čekkilār narrates the exploits and the heroic deeds of the nāyāmār. In this way Čekkilār tries to redefine Tamil culture, earlier dominated by the ethos of indigenous warrior-heroes, kings and bards, in terms of devotional service to Śiva which the nāyāmār performed. Hence, Čekkilār’s adoption of classical Tamil genre or bard’s praise of warrior-heroes and kings is no more literary borrowing but gives ample insight into the very nature of heroic service and the devotional relationship as conceived by the nāyāmār.

This, however, did not convey the sense in which the term service was understood in the temple practices at the time of Čekkilār. The notion of service was equated with an exclusive form of worship of the temple priest i.e. Āti Saiva or Saiva Brahmins.

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655 ‘...[Cēkkiḻar notes] they offer worship three times a day, never departing from the rules laid down in scripture. These are the members of the Āti Saiva caste’ (PP. 4165).
656 Čekkilār notes ‘they offer worship three times a day, never departing from the rules laid down in scripture. These are the members of the Āti Saiva caste’ (PP. 4165).
frequently to their temple-centred ritualism performed according to Saivāgams\textsuperscript{657} of southern Saivism\textsuperscript{658}. The temple priest were a privileged group, as Prentiss notes, the Saivāgams invest a certain category of Brahmans with the preeminent role of worship in the temple, where they perform pūjā to Śiva on behalf of a public audience’ (1999, p. 123). Hence, by means of their ritual performance as that which is designated exclusively to their caste they upheld the primacy of these āgamic rituals and the norms of social classification (varna) to determine ones suitability to access God in the temple which is a central concern in the story of Tirunāḷaippōvār as presented in the Periya Purāṇam (PP. 1046-1082)\textsuperscript{659}.

This aspect of the temple priest’s ‘ritual reaction of service to the embodied image have since been known technically as seva [service], which in this sense is a liturgical term, referring to the ceremonial worship of the deity’ (Gold, 1995, p. 240). Though

\textsuperscript{657} It is narrated by Cēkkilār that these priests offer ‘regular personal service to the Lord and conduct worship three times a day... the prerogatives of these Saiva Brahmans (PP. 4166).

\textsuperscript{658} Āgamic Śaivism could be classified into two branches: Southern Śaivism and Northern Śaivism. These convenient appellations do not indicate the birthplace of the two schools, but the country where they finally took root.

\textsuperscript{659} It is narrated that Aathanoor was a very fertile village and very thickly populated. However, at the very out-skirts of the village, close to the paddy fields, was a colony of people who dealt with carcasses of animals. In these wretched surroundings dwelt a strange person. He was filled with a rapturous to the anklet-grit feet of the Lord Śiva. He adopted the profession hereditary to his caste, and with an ideal of leading a righteous life he transformed his profession itself into an act of service to God. However his lowly birth in terms of caste prevented him from entering the temple at Tillai. He would only stand at the gates of temple and on account of excess devotion used to dance and sing in praise of the Lord. The Lord Śiva desirous of enabling the nāyagmār whose vision was obstructed by nandi made the nandi lying before him to move to one side and manifested himself to His devotee. At the end it is also narrated though the temple priest did not approve of his presence at the temple vicinity, Lord Śiva prepared the circumstances for the devotee of the Lord to enter the temple precincts and to worship the dancing Lord. The temple priest residing at Tillai also accompanied him.
‘conceptually distinct from worship yet often conflated with it, is *seva* or service’ (Kuiper, 2011, p. 101). It is carried out ‘to keep the gods beneficially inclined ... performing *seva* is good for the soul of the server’ (Kuiper, 2011, p. 101). Service (*tonṭu*), then, is perceived as a contrary vision or cognitive phenomenon; it is another way of interrelating with the object of one’s love - in this instance God through ritualism. While vision or contemplation implies to an extent, a sense of assimilation of the knowledge of the ‘sacred power’, one may call it a passive experience; service demands sacrifice – the devotee’s activity is of a very physical nature, in involves one’s own personal self in love and devotion. As, Richard Davis points out, ‘a proper *Saivāgama* should stand on four feet (*pāda*): the feet of knowledge (*jñāna*), ritual action (*kriyā*), proper conduct (*caryā*), and disciplinary practice (*yoga*)’ (1992, p. 107). However, what is observable is that the emphasis placed on the ‘temple priests’ as ones who ‘conducted worship never departing from the rules laid down in scripture’ (PP. 4165) indicate that they concentrated on ritual action (*kriyā*: *kriyā*), proper conduct (*caryā*: *caryā*) and disciplinary practice (*yōga*: *yōga*) towards liberation held a subordinate position to ritual.

In contrast by foregrounding the classical Tamil concept of the ‘sacred power’ domiciling in Tamil region, the body-space and by integrating and idealizing the two inherent aspects of service i.e. *aham* (*aham*) or contemplative love and *puram* (*puram*) or active service as exemplified by the warrior-heroes and bards in the life of the *nāyanmār* and by establishing these notion of service (*tonṭu*) as fundamental to realize Śīva within and become Śīva, Ĉēkkīlār sets forth a new path of access to God that
eliminates caste elitism and that shatters the primacy of ritual in the stereological domain. This is clearly evident in the classification of service performed by the nāyamār, as wild devotees or vaṇṭōntar (நாயக்காரர்கள்) and mild devotees or meṇṭōntar (மேண்டாரர்கள்). The mild devotees or meṇṭōntar (மேண்டாரர்கள்) are described as persons who serve the Lord at the temple, never once contravening the laws set by tradition especially the Āgamas: ‘...they have set their heart on Śiva. These are they who by their service have attained the feet of the Lord...’ (PP. 4162).660 The wild devotees were considered as those who transgress or go beyond set the patterns of tradition so as to seek and serve the Lord. The wild devotee is the companion of the Lord (PP. 317-318)661. The two aspects, however, are merged in Śiva who is an archetypical Lord and servant; he is the end of the mystical quest (PP. 4163-4164)662.

What is noteworthy is that the life of wild devotees or vaṇṭōntar (நாயக்காரர்கள்) or harsh devotees are mentioned at great length and are more common in the Periya Purāṇam than the narration of mild devotees or meṇṭōntar (மேண்டாரர்கள்). In the story of vaṇṭōntar (நாயக்காரர்கள்), after elaborating the early life and the background of the

660 ‘...நாயக்காரர்கள் முக்கியமான பிரதிபோக்கு பிறந்தவர்கள் வாழ்பாட்டை கைவிட்டு விளர்த்தினர் வாழ்க்கை என்பது அத்துடன் வாழ்க்கையைப் படிக்கவும் இனி மட்டும் வாழ்க்கையின் பிள்ளையாளர்’ (PP. 4162).

661 ‘... வாழ்க்கையில் விளக்கள் முடியாத முடியாத வாழ்க்கை...வாழ்க்கை...அனைத்துள்ள வாழ்க்கையில் வாழ்க்கையைப் படிக்கவும் வாழ்க்கையின் பிள்ளையாளர் பாதுகாக்கும்...’ (PP. 317-318).

‘He is known as the companion of the Lord...when Paravaiyār heard this she mused, “so he is the one who is called the companion of the Lord”. Before the words could pass her lips, love for the vaṇṭōntar welled up in her heart beyond all bound’ (PP. 317-318).

662 ‘...உலகில் எதுவும் எதுவும் எடுப்பதும் பிடிப்பு என்பது...வாழ்க்கையில் வாழ்க்கையில் வாழ்க்கையின் பிள்ளையாளர்கள் வாழ்க்கையின் பிள்ளையாளர்கள் வாழ்க்கையின் பிள்ளையாளர்கள்...’ (PP. 4163-4164).

‘The Supreme Lord is all things. He is without form and yet has form...those who were born there perform service that lies beyond all comprehension...they have subdued their five senses, concentrated their minds upon a single point and offer worship at his feet’ (PP. 4163-4164).
nāyaṅmār and their virtues, Cēkkilār focus on ethical and emotional turmoil that serves as decisive moment of the deeds of services of the nāyaṅmār, generally comprising the nāyaṅmār’s encounter with Šiva. In these narrations, a swift series of acts and event, harsh and violent deeds ultimately results in the vision of Šiva and the nāyaṅmār achieve their goal of being with Šiva. Thus, most of the narratives end at a point of climax, the wondrous nexus between the nāyaṅmār heroic deed and Šiva’s response, in the form of benevolent self-revelation. What is even more remarkable in the narrations is that the wild devotees or vaṅtoṇṭar acts of devotion are essentially acts of sacrifice of the most gruelling kind. To show their devotion to Šiva, the nāyaṅmār gave up without reluctance what they held most dear to them – their life itself.

663 This is made clear in the narration of the life of Iyarpakaiyār (PP. 404-439). True to his name, the nāyaṅmār was totally out of tune with the world of fleeting delights. He fixed his liberated mind and gaze on Šiva. Domestic felicity was a marked feature of the Hindu way of life and the nāyaṅmār enjoyed the companionship of a loving and devout wife. This Saiva family had made it a golden rule to feed those hungered whenever they knocked at their doors, as well as showed utmost deference and hospitality to those devotees who renounced worldly ties in order to set up Šiva in the domain of their hearts. One day, when an imposing pilgrim clad with the insignia of holy ash and beads and matted hair turned up to as a favour, the nāyaṅgār welcomed his guest with due deference. It came to pass that the renunciate made a strange request and asked for his wife. Even though it seemed an extraordinary alms-giving to a world-detached nāyaṅmār acquiesced and gave him permission to take his wife. The strager further wished that his host should accompany him to the outskirts of the village, so that he was not attacked by the villagers for taking his wife away. So the nāyaṅgār kept company with remarkable calmness, he returned home after having parted from his loving wife and never did he turn back to have a last look. There was no mesmerism at work. He was free from the desires of the senses. The absence of reflection was a sign of grace. The nāyaṅgār vindicated that the feeling of ‘I’ and ‘Mine’ and waned before the all-powerful love of Šiva to whom belonged everything. In serving a servitor of Šiva, Iyarpakaiyār testified to his total surrender and this realised the bliss of oneness with Šiva.

664 The nāyaṅmār who exemplified this intense devotion are listed here according to the types of act and service they did: (i) Injury or death of to oneself out of service to Šiva’s devotees: for example Eṉātināṭṭi showed faithfulness to the ashes and beads that Šiva’s devotees wore (PP. 608-649); (ii) injury of death to oneself out of service to the liṅga: for example Mūrtti nāyaṅgār (PP. 973-1021); (iii) injury to oneself and one’s kin out of service to the devotees of Šiva: for example Amarnīti nāyaṅgār (PP. 507-554); (iv) injury to oneself and one’s kin out of service to the liṅga: for example Caṉṭēcurar (PP. 1211-1270); (v) killing one’s kin out of service to the devotees of Šiva: for example Iyarpakaiyār (PP. 409-444); (vi) injury or killing non-kin out of service to the devotees of Šiva: for example Catti (PP. 4044-4050); (vii) injury or killing non-kin out of service to the liṅga: for example Erpiattar (PP. 555-612).
This they did in a violent manner or one may point out heroic way of sacrifice and service (ṅayāṅmār: toṇṭu): this sacrifice and service is feet of physical and moral bravery. Those most striking feature of the nāyaṅmār’s sacrifice is, apart from demands imposed on the physical self of the nāyaṅmār, is the way it exemplifies the ideal of service as passionate act of love or ap̀u (aṭṭāḷ): the word ap̀u (aṭṭāḷ) is presented here in sense of desire to do deeds of love for Śiva ceaselessly, it really indicates the deep devotion of the nāyaṅmār. This ap̀u (aṭṭāḷ) itself is attachment (patṭru: māṭṭu), affection (nāsam: pattru), benevolence (karunāi: aṭṭāḷ), piety (pakti: māṭṭu), joy (inpam: māṭṭu) and most specifically deep contentment. The nāyaṅmār’s commitment to Śiva-toṇṭu (śiṅgāḷṭu) gives life-fulfilling contentment joy (inpam: māṭṭu) and takes precedent over worldly attachments. The nāyaṅmār carries the Śiva-toṇṭu (śiṅgāḷṭu) so unfailingly in a manner that exemplifies extreme rather than constrained love to an extent that can only be viewed heroic, fanatical and fierce. They portray nāyaṅmār’s quality of attachment to Śiva and His Śiva-toṇṭu (śiṅgāḷṭu) or service to Śiva.

The narration of the life of the Kaṅṭappar is the persuasive example of the nāyaṅmār’s sacrifice made out of intense love of Śiva as presented in the Periya Purāṇam (PP 650-830). The story points to the fact in the intensity of love bring transformation to the nāyaṅār’s ordinary nature and life. For example, Čēkkilār describe that when Kaṅṭappar saw Śiva on mount Tirukkāḷṭṭi his feeling of joy and love grew more intense spontaneously, overcome with longing he ran forward in haste and embraced Śiva. His appearance changed into the image of measureless love. ‘I am his

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665 For the life story of this nāyaṅār, see p. 50.
servant, and I found him here’ the nāyaṉār exclaimed (PP.755). Further Cēkkiḷār narrates that ‘Śiva in his arul (grace) looked with favour upon him, at once freed from the entail of previous sins, he was transformed into the image of matchless love, abiding in the shade of heavenly light’ (PP.753). This makes clear that the by benevolent gazing of Śiva the nāyaṉār’s individual nature as a hunter was transformed into the image of love and he received Śiva’s nature; the nāyaṉār’s hunter identity was only a means through which love for Śiva was expressed, a love for Śiva who was now part of the nāyaṉār. This love, as Cēkkiḷār narrates, welled up with great intensity – ‘his devotion to the Lord did not allow him to leave the Great One on his own’ (PP. 759). This fanatical devotion made his fellow hunters believe that he had gone completely mad caught by some divine frenzy and they had no idea how to cure him (PP. 768-769): Śiva has ‘enslaved’ (தாத்தத் கொள்ளத) the nāyaṉār completely out of the practices that make up a community of the hunters. The narration also reveals, that appu (ஆப்பு) surpasses learning and ritual purity, it is a single minded devotion to Śiva is the ultimate necessity.

The narrations also reveal that not only the nāyaṉār was ‘enslaved’ (தாத்தத் கொள்ளத) by Śiva, the Lord Śiva himself was captivated by the nāyaṉār. Hence appu (ஆப்பு), it may be pointed out, is an emotion that Śiva and the nāyaṉār shared in common. At the end of the narration Cēkkiḷār narrates to show the nāyaṉār’s great love, Śiva created a circumstance that allowed the nāyaṉār to express his love to the

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666 ‘...அன்று உண்புக்கு நீர் இறி துணீர் அண்மூழ்ல் ...’ (மல. 755).
667 ‘...நிரந்தரமாக கூறும் போது வழிங்கை நல்லத்தையால் அன்பன் அனைத்துபுரியேன்கி அன்மூழ்ள் குருத்துவுடன் கடையாள் ஆண்டு விளக்கவுள்ளதன் தருக்கர் துணீர் பெண்மூழ்ல் துணீர் குருத்துவுடன் அன்மூழ்ள் குருத்துவுடன் அன்மூழ்ள் குருத்துவுடன்’ (மல. 753)
668 ‘...அல்லா அண்மூழ்ள் ... அன்பன் அனைத்துபுரியேன் பெண்மூழ்ள் அண்மூழ்ள் குருத்துவுடன் அல்லா குருத்துவுடன்’ (மல. 759).
excessive, but the Lord could not fathom such an extreme deed of act the nāyaṉār performed to express his love. Finally, Śiva responds in his boundless arul (grace) inviting the nāyaṉār to ‘Take the place at His right hand’ (PP. 834)669. Śiva and the nāyaṉār share anypu (அன்யு) in common. Anypu (அன்யு) as sharing and a longing for participation in Śiva accounts for fanatical devotion of the nāyaṉmār. Their acts or the services they performed are not simply of their own; they are deeds of Śiva and they discloses his true nature – a nature which emerges as fanatical or mad. It is this experience of being ‘captured’ and ‘enslavement’ (தட்டுத்தட்டு கொல்லல்) by Śiva makes the nāyaṉmār perform all sorts of service to Him. Hence, as Hudson notes, ‘by virtue of love for Śiva, the nāyaṉmār are extensions of Śiva’ (1989, p, 385).

The holistic concept of service (நூறு; toṭu), where both aham (அஹம்) and puram (புரம்), inner and outer contemplation and action were fused together to reiterate one’s instinct for service (நூறு; toṭu) and see the Lord in service (நூறு; toṭu).

In this, Čekkilār demonstrates that the vision of seeing and being at ‘one’ with Śiva is not merely far reaching philosophically or theologically, but the state of being one with Śiva shows it has a social consequences. In this perspective, it is precisely in and through action or service towards other devotees, that one opens oneself to Śiva. Therefore, a significant aspect of the mysticism in the Periya Purāṇam arises from seeking the vision of Śiva and this implies seeing him participating in the lives nāyaṉmār, and one’s participation in it. Čekkilār draws attention, as seen in the sixth chapter, to this theological understanding by suggesting that Śiva is the creator, preserver and is at work to deliver the soul.

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669 ‘...அண்மை அண்மையில் உள்ள முற்றம் நூறு ...’ (முற்றம், 834).
The practicality of the theology of service is to denote that it is Śiva-knowledge that fills the self of a person as a result of contemplation of the mysterious power of Śiva’s arul (grace) symbolized by the lotus feet of the Lord. It is this pure awareness that led the nāyaṃmār to engage in their service (toṇṭu). The life of a person who is conscious of this presence of Śiva is not just intellectual, but is one of an expansive life and one that is lived out in the fundamental awareness of Śiva’s arul (grace). This is the reason in the Periya Purāṇam that the author is primarily concerned with service not with an abstract principle. The lives of the nāyaṃmār are examples of the progressive realisation of the true knowledge of self and service. They stand as a catalyst of contemplation, intuition and will transform into a natural experience and action. The progressive assimilation of true knowledge of the self by divine arul (grace) is the soothing characteristic of the Periya Purāṇam. It is for this reason Cēkkilār considers the nāyaṃmār as ‘heroic soldiers’ contrary to the misinterpretation of the term as ‘violent’. They manifest the splendour of life lived in the presence of Śiva.

7.3 The Motivation for Service in the Periya Purāṇam

The inclination for service (toṇṭu) in the Periya Purāṇam is universal and is not restricted to humans alone. This is stated in the narration of the life of the Köccejkaṭ Cōla purāṇam where the story is related of service of a wise spider which spun a sturdy web of fine thread as a canopy over the Lord’s golden head, to protect him from the rays of the sun and falling leaves (PP. 4202-4219). In fact, for Cēkkilār all that is on earth are incessantly occupied in the service of the Lord i.e. Śiva-toṇṭu (toṇṭu), as all are believed to be domiciled by Śiva, no one can earn the arul (grace) of endlessly being in

\[\text{670 For the story of this } nāyaṃmār, \text{ see p.144.}\]
him without service (PP. 4154-4159). This makes clear, though the motives that inspire humans to engage in service vary in general, e.g. sensitivity to human needs, mercy and compassion towards other devotees, in Čekkilār's thought the motivation for service is intrinsic to nāyagmār’s perception, in which Śiva domiciles as the soul of their soul and self of their very self, as arul (grace) and is receptive to being nurtured or suppressed.

The key principle, however, is the intuitive and mystical awareness and the mystical experience of the unity of life with Śiva, through Śiva, in Śiva and for Śiva and in the unity of all and it is a reflection of him labouring in manifold manifestations for the deliverance of the soul (PP. 648). This mystical experience, awareness, the fundamental oneness of all phenomenal reality, enables the nāyagmār to take on and live a life of intentional simplicity, humbleness in service and poverty in self-sacrifice. It is voluntary (PP. 4199).

671 ‘With love and joy they delight in worshipping the Lord his servants ... those who serve the Lord with the intention of making all their actions worthy of his lotus feet, will not return to the womb to be reborn. The world itself is too small to contain their glory. Having ears for nothing but the stories of Śiva and love for nothing else but him, they have won the right to gain his lotus feet. There are the men and women of true integrity, whose delight it is to serve God with a melting heart. Whether they stand or sit, lie or walk, eat or sleep, with their eyes open or closed, they never forget his dancing feet. Those are genuinely his servants never slacken in their awareness of the Lord’ (PP 4154-4159).

672 ‘What more can we say in praise of his ineffable grace? To sever the bonds of attachment, he made use of the sword in the hand of one who owed him no loyalty. To the one who looked to him for help, he granted the privilege of being with him forever in love that knows no parting...’ (PP. 648)

673 ‘Dedicating his thoughts to the flower feet ... his words to the five letter prayer and his works to the servants of the Lord, he used to weave clothes ... when the servants of the Lord came to him, he would invariably give them...’(PP. 4199).
The nāyāṅmār cultivated a steadfast devotion with their self-knowledge and in elegance expanded their spiritual essence of this knowledge as unifying which is not forced from outside but is based on self-knowledge of Śiva domiciling in the cosmos and Tamil region. With this understanding, Cēkkiḷār takes one to the essence of the nāyāṅmār’s mystical awareness of Śiva, meaning an uninterrupted vision; this is the total self-surrender to Śiva to be in his service (PP. 336). What is clear and important is the fact that the nāyāṅmār’s fundamental insight into reality involves Śiva domiciling in the Tamil region. The lives of these nāyāṅmār give a profound confirmation in Śiva-faith, such that it elevates one to a higher level of mystical awareness and active service and – because of what is experienced; one notices a sense of the transforming power of arul (grace). Indeed, throughout the narration of the lives of the nāyāṅmār, Cēkkiḷār refers back to this experience of the nāyāṅmār as the foundational experience and motivation for service (Qb companyId: tonṭu). This mystical experience, in fact, can and should be considered as a particular intensification of the ordinary life of the Śiva-faith, that is sensitive to Śiva domiciling in the Tamil region, rather than as a radically different form of ordinary living.

The mystic experience of being one with Śiva, often realised through introverted contemplation, can be realised here and now. However, this inner spirit of mystical reverence of devotional contemplation which is experienced is constantly strengthened through service (Qb companyId: tonṭu). The inner affective knowledge of the Lord is not

674 'அப்போன்று அவ்வோர் அதிகார சார்ந்து அதுவாக தத்துவம் இயற்றிய தன்னை தன்னை உரியது குறித்து ஒவ்வொரு சமயத்திலும் பெயரினர் அதிகார சார்ந்து தன்னை தன்னை உரியது குறித்து ஒவ்வொரு சமயத்திலும் பெயரினர் அதிகார சார்ந்து தன்னை தன்னை உரியது குறித்து ஒவ்வொரு சமயத்திலும்' (பகுதி. 336).
This Cēkkiḷār notes ‘having bowed before the entrance, with his hands together in worship, he entered the sanctum. At that moment the Lord appeared in visible form and stood before him’ (PP. 336).
simply a love of the Lord but it is a profound insight into Śiva, not a simple knowledge but a dynamism of service in its manifold expressions. This affirms that the knowledge of knowing the Lord alone is insufficient for liberation, the bliss of serving the Lord which is the ultimate goal, has to be first manifested in the life of service to Him. The quest of the nāyaṁmār to have a vision of Śiva in the cosmos, is fundamentally an outlook on life driven by the desire and ‘heroism’ to serve, to place one’s self at the feet of the Lord (PP. 4162, 4165, 4167)\(^675\).

It is clear in the hagiography Cēkkilār rarely focuses his attention on love (anpu: அன்பு) alone; his constant emphasis is on service (நூறைத்தமிழ்: tonṭu). However it is significant, that Cēkkilār is keen to highlight the crucial fact that the compelling vigour or principle behind the morals of service is love – love which is specially directed towards the feet of the Lord i.e. love of Śiva (Śiva - anpu: சுவா அன்பு) and then because it is an affective movement, it is also directed at the service of Śiva devotees (Śiva-tonṭu : சுவா தொன்று). It is stated ‘their life is the life of worship and penance, offered in love to the feet of the Lord’ (PP. 352)\(^676\). At the very end of the hagiography, Cēkkilār reiterates ‘as their bliss grows ever more intense, with hearts inspired they love the only Lord. So the celestial glory of the servants of the Lord, who dwell in the golden court, everywhere abodes throughout the entire world’ (PP. 4286-4287). It shows that service which is

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\(^675\) ‘...காத்தானையால் சிறுத்து அன்பு அன்பு காத்தானையால் அன்பு அன்பு காத்தானையால்’ (இல. 4162).

‘...நூறைத்தமிழ் தொன்று நூறைத்தமிழ் தொன்று நூறைத்தமிழ் தொன்று’ (இல. 4165).

‘...நூறைத்தமிழ் தொன்று நூறைத்தமிழ் தொன்று நூறைத்தமிழ் தொன்று நூறைத்தமிழ் தொன்று’ (இல. 4167).

‘They have set their hearts on Śiva ...and by their service have attained the feet of the Lord’ (PP. 4162).

‘...their love and zeal never waver. According to the scriptures, regular personal service to the Lord and the conduct of worship ... are the prerogative of these saints’ (PP. 4165). ‘Now to the best of my knowledge I shall recount the deeds of the holy men who with a melting heart wear the holy ash throughout their lives’ (PP. 4167).

\(^676\) ‘...நூறைத்தமிழ் தொன்று நூறைத்தமிழ் தொன்று நூறைத்தமிழ்’ (இல. 352).
offered to Śiva flows out of love. It opens new pathways to God. It is remarkable that this motif of service is intermingled with love. Śiva of this nāyaṇmār is not just an awesome Lord; He and the nāyaṇmār are bound to each other by a power of mutual love.

The life affirming principle of love i.e. love of Śiva (Śiva-anpu: சிவான்பு சிவாண்மை) is found in the narration of the life of Viṇṇiṭṭal nāyamār purāṇam (PP. 491-501). Significantly he writes: ‘into the Vēḷālar family of that town, Viṇṇiṭṭal was born. Above all else, he was devoted to the Lord Śiva, and to the loving service of devotees. He showed his devotion by visiting the shrines of the Lord to offer worship. He would first pay respect to the servants of the Lord who were gathered there to offer worship at the Lord’s feet’ (PP. 494-495). By this, Cēkkilār affirms that mystical love is primarily a mystical intimacy with Śiva and it is found in deeds rather than words. Cēkkilār stresses humble service as the dynamic expression of the love of Śiva, one that is based on activity rather that merely a passive response - the theme is interwoven through the hagiographical narration of the lives of the nāyaṇmār. Indeed, for Cēkkilār, love is the force of service that fires the nāyaṇmār with a thirst to serve. The voluntary service is an outward expression of the inner mystical reality of oneness.

It is clear that this love (Śiva-anpu: சிவான்பு சிவாண்மை) which ignited the nāyaṇmār in service cannot be enforced. It is evoked or stirred. It emerges, moved by divine arul (grace) active in them, from one’s inner self. One has to realize that Śiva labours in the nāyaṇmār, and this realisation itself comprises a primary force within them. This allows one to do service at the feet of the Lord and of what otherwise would have been unthinkable. To be in Śiva, is to abide in him. This inner force evolves into its own
contemplation in service. Hence, one has to realize that his energy should be possessed
by the knowledge of the grace working in oneself. The purpose of this knowledge is not a
simple understanding, but a knowledge that goes beyond itself and overflows into a
conscious decision and direction in one’s life.

What emerges is the fact that there is a certain unity in three inner moments in self
– interior knowledge (mei- jñānam: மீய்புருந்துவம்), love (aṇpu: அண்ணர்) and service (tonṭu:
முன்னாண்டு) that comprise the desired end of the contemplation of the arul (grace) of Śiva.
They are the single thread of an interpersonal surrender to the Lord’s presence serving
him endlessly. Just as ‘interior knowledge’ (mei- jñānam: மீய்புருந்துவம்) does not flow in
love (aṇpu: அண்ணர்) would not be an inner experience, so love (aṇpu: அண்ணர்) that does
not exemplify in service (tonṭu: முன்னாண்டு) would be deceptive. It is for this reason
Cēkkilār accentuates an intrinsic unity between love (aṇpu: அண்ணர்) and service (tonṭu:
முன்னாண்டு), knowledge and activity which shaped the ideal of and primary objective of the
Periya Purāṇam. Just as love did not predispose knowledge but contemplates it, so
service did not tap the inner vitality and contemplative love, but fulfilled them within an
ordinary human mode of living. Hence, Cēkkilār declares that to receive divine grace
(arul) consciously, with inner illumination and understanding, the love of the servants of
the Lord is induced into an incorporated all-embracing service (முன்னாண்டு: tonṭu), which
fills the saint’s life. Thus it is a life of service which is rooted in a way of life (PP. 555-
557)\textsuperscript{677}.

\textsuperscript{677} Karuvūr was surrounded by walls embellished with gold, which even the gods admired, and in the
town there was temple called “Ā-nilai”, where the Lord made his abode, just as forever he abides in the
hearts of the loving devotees. In order to dispel illusion, Eripattar used to worship the holy one in that
temple, and to perform acts of service for those who belonged to the dark-throated Lord. When anything
In all, what is obvious is the fact, of the twofold unity in the love of Śiva (Śiva-anpu: சிவா அன்பு): (i) integral to nāyaṉmār’s religious ethos is the true inner knowledge of Śiva (mei- jñānam: மேய் ஜந்தம்), love (anpu: அன்பு) and service (toṇtu: தொண்டு) in complete surrender to Śiva; (ii) within this lies the profound truth of being in Śiva’s service (Śiva-toṇtu: சிவா தொண்டு). Nowhere is the motif of service so beautifully narrated than in the Kaliya nāyaṉar’s life episode (PP. 4027-4043). At the end of the narration, Cēkkilār emphasizes, that when he was no longer able to serve the ruler of the gods by lighting up the temple lamps, Kaliya nāyaṉar performed the heroic deed of cutting his own throat.

7.4 The Varieties of Service in the Periya Purāṇam

In order to highlight his mysticism of service and morality, Cēkkilār emphasises varieties of service that are discernible in the life of the nāyaṉmār. In his account of the Tirukurippuṭ Toṇṭar, Cēkkilār comments:

untoward happened to any of the devotees, he would come on the scene like a lion from a lair. Then to advance the Śaiva religion throughout the world, he would wield his axe and rid them of their trouble (PP 555-557).

On another occasion it is narrated: ‘As soon as he reached the age of discernment, his great love of the Lord governed all his thoughts and actions. Even in the moment of forgetfulness, his mind would harbour no other thought ... he stood fast in the path of service at the Lord’s feet’ (PP 1057).

678 Kaliya nāyaṉar was born in the city of Tiruvorriyūr in a clan which was known for its oil trade. Although he owned immeasurable wealth, he followed the way of service to the Lord. While he faithfully engaged in service, in his grace the Lord determined to make known to the world what his virtuous servant was doing. Accordingly, in due time, He made nāyaṉar’s wealth disappear. However, even after his wealth was exhausted, this great devotee did not stop serving the Lord with distinction. In desperation, he even sold his house, to serve the Lord by providing oil to the temple, but the proceeds of that venture too went up in smoke. When he was penniless, he even thought of selling his wife. In his wildest dreams he had not imagined that the day would come when he would be unable to perform his service in the temple, but now there was no more choice. He went to the temple for the lightening of the lamp. There he determined that if the flame of the lamp should die, he too would end his life. With that thought in mind, he arranged the lamps in a row and set their wicks. Since he had no oil, he intended to fill them with his own blood. So he took a knife and slashed his throat. At that moment, the Lord in his abundant mercy intervened and stayed his hand. The Lord granted him grace to abide in his beautiful city in the eternal bliss of serving him (PP. 4027-4043).
There was once a man living in this city who was washer-man by birth. He was of a loving disposition, and steadfast in the path of virtue. By family tradition he was a servant of the Lord ... since his earliest days he had dedicated himself, in thought, word and deed to the feet of the Lord. Because of his ability to serve the servants of the Lord by discerning their wishes before they were expressed, he earned the name “Tirukkippadu Tonțar” i.e. “the Lord’s servants who picked up hints” (PP. 1193-1194).

This makes clear that services to the Lord could be done in various ways. Cēkkilār classifies the nāyaṇmār’s service in a threefold manner; these are through one’s thoughts or mind, through one’s body or deeds and through material means of wealth. This concept of service presents an ideal model for the nāyaṇmār to follow. This is evident, in the life of Tirukkippadu Tonțar (PP. 1082-1210)\(^\text{679}\). He devoted physical exertion for the comfort of the servants of the Lord; ‘he delighted in serving the devotees whose hearts melted with love on hearing the name of their Lord, and by washing their clothes’ (PP. 1195)\(^\text{680}\). Further it is stated; the ‘nāyaṇār had the ability to serve the servants of the Lord by discerning their wishes before they were expressed’ (PP. 1193)\(^\text{681}\), implying that they were always in his thoughts. Cēkkilār explains that the nāyaṇār would spend all of his material wealth to comfort the servant: when the nāyaṇār saw the servant of the Lord approaching, he was very pleased and he went out to meet him. Then he spoke to him in a kindly manner, ‘Sir, why have you grown thin?’ (PP. 1200)\(^\text{682}\) and asked him to enter his home. It is noted that this service of the nāyaṇār, whenever it is done to someone, is

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\(^{679}\) For the life of this nāyaṇār, see 149.

\(^{680}\) ‘... நாயானைர், மகரசனாருக்கு கூர்ந்து மகரசனார் வான்மையிலைக்... நாய் தொண்டர் கூர்ந்து வான்மையிலைக் நாயானைர் வான்மையிலையுள்ளார்’ (படம் 1195).

\(^{681}\) ‘..சிலையைர் வரி ஆக வெள்ளாய் விளையாடினார் தொண்டர் கூர்ந்து நாயானைர் வான்மையிலைக் நாயானைர் வான்மையிலையுள்ளார்’ (படம் 1193)

\(^{682}\) ‘...கூர்ந்து வான்மையிலைக் நாயானைர் வான்மையிலையுள்ளார் ...’(படம் 1200).
offered to the Lord himself who dwells in them: when the Lord saw the service which his servant performed for his devotees, he came to bestow his grace upon him (PP. 1209).  

In the *Periya Purāṇam*, service through mind or thought, primarily implies, to evoke, love, contemplate or reflect on Śiva by reciting and repeating Śiva’s name. Though, Śiva has manifold names in the *Periya Purāṇam*, Cēkkiḻār portrays the nāyaṇār and other adherents of remembering the Lord Śiva with a Five-Letter-Prayer i.e. by the name of Śiva - Na Ma Si Va Ya (PP. 84). When humans are bound to the rock of impurity by the chains of deeds, both good and bad, they sink in an ocean of rebirths, the Five-Letter-Prayer will release them. So now it raised *Tirunāvukkaracar* from the sea and set him on the path of wisdom (PP. 1400). On another occasion it is narrated ‘that the Lord’s Five-Letter-Prayer was the source of all the original mantras (PP. 2169). ‘He pointed the way for all to follow by singing the Na Ma Si Va Ya hymn ... path of true wisdom to all mankind and he sang for all to hear’ (PP. 3151). It is clear from these citations from the *Periya Purāṇam* that in practice the recitation of the Five-Letter-Prayer takes two forms. One is, in the participation of the community through common worship, recital or singing the Five-Letter-Prayer where the community seeks a unity with Śiva.
The other is, in private recital or meditation, with or without beads. These two methods are not mutually exclusive to each other. The communal recital of the name of the Lord is as important as is meditation in solitude.

What is important is that for Cēkkilār, the simple recitation of the Five-Letter-Prayer is not sufficient. The nāyaṇmār’s desire was to have the vision of Śīva. In another hymn Cēkkilār describes the life of the Pūcalār nāyaṇār as a classical example of service through thought or mind (PP. 4176-4193). The story of Pūcalār nāyaṇār indicates that service through one’s thoughts or mind lies profoundly in the giving of one’s entire thoughts to the Lord for the benefit of the Śīva-community and His devotees. It consists in thinking about the elimination of all that distracts oneself of thinking of Śīva. Service through one’s mind is motivated not only by seeking opportunities of serving the Lord in times of adversity, but it is primarily by cultivating an attitude of compassion and deepening one’s fidelity to the service of the Lord Śīva and His devotees.

It has to be noted that their service through one’s body means a practical physical action, the performance of which is associated with temples or helping all who need assistance, shelter or protection. The simplest form of that service is one which establishes a mystical intimacy with Śīva. This is recounted in the Periya Purāṇam as

For the advancement of the Vedic tradition, a man was born in that town whose thoughts and feelings were all focused on the feet of the Lord. He never deviated from the path of devotion, and as he grew, his love grew within him. He held that to render service to the devotees of Śīva was his proper course, so he collected money from whatever source he could and distributed it to them. Beyond that, this devotee cherished the intention of building a temple as a dwelling place for the Lord. However, he did not take into account the fact he never had the money to achieve that goal. Hence, he decided that a temple built by means of his spiritual awareness would serve as well. So that it is what he did. It turned out to be a very fine temple too. In his mind, he looked for craftsman and their equipment, settled on an auspicious day to begin the building work, and laid the foundations. With loving devotion he continued his work throughout the night without sleep. When the king heard this he was astonished. “What a wonderful man!” he cried, “he has a mind free of all imperfection!” (PP. 4176-4193).
hospitality; it was a community duty that had its origination in Tamil tradition. As observed, in the second chapter, Cēkkilār draws on Tirukkuṟal, to idealize the nāyaṉmār’s spirit of service. It was their understanding that the primary duty of a householder was to be at the service or to offer hospitality to those who took refuge with them. Hospitality was inseparable from the nāyaṉmār’s Tamil identity, tradition and spirituality and this practice was holistic and central to the nāyaṉmār’s mystical ethos. It was more than a warm reception – it was about treating the visitor as a whole; the very act of hospitality with its various dimensions of preparation of food and the provision of clothing was carried out in sacredness, establishing a mystical wholeness between the sacred and the act of hospitality. It established in the spirit of Śīva, a reverence and respect for both guest and host.

Cēkkilār imparts significance to this hospitality in the narration of the nāyaṉmār’s all-embracing metaphor with theology. He describes the nature of Śīva can be well illustrated as hospitality. He moulds this metaphor in the mutuality and unity that exists between Śīva and Umā, in collaborating in the work of deliverance of the nāyaṉmār from bondage (PP. 1969-1974). He advocates an understanding that the essence of Śīva is imaged or mirrored in hospitality. The interconnection between the nāyaṉmār’s restorations to their true nature in Śīva is also made clear by this metaphor of hospitality. It leads the nāyaṉmār to the acknowledgement of Śīva’s invitation to partake in His self. Thus, it is stated that the nāyaṉmār exclaimed that: ‘By honouring me with your visit, you
have rescued me from the deep trouble that beset me. Please come now, your meal is served’ (PP. 463)\(^6\).

In a number of places Cēkkiḻar gives examples of hospitality. The story of Kalikkampa nāyaṉār feeding the devotees of the Lord is one such example (PP. 4017-4026)\(^7\). In fact, in showing hospitality to such a visitor, one serves not the visitor but Śiva. This is the ideal of service demonstrated in the Periya Purāṇam. Cēkkiḻar further stresses this in the narration of the life of Māṟṇ of Ilaiyāṅkuti (PP. 440-466)\(^8\). This episode demonstrates the true nature of service to Śiva that is done without any desire of an immediate reward, in humbleness and humility, with reverence and love, and with a pure intention and in utter self-abnegation. This mystical experience of hospitality is not carried out in a spirit of detachment, but in a genuine spirit of endless service to the Lord.

\(^6\) ‘அனுரைம் செக்கியுள் வேளியிடி ஆசன்சால் எப்பவரும் ஸ்வாத்ஸால் ஸ்வாத்ஸால் கூறி வைந்து வைந்து சுற்றுக்குக் காட்டு மறைவு நீர்வாய்ந்த தில்லியூ’(சின் 463).

\(^7\) In the narration Cēkkiḻar relates that one day, as was his custom, the nāyaṉār was preparing to feed the devotees who had gathered in his house. At that moment, among the devotees there came forward a man who had once been a servant in the saints’ house, but had subsequently fallen out with him and left his employment. He had become a servant of the Lord, and was wearing the garb of a devotee. As the master of the house took this man’s feet in his hand and washed them, his wife recognized the guest as the man who had gone off and refused to work for them. As soon as this occurred, she stopped pouring the scented water from the pot. Then, looking at his wife, and embarrassed by what his wife had done, the nāyaṉār washed the feet of the former servant thinking of him as if he was the Lord Śiva himself that had appeared before him. After that incident, this great servant of the Lord persevered faithfully in the path of service, and finally attained the shade of the Lord’s feet in the company of his devotees.

\(^8\) Māṟṇ was from a family of the lower caste. Yet, his mind was firmly set on performing loving service to the servants of the Lord. Whenever, any friends of the Lord came to his door, he would greet them with affection. In the course of time by divine will, his wealth gradually diminished. Although, he went through severe hardship, he sold his possessions to enable him to persevere in his sacred service as before. As this was going on, the Lord approached the nāyaṉār’s house in the guise of an ascetic. It was a night in the rainy season. Māṟṇ had locked the door and lay awake, feeling hungry and improvised. Nevertheless, he got up to greet his guest. In order to satisfy the hunger of his visitor and finding nothing to feed him, he went to the field to gather the paddy seedlings that he had planted that morning, to make food for his visitor. He realized that he had no firewood to prepare the food, so he cut down the rafters of the roof of his house. Once again, there was no curry to serve with the paddy food so he rushed to the garden to pull the immature vegetable plants to serve his guest. On seeing the generosity of the heart of the nāyaṉār, and on seeing him engage in the service of hospitality in a time of adversity, the Lord blessed him saying: ‘for the service that you have offered, come with your wife to the world above, there you may enjoy the eternal bliss’
Such is the ideal of and spirit of service, as recorded in the episode; it stands as the pathway to liberation. As Cēkkilār acclaims; ‘the Lord blesses them with the felicity which they deserved and departed from their sight’ (PP. 466).

It is important to record that Cēkkilār was always keen to illustrate the life of the nāyaṇmār who even went to extremes in their service of hospitality in the cause of Śiva. It is against this background that one has to understand the narration of the life of Iyarpakaiyār nāyaṇār who went to the extreme of offering his wife to a guest, who was none other than the Lord himself under concealment (PP. 404-439). In a similar manner, Cīruttoṇṭar in giving up his only son at the persistence of the divine guest (PP. 3665-3752) and of Eṇātināṭay who willingly gave himself up, out of his respect to Śiva, to be killed by a rogue soldier who came in disguise to kill him (PP. 608-649). These events have traditionally been understood to depict the ‘violence’ of devotion that is performed by the nāyaṇmār; rather they should be interpreted as the outpouring of a single minded service to the Lord who seems to dwell in the inner life of the cosmos.

Cēkkilār gives examples of yet another manner or type of service that is based on material prosperity or wealth. This aspect of service also forms an integral part of the Periya Purāṇam’s ideal of service. For example, Tirunīlakanta Yāḷppāṇa nāyaṇār glorifying the Lord by playing the flute (PP. 4220-4231), the story of the Nēca nāyaṇār, who was born in the weaver caste, rendering his service to the devotees of the Lord by placing his head beneath their feet (PP. 4197-4201), the story of Maṅkaiyarkkaraci
Ammaiyār of guiding the Pāṇṭya monarch in the spiritual path (PP. 4194 -4196), and the episode of Muṇaiyaṭuvār distributing to the servants of the Lord all the spoils, which he won by the conquest of his foes in battle (PP. 4094-4099). What is even more striking is the depiction of the life of Vāyilār nāyaṅār (PP. 4084-4093) and the remarkable respect that Cēkkilār pays to the Caṭaiya nāyaṅār (PP. 4232) and Icaiṅāṇi Ammaiyār (PP. 4233). The story of Icaiṅāṇi makes clear that though Cēkkilār considered even menial work and the humble service that parents perform in raising their children to the path of true life are a service rendered to the Lord. By sanctifying ordinary work that one performs in life as a path for mystical experience, Cēkkilār establishes the religiosity of service. This was an ideal almost foreign to the Tamil medieval community.

In the Periya Purṇām each nāyaṅār emerges with distinct personality. The other acts of service include, apart from what is mentioned above, practical services or manual labour such as digging wells near temples, gathering flowers, tending lamps, providing sandalwood and other materials required for the worship; some of the other nāyaṅmār performed acts of service at the shrine, sweeping the temple premises, and attending to the needs of those devotees who frequented the shrines. The emphasis is that these modes of services encompasses and signify meanings and reward of service, of discipline and

693 In commenting on the life of Vāyilār nāyaṅār (PP. 4084-4093) Cēkkilār points out that he was the saint who was well known for his zeal and devotion which he showed in sacred service of the Lord. By the power of his extraordinary concentration, he established a temple for the Lord within his own heart. In it, he lit the lamp of consciousness in God. His unfailing joy was the water which he used for ritual oblation, and the food he offered to the Lord was the nectar of his love. This was a service which for many years this holy devotee offered to the Lord with constant love in the temple of his heart. At length he found refuge in worship at the feet of the Lord.

694 Cēkkilār recounts that ‘our Lord Nampi Ārūrar was the bosom friend of Cēramāṇ Perumāl. He also became the companion of the Lord ... Caṭaiya nāyaṅār was Nampi’s father and thereby conferred a blessing on the world’ (PP. 4232).

695 Further it is stated that Icaiṅāṇi Ammaiyār (PP. 4233) was the wife of Caṭaiya nāyaṅār, whose fame is imperishable, and mother of Nampi, the servant of the Lord.
knowledge mainly through their depiction of exemplary life of nāyāṃmār in personal and emotional terms rather than in terms of their proper behaviour. For Cēkkilār they are true ‘devotees’, ‘servants’ or ‘salves’ of Śiva either by serving the Lord Śiva directly or by His devotees. For example Cēkkilār beautifully portrays how the Pāṇṭya queen and her minister humbled themselves in the service of Śiva and His devotees (PP. 4074-83, 4194-96): they reveal their passionate, all-consuming, personal love of Śiva in its absolute sense. It certain occasions the nāyāṃmār’s great act of service and their act of love was brought to light to the world by Śiva himself as one sees in the Kaṇṇappa nāyaṅār Purāṇam. Therefore, the values of service is measured not just by the status or caste of the person performing such services or acts but the utter sincerity and passion with which it is performed.

It is for this Cēkkilār adopts different narrative strategies to retell the story of these nāyāṃmār. In some instance Cēkkilār uses short biographies of between fifteen stanzas to narrate about the nāyāṃmār. In the short space allotted to them, he says very little about these nāyāṃmār, except briefly to describe in very general terms the nature of the service which they performed, without recording any special event of particular significance. As example the narrative of the Cuntarar’s parents Caṭaiyaṉār and Icaiṅāiṉiyar (PP. 76-77). In some other instance Cēkkilār uses biographies of varying length, from only seven or eight stanzas up to a maximum of over sixty, Each of these include by way of introduction a description of the general character of the nāyāṃmār’s service then goes on to recount a particular crisis or turning point in their career upon which their fame came to be based. The story usually ends with the saint being transported to the bliss of Śiva’s heaven. For several of these crisis was brought about
when their money ran out, and they could no longer perform the service to which they were committed. In order to continue their work, they had then to resort to exceptional measurer, for example Mūrkkar who turned to gambling (PP. 3623-3634), Naminati who lit the lamps first with grass then with his own hair (PP. 4060-4068). Different to what is mentioned, in some other instances, Cēkkilār begins the biographies the nāyānmār’s chosen form of service and go on to describe the occurrence of a particular crisis in their life and the manner in which the saint overcame it. However, in this group of stories, the significant difference is that the crisis recorded as being directly occasioned by the deliberate intervention of Śiva himself. Śiva intervenes explicitly in order to make known to the world the true merits of the nāyānmār’s service and love. For example in the case of Māṟaṉ of Iḷaiyāṅkuṭi whose hospitality to Śiva-devotees seemed initially dependent upon his considerable wealth, the Lord plans to demonstrate that the nāyagār’s zeal for service was in no way limited by the depth of his bank balance (PP. 450).  

In Cēkkilār’s perspective, therefore, nāyaymār’s lives demonstrate a single-minded and unconditional service of life and devotion. In his hagiography, he expresses his desire that this life of service becomes well known throughout the world. He proclaimed that ‘as their bliss grows ever more intense, with hearts inspired by love of the only Lord. So the celestial glory of the servants of the Lord, who dwells in the golden court, everywhere abides throughout the world’ (PP. 4286). Therefore, for those who
desire that mystical intimacy with the Lord and who labour, serving him and him alone is one sublime path. This service rendered in whatever form may vary but it is all in the service (toṇṭu: தொண்டு) of Śiva.

7.5 Summary

The subject of the Periya Purāṇam deals with the relationship of Śiva and the nāyaṃmār and elucidates the lives of these nāyaṃmār or servitors of Śiva who not only lived for Him but adored Him in delightful and distinct ways in their historic, social and religious settings. They are identified in the Periya Purāṇam as Śiva-toṇṭar (தொண்டு நந்தர்) i.e. ‘servitors of Śiva’ or Mei-toṇṭar (மேயு் நந்தர்) i.e. ‘votaries of truth’. These nāyaṃmār pursued the path of Śiva-realisation through dedicated activities of love and devotion to Śiva and to His devotees implying all works as service of Śiva. However, each of the nāyaṃmār praised in the Periya Purāṇam made their journey in his own fashion, making it look as if it is a unique manner of treading the path.

What must be observed is the fact that it is power and efficacy of single-minded love for Śiva that made them wake up to such acts of service: in this they gain not only Śiva-jñānam (ஞந்தர் ஜந்தாம்), the supreme knowledge of Śiva, but also mei-jñānam (மேயு் ஜந்தாம்) the true knowledge their self. Therefore, to be a ‘servant’ (ஞந்தர் - toṇṭar) of Śiva is to commune with Him through love; to be a ‘servant’ is also to express the love that is within. It is a devotion which is not only is an alert to the private, inner nature of human religious experience; it is at the same instance, the most vigorously expressive kind of personal devotion.
It is, therefore, presented in the *Periya Purāṇam*, the service of the nāyaṃmār which they rendered in love of Šiva and His devotees is an expression of the familiarity born out of that experience of being in love with Šiva. At the same time, the narrations in the *Periya Purāṇam*, also presents Šiva as domiciling in the Tamil region and who intervenes out of His love for His devotees in manifold forms, as beggar, ascetic which alters radically the sensitivity of the nāyaṃmār’s desire to service. Therefore, their affection, interior knowledge and pilgrimages that they undertook played a significant role in discerning the hospitable Šiva who invited them to participate in his transforming love and to co-mingle with him freely in the formation of community based on that mystical love.

It is for this reason; Čēkkilār presents the nāyaṃmār’s pilgrimages as not pleasant experiences – gentle and stable in the case of *Campantar*, stormy and violent in the case of *Cuntarar* – but a journey of life, trail and turmoil which end in union with Šiva. It is for this reason, Čēkkilār plays the significant events in nāyaṃmār’s life i.e. the narrations of being possessed or being enslaved by Šiva, the periodic revelation of the devotional relationship through miracles, the nāyaṃmār expressing their emotional devotion in hymns and poems, and encountering Šiva in places they visited, treating the other devotees of Šiva as Šiva Himself, recital of Šiva’s name; these are played out in the nāyaṃmār’s life narration in ways that should be specific to Tamil Šaiva ideal of devotion, which are themselves transformation of earlier Tamil views monopolized by pre-devotional cultic context and ethos of servitude of bards exemplified in relation to the sacred power believed to be domiciling in the Tamil landscape. This may appear that this love for Šiva does not arise without significant interest on the details of cultic service nor
is it expressed except through such service and more commonly in the midst of one’s
householder life. For example, attention to a devotee of Śiva always implies to confer the
rites of hospitality that usually comprise washing the feet of the devotee and lavish the
devotee with hospitality. However, nothing will divert the nāyagmār’s from fulfilling
their commitment to serve Śiva, not even when Śiva himself provides a way out.
Everything the nāyagmār did is motivated not out of self-interest but out of love for Śiva
out of Śiva-interest, one might observe.

Through their life stories of service (toṇṭu: புத்து), Cēkkiḻār demonstrates that
the Śaiva community should cultivate the spirit of sacrifice, love and service as offered to
Śiva whose patronage they enjoyed in temples located in their region. The contribution of
nāyagmār was that they made this ideal of service as a popular moment and promoted
good will and harmony among all ranks and classes. What distinguishes these nāyagmār
is the potentiality and clarity of their understanding of the nature of service and this is
revealed in multiplicity of acts. It is for this reason Cēkkiḻār presents the nāyagmār as
servants of the Lord who had realized mei-jñānam i.e that is the true knowledge of the
self. This ordinary religious experience of the nāyagmār is not just confined to
subjective experience; it is rather an experience of Śiva in many different ways and
modes of service.

This mysticism which emerges from a Śiva-centred life is not an impersonal
abstraction which the clouds the soul of the nāyagmār, but it is a significant and practical
guiding principle in their mystical life. In the Periya Purāṇam, the mystical insight into
the theology of Śiva, translates into unique lives of service. It is important to note, that
the mysticism of the *Periya Purāṇam*, especially as it is read and interpreted through the lives of the saints, reveals not only a sense of Śiva at-work in the cosmos as an indwelling principle, but it is found in belief and faith in a personal God and in deed and action; it radically alters the saints’ consciousness in its profound sense of intimacy and service to such a God. The love of Śiva, particularly is a love in service which is expressed through one living in the world. It might be said of the of the nāyagmār of the *Periya Purāṇam* that they ‘taught’ and ‘inspired’ the Tamil community by example, what they ‘taught’ was not substance of devotional attitude, but integrity of action inspired and motivated by love of Śiva.
8.1 Introduction

Cēkkiḻār’s concern in the Periya Purāṇam was to highlight the enlightened nāyaṉmār of Tamil Saivism. He could not but narrate their worthwhile demeanour in praise worthy terms throughout his work. The nāyaṉmār of Tamil Saivism did not lay down a code of law, and neither did Cēkkiḻār, the author of the Periya Purāṇam, attempt to codify the rules of conduct. However, Cēkkiḻār has portrayed a variety of meaningful incidents of ‘saintly conducts’ of the nāyaṉmār in the Periya Purāṇam (PP.4-5). In a single sentence ‘Pūcum nīṟupōl uḷḷum puṇjitarkaḷ’ (புத்தும் நிறுறப்போல் உள்ளம் புண்டிதர்கள்) (PP. 141) Cēkkiḻār depicts the true nature of the nāyaṉmār’s character that they are pure subjectively, as they outwardly smear white ashes. While describing the distinguishable character of the nāyaṉmār, Cēkkiḻār also offers a definition of saintliness in the Periya Purāṇam (PP. 4152-4153). In this way Cēkkiḻār deals with moral questions in the context of a typical Saivite’s motive and vocation.

698 Cēkkiḻār notes that these are ‘the poet saints who extolled in song the Lord who dance in the sacred court ... and have since enjoyed the blessings which those garland of songs bestow. Further Cēkkiḻār exclaims ‘that the greatness of the devotees is beyond measure; beyond measure too their fame, which I am going to relate. Although to tell even the smallest measure of it is impossible, my measureless zeal will spur me on to the endeavour’ (PP. 4-5).

699 ‘...The whiteness of the ash reflects the purity of their hearts...’ (PP. 141).

700 ‘...The whiteness of the ash reflects the purity of their hearts...’ (PP. 141).
It is noteworthy to see in the Periya Purāṇam, therefore, there are many instances to prove that motives rather than rules, love’s implications rather than law prevailed in the Tamil culture to judge Śaiva morality. The values derived in depth from the Śaiva tradition as, for instance, that justice must follow the same canons for a king’s son as for the cow, and all the lowest creatures of his state, and that any type of promise once made should be honoured, prove that love which fulfils the law does not supersede the

‘These are the men and women of true integrity, whose delight it is to serve God with a melting heart, while their lips stammer, their hair stands on end, their limbs tremble, and from their bodies floods of tears wash off the scared ash. Whether they stand or sit, lie or walk, eat or sleep, with their eyes open or closed, they never forget his dancing flower feet. Those who are genuinely his servants never shaken in their awareness of the Lord’ (PP. 4152-4153).

701 The Word ‘moral’ can be an adjective, a count noun, or a plural noun. According to Tamil Lexicon of the Madras University when ‘moral’ is used as an adjective it denotes the judgment of ‘right or wrong’ of human action, character and behavior: moral examination or having a moral sense (இறுவியை: iruvīyai – two classes of moral actions – good and evil). The word is also used to denote adherence to conventionally accepted standards of conduct acceptable in a particular society; virtuous: moral life (அம: agam – performance of duties to be practiced by each caste). It also refers to examination of the nature of ethics and the foundations of good and bad character and conduct (அருவை: aruvurai – religious or moral instruction). The word also mean when used as adjective to mean that which arises from conscience or the sense of right and wrong: a moral obligation, moral courage (இரம: iram – moral conduct and uprightness). It also affirms of having psychological rather than physical or tangible effects: a moral support or victory (நாயகிலை: nayagalai). It also means having a strong probability: a moral certainty (கோலை: kolai: conformity to moral principles, good conduct). Used as noun, the word ‘moral’ and plural noun ‘morals’, it refers a lesson that can be derived from a story or experience (அசாரக்கோவை: ācārakkōvai or தர்மபாத்தோம்: tarmōpatēcam – religious or moral instruction). Further as used noun it also refers to standards of behavior; principle of right and wrong (நல்லூர்க்கம்: nallolukkam). In the Periya Purāṇam, Cēkkilār has dealt with moral questions i.e. of what is ‘right’ and ‘good’ in the context of a typical Śaivite motive and vocation. For this to be clear, Cēkkilār has portrayed a variety of meaningful incidents of saintly conduct of the nāyamār. Cēkkilār notes:

‘…அதியூர்சீட்டு அமுபையும் பரிவையும் அறித்து வைக்கும் மத்தியசேரம் தேவரிமானர் என்றால் எவரளவும் நர்மாண்டு காப்புத்தும் என்று உள்ளது’ (Gall.4164).

‘…They have subdued their five proud senses, concentrated their minds upon a single point and offer worship at his feet. Theirs is the noble path’ (PP. 4164).

Again Cēkkilār exclaims:

‘…அமுபையும் பரிவையும் என்றால் எவரளவும் நர்மாண்டு காப்புத்தும் தேவரிமானர் என்றால் எவரளவும் நர்மாண்டு காப்புத்தும் என்று உள்ளது’ (ng.G.4165)

‘…with unwavering love they offer worship …’ (PP. 4165).

It is evident, therefore, in the Periya Purāṇam, motives rather than rulers, love’s implications rather than law prevailed in the Tamil Śaiva culture to judge Śaiva morality. It was on this fundamental concept of love (அமுபை: agam) that the Periya Purāṇam justifies the code of life that nothing of itself can be labelled as false or incorrect. The pathway to Śiva in Periya Purāṇam proclaims the unique truth of how a whole nation with one accord considered the superiority of the love for Śiva as the noble path to god (பார்வைக்குள்: uvaṅkig) and upheld it as nāyamār’s supreme goal in life. Śaiva morality of Tamils, therefore, is a ‘way of life’. It becomes evident in the Periya Purāṇam in particular significant situations where self-denying, self-effacing love forms the major criterion. In this sense ‘moral’ refer to a person who follow the Śaiva way of life totally and fully with Love of Śiva and to his devotees. In the Periya Purāṇam, it is not used in the sense of emotion but ordering of ‘right conduct of life’ (நாயகிலை: nayagalai) according to standards of conduct acceptable in Śaiva society; virtuous: moral life (அம: agam).
law; it give profound meaning to life (PP. 86-135)\textsuperscript{702}. It was on this fundamental concept of love (\textit{anpu: அன்பு}) that the \textit{Periya Purāṇam} justifies the code of life that nothing of itself can be labelled as false or incorrect. The lives of the \textit{nāyamār} in the \textit{Periya Purāṇam}, therefore, testify to the fact that they confronted what was thrown at them in life according to the norms or tenets of the \textit{Śaiva ‘way of life’ (nerī: நேரியே)} and upheld this \textit{Śiva-nēti (சிவா-நேதி)} as the norm of one’s morality and the source of moral (\textit{naṉṆērō: நான்நீர்}) freedom with love and purity (PP. 4118)\textsuperscript{703}.

The main concern of this chapter, therefore, is to detail various complex structures that stand as a backdrop to present that the \textit{Śaiva} morality of the Tamils as a ‘way of life’ as lived by \textit{nāyamār} in the \textit{Periya Purāṇam}. It becomes evident in particular significant situations where the \textit{nāyamār’s} self-denying, self-effacing love forms the major

\textsuperscript{702} It is an observable fact that, in the introduction to the \textit{Periya Purāṇam}, Cēkkilār highlights, that ‘this was the ancient city that was ruled by king \textit{Maṉu} who was descended from the sun ... as guardian of all earthly creatures, he was their eyes and their way of life ... by virtue of his fairness in reconciling even with his very enemies, he was known as “The Just” and crowned with the title “\textit{Maṉunti Dharman}” or “The Sustainer of the Moral Order”.

As noted in the ancient texts, he, the king, made sure that the Lord of the Vedas is worshipped and glorified in his kingdom. He steadfastly followed the path of virtue in his private, family and public life. He punished the evil doers, and with the support of the other kings, it is he who maintained the order of the world’ (PP 98-102). Further, it is stated, that this king who sought justice for the mother cow which lost its calf allegedly killed by the king’s son, and proclaimed ‘I am the guardian of all life’, and he thought to himself ‘I have set myself up as the protector of the whole world. Eventually, my rule is based on justice’ (PP 118-119) and he ordered the death of his son.

At the end of the narration Cēkkilār points out that the ‘Supreme Lord, is the Lord of all virtue who dwells in the temple, sensing what had happened, the Lord appeared to king \textit{Maṉu} and granted him abundant grace’. In a similar manner, ‘as of king \textit{Maṉu}, the Lord will bestow his grace on those who follow the path of virtue’ (PP 118-119) and he ordered the death of his son.

\textsuperscript{703} ‘The \textit{Śaiva} path and the way of virtue prescribed in the Vedas flourished...’ (PP. 4118).
criterion. This chapter surveys the lives of the nāyaṁmār to highlight that the concept of morals derives from the concept of love (anpu : அன்பு), a deep down reality. The chapter is divided into the following sections.

8.2 The Śaiva-neṛi as the norm for morality in the Periya Purāṇam
8.3 The Mystical Nature of the Śaiva-morality in the Periya Purāṇam
8.4 The End Goal of the Moral Life in the Periya Purāṇam
8.5 Summarry

8.2 The Saintly Conduct of the Nāyaṁmār in the Periya Purāṇam

The objective of the Periya Purāṇam is clearly stated in the first line of the opening verse (PP. 1)704. Again at the last verse of the Periya Purāṇam this objective is reaffirmed (PP. 4182)705. In this verse Čēḵkīlār presents the ‘whole world’ (சோழக்காளி: Ulakelām) as being sustained by the testament of the legion of Śiva-toṇṭar (சிவ தோண்டர்) i.e. the ‘Servants of the Lord’. The emphasis the ‘whole world’ (சோழக்காளி: Ulakelām) not only expresses Čēḵkīlār’s universalism but also reveal the nāyaṁmār’s personal longings and the universal applicability of their religious experience and expression. At the same instance the emphasis that the world is sustained by Śiva-toṇṭar (சிவ தோண்டர்) or ‘Servants of the Śiva’ illustrates the concept of universal love and fraternal tendency of mind towards the others. Amidst diverse pursuits, ranks and background and upbringing, these earnest preceptors and devotees of Śiva lived and moved with their fellow devotees in service, activated by one-pointed yearning for the realisation within of ‘Anbe Śivam’

704 சோழக்காளி: சோழக்காளி ....’ (PPP. 1)
705 ‘...சோழக்காளி: சோழக்காளி சிவ தோண்டர் சிவ தோண்டர் சிவ தோண்டர் சிவ தோண்டர்’ (PPP. 4286).
i.e. Śiva is love (TM. 270). It is for this Cēkkiḻar states ‘true wisdom consists in loving God’ (PP. 2746).

The lives and works of the nāyaṉmār immortalized in the Periya Purāṇam, therefore, opens a vast field where the subject-matter is not primarily concerned with thinking, but with doing i.e. service (tonṭu: தோண்டு) and being i.e. being a Śiva-tonṭar (சிவாதோண்டர்) or ‘servant’ of Śiva (PP. 10). In the case of anything that is done, it is the goal which constitutes the first principle and cause of the whole thing; for it is that which sets the nāyaṉmār in motion. It was this unsullied love in the service of Śiva was a common unifying factor (PP. 4152). The foundation of the entire Śaiva culture promulgated by the nāyaṉmār is projected on this first principle (PP. 6). This implies it is not the individual’s self-centred growth that is the final goal but rather the proper functioning of the individual person.

What is remarkable about these nāyaṉmār of the Periya Purāṇam is the potentiality and the clarity of their understanding and this is revealed in a multiplicity of

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706 ‘அனின் சிவா தோண்டர் அனின் அதிகாராக
அனின் சிவா தோண்டர் அதிகாராக
அனின் சிவா தோண்டர் அதிகாராக
அனின் சிவா தோண்டர் அதிகாராக’ (ஜி. 270).
‘The ignorant think that love and God are two; They do not know love is God. After knowing that love of God. They remain possessed of love which is God’ (TM. 270).
707 ‘...செய்கிறிய அம்மனி...’ (ஜி. 2746)
708 ‘As to the title of the work ... I shall call this work “The History of the Holy Servants of the Lord” (PP. 10).
709 ‘செய்கிறிய அம்மனி என்றுக் கூறியுள்ள மிக அரியக்கர்...’ (ஜி. 4152)
‘These are the men and women of true integrity, whose delight it is to serve God...’ (PP. 4152).
710 Cēkkiḻar recounts very humbly that ‘like a thirsty dog that tries to drink up the mighty ocean, I have set myself the task of setting forth the matchless glory of the holy servants of the Lord, although it lies beyond all human understanding’ (PP. 6).

’செய்கிறிய அம்மனி என்றுக்கூறியுள்ள மிக அரியக்கர் என்று கூறியுள்ள மிக அரியக்கர் என்று கூறியுள்ள மிக அரியக்கர்...’ (ஜி. 6).
acts. This is clearly stated in the *Periya Purāṇam* (PP. 4152-4153)\(^{711}\). What is obvious in these statements is that, Çëkkilär gives a fairly good account of saintliness according to the Šaiva tradition. Again, in memorable terms Çëkkilär portrays the general characteristic of Šiva saints (PP. 342)\(^{712}\). The hearts of such devotees were pure like the sacred ashes which they smeared over their body. They made all quarters illuminative owing to the lustre of their radiation (PP. 141)\(^{713}\). Their persistent path of steadfast devotion engendered in them virtues and not vices. The essence of their humanity is bereft of all accidental factors, and their lives are a continuous realisation of the total knowledge and love of which they are capable; to serve Šiva alone was their objective in life and their benign love towards the Lord and His devotees were unfathomable (PP. 4162)\(^{714}\). Some of these devotees, sought out by Šiva himself to bestow His *aruḷ* (grace), enjoyed the divine thrill in their very being out of glowing love (PP. 871-907)\(^{715}\). In them we see the potential intellect, intuition, and will translating into a dynamic experiences and actions.

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\(^{711}\) ‘... the potential intellect, intuition, and will translating into a dynamic experiences and actions.'

\(^{712}\) ‘There is no one who can compare with them,’ he said, “By their devotion they have attained me. By their single-mindedness they have conquered the world. They have no imperfection. No one else could reach a state of opposites. Now you are to join theirs. Their love for me has brought them untold bliss. They have passed beyond the play of opposites. Now you are to join their number’ (PP. 342).

\(^{713}\) ‘...The whiteness of the ash reflects the purity of their hearts...’ (PP. 141).

\(^{714}\) ‘... They have set their hearts on Šiva. These are they who by their service have attained the feet of the Lord’ (PP. 4162).

\(^{715}\) Mānakkāṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟ畬ด் did not hesitate to cut off the hair of his daughter on her wedding day to offer it to a mendicant. These and a few more instances stated in the *Periya Purāṇam* are the remarkable events to highlight the concept of service and sacrifice and surrender from the Šaivite point of view.
The faithful love towards Śiva will result in equanimity (இருவினாயியோப்பு: Irūvinaiyoppu)\textsuperscript{716}, tranquillity (நாயக்கம்: cāntam)\textsuperscript{717}, fortitude (ஏதிப்பு: atippāṭu)\textsuperscript{718} and persistence (ஏக்கிரகம்: ākkirakam)\textsuperscript{719}. These kinds of subjective states of the nāyānmār will have their culmination and fulfilment in external activities (PP. 3665-3752)\textsuperscript{720}. The fruits of their saintliness or qualities, therefore, could be easily discerned in the lives of

\textsuperscript{716} It is an attitude of perfect equanimity towards meritorious or sinful deeds. Good example of this is found in the story of Tīrūṉavaikkarar. It is stated that ‘when human beings are bound to the rock of impurity by the chain of deeds, both good and bad, and sink in the ocean of births, the Five Letter Prayer will give release. So now it raised the nāyānmār on the rock from the depths of the sea’ (PP. 1399).

‘இருவினாய் போற்றும் மலையில் இருந்து வந்து வந்து வட்டை வண்டு கொண்டு முழுக்கு கொண்டு உடன்முன் சாதித்து நேரும் வெள்ளை செய்துத் தொண்டியியை’ (Cukatukkānkalai poruputattāta maṇiñai). However, in the Periya Purāṇam, it refers to the state of being in pure awareness of Śiva’s presence in life (இருவினாய் போற்றும் (Irūvinaiyoppu)). Here, the nāyānmār does not become attached to the world, rather they act as a ‘witness’ to the love of Śiva which is exemplified in their service to Him and His devotees.

\textsuperscript{717} ‘...அந்த பொருள் தொடர்ந்து கூறியிட்டு கவலை’ (PP. 2109).

“We give you these gift with Joy’ (PP. 2109).

The word tranquillity (நாயக்கம்: cāntam) is described in Tamil Lexicon of the Madras University in number of ways. It refers to the quality of quietness, stillness and calmness (ஆமாசைகள்: amarikai). It also denotes transparency (துல்கக்கம்: tulakkam), brightness (பீரக்கம்: pirakām), conscious waking state (காவை: nāgavu). In the Periya Purāṇam it refers clarity of mental vision (காவைகளை: Maṇattēvi) and in the sense of clear vision of truth (காவைகளை: nārkāti).”

\textsuperscript{718} ‘...நாயக்கம் அமையும் தியங்கமடை மாறாகி’ (PP. 2107).

‘... the flawless and truthful ...’ (PP. 2107). In another occasion it is narrated that ‘they have subdued their five proud senses, concentrated their minds upon a single point and offer worship at his feet’ (PP. 4164).

‘...காவைகளை தொடர்ந்து உடன்முன் அமையும் காவைகளை’ (PP. 4164).

The word fortitude (ஆதிப்பு: atippāṭu) has several expression in Tamil. Tamil Lexicon of the Madras University uses the word to firmness or stability (சுருக்ககளை: uttiṟṟam) or to mean a man of fortitude (சுருக்ககளை: vimāllum) in the Periya Purāṇam, it refers to the state of the nāyānmār and their attachment to the feet of God (இருவினாய் போற்றும்: Irūvinaiyoppu). In the Periya Purāṇam, it refers to the state of the nāyānmār’s firm attachment to the feet of God (இருவினாய் போற்றும்: Irūvinaiyoppu) and the stubbornness they have to stay with the Lord.

\textsuperscript{719} ‘...நாயக்கம் காவைகளை தொடர்ந்து உடன்முன் அமையும் காவைகளை’ (PP. 4173).

‘...they stand fast in the path of justice...’ (PP. 4173).

Tamil Lexicon of the Madras University explains this word persistence (எக்கிரகம்: ākkirakam) in different ways. It means obstinacy (சாபேப்பதை: pīṭāṭām), firm attachment (சுருக்ககளை: uttiṟṟam), stability (சுருக்ககளை: nilaipēruka). It also in the sense to struggle with stubbornness (சுருக்ககளை: armumyaça ciyeṭṭu). In the Periya Purāṇam, it refers to the state of the nāyānmār’s firm attachment to the feet of God (இருவினாய் போற்றும்: Irūvinaiyoppu) and the stubborness they have to stay with the Lord. 

\textsuperscript{720} Ciputioantar went to the extreme state of ecstatic behaviour of cutting his only son while his wife was holding him to cook food for the mendicant saint i.e. Śiva.
the nāyaṃmār in terms of asceticism (_tenṟavu_) (PP. 4027-4043),721 strength of their character (_cirappu_) (PP. 650-830),722 purity (_akattumai_) (PP. 507-549)723 and charity (_kiriya_) (PP. 1078-1205). As ascetics the nāyaṃmār derived pleasure in sacrificing their possessions. They did not aspire for mundane enjoyments nor were experience pleasures, since they had realised that such experience ephemeral in nature (PP. 4027-4043).725 Hence they longed for lasting joy which finds no measure. This attitude had made so tremendous an effect on them that they did not attach values to the earthly substances. As a result, they were able to sacrifice their belongings for the sake of their devotional pursuits. As they realized that they are part of the whole community of Śiva followers, they did not hesitate to sacrifice either part of the whole of their body.

The strength of their life character refers to a purified state of the nāyaṃmār’s personality which has relinquished the sensuous pleasures caused by the phenomenal

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721 The life of Kaliya nāyaṅār who went on to the extent of cutting his throat to use the blood as oil for burning the temple lamps as he was poverty stricken can be cited as an example. In another instance it is narrated that the ‘Cēra king had reached the conviction that the benefits of kingly rule, the pursuit of riches, altruistic service and the practice of austerity all find their fulfilment in the feet of the Lord who dances in the sacred court at Tillai...’ (PP. 3770)

722 Kannappar, whose intense love towards Lord Śiva was matchless, had the courage to pluck his eyes to block the bleeding in the eyes of the Lord is a clear example.

723 Amarnīti was emboldened to climb on the one plate of the balance, while the other one contained a piece of loin-cloth. When all his wealth did not make the balance erect, he had decided to show his integrity and honesty to the saint (here too Śiva in disguise) by himself climbing on the balance.

724 Tirukkuripputtontar too resolved to end his life dashing his head against the stone in order to save his reputation and prestige. He could not return the saint’s wear (again Śiva) after washing and drying up, owing to unexpected (but God-designed) rain.

725 The typical example of this is Kaliya nāyaṅār. The nāyaṅār was emboldened to climb on the one plate of the balance, while the other one contained a piece of loin-cloth. When all his wealth did not make the balance erect, he had decided to show his integrity and honesty to the saint (here too Śiva in disguise) by himself climbing the balance.
world and has attained patience and fortitude (PP. 908-924). As the ascendency of their self-centred life has been annihiliated, the nāyaṉmār attunes itself to the steady and invigorating spell of religious life. In the life history of the nāyaṉmār in the Periya Purāṇam, there are number of instance to substantiate these attitudes (PP. 4060-4068). Owing to their faith in prayer, conviction on worship and on the efficacy of unfailing arul (grace) of Śiva, the nāyaṉmār did not deviate from the life of devotion and dedication (PP. 939). Even though their day to day life was interrupted due to the tests of Śiva, never did they alter their course of living, but stood firm on their life of charity, compassion and determination. As the nāyaṉmār had been deeply immersed in the love of the Śiva, it was but easy for them to revitalize their heart in the field of religious experience. Cēkkilār, while explaining the life of Kuṅkuliya Kalyar nāyaṉmār asserts that for such a devotee Śiva would stand erect from His bending posture (PP.831-865).

At the same instance, Cēkkilār praise the purity of each nāyaṉmār while introducing him to the readers. In a single sentence, ‘Pūcum nūṟupōl ulḷum puṉitarkal’

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726 It is narrated that even in poverty; the nāyaṉmār worked as a day labourer in the paddy fields, and with unwavering devotion used the paddy which he received as wages to make a meal for the Lord. Through all this, his wife remained unfailingly loyal to him. She gathered leaves from the garden, cooked them and kept them in a pot for her husband to eat, while he dutifully continued his service for the Lord.

727 Kanampulla nāyaṉmār used to sell grass and with that earning, light the lamps in the temple. As the region was desolated due to famine, he could not get even a fistful of grass to sell and get oil. Hence he was determined to burn his long hair to burn the lamps and executed his decision (PP. 4060-4068).

728 Cēkkiḷār notes that Āṉāyar nāyaṉmār came into the world to bring glory to his caste, by the willing service which he rendered to all who wore the pure white holy ash. To the Lord Śiva alone he offered the worship of his heart and hands and voice (PP. 939).

729 The nāyaṉmār was used to purchasing a perfumed substance called ‘kuṅkuliam’ (dammar) i.e. dammar and derived ecstatic joy in offering it to Śiva temple for worship. He even went to the extent of selling his wife’s sacred ornament (tāli: தாளி) and brought ‘kuṅkuliam’. At Tiruppanandal temple the king was sorrow-stricken as the Śiva-linga was not brought upright even by a number of elephants. The nāyaṉmār made up his mind either to make the idol erect or lose his life. He tired one edge of the rope to the idol and the other edge around his neck. On seeing his determined oneness of mind and spirit Śiva stood erect.
Cēkkilār depicts the true nature of the nāyaṃmār’s character that they are pure subjectively, as they outwardly smear white ashes. These symbols such as white ashes and sacred beads made the nāyaṃmār externally pure, while the recital of the Five-Lettered-Prayer made them internally pure (PP. 3632). It shows that purity is a pre-requisite to be pure externally as is required to be internally pure also. The nāyaṃmār also seldom had yielded to the temptations of the flesh. Rather they maintained balance in all their endeavours owing to worship and love. As we have already seen, the nāyaṃmār were able to sacrifice either the whole or part of their body because of the meagre significance they attached to the demands of the flesh (PP. 4027-4043). Almost all the nāyaṃmār categorically declare that the body and its constituent organs hamper their spiritual. The whole narration of the Periya Purāṇam elaborates the path adopted by the nāyaṃmār to overcome the lure of the flesh and to carry out the religious obligation (PP. 4044-4050).

It should be stated that the large number of nāyaṃmār had taken adequate care to combat evil thoughts, due to their poignant prayers and deep involvement in the religious activities (PP. 1042). They loved other devotees as themselves and expressed mercy...
even to those who intended to murder them (PP. 608-649). In the community of devotees, there prevailed only devotion and equanimity devoid of enmity, exasperation, prejudices and insidious deeds. Further, the näyagmär believed that Śiva is the pioneer person in extending mercy to the enemies as well as to the destitute (PP. 1637). Śiva’s gracious deeds of drinking poison to save the universe, wearing the crescent and Ganges

‘He would chant the hymn day and night without ceasing, like Aya seated on the lotus. After chanting thus for a period of several days together, the pleasure of Umā’s Lord, he would attain the state of concentration’ (PP. 1042).

735 The story of Ēṇatiṇaṭag is a clear example of this. The näyagmär was a distinguished member of the toddy-tapper caste. Now in that town there lived another man who followed the same profession, named Aticūra who was extremely arrogant and conceited, and believed that there was no more skilled than himself in the field of swordsmanship. However, his employment as an instructor in that art began to decline, and with that the income of his heredity profession diminished too. Mean, just as the light of the moon grows dim while the sun rises in the morning sky, while Ēṇatiṇaṭag was prospering. On account of this Aticūra conceived an implacable hostility towards Ēṇatiṇaṭag. Aticūra called for a fight with Ēṇatiṇaṭag and his people. The two warrior groups met in the specified place. The entire battle very soon took a turn with the side of the jealous Aticūra loosing in front of the mountain bowed Lord’s devotee i.e. Ēṇatiṇaṭag. Aticūra was defeated and he ran away from the field. Determined to kill Ēṇatiṇaṭag, Aticūra made a dubious plan and in Ēṇatiṇaṭag sent across a message that without the loss of other lives they both could fight at some other place. Aticūra knowing that the devotee respects the Holy Ash more than his own life and that he would never harm the people, who smear that holy substance, smeared his forehead with the white ash. He never used to wear that holy symbol before! When Ēṇatiṇaṭag saw the holy symbol on Aticūra forehead, he was shocked at the sight. He had never seen it on his forehead. The presence of the Holy Ash indicated that he had become a devotee of the Lord Śiva. So thinking that killing a devotee of Śiva and he was ready to sacrifice his life for the glory of Holy Ash. The Lord intervened and saved Ēṇatiṇaṭag. Let the compassionate thinking of Ēṇatiṇaṭag in thinking good even for the opponent who wanted to kill him be praised recalls Čekkiḷār.

736 In a beautiful stanza, Čekkiḷār delineates the evolving world its dense obscurities and the two most intimate lovers of Śiva - Campanṭar and Tīrṇavukkaracar in the unity of one-pointed consciousness. In this case Čekkiḷār did not see two seers! The love energy of Śiva in Sakti, the moving principle of grace, clears the clouds of unknowing before the unifying and unanimous vision of truth perceived by the child of wisdom i.e. Campanṭar and noble Tīrṇavukkaracar at the Vedāranyam temple:

‘...They were like an incomparable sea of grace, an ocean of love for all the world; or like a sacred pair of eyes for the way of Śiva, the first among religions; or the very embodiment of the grace of Him who drank the dark poison to save the world and the grace of her who gave birth to all the world’ (PP. 1455).

It is also stated that both of these näyagmär stepped into divine presence in a crescendo of love ineffable and experienced the bliss of Śiva. Two of them were bound to one another in genuine and heartfelt love, and together conceived the desire to worship the feet of him...

737 ‘...He realized then how great is the grace of the Ruler of the gods. “So this is what the mercy of the Lord is really like!”’ (PP. 1642).

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on his mattered locks, smearing the white ashes all over the body shedding tears out of compassion towards the demolition of the three cities of the demons, paved the way for shaping the lives of the nāyānmār towards piety, compassion and deliverance (PP. 2638, 363). Cēkkilār shows as to how Śiva compassionately condescends to the extent of helping His sincere devotees to get rid of their suffering in the form of a sage both mild and terrible.

It is for this reason the following then can be considered as indicating the nature and function of saintliness according to Cēkkilār. That the nāyānmār wore sacred objects so as to exemplify identification and recognition. They patronised the appropriate service akin to Śiva worship. They led a life of service based on love. The nāyānmār did not refrain from serving their fellow devotees at any cost. At the empirical level they had different occupations to eke out livelihood. Each profession was respected and was the basis for building up the rapport with Śiva and His fellowmen. The women saints equally proved their eminence in the spheres of worship, service and sacrifice. They experienced divinity in every walk of life and finally resolved in the life of communion with God. They believed and exemplified that the worship of the Lord will engender in self-

738 It is this stated that the nāyāgār sang “To save the gods, you turned the poison into nectar and drank it down! For the sake of Märkkanṭēyar, you destroyed Kālai! Today, for your servant’s sake, may your glory be diffused throughout the world!” (PP. 2643).

In another occasion it is stated that ‘When for the salvation of the world the Lord drank the poison from the sea of milk, it might have seemed as if it was the force of human penances that prevented him from swallowing it. In fact it was the Lord himself who checked the poison and held it in his throat. On this account, the potter’s wife, who surpassed Aruntai in chastity, used to venerate the throat of the Lord Śiva, by continuously repeating “Holy blue throat”, or “Tiru Nilakaṇṭam” (PP. 363).
integration and culminate in congregation. The individual practice will have its impact on social integration and communal harmony.

This saintliness of the nāyaṃmār allows them to seek universal peace - peace at all levels of men of goodwill. Peace followed in the footsteps of the nāyaṃmār and where it was thwarted, these nāyaṃmār ruthlessly purged all discordant factors so that concord might prevail. Equanimity in thought, word, and deed was acknowledged to be the criterion whereby the community attained to its proper stature. Whenever peace prevailed in the Tamil region, the communal life of the Śiva-devotees attained a high standard of excellence in all sphere of activity. Cēkkīlār cites many situations where unity of direction becomes necessary in order to secure efficiency in collective action of any kind. The episode of Campantar trying to restore the Śaiva way of life as narrated in the of the Periya Purāṇam (PP. 2522-2779) is a clear example not only of the path of collective action mooted by Kulacciraiyār nāyaṃār, the Prime Minister, and Maṅkaiyarkkaraci, the Queen, under the inspiring unity of direction afforded by the young Campantar in order to vanquish the flowering of other cults in the Tamil region, to establish peace but also of the assurance that the presence of Śva enthroned in his heart would prove beneficial and faultlessly good to all Śiva’s chosen devotee (PP. 2707)\(^{739}\).

In this episode (PP. 2522-2779) Cēkkīlār narrates that Pāṇṭya territory of his time was overrun by Jains and the Pāṇṭya king had abandoned the Śaiva faith, and Campantar was called upon by the Queen Maṅkaiyarkkaraci and the Prime minister Kulacciraiyār

\(^{739}\) ‘…பவூட்டும் தெசுவினையில் கைதோன்றிய மலை அரஞ்ஜனைக் பரந்துனர் அரைந்துருங்கு (Q.P.P. 2712).
‘…to uphold the four Vedas and to demonstrate the path of righteousness to the people of Pāṇṭya realm’ (PP. 2712).
nāyaṉār to avert the distress of the people and to restore peace and the Šaiva faith to its pristine glory. Campantar assured everyone that the presence of Šiva enthroned in his heart would prove beneficial and faultlessly good to all Šiva’s chosen devotees. Cēkkilār describes in clear terms Campantar first appearance in the Court of Maturai (PP. 2631). At the end one could see the victorious culmination of Campantar’s venture into the domain of Maturai, and his courageous vindication of the supreme love and arul (grace) of Šiva on the banks of Vaikai river at Tiruvedakam. Campantar sang his famous Tirupasuram Ode (தீர்ப்புசுரம் சைல்) of twelve verses and it was written on palm leaf, while the Jains wrote down their salient doctrine – Atti-Natti (அத்திநாட்டி) : ‘it is and it is not’), and both parties floated their scroll on the river. It was a historic occasion which demonstrated to the world, the infallible Truth of Šaivism and the glory of Šiva.

Tirupasuram embodies the vision of Šiva and the teachings in the Vedas and the Šaiva Āgamas in a nutshell. In ten scintillating verses Cēkkilār comments in detail on each of the twelve verses with meticulous care and sums up the fulfilment of the Šaiva way of life, and his closing line is indeed memorable (PP.2746). Cēkkilār interpretation of this holy hymn can be acclaimed as the quintessence of the infallible truth of Šiva-jñāṇam (சிவா-ஞாணம்). It is a first-hand realisation of the blessed experience of

740 There they beheld enraptured the embodiment of divine wisdom, the sole champion of the four Vedas, a crescent moon that enlightened heaven and earth alike, the source of seven kinds of music that extols the glory of the Lord’ (PP. 2631).

741 ‘...True wisdom consists in loving God...’ (PP. 2746)

For Cēkkilār commentary on Tirupasuram (PP. 2724-2746), see Appendix IV. Cēkkilār notes that the gist of the hymn inscribed on the leaf was that our Lord Šiva is all in all (PP. 2750).
Śiva effected by His plenum of arul (grace). In his explanation of the Tirupasuram, Cēkkilār extols the beauty of Śiva as all pervading yet indwelling in arul (grace) ineffable in the depths of those who seek Him in infinitude of love unto His most gracious feet. The most exalted illumination is radiant love, so perfect in Śiva.

What is of significant of this episode is the excellence of the path of collective action, mooted by Tirunāvukkaracar, Maṅkaiyarkkaraci and Kulacciraiyār nāyaṅār under the inspiring unity of direction afforded by Campantar in order to vanquish the autocratic monopoly of the king from the Pāṇṭya territory and to avert the distress of the people and to restore the Śaiva faith to its pristine glory. This shows the unity of one-pointed consciousness, unanimous vision of truth experienced by the nāyaṅmār which can be characterised as the strength of their personality. At the end of the narration of this episode of Campantar effecting changes and transforming the common people to live the Śaiva way of life: It emerges that the kingdom of the premier Tamil state were won over by the will of Śiva working in and through the enlightened Campantar. Wrong was righted; justice and the Śaiva way of life was upheld (PP. 2761)742; the temple of Śiva-Alavai at Maturai became a power centre (PP. 2775)743 and the river Vaikai was filled to the brim with the waters of Śiva’s arul (grace). In this masterpiece of divine-human relationship between the nāyaṅār and Śiva, integral oneness was seen to be the root of

742 ‘…நூற்றன் ஓடி நால் ஆண்டின் கொட்டுக்கூர் கேட்டுள்ளது கௌரவம் உள்ளது குருகாரின் கேட்டு செய்த ஓரியே குருகார்’ (நா. 2761).

743 ‘ஏனெனில் சுகாசு குலசிரையார் கேட்டு செய்துள்ளது பரத்தம் உள்ளது காயியே கேட்டு செய்த ஓரியே குருகார் கேட்டு செய்த ஓரியே…’ (நா. 2775).

While the Pāṇṭiyā queen and Kulacciraiyār daily paid homage at Campantar’s feet, he himself worshipped the feet of the Lord of Ālavāy, his heart melting in ecstasy’ (2775).
being good (PP. 440-466)\textsuperscript{744}. The nāyaṅmār of different grades in the Periya Purāṇam were all energised by the power of goodwill and harmony, emanating from their servitude to Śiva: Human living involves unity, as unity involves goodness was amply demonstrated not only in this moving spectacle, but also in the life of every one of the nāyaṅmār narrated in the Periya Purāṇam.

However, what is important to note here is that Cēkkiḻār had a conventional set of metaphysics, religious and cultural myths, and ideals of moral and social order, a mystical vision of the universe, world-view, philosophies and theologies which shaped his interpretation of the nāyaṅmār’s saintly conduct of life and moral vocation i.e. the Śaiva ‘way of life’ (neri: நீரி) and which is upheld as Śaiva-neri (ஆய்வா-நீரியே) (PP. 4118)\textsuperscript{745}. Moreover, it is within this framework of belief, in the Periya Purāṇam that Cēkkiḻār recollects the life of the nāyaṅmār with his emphasis unity of everything is Śiva (PP. 350)\textsuperscript{746} and of humanizing effect on nāyaṅmār’s lives (PP. 337)\textsuperscript{747}, of their ultimate

\textsuperscript{744} The classical example for this is the narration of the story of Iḷaiyakuti Māṟag. The nāyaṅmār used the wealth of the produce of his farms in extending his hospitality and generosity to all who stood in the need of his help. Gradually he faces landslides and periodic droughts and floods ruined his crops and his harvest failed, so that he found himself in indigent circumstances. Even so, he struggled to continue his service and made personal sacrifices. One day Śiva disguised as age old man sought hospitalit y. His wife who shared in every way his large-hearted willingness to offer the stranger an appetising meal prepared a rice meal and curry and served the hungry pilgrim with great devotion. The saintly sage blessed them with a vision of Śiva and by his grace they attained the goal of self-realisation. The nāyaṅmār’s values did not line in his possessions or in his actions, but in his insatiable love of Śiva. To serve a servitor of Śiva is to serve Śiva himself. Here one’s mode of living takes precedence over ‘having’. The nāyaṅmār’s vision of Śiva was turned to the eternal verities of truth, love and wisdom, and hence, Cēkkiḻār bows to this selfless servitor in recognition of his servitude to others as service done to Śiva.

\textsuperscript{745} ‘அர்த்திரை தண்டிரை குருதினை நெய்வின் தனியுடன்...’ (குருண் 4118).

‘The Śaiva path and the way of virtue prescribed in the Vedas flourished...’ (PP. 4118).

\textsuperscript{746} ‘அர்த்திரை உண்மையான அர்த்திரை உண்மையான உண்மையான உண்மையான உண்மையான உண்மையான உண்மையான உண்மையான உண்மையான உண்மையான உண்மையான உண்மையான உண்மையான உண்மையான உண்மையான உண்மையான உண்மையான உண்மையான உண்மையான...’ (குருண் 350).

‘He is the beginning and middle, measure without measure, light of understanding, all created matter, one without division, male and female...’ (PP. 350).

desire of serving him alone - that inspired and changed their life. Such foundational perspectives, Cēkkilār believes, also gave a vision and inspired a new dynamism to the nāyaṇmār’s moral integrity and awareness. In this way, Cēkkilār reflects the community of the nāyaṇmār as exemplifying its own moral character, shaped by its own traditional stories, rituals and symbols. Its purpose and vocation as he observes ‘the way of Śiva is the eternal, true way, and it is the Śaivite way that is the eternal way of deliverance’ (PP. 2723).

Cēkkilār acclaims that Campantar embodied the excellent attributes reflected by all the consecrated servitors of Śiva and Śaiva way of life i.e. Śaiva-neri (அடுத்துத்திரிய) (PP.1904). More poignantly, there is a moving reference in the Periya Purāṇam, which recounts the evolution of Cākkiyar nāyaṇār as a Śivajñāani (சிவஞுணி) i.e. one who has the knowledge of Śiva, who learnt to practice out of conviction the precepts of Śaivism even though he was brought up as a Buddhist (PP. 3641-3658). In the course of his spiritual life, he discovered his intimate allegiance to the Śaiva-neri (அடுத்துத்திரிய) and by Śiva’s arul (grace) became convinced of the validity of the path of Śiva (‘ஞாயரோ என்னறை என்று நாடாயே’ : Saivanel allavarrukku illai ena), truth of reality of Śiva (அட்சூங்கவதன் வியாழங்க விஷ்ணு சங்கம்: uyvakaiyāl porul Śivaṇ enru), and the four cardinal truths of Śaiva pathways – that there is the deed, the door, the consequence of

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748 ‘...அந்தணிக்கும் செய்யும் அளவும்...’ (புரா. 2723).
749 ‘செவநோ தொண்டு முன்னை மூன்று கோவையாகிய மூன்று புராணம் முறையே பதிவு செய்யும் செய்வு எண்ணமையின இருக்கும் லோகங்களில் முன்னையை என்று போல்வாயும்’ (புரா. 1904).

‘For the advancement of the religion of the Vedas, for the glory of the Śaivite path and for the benefit of all living creatures, Tiruṅā Campantar … opened his mouth and cried. Now I place my head beneath his feet, and proceed to sing the praise of the sacred service which he performed’ (PP. 1904).
action and the one who awards deserts to the doer (‘ﬁxation or the one who awards deserts to the doer: seyvignaium ceyvånum atan payałum koçuppånum meyvakaiyál nāŋku akum) (PP. 3645)750. The nāyaṅār realised that is was only Śaiva-neri ( Aadheeswarar) that showed the path to realizing Śiva’s arul (grace) and by his silent devotion, he followed from within the light Śiva and release. He realized that ostentatious outward rituals and forms of worship did not matter, so long as he took to ceaseless remembrance of the name of Śiva. While outwardly remaining in the Buddhist fold, he attained the feet of Śiva and has an honoured place in the Periya Purāṇam as a servitor of Śiva751.

It is an observable fact that, in the introduction to the Periya Purāṇam, Cēkkilār also highlights the story of Maṉu752 so as to affirm the basis of the Śaiva-neri ( Aadheeswarar-
Śaiva way of life. Cēkkilār presents Maṇu as the voice of an individual conscience; ‘he was their eyes and their very life’ (PP. 99)\(^{753}\). He is symbol of the truthful way of life worthy of administration and reverence; ‘he was known as “the just” and crowned with the title “Maṇunīti”’ (PP. 100)\(^{754}\), ‘He was the guardian of all life ... His rule was based on justice’ (PP. 118)\(^{755}\); ‘he steadfastly followed the path of virtue in his private, family and public life’ (PP 102)\(^{756}\); these serve as the paradigmatic source of ethics and morality – ‘what maṇu says is medicine’ (Crawford, 1995, p. 25). He is to be held as the icon of righteousness – ‘like king Maṇu, the Lord will bestow his grace on those who follow the path of virtue’ (PP. 135)\(^{757}\).

After having showered his praise on king Maṇu, what is distinctive and even more unique to the narration is that, Cēkkilār goes into further detail. He underlines the fact that ‘the Lord appeared to king Maṇu and granted him abundant arul (grace)’ (PP. 134)\(^{758}\). He is ‘the Lord of all virtue (அரவாஙர்: aravāṅar) ... He bestows his grace on those who follow the path of virtue’ (PP. 135)\(^{759}\). By reference to Śiva as aravāṅar (அரவாஙர்) i.e. the Lord of all virtue, Cēkkilār first seems to affirm that Śiva is the...
source of all virtues. It is in Him one has to be confirmed. It is He, secondly, Čekkilār recounts, bestows his arul (grace) on those who follow the path of virtue. Thirdly by placing his emphasis on Maṉu as one whose ‘rule was based on justice’ (PP. 118) and his emphasis that justice must follow the same canons for a king’s son as for the cow, and all the lowliest creatures of his state, and that any type of promise once made should be honoured, prove that love which fulfils the law does not supersede the law; it give profound meaning to life (PP. 124-127). This whole narration shows that the path way to Śiva pursued by Maṉu, as presented in the Periya Purāṇam, indicates Čekkilār emphasises the truth of the profundity of working of love in the core of one’s self and its exposition in the outward acts and words of the king and that the ‘justice’ (nēti) (PP. 100) followed by the king is Śiva-nēti (nēti) as the norm of justice is found in Śiva (PP. 135). What should be noted in this episode is that Śiva-nēti (nēti) is consistent with the self-integration and self-realization of a man – one who has done, in this case Maṉu, what there was to be done in love upholding the Śaiva way of life. Hence, Śiva-nēti (nēti) revitalises the law of love and harmony and the balanced code of justice effected by the benign use of the arul (grace) of Śiva externally and internally.

760 ‘...என்று உள்ளடைத் தமிழில் சட்டமைப்பு அயர்க்கும் தெரிவு குரலை முழுக்கு கொண்டு கூறுகே என்று...’ (குரு. 118).

761 It is narrated vividly that the king exclaimed “Let us leave on one side what you have said about past practice,” he continued, “Your argument overlooks the basic reality of justice. Tell me: where in the world has any cow with painful sighs and lamentation rung a bell like this and then collapsed? My son has taken the life of a creature born here, the home of the great Lord ... Therefore, understand this, he must be put to death. That is the drastic deed that needs to be performed. There is no other way. I cannot allay the sorrow which this cow feels in its heart. But it is right that I too should endure the pain which it has suffered.” (PP 130-135).

762 ‘...என்று உள்ளடைத் தமிழில் சட்டமைப்பு அயர்க்கும் தெரிவு குரலை முழுக்கு கொண்டு கூறுகே’ (குரு. 100).

763 ‘...என்று உள்ளடைத் தமிழில் சட்டமைப்பு அயர்க்கும் தெரிவு குரலை முழுக்கு கொண்டு கூறுகே’ (குரு. 135)
In the *Periya Purāṇam* we see, therefore, that the dynamic Śiva-nēti (Śiva-Indian) at work as the cosmic law and as the universal law. At first, Cēkkilār asserts that the entire cosmos exists in Śiva and his activity. He narrates Śiva as ‘the Lord of creation’ (PP. 136){764}. Elsewhere he affirms, ‘the Lord performs his sacred dance, and so that the seven worlds may have life’ (PP. 241){765} and Cēkkilār elaborates that the nāyaṉmār’s ‘senses were all subsumed in the act of seeing, the four faculties of his mind in meditation, and the three qualities in pure enlightenment at the awesome sight of the Lord in his ecstatic dance’ (PP. 252){766}. In this manner, Cēkkilār asserts that the world is created, sustained and guarded from divisive evil effects by Śiva, to lead all humanity to the just path and thereby reach unalloyed bliss, through his ‘act’ of dancing: ‘the act, the agent, the fruit of action and the one who bonds the fruit of action to the agent: he learnt that these four basic elements constitute the reality’ (PP. (PP. 3645){767}. The cosmos is identified with the ‘act’ of Śiva and seeing such a divine ‘act’ not only discharges an ultimate aspiration but it also carries within it a moral injunction, to ‘act’ humanly because ‘action’ is the fundamental aspect and the law of human nature (PP. 2728, 2733, 2735, 2738){768}.

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{764} ‘அது நேட் என்றவுடன்’ (PP. 136).
{765} ‘இது மன்னருக்குள் கிராஷ்டிகை அவர் சார்ந்து போனை பட்டி வேதநல் வாக்குகளுடன் நாய்ந்தரின் ஏற்றதை உள்ளேசலாயும்’ (PP. 241).
{766} ‘நாய்ந்தரின் அவர் கிராஷ்டிகை கிராஷ்டிகை அவர் சார்ந்து போனை பட்டி வேதநல் வாக்குகளின் ஏற்றதை உள்ளேசலாயும் கிராஷ்டிகை அவர் சார்ந்து போனை பட்டி வேதநல் வாக்குகளின் ஏற்றதை உள்ளேசலாயும்’ (PP. 252).
{767} ‘நாய்ந்தரின் அவர் சார்ந்து பாதுகாப்புகள் நாய்ந்தரின் ஏற்றதை உள்ளேசலாயும் கிராஷ்டிகை அவர் சார்ந்து போனை பட்டி வேதநல் வாக்குகளின் ஏற்றதை உள்ளேசலாயும் கிராஷ்டிகை அவர் சார்ந்து போனை பட்டி வேதநல் வாக்குகளின் ஏற்றதை உள்ளேசலாயும்’ (PP. 3645).
{768} “He is hard to see” … But for those who seek him love, he grants His vision…” (PP. 2728) ‘... He will dispel their darkness of falsehood and of action, good and bad’ (PP. 2733) ‘The primal Lord bestows His grace on those whom he has made his own ...’ (PP. 2735) ‘...He shines as the light within the hearts of those who love Him’ (PP. 2738).

*Arumap Thiruppavai* ... *Ayyavāl*’s *Thiruppavai* *Thiruppavai* *Thiruppavai* *Thiruppavai* *Thiruppavai* (PP. 2728) ‘...Thiruppavai Thiruppavai Thiruppavai Thiruppavai Thiruppavai’ (PP. 2733) ‘Ayyavāl’s *Thiruppavai* *Thiruppavai* *Thiruppavai* (PP. 2735) ‘...Ayyavāl’s *Thiruppavai* *Thiruppavai* *Thiruppavai* (PP. 2738).
worship of God has no spiritual-moral worth, unless it is accompanied by a practical realization of Him in all creatures.

In addition to establishing a theological basis for the performance of moral action ( poo: nanneri), what is important to Cēkkilār is that he underlines that morality is founded on a particular attitude to life in which one ‘ought’ to ‘act’ humanly in order to live in harmony with the divine ‘act’. It is for this reason Cēkkilār declares that Śiva is the ruler of all (PP. 2735) who dances and he dances for the sake of the world, and they reveal the working of his grace (arul) (PP. 2741). Therefore, one needs to take responsibility for one’s actions and must concentrate on discipline of action to cultivate virtue. In other words Cēkkilār affirms that Śiva has given free will and that one is accountable to Śiva for one’s thoughts and actions. One’s freedom has to be balanced with responsibility. In a novel way, Cēkkilār emphasises his point through the story of Cuntarar (PP. 147-349).

769 ‘அருட் அறியவும் முறையே அவ்வேகத்தில் புடமுள்ள மூலம் ஆண்டவன் துவாரமும் அழிந்து மூடியும் அந்த சமயத்தில் ஹரா பெருமான் ஆன்மையைய் மட்டுமே’ (pp. 2735).

770 அம்ம சமயத்துடன் கூடிய வரும் படமுள்ள பெருமானையும் காண்டு கூடிய அந்த சமயத்தில்...’ (pp. 2741).

771 It is stated: ‘when the Lord saw what had happened, he said to Cuntarar, “since you have lost your heart to these ladies, you will be born in the south country. There you will fall in love with these women, and take your pleasure with them. Then you will return to this place”’ (PP 37). On another occasion he reports ‘their love for the Lord is the greatest blessing of their lives. They have learned and practised faultlessly the four duties of the Śaivite path. They are steadfast in charity and penance, and impeccable in doing what is right. Their lives are marked by modesty, patience, and domestic virtue and are acclaimed by all. They are noble in conduct, humble in spirit and are godlike in character (PP 356-357). The two episodes narrated reveal that though ‘the act, the agent, the fruit of action and the one who bonds the fruit of action to the agent’ (PP 3645) of the Lord, one has the free will to decide one’s course of action. One has the capacity to decide the fate of one’s own self – that one’s action could condition one’s future nature. One’s present condition, is at present, is due to the consequences of one’s past action, and all that one does carries ‘residues’, that will determine one’s next life.
The important thing to consider here is that Čekkilār seems to emphasize that one is always in a state of becoming, and that action breeds temperament: He extols the beauty, the glory, the certitude, the grandeur, the magnitude of Śiva, all-pervading, yet domiciling in grace ineffable in the depths of the self of the nāyānāmār animating the true lovers and servitors with the infinitude of love unto his most gracious feet (PP. 4162). It is stated ‘their love for the Lord is the greatest blessing of their lives’ (PP. 355). This ensures that good actions form an inner transformation. It cultivates new virtues bringing one to moral transformation (PP. 357).

Moral living (nānneri), therefore, in the Periya Purāṇam is not a matter of personal concern, it elevates one to a new level of transformation where one is related to self and others, with a new personality, ethical dynamism, responsibility and status: ‘they are steadfast in charity and penance, and impeccable in doing what is right’ (PP. 356). A good moral action is the reflection of the inner moral character. It brings both individual and social transformation and maintains order in the world. In other words, the action of a morally good person brings true knowledge and love and it liberates one and others. In other words, the action of a good person is prompted by the will to serve others selflessly. In the Periya Purāṇam, Čekkilār attempts to reinforce the holistic nature of human ‘action’, framing the human action within a larger divine action. The emphasis on

772 ‘…’ (ng.G. 4162).  
773 ‘…’ (ng.G. 355).  
774 ‘…They are noble in conduct, humble in spirit, and godlike in character. In this way they have attained the first of all things, made him the object of their worship. In the future, there is no further goal left for them to attain. They remain without rival, without peer’ (PP. 357).  
775 ‘…’ (ng.G. 356).
the moral life is nowhere more poignantly related than in the narration of the lives of Kāraikkāl Ammaiyār nāyaṅār (PP 1722-1787) and Tirunīlakantar nāyaṅār (PP. 360-403). These episodes seem to emphasise that a morally good person is one who lives virtuously. Moral virtues provide a framework of mind to influence the kind of deed a good person will seek to perform. In this way, morality is established as a path related to the whole of one’s Śaiva-way of life, rather than as specified actions.

8.3 The Mystical Nature of Moral living in the Periya Purāṇam

It would seem that for Cēkkilār, what is significant in nāyaṅār’s moral path is their total reliance on Śiva’s arul (grace) for their moral discernment and disposition, and the insistence on love (anpu: அன்பு) as the most universal and significant of spiritual force (PP. 2733-2736). Elsewhere Cēkkilār notes that those who saw the enactment of Śiva’s vision or truth were convinced that true wisdom consists in loving God [(அன்பு...]

776 In the narration of the life Kāraikkāl Ammaiyār, Cēkkilār narrates the story of a devotional woman who with profound fidelity, did all of her duties that pertain to her family life – and did deeds of admirable service with overwhelming love for the devotees of the Lord. Even when calamity struck her family in the infidelity of her husband, she kept the family values with the highest integrity and continued the good deeds of helping the servants of the Lord. When the Lord asked, what she wanted as a reward for her life of virtue and integrity, she interceded for ‘immortal blissful love’, the highest ideal of life.

777 Cēkkilār recounts that Tirunīlakantar was always enthusiastic in serving the Lord. Never did he contemplate contradicting his Lord’s words. He kept the disciplines of married life and had an ardent desire to engage in humble service. Yet, blinded by carnal desire, he gave himself to a lady of disrepute. Then realizing the mistake he had committed, he vowed to his wife to uphold the right values of life. At the end of the narration, Cēkkilār relates the story that ‘the God of gods ... who visits the homes of all his devotees and reveals their spiritual achievement to the world. Now in grace he said to the nāyaṅār and his wife, “you have gained a splendid victory over the five senses ... come and abide with us in bliss” (PP 1401). Cēkkilār ends by noting that ‘to the best of my ability I have celebrated the single-minded servant of the Lord, who kept the vow that he had made to the Lord’ (PP. 403).

778 In this verses Cēkkilār warns all to abjure from logical disputes and controversies as barren intellects cannot prove the immensity of Śiva:

‘... Sankaran cannot be measured by logic or analogy’ (PP. 2735)
‘...ஆன்கன் அண்டை பலன்க விளைந்திற்கிற் சுதந்திரம் சுதந்திரம் சுற்றியுள்ளார்’ (பக. 2735).
But for those who seek Him in love, Cēkkilār notes ‘... He shines as a light ...’ (‘... அலுவலன் விளைந்திற்கிற் சுதந்திரம் சுற்றியுள்ளார்’ (PP. 2738). Therefore, ‘... in love enshrine within your heart is radiance’ (‘... அலுவலன் விளைந்திற்கிற் சுதந்திரம் சுற்றியுள்ளார்’ (PP. 2739). To those ‘who seek Him in love, He grants the vision of Himself’ (‘...ஆன்கன் அண்டை பலன் விளைந்திற்கிற் சுதந்திரம் சுற்றியுள்ளார் அன்முத் தமிழ் விளைந்திற்கிற் சுதந்திரம்’ (PP. 2729).
Cēkkiḻār lays great stress on the inner attitude of a devotee, whereby the heart and mind in unison can be directed to the light of Śiva to blossom in love (PP. 1431, 2739)\textsuperscript{779}.

To elaborate further, Cēkkiḻār describes that Tirunāvukkaracar’s perception of the benign smile of the Lord at Tillai and the attraction of the Lord’s eye that gave rise to love in the heart of the devotee (PP. 1436)\textsuperscript{780}. Therefore, a goal of unification radiates from the heart of the devotee which is the centre of love, and the attraction exercised on each part of the devotee’s self exerts a pull towards Śiva (PP. 1437)\textsuperscript{781}. This blossom of love as noted also suffused all the other devotees of Śiva in the Periya Purāṇam. The nāyamār transmitted the invisible power of Śiva’s love as occasions demanded to relieve the suffering of their fellow devotees, and testified to the greatness of Śiva who takes up his abode in the local temples as well as in the temple of the heart of devotees (PP. 1439)\textsuperscript{782}. As a result of his constant contemplation of the invincible power of Śiva’s arul (grace) symbolised by the lotus feet of Śiva, a supreme knowledge of Śiva filled...

\textsuperscript{779} ‘...உயர்வேள் கைவெட்டுக்கும் வெள்ளம் நரசிம்மான் கலர்வு அமைந்து உலக்கைத் தோன்றுவது...' (ங்கிள. 1431)

‘...As joy and longing and love together welled up in his grace-touched heart, he could scarcely speak...' (PP. 1431).

‘... in love enshrine within your heart is radiance’ (‘... உலக்கைது கைவெட்டு அமைந்து உலக்கைத் தோன்றுவது...’) (PP. 2739).

\textsuperscript{780} ‘...அதே பொழுதிய அன்னதான் நீள்வர தோன்றுவது...' (ங்கிள். 1436).

‘...Now that he saw it before his very eyes, he attained a state of loving bliss...' (PP. 1436)

\textsuperscript{781} ‘...என்று தோல்காணலாம் கைவெட்டு அமைந்து உலக்கைத் தோன்றுவது...’ (ங்கிள். 1437).

Cēkkiḻār notes as he offered worship with his hands placed on his head, from his eyes the tears poured down without remission. All his faculties were dissolved in love. In ecstasy his body kept falling to the ground...' (PP. 1437)

\textsuperscript{782} ‘...என்று முறையில் கைவெட்டு அமைந்து உலக்கைத் தோன்றுவது...' (ங்கிள். 1439).

‘...Then desiring to offer to the Lord the service of his hands as well, he bowed low and went his way’ (PP. 1439).
Tirunāvukkaracar to the exclusion of all other preoccupation (PP.1441, 1443). It is the pure awareness of Śiva’s arul (grace) that led Tirunāvukkaracar to carry his service to others.

It is for this reason Cēkkilār narrates that caressed by a heaving love to have a vision of Śiva in His abode of Mount Kailas, the nāyaṉār further makes his pilgrimage on foot from the south to north, traversing jungles, cities and hilly tracts and crossing rivers, till he feels completely exhausted (PP. 1620). There he was empowered to enjoy the vision of Lord. The nāyaṉār saw creation move in the forms of Śiva and His consort Sakti. The creator and the creative matrix moved in unison (PP. 1639). It was the moving pageant of the phenomena of life – the One in the Many. The One remains; the Many change and pass away (PP. 1652). The vision of the one in many was

783 'In joyful gratitude for grace, he sang the hymn “Ambrosia they receive”, and taking up his hoe continued his scared service with mounting devotion’ and then again he ‘felt at the feet of the Lord, and the hymns’ (PP. 1443). Cēkkilār further states though he endured hardships ‘never did his love and longing to see the Lord waver in the slightest’ (PP. 1629) ‘...His body mind was firmly set on the anklet-ringed feet of the Lord of Kailāsa...’ (PP. 1630). ‘Just as the Lord dwells on the silver mountain beside his consort, so the great ascetic beheld all the different kinds of creatures in the form of Śiva and Skati together. Having bowed in worship before the vision, he approached the temple of his Lord’ (PP. 1654).
vouchsafed to Tirunāvukkaracar. He saw Śiva in everything and everything in Śiva
[(Civayē ellēp porulum eṇru (PP. 2750)).]

The power of his love of Śiva and the knowledge and the vision of Śiva domiciling in everything was so strong that it effected the necessary transformation in Tirunāvukkaracar. His love reached to an immeasurable height in this experience of the Truth of Śiva which Cēkkiḻār articulates beautifully in the poem (PP. 1651)787. The magnetic contact of love from the centre of the universe i.e. Śiva with the power hidden in the unbounded depth of the heart of such devotee like Tirunāvukkaracar through affinity ensures a centre of unification, what Cēkkiḻār calls as loving bliss (PP.1436)788. Love transforms all and converges on an all-embracing one which unites all in Śiva. It is in this spring of unfettered love that these minstrels of Śiva relished the nectar of His arul (grace) (PP.1403)789. The nāyaymār experienced profound attraction to Śiva, who abides in the hearts of all who sought Him as in temple and natural abodes in the wide universe (PP. 2449)790.

In exquisite imagery and poetic diction, Cēkkiḻār makes one witness the coalescence of the two brilliant seers or the nāyaymār i.e. Campantar and

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787 ‘When Tirunāvukkaracar saw the Lord before his own eyes and tasted the nectar of his grace, imperishable love and immeasurable longing arose within him. In his joy, the great ascetic sang hymns in praise of the Lord, and is heart exulted’ (PP. 1651).

788 ‘... Then he rose again in love and began to sing the praise of Śiva and his path of grace’ (PP. 1403).

789 ‘...At last, reluctantly he left the temple, with the Lord’s feet enshrined within his heart’ (PP. 2449).
Tirunāvukkaracar, at the sacred temple of Tiruttōṇpuram (PP. 1452, 1453)⁷⁹¹. It was not mere confrontation of a younger truth seer i.e. Campantar meeting an elder servitor of Śiva i.e. Tirunāvukkaracar. Their spiritual animation and love of Śiva blazed in radiance in their gleaning countenance with holy ash and Rudra beads, in the Five-letter-Prayer they chanted continuously connoting the Śiva’s name and in the vivifying currents of faith of the devotees who followed them. The self-fulfilment seen in Campantar and the self-denial of Tirunāvukkaracar converged in mid-point and blazed a trail of complete interaction of two-in-one anbe-Śivan (அன்பு சிவன்) (PP. 1454)⁷⁹². Love of God implied love of others, and generated currents of power to unite all in its embrace (PP. 1455)⁷⁹³.

⁷⁹¹ கூறும் அச்செய்யங்களால் ஆட்ட அகரம் கார ஓர் காரணம் ஒரு பல்லவர் கிருஷ்ண வரையான சிவன் படையால் நூற்றாண்டுகளில் பாதிக்கப்பட்டமல்லித்தால் பல்லவரான குருவான பல்லவர் ஆனால் அவர் மன்னரால் பெற்று கொண்டை கூட்டிக் காரணம் கூட்டிக் காரணம் வெகு அதிகம் அவர்கள் காரணம்” (கு.1452)

‘Surrounded by his band of devotees and moved by deep affection. Tirunāvukkaracar came forward and made obeisance at Campantar’s feet. He in turn, invoking the Lord with tears, took Aracar’s hands on his, and addressed him simply as “My Father”. “I am your servant”, Aracar replied’ (PP. 1452).

‘...seeing their union, the servants of Haran were enjoyed, and the gods sung Śiva’s praise so that the whole world was filled with the sound’ (PP. 1453).

‘...So the two of them were bound to one another in genuine and heartfelt love, and together conceived the desire to worship the feet of His who sits in state at well-watered Tiruttōṇpuram.

⁷⁹² ’... கர்த்தர் காரணம் பூர்த்தி கூறும் காரணம் காரணம் காரணம் காரணம் காரணம் காரணம் காரணம்’ (கு.1454).

Cēkkiḻār delineates the evolving world its dense obscurities and the two most intimate lovers of Śiva - Campantar and Tirunāvukkaracar in the unity of one-pointed consciousness. In this case Cēkkiḻār did not see two seers! The love energy of Śiva in Sakti, the moving principle of grace, clears the clouds of unknowing before the unifying and unanimous vision of truth perceived by the child of wisdom i.e. Campantar and noble Tirunāvukkaracar at the Vedaranam temple:

‘... சுக்கர் குருல் கர்த்தருக்கு காரணம் காரணம் காரணம் காரணம் காரணம் காரணம் காரணம் காரணம் காரணம் காரணம் காரணம் காரணம் காரணம் காரணம்’ (கு.1455).

‘...They were like an incomparable sea of grace, an ocean of love for all the world; or like a sacred pair of eyes for the way of Śiva, the first among religions; or the very embodiment of the grace of Him who drank the dark poison to save the world and the grace of her who gave birth to all the world’ (PP. 1455).

It is also stated that both of these nāyagmār stepped into divine presence in crescendo of love ineffable and experienced the bliss of Śiva. Two of them were bound to one another in genuine and heartfelt love, and together conceived the desire to worship the feet of him...’ (PP. 1454)

‘... காரணம் காரணம் காரணம் காரணம் காரணம் காரணம் காரணம் காரணம் காரணம்’ (கு.1454).

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In the beautiful stanza, Cēkkiḻār delineates the evolving world with its dense obscurities and the two most intimate lovers of Śiva, Campantar and Tirunāvukkaracar in the unity of one-pointed consciousness. In this case Cēkkiḻār did not see two seers! The love of Śiva in Sakti, the moving principle of aruḻ (grace), clears the clouds of unknowing before the unifying and unanimous vision of truth perceived by the child of wisdom i.e. Campantar and the royal Tirunāvukkaracar at the Tiruttōṇpuram temple. In these verses truly one sees that both the nāyāmār were stepped into Śiva’s presence in a crescendo of love ineffable and experienced the bliss of Śivanandam (திருநாவிக்கரசர்) i.e. the bliss of abiding in Śiva. Tirunāvukkaracar in the course of his eventful life spiritualized the practice of ‘Śiva-tonṭu’ (திருநாவிக்கரசர்) work as worship of Śiva and enlightened many seekers like Appūti to experience divine love as the goal and fulfilment of life (PP.1469-1483). It was the power and efficacy of love Śiva that made him wake up Appūti eldest son from the sleep of death as well as bequeath to the world the legacy of his mellifluous sons in three anthologies.

The episode of Campantar and Tirunāvukkaracar also shows that Cēkkiḻār gives pre-eminence to these two nāyāmār for upholding the unity of all things in Śiva and recovering the faith of the common people in the inter-linked relationship of a devotee with Śiva. We see the unity of all things in Śiva, revealing their inter-links and inter-relationships in several gradations (PP.1423). This heightening love unto Śiva and his...
devotees of manifested as union with and compassion for all living creatures is a teaching in the *Periya Purāṇam* (PP. 1454-1455)\(^795\). On the attainment of inseparable union with Śiva, one attains likeness of Śiva i.e. Śiva-gathi or they become the ‘persons’ of Śiva (PP. 1692)\(^796\) is the ultimate goal of the nāyaṃmār. The light within them illumine and by arul (grace) vibrates the resplendence of Śiva and the nāyaṃr experience the coming in of blissful communion (PP.1651)\(^797\).

In this narration it is clear Cēkkilār was absolutely convinced of the natural unity or oneness that underlies and binds all living creatures together and Cēkkilār emphasises clearly his reasons for this conviction (PP. 2723)\(^798\). The Lord was accessible to all who sought him with earnest love therefore they stressed that the goal of realisation Śiva had

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\(^{795}\) It is stated:

‘...They were like an incomparable sea of grace, an ocean of love for all the world; or like a sacred pair of eyes for the way of Śiva, the first among religions; or the very embodiment of the grace of Him who drank the dark poison to save the world and the grace of her who gave birth to all the world’ (PP. 1455).

It is also stated that both of these nāyaṃmār stepped into divine presence in a crescendo of love ineffable and experienced the bliss of Śiva. Two of them were bound to one another in genuine and heartfelt love, and together conceived the desire to worship the feet of him...’ (PP. 1454)

‘...Then Tirunāvukkaracar was transformed into the likeness of Śiva’s joy and wisdom, the ultimate attainment, and he reposed beneath the feet of the great God’ (PP. 1697)

\(^{796}\) ‘...Then Tirunāvukkaracar was transformed into the likeness of Śiva’s joy and wisdom, the ultimate attainment, and he reposed beneath the feet of the great God’ (PP. 1697).

\(^{797}\) ‘...Then Tirunāvukkaracar was transformed into the likeness of Śiva’s joy and wisdom, the ultimate attainment, and he reposed beneath the feet of the great God’ (PP. 1697).

\(^{798}\) ‘...When Tirunāvukkaracar saw the Lord before his own eyes and tasted the nectar of his grace, imperishable love and immeasurable longing arose within him. In his joy, the great ascetic sang hymns in praise of the Lord, and his heart exulted’ (PP. 1651).

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its social relevance (PP. 1369). The co-relationship of a devotee and Śiva should lead to harmonious relationships with others and develop virtues of justice, tolerance, and magnanimity. In the episode of Campantar and Tirunāvukkaracar, Cēkkilār also lays great stress on the gravity of inner attitudes of devotees, whereby the heart and the mind in unison can be directed to the light of Śiva to blossom in love. For example, Cuntarar responds to the bidding of Śiva to extol the holy servants of Him and the nāyagār is filled with meeting love towards the holy band of Śiva votaries and takes the pledge of loyal service to each of these mighty warriors.

In order to express clearly his view about the unity of all living creatures in the Periya Purāṇam, Cēkkilār declares that for ‘the redemption of the lives that abide in all the seven world; He [the Lord] dances therefore the world would have life’ (PP. 241) and ‘the cosmos may thrive (PP. 251). Cēkkilār further notes that seeing the Lord’s dance is the highest religious or mystical experience (PP. 252) and that the nāyagār exclaimed that ‘the life on earth is to me is pure and sweet, as I have been blessed to behold Your dance divine’ (PP. 253). In another instance Cēkkilār narrates that ‘the Lord who dances in the sacred court for all to see, the subtle one to be meditated with knowledge, in order to display to the world the generosity of His servant took the

799 ‘...Kairi puranam dandugam bhakthamadha samastham atha bhugma langa bhakthapramathin kugam aivam atha akapathu’ (ng.G. 1369).
800 ‘...He is kindly to those who call upon Him... He is God, the great one, who gives life to all’ (PP. 1369).
801 ‘...Kaiyam puranam dandugam bhakthamadha samastham atha bhugma langa bhakthapramathin kugam aivam atha akapathu’ (ng.G. 241).’
802 ‘...Kaiyam puranam dandugam bhakthamadha samastham atha bhugma langa bhakthapramathin kugam aivam atha akapathu’ (ng.G. 251).
803 ‘...Kaiyam puranam dandugam bhakthamadha samastham atha bhugma langa bhakthapramathin kugam aivam atha akapathu’ (ng.G. 252).’
disguise of a Brahmin’ (PP. 407) and ‘God did these things for the sake of the world, and they reveal the working of His grace’ (PP. 274).

It should be pointed that the concept of ‘Dance’ (‘திருவண்டம்: Tirunatam) employed here in reference to Śiva unfolds the mystery Him as ‘first of all realities, endless one’ (புத்தாணம்: mutiyā mutalāy). Further the emphasis that Śiva ‘dances’, therefore, ‘the world would have life’ (PP. 241) and the assertion that Śiva took the ‘disguise of a Brahmin’ (PP. 407) points to the fact of Cēkkilār affirmation of the nāyaṇmār’s belief that Śiva domiciles on earth ‘for all to see’ [(செக்கிலார் காந்திக்குறிப்பிட்டு வெற்றிக்குறிப்பிட்டு: veliyē ampalattul ninru ātuvār umpar)(PP.407)] and that He i.e. Śiva is all in all’ [(செக்கிலார் காந்திக்குறிப்பிட்டு வெற்றிக்குறிப்பிட்டு: Śivaṅē ellāp porulum enru (PP. 2750)]808; there is a unity of oneness in him that naturally exists among all living creatures. This is significant to Śaiva moral path and Cēkkilār elaborates it through the lives of the nāyaṇmār. This unity is both an ideal and an actuality. Not only does Cēkkilār find the ontological ground for the unity of all living creatures in Śiva, but on this ontological ground, he challenges one to overcome all that impedes this unity by expressing and manifesting itself in an inter-personal, existential level. Cēkkilār points out ‘for those who meditate on him as one true shining light, he

804 ‘அப்பட்டிக்குறிப்பிட்டு நோக்கிய நோக்கிய அமைந்துகொண்டு கொண்டு கொண்டு ... கொண்டு கொண்டு கொண்டு கொண்டு என்று தன்னுடைய நூற்றணக உருளுக்கு கொண்டு கொண்டு கொண்டு கொண்டு மேலும் மேலும் (Gīlā. 407).

805 ‘அப்பட்டிக்குறிப்பிட்டு நோக்கிய நோக்கிய அமைந்துகொண்டு என்று என்று என்று தெற்றுக்கு என்று தெற்றுக்கு கொண்டு ... கொண்டு கொண்டு கொண்டு என்று என்று என்று தெற்றுக்கு என்று தெற்றுக்கு என்று தெற்றுக்கு (Gīlā. 2741).

806 ‘வன்முகம் முடிவு என்று என்று என்று தெற்றுக்கு தெற்றுக்கு ...’ (Gīlā. 241)

807 ‘அப்பட்டிக்குறிப்பிட்டு நோக்கிய நோக்கிய அமைந்துகொண்டு என்று என்று என்று என்று என்று ... என்று ... என்று ... கொண்டு கொண்டு என்று என்று (Gīlā. 407)

808 It is also narrated on another occasion by Cēkkilār that Śiva who is formless has taken several forms and has become everything.

‘அப்பட்டிக்குறிப்பிட்டு நோக்கிய அமைந்துகொண்டு ...’ (Gīlā. 4163).
dispels the darkness of falsehood of action’ (PP. 2734)\(^{809}\); they will live in love enshrined within their hearts the primal radiance, live with their attention focused on the teaching, and so escape from the bondage of separate existence and the road that leads to rebirth’ (PP. 2740)\(^{810}\). In short, there is nothing beyond the vision of truth.

As for the ontological ground of the oneness or unity of all living beings, Čēkkilār again stresses, in the Periya Purāṇam, that this natural condition of all reality is because of Śiva (PP. 1369)\(^{811}\). Čēkkilār provides solid reasons as to why one ‘ought’ to treat all beings as one. For example, in one place he affirms that it is the hearts of those who treat all alike that the Lord abides. He narrates that Mūrka nāyaṇār was a virtuous gambler who would welcome the devotees who came to visit him; he would sit them down to eat with warm affection. Because of the number of devotees who flocked to him, all his inherited wealth was soon exhausted. He was himself reduced to poverty and dejection. Hence, by the practice of gambling, he performed a service to the devotees which was his chief aim. He kept his conscience clear by not handling personally any of the gains which he accrued through gambling. Thus, day by day he lovingly fed the devotees, his guilt was purged by arul (grace), and when departed from this world, he attained the eternal abode (PP 3623-3635).

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809 ‘...the contemplation of seeing the darkness dispelled, the reality enshrined within the hearts, living with the attention focused on the teaching, and so escaping from the bondage of separate existence and the road that leads to rebirth’ (Gol. 2733).

810 ‘...the reality dispelled, the hearts living, focused on the teaching, and so escaping from the bondage of separate existence and the road that leads to rebirth’ (Gol. 2749).

811 ‘...who gives life to all’ (PP. 1369).
In order to emphasize the value of the moral path in the treatment of all living beings alike, Cēkkiḻār goes on to give the following example of Cirappuli nāyaṉār who showed unfailing love towards the growing numbers of devotees, and excelled in acts of self-less kindness. So he abode in the ‘shadow of the feet of God’ (PP 3664)\textsuperscript{812}. Thus for Cēkkiḻār for those who follow the path, the treatment of all alike and as oneself is very important. Therefore, in every narration, Cēkkiḻār praises them, as for example, he remarks ‘I offer tribute of praise to the feet of the noble Cirppuli, renowned for his virtue’ (PP. 3665)\textsuperscript{813}. He even names this virtue as ‘the great path of justice’ (PP. 129)\textsuperscript{814}. By naming it thus, Cēkkiḻār at least indirectly asserts that in his ethical worldview, given that all are alike, treating all alike as oneself is not an optional recommendation for some but an imperative requirement for all devotee of Śiva.

In Cēkkiḻār’s perspective, such a path is possible because of the arul (grace) of Śiva acting in human person (PP. 3692)\textsuperscript{815}. At the same time as arul (grace) acts through these people, and as instrumental causes of arul (grace), therefore, the nāyaṉmār too are praiseworthy and to serve them is a great privilege. It is stated ‘it is the Lord our master who gives us arul to meditate on him and to hold fast to the truth with unremitting zeal. He takes delight in meeting his servants, and see, today in his arul he has given us a’...\textsuperscript{812}

\textsuperscript{813} ‘...xaṇi kanṭuṟikkāṇu gān̄kamān̄icit’ (Gūḍ. 3663).
\textsuperscript{814} ‘...gud̄am kutiṁkum tiṟaṇam avai saṅkum k Caiti varṇam aṇṭakam’ (Gūḍ. 3664).
\textsuperscript{815} ‘...gud̄am kutiṁkum tiṟaṇam avai saṅkum k Caiti varṇamum evamum vuḷa te varṇamum...’ (Gūḍ. 3697).

‘Come and the grace which the Lord has come to earth to bestow upon his peerless servant! Praise him for his grace, and walk in the way of love!’ (PP. 3697).
palanquin inlaid with pearls’ (PP. 2116). Later on, in concluding his narrations of the life of Kūṟṟuva purāṇam he records ‘by his devoted service, he set himself to eradicate all wrongdoing. We have made obeisance at his feet’ (PP. 3942). After stating his admiration for the nāyaṉār, Cēkkilār repeatedly underlines the experience of the Lord’s arul (grace) of the nāyaṁmār. He describes the Lord’s arul (grace) as operating intensely in all human hearts and those devotees are potentially divinely graced, and one must model one’s life according to this vision. Moral virtues flow from this inner vision. This vision negates all practical distinctions between humans and stresses the important fact that all beings are born out of Šiva and are servants of him.

The nāyaṁmār’s awareness of this ontological basis of the prevailing unity of the oneness of all is but natural, for the nāyaṁmār to realize that in the suffering of others, they must come to the other’s aid. This Cēkkilār recounts in the life of Tiruṉāṉacampantar where he narrates ‘while the nāyaṉār was staying at Kaṭimāṭac Ceṅkuṇṛur, his companion became fearful ... and they approached Campantar and made known to him their fears. In response, he first invoked the grace of God ... when he had brought his hymn to a fitting conclusion, the fever epidemic abated and disappeared, not just in that town itself, but throughout the whole country’ (PP. 2231-2239). Yet Cēkkilār narrates, that some in their hard-heartedness, when they see others suffering, feel no empathy towards them. This can be explained, according to Cēkkilār, by the fact that their interior knowledge or ‘soul-knowledge’ as he refers to it, is badly dimmed or

\[\text{816'}\text{நூற்றாண்டு கல்லூரிய வேலை விளக்கத் தகாண்டு அங்கமையல்லாமல் குறிப்பிட்டு நீர்கள் நூற்றாண்டு விளக்கத் தகாண்டு அங்கமையல்லாமல் குறிப்பிட்டு நீர்கள் நூற்றாண்டு விளக்கத் தகாண்டு அங்கமையல்லாமல் குறிப்பிட்டு}’ (Gīr. 2116).

\[\text{817'}\text{நூற்றாண்டு கல்லூரிய வேலை விளக்கத் தகாண்டு அங்கமையல்லாமல் குறிப்பிட்டு நீர்கள் நூற்றாண்டு விளக்கத் தகாண்டு அங்கமையல்லாமல் குறிப்பிட்டு நீர்கள் நூற்றாண்டு விளக்கத் தகாண்டு}’ (Gīr. 3942).
blunted; they are ‘like a lamp which is clean and bright on the outside, but full of darkness within’ (PP. 473).818

The narration indicates that the human person is born with divine arul (grace). The uniqueness of these benefits of arul (grace) in the nāyānmār is implied in an unparalleled superior life, i.e. to experience the absolute natural bliss of the divine ‘who is the embodiment of truth’ (PP. 3644)819 and whose power of effulgent arul (grace) is found within all things animate and inanimate, all living and non-living things, whose existence is sustained, and who live absolutely unobstructed by any impediment of time or place (PP. 3666).820 How can one attain such a state of life? Cēkkilār asserts that is by the ‘arul (grace) of God which is His natural manifestation’ (PP. 286).821 Cēkkilār also makes an earnest appeal that no enquiry should be conducted regarding the Śiva’s arul (grace) that he bestows on His devotees, His original nature. For they are limitless and if one attempt to explore them with one’s limited epistemological tools, and then one will be miserably limiting them. Again, the scholars should not test the Lord seriously through logical inference, and verbal testimony, since He is of the very form of effulgence (PP. 2737).822 How can one obtain this arul (grace)? Cēkkilār repeatedly insists, in the strongest possible terms, that it is obtainable by compassion and love (PP. 806).823 He

818 ‘... அவனால் நிகழ்த்தி உணர்த்தும் ரவுன்றின் கடுமையான நூற்றுக்கும் அன்புகள் கொண்டு விளங்குவதற்கு புத்தகம் பற்றி பேசப்படும்’ (நிலை. 473).
819 ‘...பொதுவழியாக குறுக்கிச் செய்வதுள்ள செயல்களும் நூற்றுக்கும் செயல்களும் மேல் பற்றி பேசப்படும்’ (நிலை. 3644).
820 ‘... அவன் என்று மூடப்படுகின்ற புத்தகம் நூற்றுக்கும் பற்றிப் பேசப்படும்...’ (நிலை. 3666).
821 ‘... அவனால் யோகாமா அருளிய என்று அறியப்படும்’ (நிலை. 286).
822 ‘மேலும் பொதுவழியாக கல்வி அளஞ்செய்யும் கையாளாம் குறுக்குகளும் மேல் பற்றியும் கையாளாம் பெள் இணைந்துகூடியும் அவனால் இறைச்சியும் கையாளாம்’ (நிலை. 2737).
823 ‘அவனால் என்று கையாளாம் பெள் பற்றியும் கையாளாம் அவனால் என்று கையாளாம் அவனால் பெள் பற்றியும் கையாளாம் கையாளாம்'}
narrates the life of the nāyaṁmār implicitly or explicitly referring to the benevolent nature of Śiva, the pathetic plight in winning Śiva’s arul (grace), the overwhelming enjoyment of bliss in seeing Śiva. An interesting conclusion may be drawn from this; for Cēkkiḻār, a morally good human act is a compassionate act of service. Here a compassionate act is that which results from one’s feeling of oneness with all creatures and from one’s experiencing the suffering of all others as one’s own.

After having established the foundation of the moral path, Cēkkiḻār focuses attention on practical moral behaviour that is visible, i.e. norms of behaviour and attitudes which added character development and habit formation, in the life of the nāyaṁmār.

Four key points can be mentioned in this regard. They are control of the sense organs (intiriya olukkam: இறியியா ஊக்கம்), control of the mind (karaṇa olukkam: கரணா ஊக்கம்), right conduct of life (Śiva olukkam: சிவா ஊக்கம்), and right conduct of the soul (āṇma olukkam: ஆண்மா ஊக்கம்): this is discernable in the narration titled ‘the Taking of Captive’ (தாங்காண்டாக்கணம்: Taṭuttākkoṇṭa purāṇam) (PP. 147-349). In the section that deals with Tirukrippput Toṇtar purāṇam, the nāyaṁār is

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\[824\] In one of the stanza of this section Cēkkiḻār:

‘The hearts of nāyaṁmār constantly overflow with love, with the five senses subsumed in the act of seeing, the four faculties of the mind in meditation, and the three qualities in pure enlightenment’ (PP. 252).

What should be noted in the stanza is that though the intellect is but one, the gateways thereto are five (பொதுமக்: aimpūri i.e. the five organs of senses viz., met: மெட், caiva: கேவா, olukkum: ஊக்கம், āntukku: ஆங்குக்கு, cevi: செவி). In this sense, the five organs of senses are described as bringing fivefold knowledge i.e. ஆவியாம் (aintu pēr arivu) viz. caiva: cuvai (taste), olū: olli (form. light), āru: alū (touch), ācat: ātukku (sound), nāṟṟam: nāṟṟam (smell). It pervasion which is also fivefold was here totally concentrated in the eyes –their vision (சுவாமியாம்: சுமையா ஊக்கம்: aintu pēr arivum kankaḷē koḷa). Cunturar nāyaṁār beheld the Lord-Dancer (சுமையா ஊக்கம்: சுமையா ஊக்கம்: aintu pēr arivum kankaḷē koḷa). Cunturar nāyaṁār beheld the Lord-Dancer (சுமையா ஊக்கம்: சுமையா ஊக்கம்: aintu pēr arivum kankaḷē koḷa). Cunturar nāyaṁār beheld the Lord-Dancer (சுமையா ஊக்கம்: சுமையா ஊக்கம்: aintu pēr arivum kankaḷē koḷa).
described as one who dedicated himself in thought and deed to the feet of the Lord (PP. 1193). On another occasion it is written that the nāyaṉār dedicated His entire life to Śiva (PP. 1347). In this way Cēkkiḻār tries to portray the nāyaṉār who adhered to a certain sense of discipline in life to reach Śiva.

Cēkkiḻār also divides the discipline of the sense organs (intiriyā olukkam: இரியா உல்கம்) into two, namely, the organs of action (அம்போறி: aimpor i.e. the five organs of senses) and the organs of knowledge (அஒறி: aintu pēr aqvū). As for the control of the organs of knowledge and purity of mind, Cēkkiḻār mentions restraint from uttering harsh words (PP. 4071); restraint from treating others with cruelty (PP. ellaiyil). The nāyaṉār’s ears did not heat; his nose did not smell; his lips did not articulate and his skin was bereft of the sense of touch. Likewise his fourfold karaṅṅaṅkāl nāṅkum: கராண்கால் நாங்கம் (inner sensory comprising of சித்தம்: cittam (mind), மணம்: manam (will), விசயம்: buddhi (reason) and அகாண்டம்: akāṅkāram (self-love) were all சித்தம்: cittam (mind) nothing else (கராண்கால் நாங்கம் அஒறி: karanangal nankum sinthaiye aka). The five great sense rested on the eyes only. Again the differentiated gunas of satwam, rajas and tamas became one uniform satwam (சுவாம் ராஜஸ் தமஸ் செய்யப்படும் குமுகம்: kum oru murum tiruntu cāttu vikamē aka). What should be noted is that all other activities ceased; that which was experienced was vision alone. In this divinely unique stillness, the dance of bliss is witnessed. Thus the nāyaṉār enjoyed the great, blissful, and limitless dance. As the nāyaṉār had conquered his passions and held as obligation not to forget the grace of Śiva, it is but natural for him to behold and enjoy the resplendent beauty of the Lord in any of His forms. However, the bliss which is everlasting being enjoyed by him transcends the reach of the sense organs and none can sound the depths.
restraint from looking on others with evil intent (PP.31-34); and restraint from tasting and smelling sweet aromas offered to the Lord (PP. 4125-4131); preventing by any means any harm to living beings (PP. 4051); visiting places to meet saintly people (PP. 3661-3573); being of help to others (PP. 4018); and performing good deeds (PP. 4124). By these restraints, Cēkkilār notes the nāyaṁmār as followers of the moral path led moderate lives avoiding extremes. It is clear that Cēkkilār recognizes that by and large, our knowledge of the external world is received through the five sense organs and what enters into us through them can defile us in that they can influence our thinking and action for bad or good. Hence it is necessary to restrain our sense organs. Here the author may not strike us as an original or extraordinary master in his insistence on restraint, if one wants to follow a spiritual path. Cēkkilār in the Periya Purāṇam does so, in the context of the nāyaṁmār’s own Šaiva moral path (PP. 734).

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828 Here is the example of Muḷāiyatkavār who liberally distributes all spoils which he won by the conquest of his foe in battle. All the wealth that he earned in this way he would give away in accordance with their stated needs.
829 Here it is narrated that Cuntarar looked upon two women of rare beauty and when the Lord saw what happened he caused the rebirth of the nāyaṁgār.
830 Here it is narrated that Cerutungi nāyaṁgār was a devotee of Lord Śiva. One day, the famous queen of the Pallava king Cinjar picked up a flower which had fallen to the ground in the hall of flowers, and smelt it. When the nāyaṁgār saw this, he seized the queen by her hair, pulled her to the ground and took old of her nose. “This nose had sniffed a flower which was to grace the head of the Lord!” he cried, and cut off the queen’s nose with his sword.
831 ‘...[He] successfully eradicated wars and conflict ... brought all his subjects under the rule of justice...’ (PP. 4061).
832 It is said that when any devotee of the Lord came to his door, Ciraṅgulā nāyaṁgār would make obeisance at their feet, the greeting them with kindly words, gave them a warm welcome. Every day he would provide nourishing food for his visitors and meet all their needs.
833 ‘...The focus of all his thoughts was single minded devotion ... and acts of service for the Lord and his servants’ (PP. 4018).
834 ‘...[He] won great fame faithfully following the path of service...’ (PP. 4124).
835 ‘...the nāyaṁmār ... the pārṇa ... and the Śiva ...’ (PP. 734).
As for the discipline of the mind, he lists realization of the divine within oneself and not allowing the mind to be absorbed in mundane things, not being mindful of the evil of others, not being proud, avoiding any artificiality, being natural and restraining all one’s faculties from doing evil. Here, in his discipline of the mind from the sense organs, Cēkkilār shows the nāyaṁmār as the one who followed a moral code, who directed their attention away from evil and focused constantly on this higher reality. Cēkkilār’s understanding of human psychology is naturally right. If one’s mind is filled with many thoughts and interests, it cannot be wholly taken up on what needs total attention and concern. Cēkkilār elaborates on the point in that the followers of the moral path must be solely concerned with this path without any sort of mental dissipation (PP. 3668). The necessity of discipline of the mind is again asserted in stanza in the narration of Pūcalār nāyaṁār (PP. 4178).

The other moral idea that Cēkkilār highlights is that which relates to a right conduct of life (Śiva olukkam: சிவ ஓலுக்கம்). Through the lives of the nāyaṁmār many examples are cited by Cēkkilār. In the explanation of what he really means by right conduct of life (Śiva olukkam: சிவ ஓலுக்கம்), Cēkkilār notes ‘Just as, when the soul lies trapped in the net of good and evil deeds, although it has the wisdom to find the way out, the senses block its path, so did the hounds block the animals’ escape’ (PP. 734).

It is stated in the Cīrutoṇṭa nāyaṁār purāṇam ‘through his assiduous studies, he had reached the conclusion that attachment to the feet of Śiva was the essence of all knowledge. Just as water will forever flow downhill, so his life was characterised by constant love for those sacred feet’ (PP. 3668). That ‘for the advancement of the Vedic tradition, a man was born in that town whose thought and feelings were all focussed on the feet of the Lord. He never deviated from the path of devotion, and as he grew, his love grew with him. He was exceptionally knowledgeable in the science of Vedic morality by which the truth is attained’ (PP. 4178).
conduct of life, Cēkkiḻār explains that one should treat all alike and as one treats oneself without any distinctions of gender, caste or status in society. Although such a list may seem anachronistic, given the social situation at the time of Cēkkiḻār, it should be mentioned that his earnest desire was to rid society of any and every type of discrimination. Though this message is clearly embodied in the life of Kaṇṇappa nāyaṇār, it is also stated, in the Iyarpakai nāyaṇār purāṇam (PP. 406)\(^\text{838}\).

Another significant moral ideal that is emphasised in the Periya Purāṇam is the right conduct of the soul (āṇma oḷukkam: அண்மா உல்குகம்). This is related to the preceding, but is wider in scope in that it included all ‘living beings’. To make it clear that it means all ‘sentient beings’, from the smallest to the greatest, he adds, ‘from spider to an elephant’ (PP 420-4218)\(^\text{839}\). He does not simple lay down a norm, but gives the reason or the motivation why one should treat all living beings alike and as oneself. Since it is one and the same Lord Śiva who resides in all living creatures, and by following the moral path, one progresses towards identifying oneself with the Lord Śiva; it is

\(^{838}\) ‘அண்மை உல்குகம் அல்லது அல்லது யாவும் தொடர்புடைய கொரம் மிக்கவும் சுட்டுவாய்ப்புகள் மாடுகள் என்னாலும் வல்லாம். அருள்மிகள் நிறைவு செய்ய வேண்டும் வாதாளம் எனும் மிக்கவும் சுட்டுவாய்ப்புகள் என்னாலும் வல்லாம்’ (பெரியார் 406).

It is stated that ‘he was a true devotee of the Lord. Grace filled his heart to overflowing. If anyone approaches him, he would carry out their wish to the letter. He counted it an honour to fulfil the wishes of others, and delighted in the constant practise of domestic virtue’ (PP. 406).

\(^{839}\) While narrating the life of Kōcceikaṭ Cēkkiḻār notes that there was a white elephant of great austerity that used to bathe the Lord with fragrant water carried in its trunk and worshipped with the bunch of flowers every day. At the same spot there was a spider worshipping the God of gods. It used to build sturdy web of fine thread as a canopy over the Lord’s golden head, to protect him from the rays of the sun and falling leaves. Both the creatures were doing in their love for the Graceful one, the service and worship they can offer. One day the when the elephant came to worship the feet of the Lord, it swept away the spider’s careful work as unseemly. Thinking the elephant was just casually waving its trunk, the spider spun its web again. However, on the following day the mighty elephant destroyed the web once more. At this spider was indignant. So in anger, it crept in the elephant’s trunk and gave it a bite. Unable to bear the pain, the elephant neat its trunk upon the ground, and then fell down and died. By the impact of the trunk upon the ground, the spider too was killed. In his arul, the Lord duly granted to the elephant a fitting boon, and at the same time ordained that the spider should be born into the family of the Cōḷa kings to rule the world.
imperative that one identifies oneself with all living creatures and treat them all as oneself. This feeling of oneness or union with all living beings implies not repaying evil with evil but bearing all with patience – as long as this does not in itself bring harm to anyone. Cēkkilār surely wants to show that the nāyaṃmār lived a life of virtue which led to the highest standard of morality in that he proposed that one’s norm of behaviour should be the abstention of doing harm to any living creature even at the cost of suffering evil from others. Certainly one cannot deny that this is a higher form of human morality.

It also should be noted, here, these deeds good and bad or righteous and unrighteous of the nāyaṃmār in the Periya Purāṇam may be further classified into those deeds done towards Śiva and others. In the Periya Purāṇam Cēkkilār highlights the righteous deed done towards Śiva includes doing charitable deeds to Śiva temples. This is evident in the narration of those who attend the person of the Lord three times a day (PP. 4165-4167) where Cēkkilār notes that they offer worship three times a day and the glory of these men is beyond telling (PP. 4166). At the same time Cēkkilār also points to the righteous deeds which can enable one to attain the nature of Śiva – adoring a devotee of Śiva and listining and singing in praise of Śiva (PP. 4152). It is also clear Cēkkilār makes it a point to highlight the unrighteous deeds done towards Śiva i.e. illegitimately plundering the properties of Śiva and His devotees and indulging in prohibited activities.

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"At the sight of any devotee of God, they become shy, but at the same time full of joy and delight. They will follow such devotees with fervant longing, as a calf follows its mother, and speak to them with courtesy and respect" (PP. 4152).
towards these three (PP. 4139). The righteous deed done towards others include doing good to living beings and unrighteous deeds include doing evil to other living creatures i.e. doing injustice to wife, children and relatives. The unrighteous deeds possess abnoxious characters like lust. Kāraikkāl Ammaiyār struggle to overcome unfaithfulness of her husband in the Periya Purāṇam is a clear example of such unrighteous deed done towards others (PP. 1722-1787). According to the Periya Purāṇam, when the nāyaṉmār is appealed to for help by those who are sunk in misery, they would willingly rush to their rescue. To the illiterates and to others who are poor in spirit, but who aspire for true wisdom, they offer soothing words and the effective means of attaining it. Both the material and spiritual benefits are conferred by the nāyaṉmār on their fellow-beings. When his followers were suffering due to severe fever at Ceṅkuṟṉūr, Campantar sang a song which refers to the blue throat of Śiva which saved the devotees from all defilements (PP. 2231-2239). This is an example of help at the empirical level from religious perspectives. Campantar and Tirunāvukkaracar were granted two gold coins by the arul (grace) of Śiva during the famine (PP. 2465-2475). The nāyaṉmār show no ill-will to even lower creatures. Instead, they rescue them from danger as was done by Maṉunīti Cōla who sacrificed his only son with a view of deepening justice to a cow (PP. 86-146). Campantar rescued the dead person due to snake bite to make a maid happy

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842 For example there is the story of Kōṭpuli nāyaṉār who used all the generous prize money he received from the king to build up stocks of paddy in all the temples of the Lord Śiva, until their store-rooms were bursting at the seams. One day he was ordered by the king to take the field against his enemies. By this time he had built sufficient reserves of paddy for the Lord to last until his return. So before setting out, he approached all his relatives and gave them warning that the paddy gathered is for the Lord and if anyone even thinks of misappropriating them would be severely punished. A short while after Kōṭpuli left a famine a rose in that country. His hard-pressed relatives plundered what the nāyaṉār has gathered for the Lord. Saddened by what had happened, the nāyaṉār decided to punish the relatives who stole what was due to the Lord and His devotees.
The kinds of righteous deeds or services throw light upon the bent of mind and spirit of the nāyāṁmār had towards Śiva and fellow beings.

8.4 The End Goal of Moral Ideals in the Periya Purāṇam

The ecstasy life of the nāyāṁmār in the Periya Purāṇam from the initial step is mystical and the journey terminates in the fruition of comprehending the vision of Śiva, His beauty, truth and goodness (PP. 23, 130, 165, 223, 555). These verses in the Periya Purāṇam suggest that when one lives in accordance with moral values, one gets transformed into a higher life where one is at the service of the Lord and is in union with the Lord. Therefore, as it is written in the Periya Purāṇam, the final fulfillment or the goal of the nāyāṁmār’s moral aspiration was to be at service at the feet of the Lord in His abode (PP. 489). Hence Cēkkilār is not speaking of the mere intellectual experience of being at the service of the Lord but in the actuality or existential experience of a

[Cēkkilār notes that:]

‘On the mountain’s lower slopes there dwelt a famous hermit of deep devotion named Upamanyu. Although the true nature of the Lord Śiva is beyond the normal power of human comprehension, He had achieved that realization’ (PP. 23).

‘...[transcribed text not legible]... (PP. 23).

In another instance Cēkkilār notes that:

‘The Lord of all virtue ... bestows his grace on countless devotees, who like King Maṉu follow the path of virtue’ (PP. 135).

These nāyāṁmār fixed their mind on the feet of the Lord (‘...[transcribed text not legible]...’) (PP. 165) and without more ado attained the abode of Śiva (‘... Śiva’s heavenly hosts’ (PP. 223). In the hearts of such loving devotees, the Lord abides forever (‘...[transcribed text not legible]...’) (PP. 555). Further, Cēkkilār also notes that the Lord blessed the nāyāṁmār to continue their service in His abode:

‘...in the radiant mountain of the Lord, where he was appointed to succeed to the leadership of Śiva’s heavenly hosts’ (‘...[transcribed text not legible]...’ (PP. 3933)).

Cēkkilār states: ‘then the Lord Śiva ... stood before the king his servant, and granted him a vision of himself, as he had done before. He also gave him grace to worship without ceasing, so that his servant might find refuge at his feet, to which no dwellers of heaven could even attain’ (PP. 489).
‘deathless supreme life’, and ‘knowing the state of Śiva and becoming one with him’ and in submission of all faculties, at the service of the Lord as the sole end of the moral path (PP. 1225). Most of the nāyāmār entered into a union only after they had successfully fulfilled their mission of serving the Lord and His devotee, conceiving it has the very purpose of their birth (PP. 878). As a first step in their life of devotion and service, the nāyāmār adhered to the sublime consciousness of Śiva mostly and then enjoyed mystic contemplation which is active in nature. Tirunāvukkaracar, for instance, became an ardent follower of Śaivism through the sacred symbol of that tradition. He then gradually became the very form of devotion and service and finally illumined himself as a very form of wisdom and united himself with Śiva.

This attitude of the nāyāmār and the way of realization of Śiva is discussed beautifully in the Periya Purāṇam (PP. 72). This verse equates the growth of paddy-grains to the devoted hearts of nāyāmār. The points of comparison are: (i) like the growing grains, the devotees grow from strength to strength in loftiness and stateliness (ii) the ears of corn are gravid with pure white pulp. The nāyāmār too are full of the

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845 Cēkkilār narrates: ‘Vicāra Carumā was astonished to see the level of knowledge he had attained in the scripture and in the arts before ever they had instructed him. Yet the noble little fellow had achieved the realization that the feet of the dancing Lord are more precious than any conceivable object of study. The truth had dawned upon him that we belong to the dancing Lord. From that insight there welled up in him an unceasing flow of love. From this in turn issued a sense of duty which prompted him to strenuous effort. This became the settled pattern of his life’ (PP. 1225).

846 ‘...He had attained knowledge of Śiva, and he had become a servant of the Lord...He made it his life’s work to fulfill the wishes of all those who like him had become servants of the great Lord’s feet’ (PP. 878).

847 ‘Just as in loving devotion the friends and servants of the Lord gather together and bow their heads in worship so the ripening paddy mimics the enlightened souls, standing with heads bowed in serried ranks’ (PP. 72).
milk of true wisdom (iii) as the grains grow they suffer a change of hue. A similar change of hue comes over the nāyaṇmār too, as they mature in devotion (iv) whatever lay coiled within the husk, uncoils after a time. Even so, the once-kinky twists in the minds of the devotees get uncoiled in due time (v) when the grains are fully ripe, they dazzle with luster. The mellowed nāyaṇmār too shine with a godly lustre. As narrated in the nāyaṇmār, Campantar became Tiruṇāṉ Campantar immediately after he had taken the divine milk given to him to enrich his mystical power and enabled him to enjoy the bliss of Śiva thoroughly (PP. 1904-3159). In his life one see the valiant and jubilant efforts to establish Śaivite tradition through the exaltation of his intuitive power mixed with Śiva’s arul (grace) and hence becomes a ‘new person’ or ‘person of Śiva. The eventful life of Campantar indicates that the unitive life of the nāyaṇār is full of mystic achievements which are beneficial both to the nāyaṇār and the community. His mystic journey is not only to Śiva but in Śiva. On the wedding day of his life, the young nāyaṇār entered into the effulgence of light which appeared there to unite him with Śiva (PP. 3148-3156)\textsuperscript{848}.

To affirm this further Cēkkiḻār records that the nāyaṇmār entreated Śiva to teach with the art of deathlessness or endless service; then Cēkkiḻār repeatedly confirms that the nāyaṇmār received these gifts from Śiva (PP. 2064)\textsuperscript{849}. Proceeding further, Cēkkiḻār,

\textsuperscript{848} In this section it is narrated that the Lord appeared before the nāyaṇār and his wedding guest as a pillar of light. Together they worshipped the Lord and entering the light became one with Him.

‘...இலங்கையில் இளஞ்சேர்த் ஐதாய சூட்டியது அந்தத் பன்முகம் குண்டு விளைவு அன்றால் குண்டு விளைவு அடைந்து பானை மாறாயின் தோன்றி ஆழ்வூடு உள்ளது. அந்தத் பன்முகம் குண்டு விளைவு அடைந்து பானை மாறாயின் தோன்றி ஆழ்வூடு உள்ளது.’ (நி.III. 3156).

\textsuperscript{849} Cēkkiḻār states that Tiruṇāṉacampantar praised the Lord thus ‘you have bestowed upon me the inward experience of bliss, endless and divine’, he further asserted, ‘it has come in visible form, easy to apprehend with the senses’ (PP 2064).

‘...நம்பிக்கையும் தீர்மானமளித்து ஐதாய சூட்டியது சூட்டியது அந்தத் பன்முகம் குண்டு விளைவு அடைந்து பானை மாறாயின் தோன்றி ஆழ்வூடு உள்ளது. அந்தத் பன்முகம் குண்டு விளைவு அடைந்து பானை மாறாயின் தோன்றி ஆழ்வூடு உள்ளது.’ (நி.III. 2064).
in innumerable places confirms that this deathless state of life is a grace, a gift or special favour of Śiva that was granted to the nāyaṉār for leading a virtuous life (PP. 402)\textsuperscript{850}. Thus, the nāyaṉār paid homage to Lord Śiva for revealing his actual state of life and the state of deathless life, led him in the moral path, and thereby granted him that sublime state (PP. 1636-1638)\textsuperscript{851}. For example, Cuntarar, who is known for his God-centres deeds with a comrad’s approach, was initially shown by Śiva through the settlement of a quarrel in a temple’s presincts on the occasion of his wedding. When his life as a yōgic saint on earth was over, a white elephant was sent to bring him back to Kailas. There he enjoyed the blazing arul (grace) of Śiva. He was also accompanied by two of his fellow devotees. The attainment of perfection and union with the life of service in the abode of Śiva reveal that the worship of God and love of the devotees equally yield the results. The experience as such remains a divine gift. So too, even though Cēkkilār explains the deathless state of a utmost life of service as the goal of the nāyaṃmār’s morality, the final benefit is not the natural outcome of it but a gift, which is always gratuitous.

In granting the nāyaṃmār the sublime state, the Lord also granted them the power to perform numerous acts of service to the Lord. On several occasions Cēkkilār narrates that the nāyaṃmār had the power to perform miracles but they performed none for their own advantage or for fame. For one who is in communion with the Lord such things are.

\textsuperscript{850} ‘எற்கோல் வெள் தீர்ப்பு ஈர் சுருங்கச் சீர்கல் என்றும் உரோப்பூர் தீர்ப்பு மற்றும் வெற்றியினர் என விளக்கம் செய்தே குருக்கைந் என்று விளக்கம் செய்தே மின்னத்தித் தீர்ப்பு இருக்கே குருக்கைந் இருக்கே குருக்கை’ (GUL. 402).

‘Thus by the grace of God, the servant of the Lord and his beautiful wife performed a brave deed. That very day they received the gift of youth, attained Śiva’s heaven and entered eternal bliss’ (PP. 402).

\textsuperscript{851} Thus narrates Cēkkilār, the nāyaṉār at once refused: ‘unless I see the abode of the sovereign Lord upon mount Kailása ... I shall not take this mortal body home ... when the Lord realized how determined he was, he decided to reveal himself to his devotees ... at that the nāyaṉār’s body was healed and he rose in radiant light: “great one, sweet as nectar, you have made me your own”’ (PP 1636-1638).
possible (PP. 3569-3596). By experiencing and expressing this mystical union with Śiva the nāyaṉmār felt that they shared everything of Śiva. After showing clearly that the nāyaṉmār did receive the gift on a number of occasions, Cēkkilār states that while all of humankind thinks and worries on death, the nāyaṉmār were freed from this fear and worry (PP. 1318). Cēkkilār thus wonders whether there is anyone like them and declares there is the noble path (PP. 4166).

It is clear; therefore, for Cēkkilār life on earth is precious in that only during one’s earthly existence can one attain Śiva - final fulfilment (PP. 939). Cēkkilār believes that with attainment of Śiva, one’s earthly body is transformed (PP. 1697). One should observe how Cēkkilār makes all his assertions on the basis of the nāyaṉmār’s mystical experience and how he always attributes all they have received to Śiva’s arul (grace). In this way, and in affirming in every conclusion that the Lord ‘took possession’ (துட்டுத்துக்களவன்: Taṭuttāṭkolaḷ) of the nāyaṉmār and blessed them with His arul (grace) race of serving Him eternally, Cēkkilār invites the Tamil community to come and

852 In this narration of the life of Tirumūlar Cēkkilār remarks that in order to guide the animals who were alive at the death of their master, the nāyaṉār assumed the mortal frame of a cowherd (mūlan) and guarded them. Śiva took possession of the nāyaṉār and granted him his deathless life and thereby he became one with Śiva.

853 ‘... Do not worry’, he said, “in a previous birth your brother was a hermit ... I shall now make him my own by afflicting him with a dire illness in his stomach”’ (PP. 1318).

854 ‘... ‘now to the best of my knowledge I shall recount the deeds of the holy servant ... there is the noble path’.

855 Cēkkilār’s points out that ‘Tirunāvukkaracar was transformed into the likeness of Śiva’s joy and wisdom, the ultimate attainment, and he reposed beneath the feet of the great God’ (PP. 1697).
follow the path of justice and morality, so that they can enter into communion with, and indeed ‘become one, with Śiva and enjoy the deathless state of serving Him at His feet’ (PP. 869)\textsuperscript{857}.

\textit{Cēkkilār} explicitly affirms the immortality of the body, an ‘embodied immortality’ and calls it to account for the various elements involved in such a notion. First of all, he is conscious of the truth that the human physical body is subjected to the laws of nature, such as suffering, sickness, ageing and finally death; \textit{Cēkkilār} first records that Śiva removed from the nāyaṉmār all these sufferings of the body. In another instance it is stated ‘the Lord was so pleased, “my friend”, he said, addressing the devotee who had lived such a good life of conduct and service. “For the service you have offered to my friends, come with your wife to my world above. There you may enjoy eternal bliss...”’ (PP.465).\textsuperscript{858} \textit{Cēkkilār’s} uses a variety of terms to refer to the ‘deathless transformed body’. He calls it ‘grace in human form’ (PP.1411), ‘disembodied wraith’ (PP. 1770), in that the body is in the ‘form of a virtuous ascetic, with matted locks and sacred thread of shining white’ (PP. 1077)\textsuperscript{861} ‘encompassed by radiant light’ (PP.1265)\textsuperscript{862}.

\textsuperscript{857} ‘...எஞ்சகுவர்கள் தோற்று விளக்கத் தூற்றனில் மனம் தெளித்து மின்னலாக விளக்கும்’ (நூற்று 869).

\textsuperscript{858} ‘அன்புக்கு அன்றாய் புலர் அன்று அவ்வாறுவிக்கும் மத்தியாக என்ற பொழுது விளக்கத் தூற்று விளக்கம் பற்றிய முடிவு நடந்து பொருளாக வகையை விளக்கும் விளக்கத் தூறுப் பங்களை வெள்ளை விளக்கும்’ (நூற்று 465).

\textsuperscript{859} ‘...இன்பைக்கு விளக்கத் தூற்று வெள்ளை’ (நூற்று 1411).

\textsuperscript{860} ‘...சிறியபெரும் அப்பின்னுருக் லங்கத்து விளக்கம் பற்றிய பரம் வேகத்து பெண் விளக்கும்’ (நூற்று 1770).

\textsuperscript{861} ‘...முடிவுக்கு பங்களை வந்து விளக்கத் தூறு விளக்கத் தூறு வகையை வெள்ளை விளக்கும்’ (நூற்று 1077).

\textsuperscript{862} This is more clearly stated when \textit{Cēkkilār} comments: ‘when the boy felt touched by the flower hand of the Lord, though remaining in this mortal body, he became one with Śiva in a union that defies all comprehension’ (PP. 1265).

\textit{சுந்ந்தர் மீட்பாளர்கள் நூற்று முடிவுக்கு வகையை விளக்காய் என்ற மத்தியாக என்ற பரம் வேகத்து விளக்கத் தூறு விளக்கத் தூறு வகையை வெள்ளை விளக்கும்’ (நூற்று 867).
Cēkkiḻār asserts too the transformation of the body: He explains the state of being in the ‘eternal body’ as the ‘privilege of being with him forever in love’ (PP. 648), ‘peerless’ (PP. 829), a ‘state of performing the acts of service with ever-increasing love and longing’ (PP. 864) in the ‘world of the Lord’ (PP. 928). The Lord invited Āṉāya nāyanār ‘come just as he is, and live with him’ (PP. 970). However, Cēkkiḻār believes that before the material body is transformed, the person must be ‘freed from all fetters and cleansed of all past evil and action by virtue and conduct’ (PP. 1316-1318). Once the person is thus prepared, the very material body is transformed into a body of shining light of joy and wisdom (PP. 1697).

Cēkkiḻār states that the transformed body cannot be destroyed by any natural elements or any human instrument of death (PP. 924-925). He elaborates on this point in the Periya Purāṇam and gives an account of those elements of destruction by which...
the transformed body cannot be destroyed (PP. 1082).871 One cannot help contemplating that when Cēkkilār speaks of the transformed body of a person who has attained the deathless supreme life as one who possesses extra-ordinary powers (PP 2799-2804), ‘free of all kinds of suffering’ (PP. 1081)872, and is ‘enjoying Śiva’s joy and wisdom’ (PP. 1697)873. He does refer to a transformed material body – as material that cannot but remain subject to the laws of nature and death. It seems evident that for Cēkkilār, a transformed body is no longer a simple material body changed into something non-material but, as we saw, the nāyaṅmār received the ‘body of wisdom’ [(‘சிவானந்தா நாய்தா வாதீவு’ PP. 1697)], ‘body of love’ [(‘அன்பு பிளந்து தோன்றும் காலம்’: ‘anpu piḷam pāyi tirivār’ (PP. 803)]. And the ‘body of humility’ (‘பாணியுடைய வாழ்வு’: panivuṭaiya vaṭivuṭaiyār’ (PP. 878). The Periya Purāṇam also records that Kāraikkāl Ammaiyār too received an embodied immortality [(‘அன்மும் எல்லாம் வானிகும் பெய் வாதிப் ஆனா’ vāṇamum manṭhum ellām vanaiṅkum pēy vaṭivam āṅgar) (PP. 1771)]. Cēkkilār’s concept of ‘embodied immortality’ not only transcends death but it also fully validates the importance of the body. What is significant in all of the narrations as Cēkkilār states ‘it is to the Lord we belong. We are his servants, and we shall not walk in the path of evil deeds’ but in living virtuous lives (PP. 971)874.

871 ‘நாய்ந்தார் சிவானந்தா வாதீவு வாழ்வு கிட்டும் தோன்றும் சிவான் கையே கையே கையே’ (NG. 1082).

872 ‘Thus, bathing in the fire, Nantaṅṭār gained release from his tainted body and assumed the form of spotless ascetic ...’ (PP. 1082).

873 ‘...நாய்ந்தார் நாய்தா வாதீவு வாழ்வு கிட்டும் தோன்றும் சிவான் கையே கையே கையே’ (NG. 1081).

874 ‘...The dancing Lord freed his servants gathered there from the taint of deeds, and gave them arul to adore his feet, fair as the lotus flower’ (PP. 1081).
8.5 Summary

In the *Periya Purāṇam*, Cēkkiḻār has surveyed the lives of the nāyaṁmār in their quest to attain the direct vision of Śiva, the unity of existence consummating in joy and bliss. In the dedicated nāyaṁmār, therefore, there is the active attraction towards this Śiva. This dynamism is at work in the several acts of illimitable love, on the intuitive awareness and unitive experience of the oneness of life in Śivam, for Śivam, with Śivam and in their affirmation of Śiva as the goal of life. This awareness of the nāyaṁmār mediate self-knowledge and universal good by explicating the metaphysical, moral and mystical aspects of Śaiva way of life in a comprehensive and active way. They upheld Śaiva-nēti (சைவனெதி) as the norm of morality and source of moral freedom. It is for this reason Cēkkiḻār portrays a variety of meaningful incidents of saintly conduct of the nāyaṁmār. He has dealt with moral questions in the context of a typical Śaivite’s motive and vocation.

It is clear then, that the lives of the nāyaṁmār, as narrated in the *Periya Purāṇam* indicate, they had demonstrated by their lives, with their background and condition, what was for them the way of life. They were not guided to see what was in the list of things always right and things always wrong. The nāyaṁmār did not lay down a code of laws, and neither did Cēkkiḻār of the *Periya Purāṇam* attempt to codify the rules of conduct. In the *Periya Purāṇam*, therefore, there are many instances to prove that motives rather than rules, love’s implication rather than law prevailed to judge the Śaiva morality. The pathway to Śiva in the *Periya Purāṇam*, therefore, proclaims the truth of how a whole band of Śiva-devotees with one accord considered service enthused by the superiority of love of Śiva as the royal way to God and upheld it as one’s supreme goal in life. Hence,
from the king down to his lowliest subject, one reads of their reverence towards Śiva-devotees, who were immersed in truth, love and the arul (grace) of Śiva. It is for this reason, even after intense study of their lives, it is difficult to produce a life of things which are right and things which are wrong to be accepted as a universal code.

For Cēkkiḻār faith in Śiva can be commended only in terms of its fulfilment in the lives of the nāyaṇmār who have shown the Śaivite way. They way of Śaiva-nēti (Saivism) is commended only in so far as the Śaivite are equipped to put themselves with loving sympathy inside the doubts of doubting, the questions of the questioners, and the loneliness of those who have lost their way. True worship of Śiva for this nāyaṇmār consists in the treatment of all with compassion; it is an ethics of love. It is possible because, for Cēkkiḻār, there is the basic unity among all beings as creatures of Śiva. Therefore, the Śaiva morality for the nāyaṇmār is way of life or ‘right conduct of life’ (Saivism: nanneri); living the Śaiva way of life is of significant important for the nāyaṇmār. Due this righteous living, the life of the nāyaṇmār testify to the fact they had confronted fearlessly opposing factions and sects resolved conflicts with the armour of faith and purity. It has been their character to adapt and adopt attitudes of conduct relevant to the times from episodes of human actions and reactions, failures and success and thus accommodate to new situations of life. They embodied in their own lives and teachings the universal logic of righteousness in which the rational and ethical elements were integrated into a whole.

Above all for Cēkkiḻār the nāyaṇmār are servitors of God and human persons. Service is the main axis and focus of personal and social norm and value. Yet,
achievement of such a high ideal depends on how one act morally and the consideration one has for others. Such an ethos is a reflection of the abundance of love that overflows from a right conduct of life or way of living according to Śaiva way of life. The emphasis that human virtues are derived from a relationship with the Lord; Śiva through his grace enables one to become virtuous, loving and a moral responsible being is central to the religious ethos of the nāyagmār. It is Śiva’s arul (grace) that makes human actions meaningful and moral. Cēkkilār sees virtuous or moral life as the practical expression of the dynamism of Śiva’s arul (grace). Divine grace and human virtue form an essential unity; human action is incapable on its own, to become a moral action. Virtues are principles through which Śiva’s arul (grace) becomes active. In this sense, Śaivite morality is nothing less than humanness that flows from Śiva’s arul (grace). The cultivation of a virtuous disposition, moral character and good behaviour then become fundamental to Śaivite living. A good person, therefore, is a moral person who lives virtuously and whose character resembles divine virtue. Cēkkilār’s concern is not so much about the observance of moral codes with specific concern on ‘rightness’ and ‘wrongness’ of action, but rather on what sort of humanness one ‘ought’ to exemplify and the type of virtuous life one ought to live out in order to attain Śiva ‘the Lord of all virtues’ (aravānar) (PP.135).
CHAPTER NINE

CONCLUSION

The thesis was written to study and to elucidate the mysticism of the nāyaṁmār as presented in Cēkkiḻār’s Periya Purāṇam. By placing the text in its historical context, by studying its theological framework, and bringing together its mysticism scattered in the hymns and by analysis, it was argued that in the Periya Purāṇam, mystical experience results not only in the emergence of an intimate vision of Śiva (PP. 300)\(^{875}\) but it also motivated the nāyaṁmār to live an integral moral life (ṉanneri) i.e. a ‘right conduct of life’ and to cultivate a ‘right attitude of the self’ i.e. to engage in service to Śiva and His devotees (PP. 3514, 1948)\(^{876}\). Active engagement with the circumstances of everyday life where both the love of God and love of fellow devotees come together to encourage and reinforce nāyaṁmār’s instincts for service especially for fellow devotees done in mystical state through moral living, one may call it as the contemplative awareness of Śiva within while being in service (tonṭu : இடையில்) and moral living (ṉanneri) is a significant feature of the Periya Purāṇam and its mysticism as demonstrated in this study. Therefore, Cēkkiḻār presents a mysticism not in a simple sense of ‘unitive’ experience of a devotee to divine, but for him it implies a constant ‘re-focus’, a ‘unifying’ experience. It implies a ‘unifying’ experience of the devotee to Śiva

\(^{875}\) ‘பாலூர் கோணாட் நாமக் மல்லவன்...’ (சி.300).

\(^{876}\) ‘...பாலூர் கோணாட் நாமக் மல்லவன் முனையர் மார்கால்பார்க்கும்...’ (சி.3514).

‘...பாலூர் கோணாட் நாமக் மல்லவன் முனையர் மார்கால்பார்க்கும்...’ (சி.1948).

‘Years ago in grace you made me your servant’ (PP. 3514). ‘We are committed to nothing but to the service of the Lord Śiva’ (PP.1948).
as well as a 'unifying' experience with other devotees who seeks a vision of Śiva to be in His service (Śiva - tonṭu : தோண்டு)(PP. 342). This understanding of mysticism of the Periya Purāṇam as love of God which is expressed profoundly in their service to fellow devotees in a mystical state through the moral living is the contribution of this thesis to the understanding of mysticism.

What is of significance of the Periya Purāṇam as examined in this research is that, therefore, in this hagiographical narratives each of the nāyaṉmār not only emerges with a distinct personality as Cēkkiḻār, the hagiographer, moulds each nāyaṉār to an archetypal conception but also their single-minded, unconditional commitment to the service of Śiva (Śiva - tonṭu: தோண்டு) and His devotees (Śiva - tonṭar - tonṭu : தோண்ட் தோண்டர் தோண்டு) is presented as model to inspire and to develop intense devotion to Śiva and through this devotion to bring the Tamil Śaivite community together (PP. 5).

Hence as explained in this study, a typical nāyaṉār is a paradigm of the visceral experience of God, of unmediated relationship with him and of the ability to give dramatic expression to devotional love.

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877 '...என்றாலே மேலீங்கமாட்டும் ... தான்நற்பனை சிற்றைருளில் மூர்த்தி ஏரியலம்’...

878 '... திருவின் நீதியின் எழுத்தக் காலமாக பாடகிகள் முன்னளிங்கும் திருவின் நீதிப் பாடலை உண்லாங்கும் காவலன் முன்னளிங்கும் எழுதிய திருவின் நீதியின் எழுத்தக்காலத்தில் பாடல்களில் காணப்படும் திருவின் நீதிப் பாடல் உண்லாங்கும் திருவின் நீதிப் பாடல் உண்லாங்கும் திருவின் நீதிப் பாடல் உண்லாங்கும் திருவின் நீதிப் பாடல்’ (G.G. 1972-1973).

879 ‘The greatness of the devotees is beyond measure; beyond measure too their fame, which I am going to relate. Although to tell even the smallest measure of it is impossible, me measureless zeal will spur me on to the endeavour’ (PP. 5).
What is of noticeable distinction of Cēkkilār in achieving this ostensible purpose, as explicated in this study, lay on particularly in the ease with which he straddles diverse categories in Indian religion, literature and culture: pan-Indian and vernacular domains; classical and popular literature; universal and local themes in devotion and the Hindu religious tradition; scripture and popular songs; written and oral texts; the celebration of tradition and the poetry of an innovative movement; and personal and communal religion. In this way, Cēkkilār not only utilised pan-Indian and Tamil imagery in his composition to inspire the Śaiva fold with visual representations of Śiva but also incorporated ancient mythological representations with anthropocentric and nature-oriented settings and human relationships to express and to present the nāyamār’s devotion to Śiva and their mysticism of service and moral living. Hence, Cēkkilār’s poetry bridges the classical Tamil world and the devotional milieu in which pan-Indian myths are localized in a Tamil landscape and infused with Tamil modes or relating to the divine; his poetry provided a powerful new synthesis of the values of Brahmanical Hinduism and those of the indigenous Tamil civilization, affirming, celebrating, and transforming both traditions. By this, as made clear in this study, Cēkkilār appears not only has a great hagiographer but also great synthesizer who tries to give a comprehensive view of life.

Besides, what is even more distinct of this ideal of religious service (ǒṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟ tamil) and moral living as conceptualized in the Periya Purāṇam as affirmed in this study is that it is predominantly Tamil in conception. These ideals of the Periya Purāṇam have much in common with the ideals as illustrated by the ancient Tamil institutions of itinerant bards and by the elaborate scheme of landscape-emotion association in the classical love poetry of ‘aham’ [(_inner or love i.e. appu (appu) poems] and
‘puram’ [(இப்பா: ‘outer’ or public poems about kings, war, heroism, death, codes of conduct and so on)]. These contexts of the poetry provide a provocative outline of some of the important social, cultural, and religious themes in Tamilnāṭu during period of the nāyaṅmār, as well as the imagery that will inform the work of Cēkkilār. Most importantly, the literary devices of early Tamil literature were clearly and cleverly utilized to stress the affective element of moral living and the heroic aspect of service of the nāyaṅmār, so as to emphasize the continuity and discontinuity of the Tamil tradition.

Significantly, the intense ‘humanism’ of early Tamil society, as shown in this study, is projected and transferred to Śiva. In this manner, the Śiva of the nāyaṅmār of the Periya Purāṇam is not just an awesome deity and the manifestation of the potentially ‘dangerous’ yet a ‘sacred power’ (ananku) that manifested itself in diverse forms in particular persons, places and objects, and had to be carefully controlled on the Tamil model: Śiva and His devotees are bound to each other by a powerful mutual love. The intimate nature of this relationship comes across in the many images and terms of endearment with which the nāyaṅmār address their God: Śiva is addressed as ‘father’, ‘mother’, ‘friend’, ‘strength of the defenceless’, ‘wisdom of devotees’, ‘nectar of the enlightened’ etc (PP. 566)880. In this way Cēkkilār drew extensively on the poetic forms and conventions of Caṅkam literary tradition and transposed them into a religious context as this study has elaborated.

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880 கோண்டிய காணியில் பர சிலம்பி சிலகா
கோண்டிய காணியில் திகுக்கா சிலகா
அதிகாரத் குறும்பி ஆணிவிசா சிலகா
சுரைக்கா ஆணிவிசா சிலகா (PP. 566).
What is also noted in this study is that, it is from these poetries that Cēkkiḻār draws on to give voice to the nāyaṉmār’s uncompromising love of Śiva and their conviction that Śiva is the ‘divine hero’ who conquers evil through His ‘heroic deeds’ and through whom the devotee can conquer death (PP. 567). The varied scenes of love and heroism in the classical poetry become the stages of devotion to Śiva and the arenas of His heroic activities. By doing so, Śiva’s heroic exploits or deeds are presented as expressive of purposive and meaningful characteristics and which often reflect historical, legendary or mythological events as stated. The many battles that Śiva waged against the asuras or demons are simply allegories to combat that in which every individual participates between the true power and hostile forces. The functional role of the Periya Purāṇam emphasises its impact on the lives of the Śaivites. Hymns of praise are woven by the creative genius of Cēkkiḻār with reference to Śiva’s feet of heroism, and a kind of synthetic appeal emerges from the theology of Cēkkiḻār. Insight into the use of mythic epithets, formulae and repetitions in the refrains and similes bring out not only the beauty and quality of Periya Purāṇam as a literature, they become foundation to perpetuate an integral vision of Śiva which stood as foundation to Cēkkiḻār’s theology of service and moral living as this study as demonstrated. The goal or the aspiration of such a theological vision and mystical living in the Periya Purāṇam is ‘to be like Śiva’ (PP. 143).

881 ‘The flowers to adorn your matted locks, the elephant has scattered in the street! Lord Śiva, in your wrath you burnt the cities of your enemies’ (PP. 567).
882 ‘...They do not seek heaven for themselves, but are content to be born into the world and to worship the Lord in love. That is the measure of their victory’ (PP. 143).
In this way, for Cēkkiḻār, as highlighted in this study, the nāyāṃmār by their mysticism of service and moral living not only familiarised the masses with the heroic exploits of Śiva but also shared the nature of this nature of Śiva and behaved liked Him. The shedding of the blood in sacrifice of the the nāyāṃmār, therefore, is both the supreme manifestation of anus (love), as the offering of one’s life to the beloved, whether in self-sacrifice or in the offering of a representative substitute; it is also the means by which offences against anus (love), may be expiated, by payment of the ultimate price. It is therefore as explained, that the nāyāṃmār’s acts of fanatical devotion are motivated by selflessness directed towards Śiva’s devotees as much as to Śiva himself.

Most significant attribute of Śiva in the Periya Purāṇam, however is that, He is a God of love. Whatever Śiva does, He does out of His ‘madness’ – with a sense of fanatical love - He has for His devotees. Śiva is madly in love with his devotees. If Śiva releases the nāyāṃmār from their path of wickedness granting them arul (grace) and taking them captive (κράτος: taṭuttāṭ kollal) or taking control of their very self, the subjective result is that Śiva makes the nāyāṃmār fanatical or mad. To be captivated by Śiva is to become like Him; and to become like Śiva is to become mad i.e. to be madly in love with Him or fanatical about their service to Him. Though there is no clear evidence to prove that the nāyāṃmār imitated Śiva, however, Cēkkiḻār narrates there is a certain sense of ‘madness’ created by ecstatic awareness instilled by Śiva’s arul (grace) of all that the world offers. In this ecstatic awareness the nāyāṃmār co-mingled in the divine madness of Śiva; His devotees also appear to be mad with ardent desire to be at His service. What is important to note is primarily that Śiva both represent in himself and offers His devotees participation in a new kind of awareness, a type of realization
opposed to ordinary modes of experience. We might call it a mystical state of consciousness where not just social segregation based on caste system is abandoned, but a sense of being in His service is instilled.

In their ‘unitive’ experiences of becoming one with Him, and seeing the unity of all things in Śiva, therefore, the nāyagnār promoted harmonious relationships with others, which is turn developed virtues of charity, forbearance and tolerance. Therefore, Čēkkiḻar presents that the God of the nāyagnār is not the passionless or impersonal. As stressed in this study, while remaining Lord of the universe, Śiva is also represented as one who acts in arul (grace) in the world (PP. 286)\textsuperscript{883} to bring men and women into relationship with himself and thus release from the fetters which bind them. Hence, Čēkkiḻar presents mysticism not as a doctrine of deep thought to realize God (இறைவிணையொத்து: Irainilai inavuk kōṭpu). It is neither an understanding of mysticism which reflects the silence of the worshipper before God nor that gives explanation to mysticism in terms of ‘passivity’ and ‘numbness’. This view can be equated with a Tamil concept known as ‘summa iru’ (இறைவிணையொத்து: ‘Be quiet or still’) which has a number of meanings with reference to the context – freedom, silence, often, inactivity etc. For Čēkkiḻar, mysticism is oneness and madness and this is what the thesis as demonstrated and contributes to the understanding of mysticism. Mysticism in the It implies a ‘unifying’ experience of the devotee to Śiva (Śiva-jñānam : சிவாஜ்ஞானம்)\textsuperscript{884} as

\textsuperscript{883} ‘...அருள்மிகம் ஓரும் அனுஷ்஠ானம் முற்பகு...’ (pp. 286).
‘He stood amazed. “What can this be?” He wondered ... or perhaps it is a miracle of Śiva’s grace’ (PP. 286).

\textsuperscript{884} ‘...அனுஷ்஠ானம் ஓரும் அனுஷ்஠ானம் முற்பகு அவளியம்...’ ‘... மாற்றால் ஒரும் அனுஷ்஠ானம் முற்பகு அவளியம்...’ (pp. 1972-1973).
‘By virtue of this gift, the child came to be called “the child who is Śiva’s own possession”, and “Tiruṉāga Campantar”, the one uniquely endowed with the divine wisdom...’ (PP. 1972).
well as a ‘unifying’ experience with other devotees who seeks a vision of Śiva to be in His service (Śiva - tōṇṭu : தொண்டு காளத்தியான்) (PP. 342)\(^{885}\). This understanding of mysticism of the Periya Purāṇam as love of God which is expressed profoundly in their service to fellow devotees in a mystical state through the moral living is the contribution of this thesis to the understanding of mysticism.

Part of the the strong popular appeal of the Śaivism practised and proclaimed by the nāyamār as presented in the Periya Purāṇam, therefore, undoubtedly lay in its warm, personal character. Repeatedly Ĉēkkīḷār draws our attention to the fact that the garlands of song which the nāyamār presented to Śiva on their journeys were in Tamil, described as that which is also adored as ‘pure Tamil’ (‘நெற்றமிய’ : centtamil) (PP. 260)\(^{886}\), ‘divine Tamil’ (‘நூல்பாகம் தமிழ்’ : daivattamil) (PP. 975),\(^{887}\) ‘immortal Tamil’ (‘அந்தத்தில் தூய்மை நூல்பாகம்’ : asaital illāthe celuntamil) (PP. 1927)\(^{888}\). Because the

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\(^{885}\) ‘நெற்றமியலம் நூல்பாக காளாக நெற்றமியலம் நூல்பாகாள நூல்பாக நூல்பாகம் போல நூல்பாகம் நூல்பாகம் நூல்பாகம் நூல்பாகம் போல நூல்பாகம் நூல்பாகம் நூல்பாகம் போல நூல்பாகம் நூல்பாகம் போல நூல்பாகம் நூல்பாகம் போல நூல்பாகம் போன்றாலே உலக் மறும்’ (ng.G. 342).

“There is no one who can compare them,” he said, “By their devotion they have attained me. By their single-minded service, they have conquered the world. They have no imperfection. No one else could reach a state like theirs. Their love for me has brought them untold bliss. They have passed beyond the play of opposites” (PP. 342).

\(^{886}\) ‘... கொண்டோலிருள் கொண்டோலிருள்
சுந்தரம் பரலாக லிபோ’ (ng.G. 260).
‘...he offered worship singing garlands of pure Tamil’ (PP. 260).

\(^{887}\) ‘நூல்பாகம் வரலாற்குத் தமிழ்’ (ng.G. 975).
‘... there divine Tamil whose glory spans the world nurtured the fragrance of kindness and beauty’ (PP. 975).

\(^{888}\) ‘... அந்தத்தில் தூய்மை நூல்பாகம் என்றும் காளத்தியான் காளத்தியான் காளத்தியான்’ (ng.G. 1927).
‘... the cause of immortal Tamil triumphed over all other tongues ...’ (PP. 1927).
hymns were sung in the language of the common people, they readily became vehicle of popular devotion, and have remained so ever since.

Indeed, through their emphasis on Śiva as their personal God, and on the expression of love in song and service, nāyaṇmār of the Periya Purāṇam presented not only a formidable challenge to the model of the leader found among the Buddhists and Jainism when the boundaries between Śiva’s devotees and competing groups such as Buddhism and Jainism were just starting to be articulated in a self-conscious way. It is clear from the hymns of the Periya Purāṇam that the ‘enemy’ was not Brahmanical Hinduism, as studied, but Buddhism and Jainism which were seen as ‘alien’ to Tamil culture, defined by the Tamil Śaiva religiosity as an intrinsically Tamil Hindu culture (PP. 1928) 889. Speaking to god in one’s mother tongue was pivotal in unifying the Tamil community across the region, with a remarkable message of oneness among the Tamil Śaivites. In this way, the vision of Tamil Śaiva religiosity based on service and moral living which in turn is embodied in lives of the nāyaṇmār and in the vernacular language of Tamil laid the foundation for an identity-defining kind of Śaivism of ethno-cultural nature: a remarkable contribution of the Periya Purāṇam to Tamil Śaivism as this study elucidates. It also affirms the fact, as made clear in this study, that the theological vision of the Periya Purāṇam became an effective instrument of enculturation.

889 ‘அன்பான்குறையில் அமலில் அன்பான்குறைமுடன் சுமார்ப்பாண்டம் வாக்குமண்டலம் பல்குவாண்டாக மறைந்துள்ளார் குர்சுவாரம் தலை வாக்குமண்டலம் குர்சுவாரத் தமிழ் சென்றும் காலத்தில் வெளியிலும் பல்குவாண்டாக மறைந்தார்।’ (சன்ன, 1929).

‘So it came about the child of God was born at Canpul, where austerities were practised in abundance from age to age. Through him all creatures were to attain Śiva, and Jainism and those other base religion which propagate falsehood and cause sin to abound came to their downfall’ (PP. 1929).
Even more so, in his medieval hagiography Čëkkilär extends and synthesizes the same broad themes of *Caṇkam* poetry not only in his presentation of the heroic deeds of Śīva but also in terms of life’s of the saints themselves. The correspondences between the bards and the ‘sacred power’ (*aṇanku: ḍēkkalai*), their poetry and wandering to places, between their emotions (especially love) and particular landscapes, and the immortality conceptualized in the form of heroism in service and moral living are a uniquely Tamil heritage and they are the subject of the Tamil *Caṇkam* poetry. In their passionate love of their God and of the landscapes of their country, the *nāyaṃmār* of the *Periya Purāṇam* are presented by Čëkkilär as closer to the bards of the ancient Tamil. They have in common a pattern of service to the Lord Śīva which involved travelling with a band of devotees from place to place, and worshipping the Lord at each local shrine. To express their devotion and to propagate their message of service, they composed and sang devotional hymns in Śīva’s honour wherever they went. In the accounts of those pilgrimage journeys, Čëkkilär is careful to specify not only the particular location and occasion on which many of their hymns were composed, with a zeal that can sometime seem wearisome but also specify the kind of service they rendered at those particular places they visited. No doubt, in this way, Čëkkilär is satisfying the local pride of those shrines which the *nāyaṃmār* celebrated in their compositions by publically documenting the connection.

It is for this reason, Tamil Śaivism flourished mainly because of the active role the *nāyaṃmār* played in forging ideological links between various aspects of Tamil culture earlier dominated by the ethos of indigenous war heroes and bard in terms of devotional service to Śīva. It indicates that Čëkkilär, as explained in this study, distinctively tries to
show that in their passionate love of their God and of the landscapes of their country, the
nāyaṭṭmār were not only closer to the bards of ancient Tamil but intimately connected
themselves with the Tamil tradition. In consistently interpreting the nāyaṭṭmār’s life of
devotion in terms of ‘history’ and ‘spiritual autobiography,’ as demonstrated in this
study, Cēkkiḷār is not only a model Tamil Śaiva religiosity but also is very much a
spokesman for the tradition as established in this research. In the final analysis, the
narratives of the Tamil Śaiva saints have endured, not only because they are powerful
religious texts, but also because they are deeply embedded in the matrix of enduring
values in Tamil culture and civilization as this study as expounded.

Further, in the vision of the Periya Purāṇam, service and moral living are not
merely the frameworks of the lives of the nāyaṭṭmār, but the living core of their religious
experience (PP. 342)\textsuperscript{890}. In this vision, experience and expression are essentially related,
and the rootedness of the nāyaṭṭmār's expression of their devotion to Śiva in service and
moral living speaks for the central religious experience shared by all Tamil Śaivites: the
love of Śiva who is seen as domiciling in their land, in their temples and in His devotees.
Therefore, the loving relationship which the devotees enjoy with the Lord is naturally and
inevitably expressed in practical service becomes the pathway to union with Śiva, and
also fulfilment of that journey. This devotion is the loving response towards God or
reflexive act of love which God’s unconditional love for humankind evokes in the human

\textsuperscript{890} “There is no one who can compare them,” he said, “By their devotion they have attained me. By their
single-minded service, they have conquered the world. They have no imperfection. No one else could reach
a state like theirs. Their love for me has brought them untold bliss. They have passed beyond the play of
opposites” (PP. 342).
heart. In the vision of the *Periya Purāṇam*, therefore, service and moral living is not merely the framework of the lives of the *nāyagmār*, but the living core of their religious experience as this study has elucidated. In the *Periya Purāṇam*, Cēkkilār raises service and moral living to the supreme level of religiousness, human experience and expression: they are the foundation of union, wholeness, deliverance and ultimate meaning as this research has explicated.

In this way, Cēkkilār tries to emphasise that once devotion to Śiva implies participation in Him. In other words, devotion is relational, it conveys the sense of choice, possession, attachment and loyalty; it joins the devotee and God. However, to be clear, devotion here is not just an emotional state: without action, devotion has no meaning. By so doing, Cēkkilār nuances the concept of devotion in a more meaningful way – he links devotion with duty, because he implies that a true devotee must ‘do’ something, he must ‘act’ for the divine; he must perform service. Hence, service becomes the dominant means of religious dedication. Therefore, religion of devotion expressed in act and attitude is essentially a religion of the warmed heart and that of the *nāyagmār* of Tamil Śaivism: and that Cēkkilār holds that the symbolism and meanings of devotion are best realized through the study of the lives of the *nāyagmār* as this study has done. If it might be said of the Tamil Śaiva saints that they ‘teach’; by example, what they ‘teach’ is not the content of devotional behaviours, but rather the integrity of action motivated by *anpu* or love.

It is for this reason it is observable that Cēkkilār does not call the *nāyagmār* as ‘believers’, in the sense of the one who gives assent to certain doctrines, but a ‘devotee’.
Most importantly, the nāyaṉmār were identified as aṭiyār (அடியார்); the ones who have taken refuge at the feet of the Lord, as his slave or servant, or who has placed his head beneath the Lord’s feet (PP. 337)\(^1\). Devotional service, therefore, is the most striking feature of the religiosity of the nāyaṉmār in the Periya Purāṇam. Such service is summed up in one of the most important sections of the Periya Purāṇam (PP. 356-357)\(^2\). In various other places, Cēkkiḻar enumerates several ways of active devotion (i) collective praise of Lord (PP. 350-359), (ii) signing or reciting the named and glories of God (PP. 931-972), (iii) recalling God and his divine activities (PP. 4220-4225), (iv) serving his feet and those of the devotees (PP. 440-466), (v) bowing down to God and his devotees and befriending them (PP. 4017-4026). All the nāyaṉmār model their devotional practices on one or more of these fundamental paradigms. The entire Periya Purāṇam, in fact as made clear in this study, is meant to assist in this endeavour, offering systematic methodology and illustrative stories to facilitate it.

In them service to the devotee of Śiva, action springing from an attitude of loving devotion, is a significant religious expression and a highest ideal delineated in the Periya

\(^1\) ‘His sacred feet, like the red lotus, blossom in the heart of those who love him. Around those feet, like beetles round the lotus flower, resound the everlasting Vedas, Now those feet stand before me, unworthy as I am, and have vouchsafed to me the wine of heavenly bliss’ (PP. 337).

\(^2\) ‘…Their love for the Lord Śiva is the greatest blessings of their lives. They have learned and practice faultlessly the duties of Śaivite path. They are steadfast in charity and penance, and impeccable in doing what is right. Their life is marked by modesty, patience, and domestic virtue, and is acclaimed by all. They are noble in conduct, humble in spirit, and godlike in character. In this life they have attained the first of all beings, and made him the object of their worship. In the future, there is no further goal left for them to attain. They remain without rival, without peer’ (PP. 356-357).
Purāṇam. It is interesting that a devotee of Śiva is considered as a living presence of God (PP. 342). Likewise attendance to all the needs of a devotee of Śiva replicates the service for the Lord. In such service to a devotee of Śiva one develops humility, which is essential for spiritual progress. Such service to a devotee of Śiva purifies the mind and renders it for to receive spiritual knowledge. Thus learning the science of devotional service and engaging in it in practical way, the devotees come to the stage of love of God. This flows from the belief that God is an epitome of both being the master and servant and that end of spiritual learning is to be of service and do well to others. The bliss of merging into oneness with Śiva cannot compare with the joy that comes from serving Him in his devotees. In this way Cēkkilār’s notion of service as a devotional service articulates it as a selfless act - indeed, its selflessness is an indicator of its legitimacy as a form of devotion. For devotees, it provides similar motivation for a range of voluntary activities. According to Cēkkilār, self-sacrificing magnanimous service is the highest worship of God. In the nāyaṁmār’s life in particular, therefore, one encounters an ongoing tension between mysticism and an interior perspective, and other i.e. devotee-oriented, charismatic, public persona. However, Cēkkilār does not struggle with the temptation to allow one or other aspects of the Tamil saint’s live to dominate. He shows that the nāyaṁmār’s were in one with Śiva while they did service to other devotees of Śiva.

893 "There is no one who can compare them,” he said, “By their devotion they have attained me. By their single-minded service, they have conquered the world. They have no imperfection. No one else could reach a state like theirs. Their love for me has brought them untold bliss. They have passed beyond the play of opposites” (PP. 342).
However, the saints worship only Śaiva devotees, especially ascetics, who belong to one of the six sects that the agamas recognize as legitimate form of Śaivism. The horizon of the typical nāyaṉmār altruism is thus severely limited by sectarian and ideological concerns. Not so the poet-saints who, despite their hostility to rival sectarians, are shown to be moved to acts of great generosity towards common people by a simple, humane compassion as this study has revealed. Aspect of the image of the compassionate leader might have been borrowed by Cēkkilār from the saintly ideal of his hated rivals, the Jains and the Buddhist. It is equally likely, though, that Jains, Buddhist, Śaivas alike were tapping into a common source, the ancient civilization of the Tamils. Courage and integrity combine with passion and the ability to love deeply, as also with humanism, compassion, and fundamentally altruistic outlook, in the persona of the ideal warrior of the Caṅkam literature, the hero of aham (interior) as well as puram (exterior) poems. Among the ideal hero’s outstanding qualities is giving i.e. a generous giver. This mix of qualities on the ancient model permits Cēkkilār to unite the values emphasized in the poets’ narrative with those in the stories of the nāyaṉmār, fashioning a flexible nāyaṉmār persona in terms of the old warrior values as well as the more specific ideal of farmer-householder – vēḷālar – generosity – vēḷālanamai (ṉtshdik) – that was the dominant ethos of the agricultural society of the time.

It must be pointed out, however, that although each of the narrative of nāyaṉmār in the Periya Purāṇam bear the imprint of the each of the nāyaṉmār’s unique personality, attitudes and experience, especially in the cases that they directly deal with the intimate aspects of their relationship with Śiva, we also hear a strong collective voice as pointed out in this study. The devotion that they exemplified through their lives is
remarkably similar and is expressed in a shared vocabulary and imagery. The hymns are products of the individual saints personality and experience interacting with a shared Tamil Śaiva vision of devotion to Śiva. Once again, the communal dimension of Tamil Śaiva devotion comes to the fore in the Periya Purāṇam; the nāyaṁmār and community come together in the ideal of the ‘the devotee’ (PP. 4174-4175). At one level the nāyaṁmār included all the worshipers of Śiva in the community of devotees: not only people who exclusively adhered to Tamil Śaiva cultic practice but also members of the other Śaiva sects whose extreme ritual and ascetic practices were abhorrent to the followers of devotional mode of worshipers of Śiva (PP. 4152-4159). The author of the Periya Purāṇam assert that unswerving devotion to Śiva overrides all other affiliations and markers of identity and is the supreme criterion for respect, friendship and communal consciousness among the Tamil Śaiva. The key lies in the ideal of service itself, which is the highest qualification for becoming servant of Śiva. Therefore, the nāyaṁmār’s extraordinary devotion to Śiva manifested in their immensely powerful, mantra-like hymns and service, makes them leaders of the community, and charismatic figures in their own right in the Periya Purāṇam.

Therefore, the author of the Periya Purāṇam presents its mysticism as common to all. The emphasis is on an idea of a union with God whom every individual can enter into communion irrespective of craft, religion, gender, caste or religious affiliation. This is significant feature of the Periya Purāṇam and its mysticism as expounded in this study. The goal of devotional service and moral living is the union with the Lord, where all intervening boundaries are dissolved. Thus whatever position one is in, all of one’s duties can become an offering of love of God, which becomes the highest level of meditation,
intention, or activity. If everyone engages their talents and tendencies in his or her particular occupation with the idea that it is a service to God, then that occupation becomes the means for one’s worship and thoughts or meditation on the supreme. Then, by the grace of the Lord, he will be delivered from all earthly attachments. This is the highest perfection of life. In whatever occupation people may be engaged, if they serve the Lord, they will achieve this highest level of success. Given the fact that caste and religious affiliation frequently divided Tamil society more than uniting it, the Čēkkilār’s proposal advocates a regeneration of Tamil society based on a principle of equality and common human values as this research has shown. It is an indication that Čēkkilār concerns are focused on the future while it is primarily critical of existing structure of Tamil society; not only had it brought a new vision for the formation of a new Tamil Śaiva religiosity but laid the foundation for a movement toward communal solidarity. In order for this vision to be realized, as shown in this study, the Čēkkilār in the Periya Purāṇam affirms its social resistance against the orthodoxy of Brahmanism, their caste superiority, religious exclusiveness and their claim for authority as the sole custodians of Vedic sacrifices. Though such vision did not materialize to the extent of eradicating such caste intolerance which is even visible today, the Periya Purāṇam’s resistance is at an ideological forefront of the values of an egalitarian society.

It is important to note, as this study has demonstrated, that all the Tamil saints whose lives are narrated in the Periya Purāṇam are householders. Through service and moral integrity family life is sanctified in the Periya Purāṇam. Family is presented as an ideal environment in which the love of Śīva finds practical expression in service and moral living. A significant emphasis is placed on the crafts that were followed by the
Tamil saints. The emphasis is that the Tamil saints cleverly utilized the crafts to support their households and society as a means of service. It raised Tamil society to a higher level of integrity both in words and deeds. Among these householders mentioned in the *Periya Purāṇam*, there are few women. By the dedication in a certain number of the poems to such women in the *Periya Purāṇam*, Cēkkīḷār raises the status of women in this society and illustrates their contribution to the success of their households. In the context of the traditional society in which the *Periya Purāṇam* was created, its emphasis is on the equal treatment of men and women as well as marital life; and the emphasis on women as model of devotion of service and moral living is seen today by many to have been revolutionary.

The ideal of service and moral living, therefore, became a persistent symbol which saturated medieval Tamil society and became a communal focus for the integration and participation of the building of a just society. The *Periya Purāṇam* ideals became a mode of participation providing a space to forge socio-political and cultural unity so as to define Tamil identity. Most importantly the *Periya Purāṇam* was incorporated into the new religiosity of the Tamil people and it began to be read in temple and public gatherings. The temple, which was focused on Vedic ritualism, now became a symbol of the aesthetic expression of Tamil society where sculptures and paintings of Tamil saints became rich iconographic subjects representing significant theological and mystical themes from the lives of these saints as depicted in the *Periya Purāṇam*. These representations can be found in *Thillai Nataraja* Temple Chidambaram today. It is an indication that the social revival intended by the *Periya Purāṇam*'s began to take shape through the influence of an inner purity and moral integrity. The *Periya Purāṇam* is not
only the document and expression of an important moment, a turning point in the history of Tamil Śaivism and of Tamil regional culture, but a broader cultural phenomenon, one that has been ‘a great living force’ in the lives of the Tamils. Like other formative or fundamental religious texts, the Periya Purāṇam has transcended and transformed it literary, religious, and cultural contexts, itself becoming an important, continuing text for Tamil Śaiva religiosity. In its capacity as the scripture of the Tamil Śaiva sect, this text has had a life of its own and has a functional as a symbol and motivator of sectarian and communal identity.

It must be also emphasised, that by the time Čēkkilār wrote the Periya Purāṇam, there was already in existence a considerable corpus of literature in the Tamil language, to which the nāyamār about whom he wrote had themselves made rich contribution in the form of devotional hymns. Many of their hymns have been preserved and come down to us in the collection known as ‘Tēvāram’ (Tevāram). As the first literary expression of exemplary ‘leaders’ of Tamil Śaiva religiosity whose lives and ideas were centred on a devotion to Śiva, Tēvāram collection forms part of the Śaivite canon of sacred literature, as does the the Periya Purāṇam itself. It that Čēkkilār’s work describes the historical circumstances within which many of the ‘Tēvāram’ hymns were composed. By giving the canonical hymns a concrete ‘sitz im leben’, as this study elucidates, Čēkkilār is adding to their authority and to their appeal as human documents which has service and moral living as essence of their Tamil Śaiva religiosity.

It must be said that Čēkkilār was a man of his own time, and cannot be judged by the standards of ours. He was not clearly a trained theologian. Yet, he was so rooted in
Śaivism, he could debate with the best of his contemporaries. True to the tradition of Tamil poetic expression, he could convey a wide spectrum of human feeling. His descriptions of landscape, situation and incident are vivid and evocative. Over all, in spite of the reservations expressed above, he gives us a moving picture of the social and practical outworking of an exalted religious ideal, in which it would be hard for the adherent of any religious faith to deny the operation of divine grace and the moving of the divine spirit. Cēkkilār explicates the mysticism of the nāyaṅmār within the Śaiva tradition that was more familiar to the Tamil tradition of his day. It proposes an inclusive way of life that is a path which incorporates in itself the various valid elements common to all. It calls on all to rise above differences and to hold to what is essential to human values. What is necessary is to recognize Śiva, which the Periya Purāṇam states that the nāyaṅmār existentially experienced as personal, conceived and spoken of in personal terms, and worshiped in a spirit of genuine love for fellow human beings with a specific form of moral behaviour as true worship i.e. the mysticism of service and moral living. Cēkkilār concludes his grand work thus: ‘as the nature of delight increases forever proportionate to the oneness of loving mind, the reputation of the devotees of the dancing Lord has been sustained all over the world’ (PP. 4286). What should be emphasised here is that, as a twelfth century poetical hagiography that reflects the lives of the nāyaṅmār, the mysticism of the Periya Purāṇam is neither appreciated, as it deserves to be, nor has it been sufficiently studied in academia. This research makes an academic contribution by introducing this mysticism of service and moral living in the lives of the nāyaṅmār.
moral living of the nāyaṁmār as narrated in the Periya Purāṇam to a wider academic community and to the Tamil Śaiva religious community at large. It is emphasised that Cēkkiḷār, the author, by imbibing himself in the mystical quest of the early Tamil literary, moral and devotional traditions, textured around these nāyaṁmār, initiates a way to Śiva. Hence, what is of significance of the Periya Purāṇam as examined in this research is that, in this hagiographical narratives each of the nāyaṁmār not only emerges with a distinct personality as Cēkkiḷār moulds each nāyaṁ to an archetypal conception but also their single-minded and unconditional commitment to the service of Śiva (Śiva - tonṭu: தோண்டு) and His devotees (Śiva - tonṭar - tonṭu : தோண்டர் தோண்டு) is presented as model to inspire and to develop intense devotion to Śiva and through this devotion to bring the Tamil Śaivite community together (PP. 5). Devotional service, therefore, is the most striking the feature of the religiosity of the nāyaṁmār in the Periya Purāṇam.

In the final analysis, the narratives of the Tamil Śaiva saints have endured, not only because they are powerful religious texts, but also because they are deeply embedded in the matrix of enduring values in Tamil culture and civilization as this study as expounded. It is for this reason, that in the Periya Purāṇam unswerving devotion to Śiva overrides all other affiliations and markers of identity and is the supreme criterion for respect, friendship and communal consciousness among the Tamil Śaiva. The key lies in the ideal of service itself, which is the highest qualification for becoming servant of Śiva. Therefore, the author of the Periya Purāṇam presents its mysticism as common to

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895 'The greatness of the devotees is beyond measure; beyond measure too their fame, which I am going to relate. Although to tell even the smallest measure of it is impossible, my measureless zeal will spur me on to the endeavour' (PP. 5).
all. The emphasis is on an idea of a union with God whom every individual can enter into communion irrespective of craft, religion, gender, caste or religious affiliation. It is an indication that Cēkkilār concerns are focused on the future while it is primarily critical of existing structure of Tamil society; not only had it brought a new vision for the formation of a new Tamil Śaiva religiosity but laid the foundation for a movement toward communal solidarity. The Periya Purāṇam is not only the document and expression of an important moment, a turning point in the history of Tamil Śaivism and of Tamil regional culture, but a broader cultural phenomenon, one that has been ‘a great living force’ in the lives of the Tamils. Like other formative or fundamental religious texts, the Periya Purāṇam has transcended and transformed it literary, religious, and cultural contexts, itself becoming an important, continuing text for Tamil Śaiva religiosity. In its capacity as the scripture of the Tamil Śaiva sect, this text has had a life of its own.

Finally, it should noted that there are other areas, subjects and specific features of the Periya Purāṇam which have not fallen within the scope of the present study that necessitate separate attention, investigation and exploration and are not part of this specific study. These include: Firstly, from the literary perspective, the literary devices that have been employed by Cēkkilār to construct his classic and the place of his hagiographical work in the development of the hagiographical narration in Tamil literature; this is to prove Periya Purāṇam’s uniqueness in the Tamil literary tradition. Secondly, from a socio-cultural perspective, there is a scope to investigate the imaging of women in the Periya Puāṇam and its impact on Tamil religious culture. Thirdly, from a religious-theological perspective, a study to delineate the tenants of Hinduism according to the Periya Purāṇam, with its concept of grace according to Cēkkilār and a comparative
study of this grace and the mysticism of the Periya Purāṇam with other religious traditions so as to emphasise the Periya Purāṇam’s uniqueness among religious traditions.
## APPENDIX I

**SIGNIFICANT FACTS IN THE LIVES OF NĀṆAṆMĀRS AS PRESENTED IN THE PERIYA PURĀṆAM**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NāyaṆar</th>
<th>Caste/Occupation</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Modality of Liberation/Devotional Type</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tirunīlakaṇṭar</td>
<td>Potter/Pottery</td>
<td>Cōḷa</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Service to Lord’s devotees-Mild-devotee</td>
<td>Kept the vow of chastity that he had made in secret to the Lord without harming his wife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iyarpakaiyār</td>
<td>Merchant/Business</td>
<td>Cōḷa</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Service to Lord’s devotees-Harsh-devotee</td>
<td>He tirelessly relived distress of people and considered his wife to be the friend of the Lord</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ilaiyāṅkuṭi Māraṇ</td>
<td>Sudra/Outcaste Cultivation</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Service to Lord’s devotees-Mild-devotee</td>
<td>Even with the little means fed the Lord heartily by cutting down the rafters of the house</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meypporuḷ</td>
<td>Chieftain-King/King</td>
<td>Cēti</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Service to Lord’s devotees-Mild-devotee</td>
<td>Treated his enemy who had come to take his life as a friend of the Lord</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ViraṆmiṇṭar</td>
<td>Vēḷālar/Farming</td>
<td>Cēra</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Service to Lord’s devotees-Mild-devotee</td>
<td>It was through him that the world came to be enriched by the composition of the Roll of the holy Servants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amarnīti</td>
<td>Merchant/Business</td>
<td>Cōḷa</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Service to Lord’s devotees-Mild-devotee</td>
<td>Offered him and his Family to the Lord for loss of the Lord’s loincloth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eripattar</td>
<td>Vēḷālar/Farming</td>
<td>Cōḷa</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Service to Śiva-liṅga and feet of the Lord-Harsh-devotee</td>
<td>He punished the elephant which came to harm the devotees of the Lord</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ēṇāṭināṭaṇ</td>
<td>Forester Caste</td>
<td>Cōḷa</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Service to Lord’s devotees-Mild-devotee</td>
<td>Took refuge in the sacred ash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td>Region</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Devotion</td>
<td>Action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
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<td>--------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaṇṇappar</td>
<td>Hunter</td>
<td>Tonṭai land</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Mild-devotee</td>
<td>of the Lord and offered himself to be killed by the enemy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuṅkuliya Kulaayar</td>
<td>Brahmīn</td>
<td>Cōla</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Service to Śiva-liṅga and feet of the Lord-Mild-devotee</td>
<td>When the eye of the Lord was injured, with his own hand plucked out his eye and laid it on the wound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Māṇakkaṅcāraṇa</td>
<td>Vēḷālar/</td>
<td>Kaṅcārū</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Service to the Feet of the Lord by offering incense-Mild-devotee</td>
<td>Exchanged his wife’s marriage necklace for incense to offer to the Lord</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arivāṭṭāyar</td>
<td>Vēḷālar/</td>
<td>Cōla</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Service to Śiva-liṅga and feet of the Lord-Mild-devotee</td>
<td>On his only daughter’s wedding day, he gave her hair as an offering to the Lord</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Āgāyar</td>
<td>Shepherd caste</td>
<td>Mēlmaḷanāṭu</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Service to Śiva-liṅga and feet of the Lord-Mild-devotee</td>
<td>When he was deprived of the privilege of worshipping of the Lord, he tried to cut his throat with a sickle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mūrtti</td>
<td>Merchant</td>
<td>Pāṇṭya country</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Service to Śiva-liṅga and feet of the Lord-Mild-devotee</td>
<td>He played the flute in praise of the Five Letter Prayer of the Lord</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murukar</td>
<td>Brahmīn</td>
<td>Cōla</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Service to Lord’s devotees-Mild-devotee</td>
<td>Due to lack of sandal wood, He grated his elbow by holding it to the grind stone as a mode of worship.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rudra Pacupatiyār</td>
<td>Brahmīn</td>
<td>Cōla</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Service to Śiva-liṅga and feet of the Lord-Mild-devotee</td>
<td>Picked flowers and weaved them into garlands and offered them to the Lord</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Stood in the water-tank with his hand above his head to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Social Group</td>
<td>Community</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Role in Devotion</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------</td>
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<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tirunālaippōvar</td>
<td>Sudra/Outcaste Farm Labour</td>
<td>Cōla</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Service to Śiva-liṅga and feet of the Lord-Mild-devotee</td>
<td>Bathing in fire, attained the grace of vision of seeing the Lord</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tirukurippuṭh Tuṇṭar</td>
<td>Ekali caste Washer men</td>
<td>Tuṇṭai</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Service to Lord’s devotees-Mild-devotee</td>
<td>Bent down over the stone to strike his head against it to express his devotion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caṇṭēcurar</td>
<td>Brahmin</td>
<td>Cōla</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Service to Śiva-liṅga and feet of the Lord-Harsh-devotee</td>
<td>He cut off his father’s feet for desecrating his worship of the Lord</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tirunāvukkaracar</td>
<td>Vēḷālar</td>
<td>Tiruṅunaiṭapi</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Divine Grace – Mild-devotee</td>
<td>Credited for composing sublime Tamil devotional poetry. Resurrected a dead child.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kulacciṟaiyār</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>Pāṇṭya</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Divine Grace – Mild-devotee</td>
<td>Credited with restoring Śaivism in Pāṇṭya land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perumilalaik</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Divine Grace – Mild-devotee</td>
<td>By yogic power, he was able to meditate on the feet of Cuntarar from a distance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kāraikkāl Ammaiyār</td>
<td>Merchant</td>
<td>Cōla</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Service to Lord’s devotees-Mild-devotee</td>
<td>Fondly she was called ‘Mother’ by the Lord. She pleaded for the grace to worship in the form of a disembodied wraith.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appūti Aṭikal</td>
<td>Brahmin</td>
<td>Cōla</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Divine Grace – Mild-devotee</td>
<td>Generous host of Tirunāvukkaracar to the point of hiding his son’s death</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tirunīlanakkar</td>
<td>Brahmin</td>
<td>Cōla</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Service to Śiva-liṅga and feet</td>
<td>Officiated at the wedding of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Caste</td>
<td>Region</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naminanti Aṭikal</td>
<td>Brahmin</td>
<td>Cōla</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Service to Śiva-līṅga and feet of the Lord-Mild-devotee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiruṇāṇacampantar</td>
<td>Śaivite Brahmin</td>
<td>Cōla</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Divine Grace – Mild-devotee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eyarkōṅ Kalillāmar</td>
<td>Vēḻālar</td>
<td>Cōla</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Service to Śiva-līṅga and feet of the Lord-Mild-devotee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tirumūlar Nāyaṉar</td>
<td>Shepherd caste</td>
<td>Cōla</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Divine Grace – Mild-devotee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanṭ Aṭikal</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>Cōla</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Service to Śiva-līṅga and feet of the Lord-Mild-devotee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mūrkkar</td>
<td>Vēḻālar</td>
<td>Tonṭai</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Service to Lord’s devotees-Mild-devotee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cōmāci Māraṅ</td>
<td>Brahmin</td>
<td>Cōla</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Divine Grace – Mild-devotee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cākkiyar</td>
<td>Vēḻālar</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Service to Śiva-līṅga and feet of the Lord-Mild-devotee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cīrappuli</td>
<td>Brahmin</td>
<td>Cōla</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Service to Śiva-līṅga and feet of the Lord-Mild-devotee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cīruttonṭar</td>
<td>Māmāttirar caste-Protect lives of all creatures</td>
<td>Cōla</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Generous host who showed hospitality to devotees of the Lord</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kāḷāṟṟarivarivar</td>
<td>Kingly Malai Natu</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td></td>
<td>Service to Lord’s devotees-Harsh-devotee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<p>| Cuntarar                           |                     |         |        | Lighted lamps with water                                                     |
|                                   |                     |         |        | One who became a great friend of Cuntarar after great conflict and anger with him |
|                                   |                     |         |        | Author of Tirumandiram                                                       |
|                                   |                     |         |        | In spite of his blindness, excavated the temple tank with the aid of a guide rope |
|                                   |                     |         |        | Gambler who fed the devotees with what he won from gambling                  |
|                                   |                     |         |        | Friend and devotee of Cuntarar                                               |
|                                   |                     |         |        | Received the grace to come before the Lord                                   |
|                                   |                     |         |        | Cut up his young son and cooked him for the devotee of the Lord               |
|                                   |                     |         |        | Friend of Cuntarar and                                                        |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Role Description</th>
<th>Famous Appearance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gaṇanātar</td>
<td>Brahmin</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Divine Grace – Mild-devotee</td>
<td>Attained eternal bliss with him</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kūṟṟuvaṇār</td>
<td>Chieftain</td>
<td>Cōla</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Service to Lord’s devotees – Mild-devotee</td>
<td>Appointed to succeed the leadership of Śiva’s heavenly host</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pukaḷcēḻār</td>
<td>Kingly</td>
<td>Cōla</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Service to Lord’s devotees – Mild-devotee</td>
<td>Eradicating all wrong doings in his kingdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narasinga Muṇaiyaraiyar</td>
<td>Chieftain</td>
<td>Muṇaippāṭi</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Service to Lord’s devotees – Mild-devotee</td>
<td>Joyfully entered the Column of flames</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atipattar</td>
<td>Fisher folk</td>
<td>Cōla</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Service to Śiva-liṅga and feet of the Lord-Mild-devotee</td>
<td>Gifted the golden fish to the Lord even in dire poverty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kalikkampar</td>
<td>Merchant</td>
<td>Peṇṇākaṭam</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Service to Lord’s devotees – Mild-devotee</td>
<td>Welcomed even his unfaithful servant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaliyar</td>
<td>Oil Vendors</td>
<td>Toṇṭai</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Service to Śiva-liṅga and feet of the Lord-Harsh-devotee</td>
<td>By cutting his own throat, he tried to light the lamp with his own blood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catti</td>
<td>Vēḷālar</td>
<td>Cōla</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Service to Śiva-liṅga and feet of the Lord-Harsh-devotee</td>
<td>Would cut off anyone’s tongue who spoke ill of the devotees of the Lord</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aiyaṭikal Kāṭavar Kon</td>
<td>Kingly</td>
<td>Pallva</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Service to Śiva-liṅga and feet of the Lord-Mild-devotee</td>
<td>Gave up his position as king to make pilgrimage to temples.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaṇampullar</td>
<td>Local headman</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Service to Śiva-liṅga and feet of the Lord-Mild-devotee</td>
<td>Set fire to the hair of his own head to serve as a lamp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kāri</td>
<td>Brahmin</td>
<td>Cōla</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Service to Śiva-liṅga and feet of the Lord-Mild-devotee</td>
<td>Built many shrines for Śiva</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Caste</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Service to Śiva-līṅga and feet of the Lord</td>
<td>Devotee Type</td>
<td>Action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nīṟra Sīr Neṭu Māraṇ</td>
<td>Kingly</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Service to Śiva-līṅga and feet of the Lord-Mild-devotee</td>
<td>Mild-devotee</td>
<td>Established the way of Śiva as a true path to follow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vāyilar Nāyaṉār</td>
<td>Sudra Caste</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Service to Śiva-līṅga and feet of the Lord-Mild-devotee</td>
<td>Mild-devotee</td>
<td>Unwearily worshipped the Lord in the temple of his heart.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muṉaiyaṭuṉvār</td>
<td>Vēḷāḷar</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Service to Lord’s devotees-Mild-devotee</td>
<td>Mild-devotee</td>
<td>Distributed all the spoils that he won from battle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaḷaṛsingēr</td>
<td>Chieftain</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Service to Śiva-līṅga and feet of the Lord-Harsh-devotee</td>
<td>Harsh-devotee</td>
<td>Cut off his wife hand for taking the flowers that were offered to the Lord</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iṭaṅkaḷiyār</td>
<td>Kingly</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Service to Lord’s devotees-Mild-devotee</td>
<td>Mild-devotee</td>
<td>Was kind to those who stole paddy to be distributed among devotees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ceruttuṇai</td>
<td>Vēḷāḷar</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Service to Śiva-līṅga and feet of the Lord-Harsh-devotee</td>
<td>Harsh-devotee</td>
<td>Cut off the queen’s nose for smelling the flowers that were offered to the Lord</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pukaḷṭuṇai</td>
<td>Śaivite Brahmin</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Service to Śiva-līṅga and feet of the Lord-Mild-devotee</td>
<td>Mild-devotee</td>
<td>Lord gave money to him to offer worship at the temple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kōṭpuḷi Nāyaṉār</td>
<td>Vēḷāḷar</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Service to Śiva-līṅga and feet of the Lord-Mild-devotee</td>
<td>Mild-devotee</td>
<td>Tried to kill those who ate the food that was kept for offertory at the temple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pūcalār Nāyaṉār</td>
<td>Brahmin</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Service to Śiva-līṅga and feet of the Lord-Mild-devotee</td>
<td>Mild-devotee</td>
<td>Build temple for the Lord in his mind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maṅkaiyarkkaraci Ammaiyaṉ</td>
<td>Kingly</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Divine Grace – Mild-devotee</td>
<td>Mild-devotee</td>
<td>Established Śaivism in Pāṇṭya territory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nēcar</td>
<td>Weaver Caste</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Service to Lord’s devotees-</td>
<td></td>
<td>Distributed clothes to the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Rank</td>
<td>Family Name</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Role</td>
<td>Relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kōcceñkaṭ Cōlar</td>
<td>Kingly</td>
<td>Cōla</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Service to Śiva-liṅga and feet of the Lord-Mild-devotee</td>
<td>Spider that became king and built many temples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tirunīlakaṇṭar Yālppānar</td>
<td>Pānar – musician</td>
<td>Erukkattam Puliyūr</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Divine Grace – Mild-devotee</td>
<td>Played music with Campantar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caṭaiyaṇār</td>
<td>Śaivite Brahmin</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>By giving Birth to Cuntarar</td>
<td>Father of Cuntarar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Icaiñāṇi Ammaiyrār</td>
<td>Śaivite Brahmin</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>By giving Birth to Cuntarar</td>
<td>Mother of Cuntarar</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX II

_Tirut Toṇṭar Tokai_ - ‘The Roll of the Holy Servants of the Lord’ (Tēv. VII. 39)

To all who serve the Brahmins of Tillai, I am the servant,
To the potter, _Nilakaṉṭay_, I am the servant.
To _Iyarpakai_ who gave without limit, I am the servant.
To the servitors of _Māṟa_ of _Ilaiyāṅkui_, I am the servant.
To the indomitable _Meypporu_, I am the servant.
To _Viraṁṇintaṉ_ from _Kuprai_ of spacious groves, I am the servant.
To the worshipful _Amarnīti_, I am the servant.
I am the poet _Ārūrāy_, slave of the God of _Ārūr_.

To the prince _Eripattay_ with the sharp spear, I am the servant.
To the servitors of _Ēṉāti_, I am the servant.
To the lover of the Lord, _Kannappay_, famed for his knowledge, I am the servant.
To the servitors of _Kalayaṉ_ of _Kataṉvūr_, I am the servant.
To the magnificent and valiant _Māṇakkaṇcāṟṟaṇ_ with shoulders like hills, and the servitors of _Tāyaṉ_ of the complete scythe, I am the servant.
To the shepherd _Āgāṟṇ_ of _Maṅkai_, I am the servant.
I am the poet _Āṟūrāy_, slave of the God of _Ārūr_.

(1)

(2)
To Mūrtti who reigned over the world through the three emblems of Lord, I am servant.
To Murukay and Uruttira Pacupati, I am the servant.
To the holy pilgrim of high rectitude Trunālappōvār, I am the servant.
To the servants of Tirukuripput Toṇṭar, I am the servant.
To Caṇṭi, devotee of the Lord who gives us release, the young man who cut off with an axe the foot of his own father when he disrupted the child’s sincere worship of the Lord’s image, I am the servant.
I am the poet Ārūrañ, slave of the God of Ārūr.

To the servitor of Nāvukaracaṉ, ‘Lord of Speech,’ who too for his glory nothing other than the Lord’s name in which all blessing bide, I am the servant.
To the servitors of the noble Kulacciṟai, I am the servant.
To Perumilalaik Kuṟumpay and the revered Pēy, I am the servant.
To the servitors of princely Appūti, I am the servant.
To Nilanakkay from Cāttamaṅkai by sounding river, I am servant.
To the servitors of noble Naminanti, I am the servant.
I am the poet Ārūray, slave of the God of Ārūr.

To the servitors of the godly Campantaṉ who worships nothing but the feet of the Lord who wears in his hair fragrant flowers swarming with humming bees and the good kovai’s honey-filled blossom, I am the servant.
To the servitors of Kalikkāman, prince of the Ēyars, I am the servant.
To the servitors of our master Tirumūlai, I am the servant.
To Taṇṭi who was blessed with vision, and of Mūrkkai, I am the servant.
To Cōmāci Māṟaṉ of Ampar, I am the servant. I am the poet Ārūraṉ, slave of the God of Ārūr.

To Cākkiyaṉ who devoutly threw stones at the feet of the Lord who shares his body with Umā, whose lovely breasts are bound with the breast cloth, I am the servant.

To the generous and illustrious Ciṟapuli of good fame, I am servant.

To Ciṟuttoṇaṉ of Cēnkāṭṭankaṉ, I am servant.

To Kaḷantai of the victorious spear, prince of Kaḷantai, I am the servant.

I am the poet Ārūraṉ, slave of the God of Ārūr.

To the poets who shun crooked patrons, I am the servant. To king Pukaḻ Cōḻaṉ who slain in battle at fertile Karuvūr field, I am the servant.

To the true devotee, Naracĩṅka Muṉaiyaraiyaṉ, I am the servant.

To Atipattaṉ of wave-washed Nākai-on the sea, I am the servant.

To the servants of Kaiḷakkaṉ of the drawn bow, who cut off enemies’ arms, To Kaliyaṉ, and of Catti, the Varinėcaiyan chief with the hero’s anklet, I am the servant.

To the servitors of Aiyaṭikaḷ, king of the Kāṭavas, I am the servant.

I am the poet Ārūraṉ, slave of the God of Ārūr.
To Kaṇampullag who worshipped the feet of the Lord with the poison-stained throat as his only shield, and of Kāri, I am the servant.

To the servitors of ‘upright’ Neṭumāṟag who won the battle of Nelvēli, king who has mastered his mind and senses, I am the servant.

To the servitors of Vāyilān of ancient Mayilai, where the red coral washed ashore by the sea brightens the sky, I am the servant.

To Prince Munaiyaṭuvān of the spear of war, I am the servant.

I am the poet Ārūraṉ, slave of the God of Ārūr.
To renowned Pūcal of Niṟṇavūr, Brahmin who chanted the sacred Veda,
To the noble queen with the beautiful bracelets, and of Nēcaṉ, I am the servant.
To Ceṅkaṉ who ruled the world as King of the South, I am the servant.
To the Pāṇaṉ musician Tirunīlakaṉṭaṉ, I am the servant.
Those who delight in the song of devotion sung by Ārūraṉ, prince of holy Nāvalūr, who
loves Icaīṉaṉi and Cāṭaiyaṉ, true devotees of my Lord Araṉ’s feet, will become lovers of
our Father in Ārūr.
APPENDIX III

THE STRUCTURE OF THE PERIYA PURĀṆAM

Periya Purāṇam or Tiru Toṇṭar Purāṇam
(The Grand Epic Narratives or the Epic Stories of Holy Servants of the Lord)

[Divided into Two Books or Kāṇṭam [with Thirteen Chapters]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Book One - (PP 1-1903) [Five Chapters i.e 1-5]</th>
<th>Book Two - (PP 1904-4286) [Eight Chapters i.e 6-13]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 1</td>
<td>Chapter – 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Sacred Mountain</td>
<td>The Eternal Humming of the Bees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PP 1-350)</td>
<td>(PP 1904-3640)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Prologue (PP 1-10)
2. The Grandeur of the Sacred Mountain (PP 11-50)
3. The Grandeur of the Sacred Land (PP 51-85)
4. The Grandeur of the Sacred City (PP 86-135)
5. The Dignity of the Holy Company (PP 136-146)
6. The *Purāṇam* of Being Possessed (PP 147-349)

Chapter 2

The Brahmins of Tillai (PP 1-350)

7. The Brahmins of Tillai (PP 350-359)
8. Tirunīlakaṇṭar Purāṇam (PP 360-403)
9. Iyarpakaiyār Purāṇam (PP 404-439)
10. Ilaiyāṅkutti Māraṇ Purāṇam (PP 440-466)

Chapter 3

The Grandeur of the Sacred Mountain (PP 11-50)

11. The Grandeur of the Sacred Land (PP 51-85)

Chapter 4

The Grandeur of the Sacred City (PP 86-135)

Chapter 5

The Dignity of the Holy Company (PP 136-146)

Chapter 6

The Brahmins of Tillai (PP 1-350)

Chapter 7

The Lady with the Strap Round Her Breasts (PP 3641-3943)

34. Tiruṅācacampantar Purāṇam (PP 1904-3159)
35. Eyarkōṅ Kalillāmar Purāṇam (PP 3160-3568)
36. Tirumūlar Nāyaṅgūr Purāṇam (PP 3569-3596)
37. Taṇṭ Aṭikal Nāyaṅgūr Purāṇam (PP 3597-3622)
38. Mūrkkar Nāyaṅgūr Purāṇam (PP 3623-3634)
39. Cōmāci Māraṇ Nāyaṅgūr Purāṇam (PP 3635-3640)
40. Cākkiyar Nāyaṅgūr Purāṇam (PP 3641-3658)
41. Ĉirappuli Nāyaṅgūr Purāṇam (PP 3659-3664)
42. Ĉiruttoṇṭar Nāyaṅgūr Purāṇam (PP 3665-3752)
43. Kalariṟṟarivār Nāyaṅgūr Purāṇam
11. Meypporuḷ Nāyaṉār Purāṇam (PP 467-490)
12. Viṟaṇminnar Purāṇam (PP 491-501)
13. Amarnīti Nāyaṉār Purāṇam (PP 502-549)
15. Eṉātināṭaṉ Nāyaṉār Purāṇam (PP 608-649)
16. Kaṇṭappar Nāyaṉār Purāṇam (PP 650-835)
17. Kuṅkuluyak Kulayar Nāyaṉār Purāṇam (PP 836-870)
18. Māṇakkaṅcāraṉ Nāyaṉār Purāṇam (PP 871-907)
19. Arivāṭṭayar Nāyaṉār Purāṇam (PP 908-930)
20. Āṉāyar Nāyaṉār Purāṇam (PP 931-972)
21. Mūrtti Nāyaṉār Purāṇam (PP 973-1021)
22. Murukar Nāyaṉār Purāṇam (PP 1022-1035)
23. Rudra Pucpatiyar Nāyaṉār Purāṇam (PP 1036-1045)
24. Tirunāḷaippōvār Nāyaṉār Purāṇam (PP 1046-1083)
25. Tirukkuṟippūr Tontar Purāṇam (PP 1083-1210)
26. Caṅṭēcurar Purāṇam (PP 1211-1270)
27. Tirunāvukkaracar Nāyaṅār Purāṇam (PP 1271-1699)
28. Kulacciraiyār Nāyaṅār Purāṇam (PP 1700-1710)
29. Perumilalaik Kurumper Purāṇam (PP 1711-1721)
30. Kāraikkāl Ammaiyyār Purāṇam (PP 1722-1787)
31. Appūti Aṭikal Nāyaṅār Purāṇam (PP 1788-1833)
32. Tirunīlalanakkar Nāyaṅār Purāṇam (PP 1834-1870)
33. Naminanti Aṭikal Nāyaṅār Purāṇam (PP 1871-1903)

59. Kaḷāṛsinger Nāyaṅār Purāṇam (PP 4101-4113)
60. Iṭṭaṅkaḷiyār Nāyaṅār Purāṇam (PP 4114-4124)
61. Ceruttuṇai Nāyaṅār Purāṇam (PP 4125-4131)
62. Pukaḷṭūṇai Nāyaṅār Purāṇam (PP 4132-4138)
63. Kōṭpuli Nāyaṅār Purāṇam (PP 4139-4151)

64. Those who have true devotion (PP 4152-4159)
65. Those who sing in praise of the Lord (PP 4160-4161)
66. Those who have placed their hearts on Śiva (PP 4162)
67. Those who are born at Tiruvārūr (PP 4163-4164)
68. Those who attend to the Lord three times a day (PP 4165-4167)
69. Those who wear the Holy ash (PP 4168-4173)
70. Those who are from far and wide (PP 4174-4175)

71. Pūcalār Nāyaṅār Purāṇam
72. Maṅkaiyarkkaraci Ammaiyyār  
   (PP 4194-4196)  
73. Nēcar Nāyaṇār Purāṇam  
   (PP 4197-4201)  
74. Kōcceṅkat Cōḷar Purāṇam  
   (PP 4202-4219)  
75. Tirunīlakaṇṭar Yāḷppāṇar Purāṇam  
   (PP 4220-4231)  
76. Caṭaiyaṇār Nāyaṇār Purāṇam  
   (PP 4232)  
77. Icaiṅāyi Ammaiyyār Purāṇam  
   (PP 4233)  

78. The White Elephant  
   (PP 4234-4286)
APPENDIX IV

Tirupasuram (திருப்பாசுரம்) (Tēv. 3.054)

The only patikam (பதிகம்) i.e. poem in praise of a deity consisting generally of ten stanzas for which which Cēkkilār has given full commentary in the Periya Purāṇam is Tirupasuram of Campantar. The song and the commentary as follows:

Tirupasuram:

The song and the commentary as follows:
Cēkkilār’s commentary on Tirupasuram:

(a) अर्पित आदर्शानुि आदर्शानुि आदर्शानुि

अर्पित आदर्शानुि आदर्शानुि आदर्शानुि आदर्शानुि आदर्शानुि आदर्शानुि आदर्शानुि आदर्शानुि आदर्शानुि आदर्शानुि आदर्शानुि आदर्शानुि आदर्शानुि आदर्शानुि आदर्शानुि

“May Brahmins, gods and cows all prosper” – by virtue of this petition, all sacrifice, rituals and worship would be offered to the Lord with due order and regularity, for the well-being of the world (PP. 2724).

(b) तपशी तपशी तपशी तपशी

तपशी तपशी तपशी तपशी तपशी तपशी तपशी तपशी तपशी तपशी

“May cool rain fall” – rain is the fruit of sacrifice, and it is also a major focus in the daily rituals. “May the king flourish” – the good fortune of the king depends on his safeguarding worship and the like (PP. 2725).

(c) मृभूत मृभूत मृभूत मृभूत

मृभूत मृभूत मृभूत मृभूत मृभूत मृभूत मृभूत मृभूत मृभूत मृभूत मृभूत मृभूत मृभूत मृभूत मृभूत मृभूत मृभूत मृभूत मृभूत मृभूत

“May evil disappear” – this is the same as saying “may other religions fail”. “May the name of Haran encompass all things” – this means “may the use of the Five-Letter-Prayer extend more and more widely, for the benefit of eternal souls (PP. 2726).
“May the world be rid of trouble” – with these words, Nāga Campantar blessed the people of the world, and freed them from trouble in this world and the next (PP. 2727).

“He is hard to see” – the primal Lord cannot be seen because he is beyond the reach of human vision. But to those who seek him with true love, he grants the vision of himself by means of those great and lasting symbols which Campantar lists, viz. his bull, his dark throat, his dwelling in the burning ghat, the fire in his hand, etc. (PP. 2728).

“Yet he is great” – apart from those symbols, the universe, the five elements, the heavenly bodies and untold myriad souls constitute his visible form (PP. 2729).

“Who can know what he is like” – here the great devotee Čanpai declares that Śiva’s eternal nature is limitless, beyond the reach of human knowledge (PP. 2730).

“The fragrance of burnt ash” – apart from his eternal light, all other lights are in the end reduced to ashes. But, Campantar affirms, Śiva wears this particular ash for its beauty as an ornament, like sandalwood paste (PP. 2731).
“He has no father or mother” – this means he creates all things in the world. Then when they pass away, he reabsorbs them in a moment of time, before bringing them to both once more. But our Lord himself is not subject to repeated births (PP. 2732).

“By meditating on him alone” – for those in their present birth meditate on him as the one true, shining light, he dispels the darkness of falsehood and of actions, good and bad (PP. 2733).

“What is our father really like?” – here the prince of Pūntarāy affirms truth that in whatever terms he may be described, he is the primal Lord and all descriptions are therefore true of him (PP. 2734).

“The Primal Lord bestows his grace on those whom he has made his own” – on enquiry, the glory of the Lord proves to be without end or limit. Therefore no purpose is served by investigation (PP. 2735).

“The influence of the planets” – since his grace is such, the guardian of Čanpaṭi teaches that devotees should seek the feet of the primal Lord and listen to his voice. From them
the influence of the planets and the legacy of previous deeds will then be brought to an end. (PP. 2736)

“By Logic” – there is nothing else like him, so the character of Sankaran cannot be measured by logic or analogy (PP. 2737).

“He is radiant light” – to those who have eyes to see, this means that while his outward form is burning fire, he shines as the light within the hearts of those who love him (PP. 2738).

“You who would be free from great suffering, with your mind lay hold of him” – in love enshrine within your heart the primal radiance, live with your attention focused on the teaching, and so escape from the bondage of separate existence and the road that leads to rebirth (PP. 2739).

“O you of great goodness, draw near to God” – by this the king of Canpai taught that the sotless Lord is beyond the taint of all desire, and that those should draw near to him who worship his feet in love (PP. 2740).
“He dances” – three actions are mentioned in this stanza, beginning with his dance. You want to know whether these are performed simply to win praise, or rather to free others from their pain? In the opinion of the noble child, God did these things for the sake of the world, and they reveal the working of his grace (PP. 2741).

(9) பதிவு செய்யப்பட்டது:

குறுக்குச் சான்றாக சிறிய கிளைப்பாணியாக பின் படித்து பார்ப்பதற்கு மதிப்புகார்க்களுடன் புத்தரின் கருத்துச் சுவையான அடையாளம் வாய்ப்பாடு உருவாக்கிய மாறங்கள் வருடக் காலம் பெறுவதற்காக ( Collapse. 2742).

“Fragrant flower” – in this stanza Campantar affirms that tradition approves the deed of Canṭicar, and that killing one who disturbs the worship of the Lord confers deliverance (PP. 2742).

(1) இந்த் பதிவு செய்யப்பட்டது:

சுருக்கத்துடன் கூட்டு பார்ப்பதற்கு பார்ப்பதற்கு இன்று அறிக்கைப் பழுத்தல் பார்ப்பதற்கு இன்று அறிக்கைப் பணநுட்பங்களின் பார்ப்பதற்கு இன்று அறிக்கைப் பணநுட்பங்களை உருவாக்கிய காலம் பெறுவதற்காக (Collapse. 2743).

“The primal Lord of the Vedas” – he is the primal Lord, whose dancing feet dispel the troubles of the people of the world as they engage in praising him. That is the testimony of the eighteen Purāṇas. He who understood all things without benefit of study enjoined, “Chant those Purāṇas”. (PP. 2743).

(1) மாறங்கள் பதிவு:

பாத்திர பாத்திர அல்லது குருப்புவர் என்னும் காலம் குருப்புவர் என்னும் குருப்புவர் வாய்ப்பாடுகள் பார்ப்பதற்கு இல்லையே பார்ப்பதற்கு இல்லையே ஆனால் ஆனால் பார்ப்பதற்கு இல்லையே பார்ப்பதற்கு இல்லையே (Collapse. 2744).

“The circle of the earth” –Tirumal was given the task of protecting the world, and with it the distinction of receiving the discus as a gift from the supreme God (PP. 2744).

(1) பாத்திரம் பதிவு:

பாத்திரம் பாத்திரம் அல்லது குருப்புவர் என்னும் காலம் குருப்புவர் என்னும் குருப்புவர் வாய்ப்பாடுகள் பார்ப்பதற்கு இல்லையே பார்ப்பதற்கு இல்லையே ஆனால் ஆனால் பார்ப்பதற்கு இல்லையே பார்ப்பதற்கு இல்லையே (Collapse. 2745).

“Tirumāl” – Tirumāl, Ayaṉ and their immortal followers were all severely scalded by the poison from the sea of milk. Here the prince of Veṅkuru demonstrates the matchless grace of Śiva, who drank the poison and thereby saved them all from death (PP. 2745).
“Not only so...” – the Pāṇṭya king who fostered the growth of the Tamil Caṅgam in the city of Maturai attained clear understanding, but the Jains who cast their palm leaf into the river to resolve their dispute had no such clarity. Campantar in this stanza declares that if his palm leaf floats upstream against the current that will prove that true wisdom consists in loving God (PP. 2746).
APPENDIX V

GLOSSARY

Sanskrit terms have been identified by (S).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ādhi Bhagavan</td>
<td>Lord; ‘The primal deity’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Āgama (S)</td>
<td>Sacred texts treating the methods of temple construction and creation of idols, worship means of deities, philosophical doctrines, meditative practices, attainment of six-fold desires and four kinds of yoga.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Akam</td>
<td>‘Interior,’ ‘the inner part’; the genre of love poetry in classical (Caṅkam) literature.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Akattiyar</td>
<td>Sanskrit ‘Agastya,’ a legendary sage and culture-hero of the Tamils.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>anañku</td>
<td>A term that denotes ‘impersonal, anonymous power, sacred power’ in Caṅkam literature.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anubhuti</td>
<td>Equivalent word for ‘mysticism’ in Tamil.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anpu</td>
<td>Love</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aravāṉar</td>
<td>The Lord of all virtue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aram</td>
<td>virtue or righteousness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aruḷ</td>
<td>Divine grace, an important doctrine in Śaiva Siddhānta theology. Cēkkiḻar used the term to arul, referred in this study to demonstrate, for instance, love, benevolence, favour, generosity that Śiva has for His devotees rather than elucidating the agreement and contradictions in the theological system of a particular Śaiva tradition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aṭi</td>
<td>Foot; often used to referred to the feet of the Lord</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aṭimai</td>
<td>Slave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aṭiyār</td>
<td>Devotee; ‘one who is at the feet (of the Lord)’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aṭkoḷ</td>
<td>Taking captive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aṭṭaviratṭanam</td>
<td>The sites of the Eight Heroic Deeds of Śiva in the Tamil region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atti-Natti</td>
<td>‘It is and it is not’; Jaina attitude to life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhakti (S)</td>
<td>Devotion to God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brahmin</td>
<td>Member of the priestly class in the Hindu</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
system of four classes; the Brahmin class ranks highest in the general hierarchy of classes.

Caṅkam

These are assemblies which flourished in the Tamil environment across the period between 150 B.C.E to 600 A.C.E. These assemblies composed of poets from various strata of Tamil society gave birth to Tamil classical literature which came to be known as Caṅkam literature.

Cariyai

One of the four ways of devotion in the Śaiva Siddhanta system.

Cēkkilār

Author of the Periya Purāṇam, and was a renowned minister in the court of king Kulōttunka II (குலூதுன்னகர்) (1133-1150 A.C.E).

Ceṅkōl

Righteous sceptre.

centtamil

It is the “standard, ‘correct’, ‘polished’ language sanctioned by the norm of ilakkaṇam (இலக்காணம்) and used in ilakkiyam (இலக்கியம்) as the linguistic vehicle of high literary culture.

Cēra

One of the three ancient Tamil kingdoms or ‘land’; the ruler of the Cēra kingdom.

Cīlappatikāram

‘Epic of the Anklet,’ Tamil epic of the late classical period.

Civācāriyār

A learned and initiated person in the Tamil Śaiva tradition, qualified to perform Āgamic rites.

Cōḷa

One of the three ancient Tamil kingdoms; the ruler of the Cōḷa land.

Icai

Music; musical Tamil; genres associated with music in Tamil literature.

īcaṅ

‘Lord’.

Inpam

Ethics of Love.

iraiwan

It is used to denote ‘he who is highest’, ‘Lord’, and ‘king’.

kadavul

A notion that could be understood as a synonym for the concept anānku. The term kadavul (கடவுல்) has been interpreted in different ways. The word Ka+da (க+ட) connote the sense of ‘movement’, ‘surpassing’ and ‘crossing over’. The verbal derivation is that ‘to traverse’, ‘to pass’ or to ‘transcend’.

Kailāsa (S)

Mountain, the abode of Śiva in the
Himalayas.
Erotic love
Tamil *vīgai* (act, deed); the law of action leading to effect and rebirth.
Divine chastity
A King under whose patronage, Cēkkilār wrote his *Periya Purāṇam*. It is generally accepted that *Anapāya*, the royal patron of Cēkkilār is none other than king Kulōttuṅga II (1133 A.C.E -1150 A.C.E).
Ritual service; one of the four types of activities undertaken toward liberation according to Śaiva Siddhanta theology.
One of the eight anthologies of classical Tamil poetry.
Sanskrit jñāna, ‘wisdom,’ one of the four disciplines leading to liberation in Śaiva Śiddhanta theology.
‘Sign,’ phallus (as the male ‘sign’); symbol and an iconic image of Śiva
Taint
Also known as Manu *Needhi Cholan* was a legendary Cōla king believed to have killed his own son to provide justice to a Cow.
The Sustainer of the Moral Order
Law codes of Maṇu
Sacred chant; Vedic chant; the Vedas
A Tamil community of the state of Tamil Nadu, southern India, and are one of the three branches of the Mukkulath or confederacy.
Stain, taint, tarnish.
The knowledge of the true nature of self or one’s feeling
‘Friendly’ servants of the Lord.
‘Liberation’ or ‘release’.
Tamil hill-god, the son of Śiva
The three pioneer Śaiva Saints, viz. Campandar, Appar, Cuntarar
Responsible for compiling the first seven of twelve books of Tirumuṟai.
The five letter prayer is (ēkṛṣṭha) ‘na ma si va ya’ (NB in roman script, this is five syllables of two letter each, but in Tamil script each syllable is a single letter). The
syllables ‘na’ (نا) and ‘ma’ (ما) represent the bondage in which the human soul is trapped, ‘si’ (سی) and ‘va’ (وا) represent Śiva and his Sakti, and ‘ya’ (یا) represents the soul in between the two.

Nandi

It is the name for the bull which serves as the mount (Sanskrit: Vahana) of the god Śiva and as the gate keeper of Shiva and Parvati.

naṇṭeṛi

Righteous conduct, path of virtue and moral life.

Naṭarāja or Naṭarcha Śivan

Lord of Dance; Śiva as the cosmic dancer. It is indeed the favorite attribute used to denote Śiva in the Periya Purāṇam

nāṭu

Country, region, or realm; regional subdivision of the Tamil area.

Nāyaṇmār

‘Leaders’ (plural: nāyagmār: நாயக்கமார்; singular: nāyagmār: நாயக்கமார்) who lived in the medieval Tamil period from the third to the ninth centuries after the Common Era.

nāyaṇan

‘Master’ or ‘leader’.

Nīti

Justice or righteousness

Pantam

Bondage or pantam (پنطام) later becomes an important term in the Tamil Śaiva Siddhanta philosophical tradition, although Cēkkilār uses it much less frequently than the ever-recurrent ‘repeated births’ (پرம்பரமை: perum piravi) and ‘evil deeds’ (திழானை: tīvai). It refers to the principle of causality where intent and actions of an individual influence the future of that individual.

Pāṇṭya

Also ‘Pantyan’; one of the three ancient Tamil kingdoms.

Pāṣa (S)

(Tamil pācam) ‘fetter,’ the bonds of karma in Śaiva Siddhanta philosophy.

Pāśu (S)

The individual soul in Śaiva Siddhanta

Pati (S)

‘The Lord’ in Śaiva Siddhanta

Patti

Love of God

Periya Purāṇam

History of the Holy servants of the Lord

Pittan

Cēkkilār portrays Śiva as one who acts with a sense of ‘madness’; Śiva is the ‘madman, crowned with crescent moon’.

poruḷ

Refers to ethics of wealth in Tamil literature

puṟam

‘Exterior,’ dealing with war and public affairs; the ‘public’ genre of classical Tamil
Poetry.

Purāṇa (S)
A compendium of myths; a sacred text in Hinduism

Śaiva (S)
A worshiper of Śiva, composed by Appar, Cambandar, Cuntarar otherwise known as Tamil Vedas.

Śaiva-neṛi
Norms or tenets of the Śaiva ‘way of life’.

Sakti
Consort of Śiva

Śaiva Siddhanta (S)
The philosophical and theological system of the Tamil Śaiva sect.

Śiva-ānantam
The bliss of being in Śiva

Śiva-jñānam
Truth of the knowledge of Śiva

Śiva-jñāni
One who has the knowledge of Śiva

Śiva-nēṭi
Justice according to Śaiva norm or tenets of the life.

Śiva-toṇṭar
Servants of the Śiva

Śiva-tontu
Service to Śiva

Sothiram
The first nine anthologies of Tirumurūrai are categorized as sothiram meaning ‘Hymns of Praise’ for Śiva.

summa iru
Used in the sense advise one ‘Be quiet or still’ to experience God.

Talaivan
Leader
tampirāṅ tōlaṅ
The companion of the Śiva

Tēvāram
A collection of devotional songs in honour of Śiva

Tillai
Cittambaram
Tirukkovai
‘Holy Works of Order’ composed by manikkavacakar

Tirukkūṟal
Venerable or sacred couplets which is considered as ‘the greatest ethical treatise written in the Tamil language’.

Tirumāl
He is the Hindu deity most popular amongst Tamils of Tamil nadu state in India and in the Tamil Diaspora. Perumal is also another name of Lord Viṣṇu.

Tirumandiram
The tenth collection of the Tirumurūrai is the mystical poems of Tirumūlar’s Tirumandiram or ‘Holy Invocation’; it is categorized as sāsthiram (சாஸ்திரம்) meaning the philosophical guidelines of Śaiva doctrine.

Tirumurūrai
Tirumurūrai (திருமுருவை) or Panniru Tirumurūrai (பணினு திருமுருவை) forms the Tamil Śaiva Canon which comprises or brings together nearly 20,000 verses, the
musings, meditations and affirmations of twenty-six singers or poets of South Indian Śaivite community, compiled by Nampi Āṇṭār Nampi (ca. 1000).

Tiru nilankaṇṭam
Śiva as ‘Dark-or Blue-Throated one’.

Tiruppäcuram Ode
The Campantar, nāyār’s palm script on which was inscribed the glory of Śiva,

Tirut toṇṭat tokai
The ‘Roll of the Holy Servants’ is the primary source material for the composition of the Periya Purāṇam

Tiruvācakam
‘Holy Readings’ composed by manikkavacakar

Tolkāppiyam
The date and the authorship of Tolkāppiyam (Thonmai: தொன்னையம் or Tol: தொல் ‘ancient’ or ‘old’ + kāppiyam: கூப்பியம் epic: i.e. the ancient epic which safeguards the integrity of the Tamil language) are constantly debated in academic circles.

tōlan
Friend

toṇṭar
‘Servants,’ or devotees of Śiva

Toṇṭarcīrparavurār
The singer of the glories of the servants.

Umā
Name of Parvatī, the Goddess, spouse of Śiva

Umāpati Civācārya
A Śaivite theologian of the fourteenth century who authored Cēkkiḻār Nāyaṇār Purāṇam (செக்கிற்றேநார் புராணம்) or ‘The Story of Cēkkiḻār Nāyaṇār’.

Utaman
In Tamil the word ‘utaman’ (.utaman) is used to connote an excellence or virtues or great ‘man’

Vaikai
The Vaikai is a river in Madurai, Tamil Nadu state of southern India. It originates in the Periyar Plateau of the Western Ghats range, and flows northeast through the Kambam Valley, which lies between the Palni Hills to the north and the Varushanad Hills to the south.

Vaṇṭoṇṭar’
‘Violent servant’

Vedas (S)
The Vedas are considered as the divine manifestation of the eternal word i.e. vāk. Their origin is ‘non-human authorship’ (apauruṣya). Therefore, they are hailed as revealed text or Śruti that which is ‘seen’, ‘heard’ and ‘communicated’ by the ancient rṣis or teachers. They are different from Smṛti texts which are ‘remembered’ by
The Vedas are four: the *Ṛg*-Veda (collection of mantras), *Sāma*-Veda (collection of liturgical melodies), *Yahur*-Veda (collection of sacrificial formulas for rituals) and *Atharva*-Veda (magical mantras and spells).

**Vedānta**

The word *Vedānta* is a combination of two words: ‘*Veda*’ which means ‘knowledge’ and ‘*anta*’ which means ‘the end of’ or ‘the goal’ of. Thus *Vedānta* means ‘the end of knowledge’.

**Vēlanādal**

An ecstatic dance by a priest possessed by Vēlan (โวน) i.e. Murukaṇ.

**Vellala (S)**

Tamil ‘vēḷālar’; general term for a group of high-ranking non Brahmin castes in Tamilnadu.

**Vīram**

Heroism

**Vīraṭṭāṇam**

A place where Śiva is believed to have performed His cosmic deeds and destroyed the cities and addresses Śiva as the Lord of *Vīraṭṭāṇam*.

**vīṭu**

Liberation or release

**Yāl**

It is a direct ancestor of modern day Vēna or Lute. Many major Tamil classical literary masterpieces written during Caṇṅgam period dating back 200 BC have mentioned yāl.

**Yōga**

All actions yoked to bodily discipline and meditation.
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