

**Address by Thiru BANWARILAL PUROHIT, Hon'ble Governor of
Tamil Nadu at the 5th International Saiva Siddhandha Conference at
Chennai on 8th March 2018 at 11.00 A.M.**

Anaivarukkum Kalai Vanakkam

DharumaiAdhinam Sri-La-Sri GurumahaSannithanam

ThiruvavaduthuraiAdhinam Sri-La-Sri GurumahaSannithanam

Dr. P. Duraisamy
Vice-Chancellor, University of Madras

TansriDato. R. Nataraja
Kualalumpur

Thiru. Ashok Kumar Munthra,
Secretary, D.G. Vaishnav College

Thiru. T.N. Ramachandran
Director, SaivaSiddhandha Research Institute

Thiru. G. Kalaiselvan
Industrialist, Malaysia

Thiru. NatarajaSachidhanandam
Co-ordinator of the Conference

Distinguished Invitees
Friends from the Media
Ladies and Gentlemen

I am delighted to be here on the 5thInternationalSaivaSiddhantha Conference being held at Chennai today. It is heartening to see that devotees of Lord Siva from various parts of India and even from countries outside India have assembled at the gathering to celebrate the concept of Saiva Siddhantham.

Saiva Siddhantham is the philosophy of Saiva religion which considers Lord Siva as the primary deity. Siddhanta means the final conclusion (reached after taking into consideration all other important views). It is the popular

philosophical system based on Saiva Agamas, Upanishds, ancient Tamil works, Thirumurais and Meykanda Sastra works.

Saiva Siddhanta believes in the three eternal entities of God, Soul and material bondage. According to Saiva Siddanta God is one, Souls are many and Pasam consists of three impurities called anavam, kanmamand mayai.

Anything that has beginning, existence and decay is made by someone. It has a maker. Our physical body the world and the worldly things had a beginning. They exist for a certain period of time and then decay. They, therefore, have a maker who is God. Existence of God is thus established by inference. The existence of other entities is also established similarly by various means.

Siva (Sivam) is the name given to God by the Saivites. Siva means one who is perfect and/or auspicious. His inherent nature is wisdom. He is with infinite love to benefit the souls. It is his Grace which we pray for. Like the sun and its light, He remains inseparable with his Sakthy which is Grace. Sakthy literally means power of energy. He is omnipresent. The Tamil word for God, Kadavul, meaning one who resides outside and inside, indicates his omnipresence.

According to Saiva Siddhanta, Souls are many. No two persons or beings are alike. We may therefore, conclude that every living being has a soul of its own. Anma and uyir are other names for soul. Soul has the capabilities to know, act and desire. These are called its gnanasakthy, kriyasakthy and icchasakthy respectively. These capabilities are impaired by the associated entity called anava. Soul has a dependant nature and behaves like the one on which it depends. When it depends on the worldly things, it behaves like them. When it depends on God, it behaves like a divine being.

Anavam is the cause of all negative qualities of the soul. It is the source of ego, ignorance, hatred, etc. Anavam is associated with the soul. Like verdigris on copper, or husk on paddy, it has a natural association with the soul. Obscuring soul's power to know is the inherent nature of anavam.

Anavam is spoken of only in Saiva Siddhanta and not in any other Indian philosophies.

The Law of Karma is one of the foundation of Saiva Sidhantam. Good actions results in good or pleasant experience and evil actions result in bad or painful experiences. Hence Shaiva Sidhanta aims to lead its followers on the path of goodness and towards God.

Saiva Siddhantam is a rational philosophy. The concept is similar to the scientific concept that matter and energy get transformed from one form to another. The universe, according to the Big Bang theory in science, had an origin from a 'cosmic egg' and expanded to the present state. Even time was born from it. The Siddhanta concept of maya and its products has a close parallel with this scientific view.

Referring to the universe, the 20th century scientist Albert Einstein said, "It is an expanding Universe". The Saiva saint Manickavasakar made the same statement more than about 12 centuries ago.

I have been in Tamil Nadu for five months and have visited several district of the State. Wherever I go I see huge majestic temples particularly dedicated to Lord Siva. The Siva Lingam of Brahadeeswara Temple, the Nataraja at Chidambaram, Ekambreswarar temple at Kancheepuram are some of the examples of these. These temples not only stand as symbols of Tamil culture and Tamil worship they also represent symbols of Saiva Siddhantham.

The deep roots of Saiva Siddhantham in the Tamil psyche are well known. The concept of Saiva Siddhantham is deeply embedded in the minds of Tamils whether it be in Kanyakumari or Kancheepuram. As one goes through Tamil history one finds that after the advent of Jainism there was a period when the concept of Saiva Siddhantham was pushed to the background. With the arrival of the Nayanmars there was a great revival of Saiva Siddhantham.

The most senior and revered Nayanmar Appar in fact initially converted from Saivism to Jainism and changed his name as Dharma Sena in an attempt

to find the truth. Not able to attain realisation, he reconverted to Saivism and became Appar Thirunavukkarasar. He was greatly instrumental in reviving the concept of Saiva Siddhantham in Tamil Nadu for which he had the company and support of the great Thirugnanasambandar, Sundarar and Manickavasagar.

The poems of Appar, Thirugnanasambandar and Sundarar are contained in the Thevaram and the poems of Manickavasagar in Thiruvasagam. The Thevaram and Thiruvasagam, which continue to be sung even today after 1500 years, were propagated by the kings of the Chola dynasty and other leading dynasties of the South.

Dharumapuram Aadheenam located in Mayiladuthurai is in the same region where Chola dynasty flourished. It now manages 27 temples including the famous Thirukkadaiyur Temple, Vaitheeswarankovil, Thiruvaiyaru Temple, etc. Some of the initiatives of the Aadheenam such as the Thevara Paatasalai, the course on Agama Praveen, Aadheenam Arts College, International Saiva Siddhantha Research Centre, etc. deserve appreciation and praise.

Spirituality is the backbone of India. In the last 100 years, the greatness of Indian spirituality has been well recognized by the world. The pioneer in spreading the message around the globe was Swami Vivekananda.

Swami Vivekananda's teachings have been a source of inspiration for millions of people. His greatness lay in his ability to lead from the front. Swamiji preached to the young and old to maintain one's own dignity, to be bold and to be strong. He said strength is life and weakness is death. He eloquently propounded that you cannot believe in God unless you learn to believe in yourself. One another excellent message of Swamiji to Indians who were afraid, cautious and weak was "take risks in life, if you succeed you can lead, if you fail you can guide". He called upon Indians to arise, awake and stop not until the goal is reached.

Today India is free and the world listens to India. 125 years back Swami Vivekananda's powerful speeches made the world listen to India. When

Swamiji spoke at the Parliament of Religions at Chicago, the audience listened with rapt attention. At that historic address he stated and I quote “I thank you in the name of mother of religions for it fills my heart with joy for having been so warmly and cordially welcomed. I am proud to belong to a religion which has taught the world tolerance and universal acceptance and to belong to a nation which has sheltered the persecuted and the refugees of all religions and nations. I am proud to tell you that we have Israelites, who came to South India when their temple was shattered to pieces by Roman tyranny. We foster the remnants of the grand Zoroastrian nation”. He went on to say that religious unity will come not by the triumph of any one of the religions but by assimilating the spirit of other religions while preserving the individuality of one’s own religion. Assimilation and not destruction, harmony but not dissension.

Swamy Vivekananda and Sister Nivethitha believed that misery and poverty in India can be eliminated only through education. Infact when Sister Nivethitha spoke in Chennai it had such an enormous impact that Mahakavi Bharathi went to meet her in Calcutta, soon afterwards in 1905. It was Sister Nivethitha who explained to Bharathi the importance of recognizing women as free and equal beings on par with men. It was after this that Bharathi envisioned the concept of ‘Puthumai Pen’ and went on to create literary history.

When I see these scholars here from various countries of the world, I can see the outreach the spirit of Saiva Siddhantham has achieved. It is important for us, as sons and daughters of India, to spread the message of India’s great spiritual inheritance to the people of the world. I am sure conferences such as these will provide fresh impetus to the efforts already being taken in this direction.

I wish the organisers all success in their endeavours.

Nandri

Vanakkam

Jai Hind

Jai Tamil Nadu