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Conceptualizing Viraśaiva in Śaivāgam

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Abstract

In the Indian tradition, Veda and Āgama have equal Importance and equal authority. 'Āgama is that sacred lore which is originated from the Maheśvara and which has come down through the tradition of teachers. Āgama-s are called 'Tantra' also. 'Āgama' is derived from the root "gamlṛ gatau" etc. The twenty-eight Śaivāgama-s. Āgama-s have two parts, each called Pūrvabhāga and Uttarabhāga. Right from ancient times, some religious Samskāras have been prescribed in Viraśaivism for attaining eligibility for the worship of God. God has granted man the capacity to speak and He has also given knowledge in accordance with his Samskāra. Sivalinga makes the person eligible to attain *mokṣ*. Two types of Viraśaiva Samskāras have been mentioned. Ten Samskāras are prescribed for Viraśaivas. Thus, Śiva is all-pervading, the master of all and destroyer too. Śiva and Parvatī are described as the parents of the universe. Śaivagama texts are those which are common to all the other sects. Except the deity, there is nothing different from the social and ethical values of the other texts. Viraśaivism is only for the integration and welfare of the universe.

Key words : Veda, Āgama, Tantra ,Viraśaiva, Sivāgam

In the Indian tradition, Veda and Āgama have equal Importance and equal authority. The tradition is that Īśvara is the common source

for both Veda and Āgama. Hence, they are equal in importance and authority. A Smṛti—Statement cited by Śrīpati Paṇḍita, highlights this Common authorship of veda and Āgama :

विमर्शरूपिणी शक्तिः शिवस्य परमात्मनः ।

निगमागमरूपा स्यात् सर्वतत्त्वप्रकाशिनी ॥¹

“We do not find any difference between Veda And Āgama.” Further emphasised that both Veda and Āgama are equally authoritative for all religious practices such as Bhasmoddhūlaṇa, Tripuṇḍradhāraṇa, Rudrākṣadhāraṇa, Lingārcana, etc for the Mantra-s such as those of pañca-brahmans, Praṇavañcākī etc., and for the Philosophical principles such as pati, Paśu and Pāśa.

आगमो नाम आ महेश्वराद् गुरुपारम्पर्यागतं शस्त्रम् ।²

‘Āgama is that sacred lore which is originated from the Maheśvara and which has come down through the tradition of teachers.

‘Āgama-s are called ‘Tantra’ also. The term ‘tantra’ is derived from the root “tanu vistāre” (tan-to stretch) with the addition of the suffix “tran”. It means ‘that which extends (knowledge)’. Ajitāgama keeps this meaning along with the sense of ‘trāna’, i.e., protection assigned to the syllable ‘tra’. "Tanoti trāyate eti tantram" :

तनोति विपुलानर्थान् तत्त्वमन्त्रसमाश्रितान् ।

त्राणं च कुरुते पुंसां तेन तन्त्रमिति स्मृतम् ॥³

‘Āgama’ is derived from the root "gamlṛ gatau" (gam- to go) preceded by the preposition "āñ". The preposition "āñ" gives the meaning of what is handed down to posterity' i.e., 'tradition'. The root

¹ Śrīkarabhāṣya, Vol. I, 1.1.3, P. 70.

² Pāśupatasūtra, quoted in ‘Karnāṭaka Kalā Kulaśaivara Itihāsa’.

³ Ajitāgama : Kriyāpāda, 1.115

"gam" which gives the meaning of 'gamana' (movement), conveys also the sense of 'knowledge'. 'Āgama' means 'that knowledge which has come down in tradition', i.e., 'that knowledge which is refined through tradition'. 'Āgama' as ā, ga and ma. Each of these syllables conveys a special meaning. Here 'ā' stands for 'āgatam', 'ga' for 'gatam' and 'ma' for 'matam'. 'Agatam' meaning 'that which has come from' refers to the original source; 'gatam' meaning 'that which has entered into' stands for the recipient; and 'matam' meaning 'what has been approved of' refers to the upholder.

The twenty-eight Śaivāgama-s are : 1. Kāmika, 2. Yogaja, 3. Acintya, 4. Kāraṇa, 5. Ajita, 6. Dīpta, 7. Sūkṣma, 8. Sahasra, 9. Amśumāna, 10. Suprabheda, 11. Vijaya, 12. Niḥśvāsa, 13. Svāyambhuva, 14. Anala, 15. Vīra, 16. Raurava, 17. Makuṭa, 18. Vimala, 19. Candra-jñāna, 20. Bimba, 21. Prodgīta, 22. Lalita, 23. Siddha, 24. Śarvokta, 25. Santāna, 26. Parameśvara, 27. Kiraṇa and 28. Vātula. Among these, ten Āgama-s from Kamika to Suprabheda belong to the group called 'Śivabheda' and the next eighteen from Vijaya to Vātula belong to the group called 'Rudrabheda.' Each Śaivāgama has one to sixteen Upāgama-s. The total number of Upāgama-s is two hundred and eight. This shows that the Śaivāgama literature was quite vast in extent.

Āgama-s have two parts, each called Pūrvabhāga and Uttarabhāga. The Pūrvabhāga of each Āgama deals with the practices and philosophy of Śaiva-s in general and the Uttarabhāga expounds those of the Vīraśaiva-s in particular. Sri Siddhāntaśikhamaṇi makes this point very clear :

सिद्धान्तख्ये महातन्त्रे कामिकाद्ये शिवोदिते ।

निर्दिष्टमुत्तरे भागे वीरशैवमतं परम् ॥⁴

The Vīraśaiva doctrine is especially expounded in the Uttarabhāga of the great Tantra called Siddhānta which consists of Kāmikāgama, etc., and which is taught by Śiva. This is corroborated by the fact that references to almost all Śaivāgama-s are found in the Śrīkarabhāṣya of Śrīpati Paṇḍita and the Vacana-s of Basaveśvara, Cannabasaveśvara and other Śaraṇa-s. It is unfortunate that all the Āgama-s are not available now. Even those that are available are not available in full. Only Pūrvabhāga-s are available in the case of some and Uttarabhāga-s are available in the case of others extant. Only in the case of a few, both the parts are available.⁵

Right from ancient times, some religious Samskāras have been prescribed in Vīraśaivism for attaining eligibility for the worship of God. These Samskāras are explained in religious treatises such as Vīrāgama, Chandrajñānāgama, Makutāgama, Parameshwarāgama, Dashakarma Vidhi, Vīraśaivadharmasindhu, Vīraśaiva poorvaprayogaratnam, etc.

Every being in the world may not have any Samskāras at the time of birth. But in course of time, this being goes on imbibing different Samskāras gradually from time to time.

God has granted man the capacity to speak and He has also given knowledge in accordance with his Samskāra. In this background, we can study how Śaivāgamas have prescribed certain Samskāras.

⁴ *Srī Siddhāntaśikhāmaṇī*, 5.14

⁵ Vide : “*Śaivāgamagalu* : Ondu Adhyayana” by the present author, pp. 10-24 for details about the availability or otherwise of the Saivāgama-s.

Samskāra is a special excellence of the body and the soul created by suitable rites. Samskāra is of two kinds. Firstly, it may be aimed at creating eligibility for certain functions. For instance, Śivadīkṣā is a Samskāra which makes a person eligible for the study of Veda, worship of Śivaliṅga, etc. Through this it makes the person eligible to attain *mokṣa*. Secondly it may be meant for the eradication of sins committed. For example the samskāras like Lingadhāraṇa are meant for the eradication of the sins committed in the past lives.

Two types of Veerashaiva Samskāras have been mentioned : —
1. Dhārmika 2. Sāmpradāyika. There is a statement in Vīrashaivāgamas as “गभष्टिमे कृता दीक्षा।” “Accordingly, Lingadhāraṇa for the womb during the eighth month is prescribed. Besides this, Vīrashaiva *dīkṣā* and Shivamedhā (Antyeṣṭi) are the religious Samskāras prescribed in the Śaivāgamas such as Chandrajñānāgama, Parameshwarāgama, Mukutāgama, Sūkshmāgama, etc., These three Samskāras come under Dhārmika type. Others are Sāmpradāyika.

Ten Samskaras are prescribed for Vīrashaivas. Some scholars speak of 12 Samskāras. These Samskāras have the impact of Vedic Samskāras. The ten Samskaras are :

1. Garbhādhāna 2. Pumsavana 3. Simanta 4. Jātakarma (Lingadhāraṇa, Nāmakāraṇa come under Jātakarma) 5. Annaprashana 6. Chaulakarna 7. Aksharābhyāsa 8. Dīkṣā 9. Vivāha and 10. Antyasamskāra (Sivamedha). Pumsavana and Simanta, these two Samskāras, are meant for women. The other eight are meant for both men and women. There is another special Samskāra which is the Dīkṣa performed to the womb during the eighth month of pregnancy.

Śiva is powerful master of all, one in all, as depicted by Vedas. In Mantra—

“ॐ नमो हिरण्यबाहवे—अम्बिकापतये उमापतये पशुपतये नमः—ऊर्ध्वरेतं विरूपाक्षं विश्वरूपाय वै नमो नमः—नमः शम्भवे च मयोभवे च नमः शंकराय च मयस्कराय च नमः शिवाय च शिवतराय च ।

नमो हिरण्यबाहवे सेनान्ये दिशां च पतये नमो नमो वृक्षेभ्यो हरिकेशेभ्यः पशुनां पतये नमो—स्थपतये वृक्षाणां पतये” इत्यादि।⁶

Thus, Śiva is all-pervading, the master of all and destroyer too. Vīraśaiva is a branch of Śivadvaīta only which was expounded by Basava in 12th century.

“ऊर्ध्वाय नमः । ऊर्ध्वलिङ्गाय नमः । हिरण्याय नमः । हिरण्यलिङ्गाय नमः ।
—भवाय नमः । भवलिङ्गाय नमः—

..... so on. The devotion for Lord Shiva is found in post-Vedic literature too. The Sūtras of Pāṇini, are named after Maheshwara which describe the ‘Sabda’ prādurbhāva’ from Maheshwara’s ‘damaruka’.

“नृत्तावसाने नटराजराजो ननाद ढक्कां नवपञ्चवारम् ।

उद्धर्तुकामः सनकादिसिद्धान् एतद्विमर्शो शिवसूत्रजालम् ॥⁷

Kalidasa, the great poet, describes the manifestation of Shiva in various forms. In his Raghuvamśa the Ardhanarisvara tattva is described.

“वागर्थाविव सम्पृक्तौ वागर्थप्रतिपत्तयो ।

जगतः पितरौ वन्दे पार्वतीपरमेश्वरौ ॥⁸

⁶ कृष्णयजुर्वेदः ।

⁷ अष्टाध्यायी ।

⁸ Rigveda. 1.1

Here, Śiva and Parvatī are described as the parents of the universe. In Sakuntalam Śiva's Ashtamurthi rupa is described.

“या सृष्टिः स्रष्टुराद्या वहति विधिहुतं या हविर्या च होत्री
ये द्वे कालं विधत्तः श्रुतिविषयगुणा या स्थिता व्याप्य विशम् ।
यामाहुः सर्वबीजप्रकृतिरिति यया प्राणिनः प्राणवन्तः
प्रत्यक्षाभिः प्रपन्नस्तनुभिरवतु वस्ताभिरष्टाभिरीशः ॥⁹

In Kumarasambhava, 'Śiva' is described as Mahayogin.

“मनो नवद्वारनिषिद्धवृत्ति हृदि व्यवस्थाप्य समाधिवश्यम् ।
यमक्षरं क्षेत्रविदो विदुस्तयात्मानमात्मन्थवलोकयन्तम् ॥¹⁰

According to the descriptions the characteristics of Siva or Mahadeva are : he was a powerful, wrathful and impetuous god but geneous and bountiful and spared nothing.

The propagator of Vīraśaivism is Basava; who is the son of Madiraja, a Brahmana of Aradhya sect. His story is given in Basavapurana published in 1905, at Poona.

Sthala → Lingasthala → Angasthala

Lingasthala is Śiva, Angasthala is adorer Sakti-kala and Bhakti : Kala to Śiva, Bhakti to individual.

The linga is Śiva himself. The lingasthala is of three kinds : (1) Bhavalinga, (2) Pranalinga, (3) Isthalinga. The first is simple 'Sat'. The second is to be apprehended by mind which is with parts and without parts. The third is with parts. Nothing but Vigharādhana.

⁹ Sakuntalam. 1-1

¹⁰ Kumarasambhavam 3-30,-31, 3-50.

There are many other miscellaneous ethical values mentioned in the Śaivāgama literature. Out of them some are negative and the others are positive. Thus, one has to avoid certain things or accept certain things while following the rules of ideal behaviour. The consecrated student is advised to avoid the act of cheating (*māya*), jealousy (*mātsarya*) fatuousness (*mada*) (Mṛgendrāgama, Kriyāpāda, 8.236). Similarly, one should avoid blaming Lord Śiva, teachers, fire etc. (*the same*, Kriyāpāda, 8.170, Śaivāgamapratibhāṣāmañjarī 8.28). Among the positive aspects of ethical behaviour, we may mention the use of ashes (Śivatattvaratnākara, VIII, 6.6ft), carrying the emblem of Śiva (*the same*, IX. 8.70ft), feeding of Brāhmaṇas, couples, etc. (Rauravāgama, Kriyāpāda 75.127 ff), giving gifts (Śaivāgamapari-bhāṣāmañjarī IV, 41ft) etc.

The hierarchy among the castes is at times denied. Thus while praising the sacred ashes (*bhasman*) and Rudrākṣa, it is said that whether a Brāhmaṇa or a Caṇḍāla with good or bad qualities, one who uses these things is undoubtedly as good as the Lord Śiva himself

brāhmaṇo vapī caṇḍālaḥ suguṇo durguṇopi vā |
rudrakṣasamiśraḥ Śiva eva na samśayaḥ ||¹¹

We can say that the social and ethical values mentioned in the Śaivāgama texts are those which are common to all the other sects. Except the deity, there is nothing different from the social and ethical values of the other texts. This indicates the basic unity of all the religious sects in Hinduism which gives freedom and choice of worship of a particular deity within its polytheistic liberalism. These values are based on the tolerance and love for all the human beings and indicate a lenient and sober worldview.

¹¹ Rauravāgama Kriyāpāda, 63. 27-28

Thus, the idea of Vīraśaivism is only for the integration and welfare of the universe.

This paper may be concluded with a stanza of Shankarabha-gavatpada.

“ आराधयामि मणिसंनिभमात्मलिङ्गं
मायापुरीहृदय पंकज संनिविष्टम् ।
श्रद्धानदी विमलचित्तजलाभिषेकै-
र्नित्यं समाधिकुसुमैरपुनर्भवाय ॥¹²

¹² *Minor works of Shankaracharya - p. 360.*

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