

THE ETERNAL EVE : MATTER IN HINDU PHILOSOPHIC THOUGHT

Most philosophies of India see a dichotomy between the soul and matter. The soul, called *atman* or more suggestively *purusa*, the 'male', is the immutable, knowing principle in man. Matter, on the other hand, is mutable and unintelligent and is often spoken of in the feminine gender as *prakrti* or *maya*. Matter in Hindu philosophy comprises everything other than man's indestructible soul. Matter, therefore, includes his psychophysical self, that is, his internal organs (*antahkaranam*), his *buddhi* 'intellect' *ahamkara* 'self-sense', *citta* or *manas*, 'mind', 'heart' as also his physical self, and the material world of nature around him. And Hindu philosophy and religion see this association of soul and matter as a state of bondage. It is matter that entices, deludes and imprisons the soul in a body of matter. It is the 'Eternal Eve' that is *prakrti* or *maya* that entices and keeps in thrall the *purusa*, the 'male' that is the soul.

This bondage to matter is in most philosophical systems, *anadi* 'beginningless'. How or when the immutable soul fell into the snare of *prakrti* and lost its state of freedom, is left unanswered. That this bondage is due to the soul's *avidya*, 'ignorance', its mistaken identification of its own eternal, immutable self with the changing, unintelligent products of *prakrti*, is the consensus of the Hindu philosophers. They take as their starting point the existential state of the soul, the state of bondage to matter, and proceed to analyse the cause of bondage and to map out the path of liberation from matter and consequently from *samsara* 'life' itself.

The distinction of spirit and matter was not clearly recognized in the *Rgveda*. The *Rgvedic* references to the felicity that the dead enjoy in the abode of the dead, in the world of king Yama, indicate a belief in the continued existence of the dead on a different plane. The Vedic Aryans loved life; death to them was not the end of life. They believed in an eternal life, free from bodily frailties, sickness and death, in the world of Yama. Yet this life was imagined as existence in bodily form.¹

The Upanisadic quest for the one reality that underlies man and matter, sees a distinction between spirit and matter. The Upanisads study the human being at the physical, physiological, emotional, intellectual and spiritual levels and speak of the soul as 'encased' in successive *kosas* 'layers' of *anna* 'food', *prana* 'vital airs', *manas* 'mind', *vijnana* 'intellect' and *ananda* 'bliss'.² The *atman* was the reality that held

1. A.B. Keith, *Religion and Philosophy of the Veda and the Upanisads*, Harvard Oriental Series (HOS), vol. 32, p. 410; A.A. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, Strassburg (1897) p. 166.

2. *Taittiriya Upanisad* (Tait. Up.) ii, 1-5; also *Maitrayaniya Upanisad* (Maitri. Up.) vi. 12 in R.E. Hume, *The Thirteen Principal Upanisads*, London (1964); S. Radhakrishnan, *The Principal Upanisads*, London (1953). The Upanisads,

together the states of waking, dream, deep sleep and the state beyond.³ It was the power that animated the senses and the body. And at death the soul left behind its body 'as the slough of a snake lies on an ant-hill'⁴ and reached out towards another body even 'as a water leech leaves one blade of grass and stretches towards another.'⁵ This distinction of spirit and matter comes out even more forcefully in the *Bhagavadgita*, which refers often to the soul as the 'one possessed of a body' (*dehin, saririn*) and compares the passage of the soul through different births to casting off worn-out clothes and putting on new clothes.⁶

In the Upanisads for the first time the thought comes up that existence in this world is to the soul a state of bondage. The Upanisads with their focus on what is permanent and unchanging beyond the variety and impermanence of the world, see the body and the world, which distract man from realizing his soul's oneness with *Brahman* 'the universal soul', as a bond. 'When liberated from the body he is liberated indeed', says the *Katha Upanisad*.⁷ The very word *moksa* 'liberation' derived from the root *muc* and *bandh* 'to bind' occur a few times in the Upanisads;⁸ they are not as frequent as one would expect. Other words occur, however, which imply that the world and the body are a fetter on the spirit. 'By knowing God one is released from all fetters', says the *Svetasvatara Upanisad*. The words *pasa*⁹ and *jala*¹⁰ occur a few times in the sense of 'snare'. 'The small-minded go after outward pleasure, they walk into the net of widespread death'. It is even suggested that the lord Mahesvara 'the illusion-maker' (*mayin*) uses the world (*prakrti*) as an illusion (*maya*) and draws into his net the deluded.¹¹ The *Maitrayaniya Upanisad* gives a series of similes to describe the plight

circa 6th century B.C., are the earliest philosophical works of Hinduism.

³. *Brhadaranyaka Up.* (Brh. Up.) IV. iii. 7-18; *Chandogya Up.* (Chand. Up.) viii. 8-12, *Prasna Up.* iv. 5; *Mandukya Up.* 3-7.

⁴. *Brh. Up.* IV. iv. 7.

⁵. *ibid.*, IV. iv. 3.

⁶. ii. 13; 22; 30; 59; ii. 40; xiv. 5; 7; 20; xvii. 2.

⁷. v. 1.

⁸. *ibid.*, v. 4; vi. 8; 34; *Maitri. Up.* iv. 2.

⁹. *Katha. Up.* iv. 2; *Maitri. Up.* iv. 2.

¹⁰. *Svetasvatara Up.* iii. 1; v. 3.

¹¹. *ibid.*, iv. 9; 10; v. 3.

of a man caught in the deluding attractions of the world and body and concludes. 'It has been said, "Objects of sound, touch and the like are worthless objects for a man"; the elemental self, through attachment to them, does not remember the highest state.'¹²

Moha 'delusion' and derivatives of the root *muh* 'to delude' too occur in the Upanisads, in the *Bhagavadgita* and all of post-Upanisadic Hindu philosophy. Here again the world of matter and the body are seen as deluding the soul. 'Heedless, a deluded with the delusion of wealth. Thinking "This is the world! There is no other! - Again and again he comes under my control.' (i.e. Death)¹³ The suggestion that the attractions of the world are indeed more pleasing (*preyas*) than the knowledge of the *atman* which is more valuable (*sreyas*) comes up in the dialogue of Yama and Naciketas in the *Katha Upanisad*. Yama commends Naciketas for choosing what is of ultimate good while rejecting the transitory pleasures of the world.¹⁴

That the body needs to be controlled and directed to serve the interests of the self is another perception that is seen in the Upanisads and becomes for all time an important tenet of Indian ethical thinking. In the Upanisads it is as yet in an early stage. The word *yoga* 'yoking', 'control' 'integration', and cognates of the root *yuj* 'to yoke' occur in the Upanisads and are of frequent occurrence in the *Bhagavadgita*. In the famous metaphor of the chariot in the *Katha Upanisad*¹⁵ the soul is compared to a rider in the chariot which is the body drawn by horses that are the senses with the *manas* 'mind' as the reins. Of a soul which has no understanding and does not keep the *manas* under control, the senses like vicious horses are uncontrolled and will lead the soul to repeated deaths. But of a self that has understanding and with mind constantly held firm, the senses will be like the good horses of the chariot driver. The senses by nature reach outward to their objects of enjoyment. They lead the soul astray (*pramathini*). When the mind runs after the roving senses, it carries away the understanding, even as the wind carries away a ship on the waters, says the *Gita*.¹⁶ He should, therefore, bring the senses under the control of his *manas* and the *manas* itself under the control of the *buddhi* 'understanding'. Like the tortoise that draws in its legs he should withdraw his senses from contact with their objects.¹⁷ The ideal man of the *Gita* is *yuktendriyah* 'one whose senses are controlled'. Both Kautilya's *Arthashastra* and the *Manusmṛti* emphasize

¹². *Maitri Up.* ii. 6.

¹³. *Katha Up.* ii. 6.

¹⁴. *ibid.*, ii. 6.

¹⁵. *ibid.*, iii. 3-9.

¹⁶. *Gita*, ii. 60; 67; iii. 34.

¹⁷. *ibid.*, ii. 58; 59; 61; 68; iii. 40-42.

the importance of sense-control in the case of kings.¹⁸ The practice of withdrawing one's senses from contact with their objects, termed *pratyahara*, is the third of the eight stages of yoga discipline in the classical system of Yoga.¹⁹

Though this is the prevailing view of the *Bhagavadgita*, there is also seen another view which implies that the human will is powerless to withstand the pull of the psycho-physical person.²⁰ According to Hindu thought, *prakrti* 'matter' consists of three *gunas* 'elements' - *sattva*, a noble, magnanimous trait, *rajas*, an aggressive passionate nature and *tamas* a lethargic, dull nature. All things material, including the human body, have varying proportions of these three *gunas*. These are, as it were, our inherited tendencies. And man's response to life is in accordance with the *gunas* that make up his psycho-physical body. Lord Krishna, in the *Bhagavadgita*, says that Arjuna being a *ksatriya*, a member of the royal caste, would surely participate in the Bharata battle, despite his disinclination then. The elements that make up his *ksatriya* character will make him fight, he says.²¹ Here we see the beginnings of that dichotomy of the human personality that characterizes most of Hindu philosophy, which relegates the thinking, willing and feeling elements of man - the cognitive, the conative and the emotive aspects - to the realm of matter while the soul remains a colourless, luminous self. Nevertheless, the importance given to *yoga* in Hindu ethical thinking would mean that the human will can and does control the mind, feelings and the body.

The foregoing views of the soul's relationship with matter are echoed in Hindu literature in Tamil. The senses are compared to horses, elephants, and even demons that lead men astray. They are like warring elephants, like a five-headed serpent, like flames in a forest glade, like vultures, like a mirage that allures etc.²² Worldly life is deluding. Saints Manikkavacakar, Pattinattar and Tayumanavar compare life to the experience of being caught in a storm-tossed ocean amidst the dangers of sharks such as

¹⁸. *Arthasastra*, trans. R. Sharmasastri Mysore (1965) p. 10-12; G. Buhler, *Laws of Manu*, Sacred Books of the East (SBE), vol. 25, ii. 88-100; vii. 44.

¹⁹. *Yoga Sutra* of Patanjani, Sacred Books of the Hindus, vol. IV, part I, Allahabad (1910), ii. 29, 54.

²⁰. *Gita*, iii. 5, 27, 33; v. 14; vii. 20; ix-8; xii - 20, 29; xviii - 40.

²¹. *ibid.*, xviii. 59.

²². *Tiruvacakam of Manikkavacakar* (9th century A.D.) Trans. Pope, G.U., London, (1910) p. 96, 97, 183, 189.

the senses.²³

- ²³. *Tiruvachakam of Saint Manikkavachakar*, trans. K.M. Balasubramaniam, Madras. (1958) p. 61.

My forlorn self was tossed upon the billows broad
 Of sorrows great within the mighty ocean of births
 Without a single hold or prop, when violent storm of maids
 Who have reddened, fruit-like mouths whirled and wildered me
 And caught betwixt the jaws of mighty shark of lust
 Oftentimes I thought and thought, 'In future what's the way
 I should seek for my release' and then did seize the Raft
 Of the Mystic Letters Five and floated on the waves
 O Primal One, didst thou disclose to me, a brutal soul
 A fertile haven which has neither origin nor end.

Saint Pattinathupillai : a Saiva mystic of the 10th century A.D.

Pattinathupillaiar Tiruppaadalgal, Part-II, Madras, (1990). p. 33 -
 34. My translation:

I had loaded in the boat, my body,
 An Evil cargo of foolish conduct, deluding lies and
 A host of sorrows,
 And was pushed from its mooring-place by the
 Sailors that are my karma towards the harbour
 Of the city that is called a mother's womb.
 While setting off the boat was followed by
 The murderous sharks that are the five senses
 Yet onward I sailed into the great sea that is birth.
 Battered by the waves which are sorrows, and reeling,
 I crashed against a big mountain.
 The mast that is self-control broke,
 Tearing the sails that are the unfailing wisdom.
 This body, this boat of delusion, is about to be
 Destroyed.... O Lord Siva, be gracious and
 Lead me to the Eternal Shore.

Saint Tayumanavar:

Ponnambalam Arunachalam, 'Selections from Tayumanavar' in
Studies and Translations, Colombo (1937), p. 234.

Sinking in the dark sea of life, caught in the mouth of the shark "I",

Not only were the world and the body seen as deluding, the body was also referred to as evil, foul-smelling etc. Such descriptions of the body do not commonly appear in Hindu literature in Tamil till after the 6th century A.D. The earliest such reference in Sanskrit is in the late *Maitrayaniya Upanisad* where King Brhadratha describes the body as evil-smelling, impermanent and as a conglomerate of skin, bone, mucus, phlegm etc.²⁴ This trend of thought is probably due to the ascendancy of Buddhism and Jainism in the Upanisadic period and later in the north and south of India. Both these religions emphasize the impermanence of the body. The Tamil Buddhist poem, *Manimekalai* (circa 5th century A.D.) contains a description of a cremation ground and gives a gruesome, vivid account of the indignities that befall the body on death.²⁵ The focus of the Saiva saints of South India of the 6th century and later, was not so much on the impermanence of the body. In their eagerness to be united with their God, they grieve that they are saddled with a deluding, evil body. They long to be rid of their body which is described in terms such as 'the body of pain', 'the bag of worms', 'the leaking butt with nine apertures etc.'²⁶

tossed by the waves of the good and evil deeds, dashed again and again by the hurricane of love of woman's rosy lips, lotus breasts, the river of ceaseless desire rushing, roaring as though the celestial river had overflowed, the ship deserted by its master, wisdom, in agony of perplexity, shedding fountains of tears, in fear of the coming of the pirates of death. Oh wilt thou have mercy on poor me, that I may reach the shore of freedom

²⁴ i. 3.

²⁵ *Manimekalai*, Madras (Paari Puttaka Nilaiyam. 1961) vi. 92 - 117.

²⁶ Pope, *op.cit.* p. 69; 74; 235; 236; 241; 291 *Pattinathuppillaiar Tiruppaadalgal*, *op.cit.* part II, p. 76. My translation.

Lord Ekampa, alas, I have gone around
Loving and cherishing this filthy body,
This abode of lust, this bag full of holes
Wrapped in flesh, this leather bag that guzzles rice,
This impermanent, despicable thing, full of wind;

Pampatticcittar (1400-1450 A.D) in Kamil Zvelebil, *Tamil Literature in A History of Indian Literature*, ed Jan, Gonda, vol. x, fasc. 1, Wiesbaden (1974) p. 57.

Pus and filth and thick red blood and fat

Two lines of thinking are to be discerned in post-Upanisadic Hindu philosophy in regard to the body and the world. The Advaita as expounded by Sankara sees no purpose in the association of the soul and body. The association is a *bhrama* 'mistake' or 'delusion' caused by the beginningless *avidya* 'nescience' the soul is subject to.²⁷ Everything that limits the soul, the body and the organs, is seen as *upadhi* 'limitations'.²⁸ To the soul in the grip of *avidya*, the world and the body seem real. This is the *vyavaharika* 'phenomenal' level of understanding. When *paramarthika* 'true' knowledge dawns however, the soul realizes that the body and the world are not ultimately real but are mere impediments to its own self.

Sankhya, Yoga and the theistic philosophies, however, see a purpose in the association of soul and matter. In these philosophies matter is regarded as real. It is Sankhya that underlines most clearly the dichotomy of spirit and matter. The soul, as we said earlier, is referred to as *purusa* 'male' while matter is spoken of in the feminine as *prakrti*. These two categories, *purusa* and *prakrti* are independent of each other. The association of *purusa* and *prakrti* in the world arena is for two purposes, for *bhoga* 'experience' and *apavarga* 'liberation'.²⁹ The evolution of *prakrti* into the world of experience is for the deliverance of souls; it is done for 'another's sake'.³⁰ The union of matter and the soul is like the partnership of the blind and the lame. The lame *prakrti* helps the blind soul to gain release.³¹ *Prakrti* binds the *purusa* only so long as the soul does not discern its own intrinsic separateness from matter. The moment the soul realizes the truth of its own nature, *prakrti* like a dancer whose dance is over withdraws

All together make up an ugly-smelling pitcher.
 Now if that breaks
 Dog and jackal and large goblins and hawks
 Will cry - It belongs to us
 And they will gobble it.

See also V.S. Senkalvarayapillai, *Tevara Oli Neri*, part II, Madras, (1962), section 170, 'The Body' and *Tiruvacaka Oli Neri*, Madras, (1917) section iv. 52.

²⁷ P. Deussen, *The System of the Vedanta*, Chicago (1912) p. 53, 299.

²⁸ *ibid.* p. 302-4; *Vedanta Sutras*, Sankara's commentary, SBE vol. 34, p. xxvi.

²⁹ *Sankhya Karika* of Isvarakrsna, ed. Henry Thomas, Colebrooke, Bombay (1924) verse 21. See also *Yoga Sutra*, *op.cit.* 18; M. Hiriyanna, *Outlines of Indian Philosophy*, London (1932) p. 274, 283.

³⁰ *Sankhya Karika*, *op.cit.* verse 59.

³¹ See Gandapada's comment on *Sankhya-Karika*, verse 21.

from the scene.³² 'Nature like a gentle woman once aware that she had been seen does not again expose herself to the gaze of the soul.'³³

Kaivalya 'isolation' is the goal of Yoga discipline. In a simile that is familiar in philosophical literature, the *Yogasutra* compares the soul to a crystal placed near a red flower. Like the crystal reflecting the colour of the flower, the soul in association with matter imagines that itself is changing and dynamic like *prakriti*.³⁴

There is also in Tamil literature another line of thought that regards human birth as a rare gift. Says Poetess Avvaiyar,

'If you should ask what is rare,
O bearer of the sharp spear!
Rare, rare indeed is human birth.
Rarer still is birth without blindness,
A hunchback, deafness or sexless.'³⁵

In the humanistic philosophy of the *Tirukkural*, the emphasis is not so much on the life hereafter as on the life here on earth. Despite the fact that life is fleeting, life on earth with the blessing of home, family, friend and neighbour is regarded as joyous. Man is, therefore, urged to live nobly as befits someone distinguished from the rest of brute creation and even nature, being endowed with the gift of discrimination.³⁶

In the philosophy of the Siddha mystics (circa 7th - 17th centuries A.D.) again the body is regarded as a means of liberation. The Siddhas valued the body as the

³². *ibid.* verse 61.

³³. *ibid.* verse 70.

³⁴. *Yoga Sutra* i. 41. A similar simile occurs in Saiva Siddhanta literature. see Gordon Matthews, *Sivananabodham*, Oxford (1948), p. 20-21.

³⁵. My translation. 'Avvaiyar comes in the pre-Pallava or Sangam age, she also comes as a contemporary of Cuntarar of the Pallava age and again comes to live in the age of Ottakkuttar of the later Chola age. Perhaps this may be due to the identity of names being mistaken for an identity of personalities of different ages.' T.P. Meenakshisundaran, *A History of Tamil Literature*, Annamalainagar (1965), p. 133-5.

³⁶. Ed. K.M. Balasubramaniam, Madras (1962) verses 621, 627, 728. Also Maheswari Arulchelvam, *A Study of the Tamil Tirukkurali in The Sri Lanka Journal of the Humanities*, vol. XVI, nos. 1 & 2 (1990), p. 12-13.

temple of God. Siddhas of later times do not refer to the worship of God in temples. The Siddhas also believed that the soul (*uyir*) without the body would perish even as the body without life does. They were very much concerned, therefore, to preserve the body. Their obsession with alchemy and medicine reflect 'their dream of eternal youth and splendid health' and their belief that one could avoid the five limitations that the body is subject to, namely, 'grey hair' (*narai*), dim vision (*tirai*) old age (*muuppu*), disease (*nay*) and death (*maranam*). Says Saint Tirumular (circa 7th century A.D.) in his *Tirumantiram*.³⁷

'If the body is lost, the soul is lost
It would not attain true knowledge.
I learnt the truth of nurturing the body;
In nurturing the body, I nurtured the soul.

I once thought that the body was evil.
I then saw the Eternal within the body.
Seeing that the Pure One (the Lord) resided in the body
I now cherish the body.

The mind is the sanctum sanctorum;
The body of flesh is the outer temple;
To the magnificent Lord the mouth is the sacred entrance.
To these who have clarity of vision,
The soul is the Sivalinga.
The misleading sensations are the
Five great crystal lights'.³⁸

In Tantrism which came into vogue around the fifth century A.D., 'the human body acquired an importance without precedent in India's spiritual history.' The aim of Tantrism is to transcend the polarity of spirit and matter and to achieve oneness in life itself. It seeks to by-pass death by transmuting the perishable body into a 'divine body'. To achieve this end, Tantrism advocates a 'total experience of life', even the use of promiscuous sex as a means as in some Tantric sects called *Vamacari* 'left-handed'.³⁹

³⁷. Madras: The South India Saiva Siddhanta Publishing Society Ltd., (1942) 704-705; See also verses 706-719; Kamil Zvelebil, 'Cittar, An Enigma' in *The Smile of Murugan*, Leiden (1973) p. 218-236.

³⁸. *ibid.* 1792. trans. Meenakshisundaran, *op.cit.* p. 68.

³⁹ M. Winternitz, *History of Indian Literature*, vol. I, part II, Calcutta (1963), p. 518-532; Jan Gonda, *Hindu Tantric and Sakta Literature in A History of Indian Literature*, vol. ii, fasc. 2, Wiesbaden (1981), p. 1-2; Agehananda Bharati, *The Tantric Tradition*, London (1965) p. 244, 264-266.

In the theism of Vaisnavism and Saivism, *prakṛti* is not the dynamic *prakṛti* of Sankhya. Instead it is subject to the Lord. The souls and matter are to the Lord, Isvara, as the body is to the Soul. Isvara 'controls, supports and utilizes' them for his own ends.⁴⁰ The Lord it is who initiates the evolution of *prakṛti* as the world of matter to provide an arena in which the souls may work out their past karma. And the Lord himself equips them with bodies according to their karma. The body is to the soul like a horse to its rider.⁴¹ This association with matter does initially obstruct the soul's vision of the Lord, according to the Visistadvaita of Ramanuja.⁴²

In the Saiva Siddhanta philosophy as reflected in the songs of the South Indian Saiva saints and the later doctrines of the school, the association of *maya* matter is part of God's purpose to liberate the soul from the *pasa* 'fetter' of *anava* 'egoism'. According to the Saiva Siddhanta the soul is fettered from eternity with the 'fetter' of *anava*. In order to liberate the soul from *anava*, and to guide it to 'oneness' with Him, God Siva binds the soul in two other 'fettters', *maya* (matter) and *karma*. He makes the soul take birth as a human being with a body and organs which are the products of *maya* matter and places it in a world of *maya* matter. Initially the soul is enticed into tasting the pleasures and pains of the world and body. And then when it is satiated with the world and turns to the Lord, God Siva shows his gracious nature. The association with *maya* then has a dual purpose; it binds and releases. *Maya* is, therefore, compared in Saiva Siddhanta to fuller's earth, which sullies and cleanses.⁴³ The bodily organs bring the soul a knowledge of the world of matter and thus help the soul realize that it can find no ultimate satisfaction in the world or the body. So Saiva Siddhanta literature compares *maya* to a nightlamp that gives a little light till dawn and to spectacles that help the eye to see.⁴⁴

In the Saiva Siddhanta, as we said earlier, *maya* functions under the aegis of God. God it is who uses *maya* to entice and liberate the soul. These two are among God's *pancakṛtya* 'five task' of creation, preservation, destruction, obscuration and grace. The first three refer to the periodical creation and dissolution of the world. The

⁴⁰. Hirianna, *op. cit.* p. 399.

⁴¹. S. Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*. vol. I, 2nd ed. London (1929) p. 685-691.

⁴². 11th century A.D.

⁴³. *Civananacittiyar* in Maikanda Saatiram Patinaangu, MSB part I, Madras (1969), ii. 52. *Civananacittiyar* is one of the fourteen doctrinal works of Saiva Siddhanta philosophy, composed about 1253 A.D.

⁴⁴. Matthews *Sivananabodham*, *op. cit.* p. 38; *Tiruvarutpayan* in Pope, *op. cit.* p. xxxv; *Tiruvarutpayan* in MSB vol. II, ii. 10.

fourth and fifth functions, obscuration and grace, are peculiar to Saiva Siddhanta.⁴⁵ God as lord of *maya*, deliberately associates the soul with matter; this is His function of 'obscuration'. He then liberates; this is grace'. These five functions of God are symbolized in the form as the dancing Siva, Nataraja. The foot trampling the demon symbolizes 'obscuration', the pushing of the soul into entanglement with matter. The lifted foot with the left lower hand pointing it, implies that the grace of liberation is to be had only at the foot of the Lord.⁴⁶

This is an eternal dance. Souls are innumerable and the process of entanglement and liberation goes on eternally. *Maya* under God's direction binds and liberates souls eternally. She is the eternal Eve.

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⁴⁵. *Civananacittiyar*, i. 37, 47; v. 7: *Unmaivilakkam* MSB vol. II, verse 35-36.

⁴⁶. M. Dhavamony, *Love of God according to Saiva Siddhanta*, Oxford (1971), p. 263, 'Obscuration keeps souls on the deserved course of their karma. ... in order to give them a taste for the pleasures of the senses.....'. *Unmaivilakam* in MSB, vol. II. verse 36 interprets 'obscuration' thus: '... his feet on the ground presses down ... lest the *malam* gain power (Dhavamony, *op.cit.* p. 257); Dhavamony, *op.cit.* p. 135, f.n. 2, '... This dance is variously interpreted as the symbol of the destruction of the world, or of the liberation of souls, or more universally as the source of all movements, the origin of the five cosmic powers (*pancakrya*): production, preservation, destruction, embodiment, and liberation'. The excerpt is as cited by E.M. Arumuka Cettiyar, *Periapuranam*, p. 112; See also John H. Piet, *A Logical Presentation of the Saiva Siddhanta Philosophy*, Madras, (1952), p. 117; A.K. Coomaraswamy, *The Dance of Shiva*, New York (1957), p. 71, translates *Tirumantiram* verses

'His form is everywhere: all pervading in His dance
 Chidambaram is everywhere, everywhere is His dance:
 As Shiva is all and omnipresent
 Everywhere is Shiva's gracious dance made manifest.
 His five-fold dances are temporal and timeless.
 His five-fold dances are His Five Activities.
 By His Grace He performs the five acts,
 This is the sacred dance of Uma-Sahaya.
 He dances with Water, Fire, Wind and Ether.
 Thus our Lord dances ever in the court.