

# Sabda Pramāna in Saiva Siddhānta

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**ABSTRACT:** This research paper on *Sabda Pramāna* in *Saiva Siddhānta* deals with the stand taken by *Saiva Siddhānta* in determining the place of Scriptural Evidence in Indian Philosophy as an error free means of Knowing. The Veda gives great importance to *Sabda Pramāna*. Excepting the Anti – Vedic (*Avaidika*) *Darsanas* – *Lokāyata*, *Buddhism*, *Jainism* - all other philosophical systems (*darsanas*) accept the suzerainty (overlordship) of the *Veda*. As these follow the *Veda* they are called, *Vaidic darsanas*. *Saiva Siddhānta* too, follow the footpath of the *Veda*, it is named '*Suddha Advaita Saiva Siddhānta*'. Anyhow, it accepts the *Āgama* as stronger to the *Veda*. *Veda* is for those who query about this world - its wherefore and why – After receiving enlightenment on getting answers to these questions, it becomes the soul as the recipient of *Sakti* and is 'impressed' by it. But many *Vaidic darsanas* do not admit *Āgama* as authentic verbal testimony. Some of these *darsanas* do not accept *Veda* as created/delivered by God but eternal. *Sivajñāna Siddhiyār* and other *Siddhāntic* works accept both *Veda* and *Āgama* as *Pramānas* and present rejoinders to the statements of *Mīmāṃsakas*. *Sivāgrayogi* and *Sivajñāna Munivar* and such later commentators are in the forefront of refuting them. Linguistically - based arguments are put forward for proving their stand. What the *Sastras* present in compact argument form, these commentators elaborate at length. This method is also questioned here by the present writer. The recent researchers on *Saiva* point of view of *Sabda Pramāna*, the acceptability of the arguments are not questioned by valid review. This article, critically views the statement that *Āgama* is at par with *Veda* as the Scriptural means of Knowing and also try to clarify whether the *Saiva* view of the stand that *Veda* is non – eternal is a valid argument.

**Key words :** *Saiva Siddhānta*, *Pramāna*, *Veda* and *Āgama*

## Introduction

Of the numerous Indian Philosophic systems, *Saiva Siddhānta* has a special importance. It is the essence of the Vedas – their peaks known as Upanishads, combined with the wisdom of the *Saiva Āgamas*. The word *Saiva Siddhānta* consists of two parts – *Saiva*, an adjective, meaning 'related to God Siva' and '*Siddhānta*', connected with *Sidh* – realized, fulfilled.

The eternal advaitic relationship indicated between '*Pasu*' (soul), '*Pathi*' (God=Siva) and the triple '*Malas*' (impurities) – *Ānava*, *Karma* and *Māyā* should be realized. This is the *summum bonum* of life on earth not contradicting the *Vedas* and *Āgamas*.

The Indian schools of thought did not arise because of the "Love of Wisdom." Their final aim is realizing Truth. *Saiva Siddhānta* is not an exception to this rule. Thiruvalluvar calls it Knowledge of the Truth.

<sup>1</sup> “எப்பொருள் எத்தன்மைத் தாயினும் அப்பொருள்

மெய்ப்பொருள் காண்பதறிவு” (Thirukkural 5 : 355)

(“To those who severance seek from being’s varied strife,  
flesh is burthen sore, what then other bonds of life”

<sup>2</sup> “கற்றீண்டு மெய்ப்பொருள் கண்டார்” (Thirukkural 5 : 356)

(“Having learnt the Truth (Sat) and realized in their inner eye”)

<sup>3</sup> “எப்பொருள் யார் யார் வாய்க் கேட்பினும் அப்பொருள்

மெய்ப்பொருள் காண்பதறிவு” (Thirukkural 3 : 423)

(“Though learning none hath he, yet let him/her always, in weakness this shall prove a staff and stay.”

“Knowledge of the True” means: the causes of birth and the knowledge of release are realized without doubt and devoid of misunderstood doubts. *Upadesa* should be had from the mouth of a guru, with Experience of Truth.

Indian Philosophy embodies ten means of Knowledge for realizing the Truth. *Saiva Siddhānta* compact them into three Instruments of Knowledge, namely, *Pratyaksha* (Perception), *Anumāna* (Inference) and *Āgama* or *Sabda* (Verbal testimony). The followers of *Nyāyasastra* (*Naiyāyikas*) define *Pramāna* as that which is the means of right (true) knowledge. It is called *Pramā*. *Saiva Siddhāntins* reduce even the three to a final one – namely, *Atma chit – sakti* (the soul’s intelligence energy). It is free from errors and doubts. *Pramāna* is translated into ‘*Alavai*’. The ordinary man utilizes different units to measure solids, liquids etc. The parallel units in contemporary life are Kilogram, ton, metre, Kilometre etc.. What we consider true objects observed in our daily life are measured thus. Similarly the *Pramānas* used by logicians are tabulated by philosophers.

*Sabda Pramāna* is superior to *Pratyaksha* and *Anumāna* in supplying true or error less knowledge. The knowledge we obtained through perception and inference, can be definitely ascertained with *Sabda* (Scriptural). Having obtained knowledge of this world by perception and inference, we test them by Scriptural Knowledge that is superior to them.

This *Sabda Pramāna*, undermines the special nature of the first two and help the soul to realize the Scriptural truths. This becomes possible because of the True nature of the *Vedas*. *Sabda Pramāna* is acceptable to many of the Indian Philosophies. But what should be included in this *Pramāna* is a matter of difference? Doubts arise among schools. This *Pramāna* discusses the problems such as: Is *Veda* eternal? Or is it also ephemeral? Is *Āgama* equal to *Veda* as an actual *Pramāna*? Or is it of a different plane of Truth. Strong differences are

observed among the followers of Vedānta philosophy, especially the Sankarites accept only *Veda* as eternal and true. *Āgamas*, *Saiva*, *Sakta*, *Vaishna* – Are given only a secondary place as *smrithis*. *Vira Saivam* holds *Sivagamas* as superior to the *Veda*. So it is considered *Avaitika* (Anti-Vedic) by the *Āgama* – followers. *Saiva Siddhānta* accepts both *Veda* and *Āgama* as equal *Sabda Pramānas*. This research covers the *Sabda Pramāna* in all its aspects and leads the reader to the view of the *Saiva Siddhāntins* and helps them to arrive at their own conclusion.

## Materials and Methods

This research paper has utilized primary printed sources such as

1. *Paushkara Āgama Bāshyam* (Ambalavana Navalur of Sithankerny, Jaffna), 1925, Chidambaram,
2. *Sivajñāna Siddhiyār* – *Sivāgra Yogi's* commentary
3. The same text with the commentary of *Jñānaprakasa Tambiran*, edited by M.Amarasinga Pulavar of Vannarpannai, Madras Ripon Press, 1889
4. *Sivāgra Yogi's Saiva Paribāshā*, *Sivajñāna Munivar's Sivajñāna Pādiam*, Kazhakam edition, 1926

The secondary printed sources are:

1. Dr.V.Ponnaiya, *Saiva Siddhānta Theory of Knowledge*, Annamalai University, 1952.
2. Dr.V.A.Devasenāpati, *Saiva Siddhānta* as expounded by *Sivajñāna Siddhiyār* and its six commentaries, Madras, 1960.
3. *Saiva Prakāsam* of *Sankara Panditar* of *Neervely*, Kazhakam, 1926 (2<sup>nd</sup> edition Tiruvavaduturai Adheenam, 2010)

This paper followed the descriptive method and *Pūrva Mimamsā*, *Nyāya*, *Sankara Vedhanta* and other systems are touched following comparative and analytical methods.

The hypothesis is that *Veda* and *Āgama* are the supreme *Pramānas*; besides the Tamil works on *Vedāgama* tradition, namely, the twelve *Tirumurais* are also included apart from the fourteen *Siddhānta Sastras*. *Tattva Prakāsam* and other middle – Indian sources are occasionally quoted.

*Vedāgama* may be non-existent in *Kārya* form – not used by a major part of society in practice, they exist in *Kārana* form often read, studied and quoted by traditional scholars and academics.

Now, there is a group of moderns who speak of *Veda* as authoritative, while another minor group defend the place of *Āgama* is more valuable *mūla* texts. There is a rising school of thought in the Jaffna academic circles which probe into the validity of both *Veda* and *Āgama* and place them in prosper perspective with supportive evidence from classics and personal spiritual (direct) experience. That is also occasionally dealt with as an introduction to future researchers.

## Discussion

### *Sabda Pramāna*

The word '*Sabda*', according to MacDonnell's dictionary has: "sound, voice, tone, note, word. Verbal authority as *Pramāna* or source of knowledge. Others include: letter, word, sentence and commentary. Scholars like S.C.Vidyābushan and Keith call '*Sabda*' - 'speech'. Battacharya translates it 'word'. (Krishnarajah 1995:36) *Sabda Pramāna* has different words in Tamil Saiva works: *Āgama Pramānam*, *Urai Alavai*, *Vāymai Chānru*, *Āpta Vākkiyam*: Generally, in Indian philosophy, *Sabda Pramāna* is the standard word used by academic philosophers. In *Saiva Siddhānta*, particularly, "*Sivajñāna Siddhiyār*" used *Āgama Pramānam* as a standard term. (Thiruvilangam 2010, 37) *Aksha Pāda* defines it as "*Āpta Upadesam Sabdah*". (Nandala Sinha 1990, 5) Tamil *Tarka Sangraham* defines *Sabdam* as the word of the *Āptan* (truth – realizer), which is free from errors. (Swami Virpakshananda 1980) *Thāyumānavar* uses this word in his Tenth Decade. "The great word of the *Āptas* that without him not even an atom will move".<sup>2</sup> (*Thāyumānavar Swamikal Pādal*: No Year)

*Appar Swamikal* also uses the phrase '*Āptar moli*'. *Gāngesa* defines *Sabda* as that word which arises from the true meaning is *Sabda Pramāna*. *Upavarsha* defined it as the *Sāstra* – the *Veda sabda* which reveals the knowledge of the Truth of Truths. These truths are not connected with the inferior knowledge we gather through our sense – perception. This is superior knowledge arising from the knowledge attained by *Sabda Pramāna*. In *Saiva Siddhānta* too, *Āgama Pramāna* is defined as the instrument of the feeling of the meaning of the word as activated by *Chit-Sakti* to create in the soul's mental reflection. (Sangara Pandithar 1925 : 33)

### The Qualification of an *Āptan*

As *Sabda Pramāna* is the word of the realized soul we must define who an *Āptan* is. What are his qualities? What are revealed through his words? *Vātsyāyana*, the commentator on *Nyāya Sūtra*, tabulates the qualifications of an *Āptah* (Krishnarajah 1995, 36):



- 1 He should have attained direct/first-hand knowledge, acceptable to such persons
- 2 He should have straight forward aim in gathering knowledge
- 3 He should have the ability to transfer his views to others

*Sivāgrayogi* defines an *Āptah*; “ He, who does not misunderstand the meaning due to delusion and thus convey its meaning erroneously, who perceives the true meaning according to *Sabda Artha* is an *āptah*. Hence, he who is eternally free from Malas, eternally exuberant in *Anand* (Joy), all Knowing, all Doing (*Sarva Karthā*) that Siva is *Parama Āptah* (Supreme *Āptah*). As his words are the *Veda – Āgama*, they are *Āpta Pramānam* - Supreme *Pramāna*. (Suryanarayana Sastri 1982, 43)

A person, who is a specialist in a particular field, can be called an *Āptah*, his words are also *Āptah Vākya*. His knowledge should be Supreme. He should be straight - forward in his statements – never crooked; He expresses himself with Special Knowledge. He is an *Āptah* according to *Vātsyāyana*. (Nandala Sinha 1990, 5). Annambhatta mentions an *Āptah* as a speaker of the truth. *Āptas* may be many but Siva alone is the Supreme *Āptah*, is the standpoint of the *Siddhāntin*. (Swami Virupakshananda 1980, 17).

*Sankara Pandithar* of Neervely defines *Ādi Sruti* – the ancient *Veda* (*Sruti*-that which is heard) as the word of his eternal Pure Being; that Being is all Knowledge (*sarvajñāna*) all-actor (*Sarva Karthā*). Bestower of Grace on all beings (*Sarvānugrahin*), the only Perfect Being free from the triple inner defects – Passion, Anger and Delusion. He is never one – sided, He is *Isvara* (The Lord). He is The Most Meaningful (*Parama+ arthah*). What he presented as The Highest Truth – The Sum Total of Words – that is the *ādi Sruti* what have been collected as *Sruti*. (Sangara Pandithar 1925, 43).

### *Veda – Āgama Pramāna*

We use the words *Sruti*, *Veda*, *Āgama*, *Āmnāya* to denote the Scriptures. *Sruti* means ‘that which is heard’. It is the only instrument to hear the highest meaning (word) heard from *Isvara* (Lord). ‘*Veda*’ means Knowing (not as mere word, but know with the inner faculties). It is the instrument of the highest knowledge. *Āgama* is Knowing perfectly – totally. *Āmnāya* means that traditional text, inherited from the most Ancient *Guru*.

What are included in the *Sabda Pramāna*? The adherents of *Sankara* and *Mandana Misra*, i.e. the followers of *Uttara* and *Purva Mīmāṃsā*s, hold that only *Veda* are meant by the phrase *Sabda Pramāna*. But *Saiva Siddhāntins* hold *Veda* and *Āgama* at par as *Sruti*. To them *Āgama*, too, belongs to *Ādi Sruti*.

Sankara Panditar in his classic “*Saiva Prakāsanam*” (Chapter on ‘*Saiva Sruti Nirūpanam*): “*Siva, the Anādhī Bhagavan* (the Eternal Lord) gracefully bestowed on the Souls, the most Ancient *Sruti* during the First Creation (*Pratama Mahā Srishti*) the *Veda*. It has two divisions – *veda* and *āgama* due to the General (*Sāmānya*) and special nature of their contents.”<sup>3</sup>(Sangara Pandithar 1925, 71) *Siddhiyār* (verse, 19) defines *Āgama* as ‘the Scripture (‘Nool’) presented by The Eternal and Spotless (Lord). *Sivāgrayogi* and *Sivajñāna Munivar* include both *Veda* and *Āgama* alike as *Srutis*. *Sivajñāna Munivar* (2008, 21) quotes a sentence from *Srikanda Bāshyam* to justify his statement that “there is no difference between *Veda* and *Āgama*.” Both have the same authority for a Saivate. <sup>13</sup> *Veda* is general in the sense that those who consider their body is of some importance, they must adhere to *Vedic* injunctions regarding *varna* (caste) and *Asrama* (station of life). *Āgama* is related to those who are anxious for the release of the *Ātmā*.

They have already realized that both good and evil deeds are like gold and iron fetters and the Grace of *Siva Sakti* has pervaded them. Actually, these two, *Veda* and *Āgama*, are the scriptures. All other words (Nool) are named the secondary (‘showing the way’) and tertiary (allied works). The *Veda* is like the *Sutra* which includes several meanings. The *Āgama* is like *Bāshya* (Commentary). The *Veda* commands you to worship all deities for mundane benefits; hence it is general in nature. But the *Āgama*, ordains you to worship *Siva*, the Lord of the *Devas* for release (*mukti*).

*Sivāgrayogi* elucidates the *Siddhiyār* (verse 267) thus: The phrase “*Veda* for the worldly” means those who follow the *Vedic* injunctions for the performance of *yajña* (rites) with the aim of enjoyment of this ephemeral world. They are not interested in the query of Brahman (*Brahma Vichāra*). They are enveloped in darkness. The phrase ‘*Sivāgama* is for the *Saktinipātas*’ means it is meant for those who have mild attachment to the world, received the *Siva dikshas*. They have an understanding of *Siva Dharma*, the triple knowledge of *Pathi*, *Pasu* and *Pāsa*, practice *jñāna* (studying *Saiva Sastras*), *Dyāna* (Yogic Meditation) and try to be in *Samāthi* for mental poise. The epithet “the blameless sense of Vedanta” is purposefully placed here to denote the sense that is not contrary to *Siddhānta*.<sup>14</sup> (Thiruvilangam 2010, 423).

Here following our commentator, *Thiruvilankam* quotes *Thirumūlar*, the grand author of the Tamil *Āgama*, i.e. *Tirumantram*:

“The *Veda* and the *Āgama* are the only scriptures;

One is general and the other, special” (*Tirumantram*, 2397)

Both are the words of the Lord. For the searchers who think they are two ends,

Both are not different; they are non – different.

## The refutations of those who question Āgama' place in Sabdha Pramāna

The *Mīmāṃsakas* consider that the *Vedas* alone are (*Pramāna*) standard works; not *Āgamas*. *Sivāgrayogi* and *Sivajñāna Munivar* question their stand. The *Mīmāṃsakas* state: *Veda* is revealed by One Supreme (*Brahman*). It is undying. The *Smṛiti* passages that proclaim the eternality of the *Veda* have not mentioned its Author. *Veda's* authenticity is not questioned by the elite or the noble. Therefore they are blameless *Pramāna*.

Those who do not accept the *Āgamas* as supreme scriptures put forth the following objections.

1. *Āgamas* are composed by certain authors; therefore they are not – everlasting
2. *Āgamas* have certain errors; or they are not free from errors.
3. Works like *Mahābhārata* that depict the highest goals of life prove their teachings, quoting the *Vedas*. They never quote the *Āgamas*.
4. There are controversial statements in the *Āgamas*.
5. *Purānas* do not approve certain *Āgamas* or *Tantras*; hence they are not eternal.

Examples such as King *Chitrasena* followed the *Pāsupata Tantra* and fell into hell. *Sūtha Samhita* states that the curse of *Gautama* as the cause of following the way of the *Tantra*.

The *Vaidikas* discover the cause of some *brahmins* who follow the *Tantra marga* – they had lost the right and capacity to perform Vedic rites because of their fall. For their economic benefit the tantric works were written. The imaginative story further goes:

*Parvati devi* and *Parameswara* created *Moha Sastra* in the form of *Sākta tantras* and *Sivāgamas*. The *Saivas* do not accept the *Mīmāṃsaka* conclusion that the Eternal *Veda* is without an author. Letters (*Varna*) appear to our ears when uttered and disappear soon. Therefore words formed by letters and sentences formed by words have a beginning and an end. The *Vedic* works are non – eternal. *Siva* revealed the universe in the dual form of word (*Sol*) and object (*Porul*) for the elevation of the souls from ignorance to divine light. In that sense, *Veda* and *Sivāgama* are eternal scriptures. *Sivajñāna Munivar* (2008, 18) states, “From *Lokāyata* to *Veda* are revealed by *Siva* to suit the different grades of souls. *Sūtha Samhita* author's statement is to be construed in this sense.

Regarding the statement that the Noble men did not embrace the *Veda*, *Munivar* says, “If one wants to attain *Swarga* (the abode of *Devas* and ruled by *Indra*) he should perform *Vedic* rites such as *Jyothishtoma* (Praise of Light)

(a soma sacrifice). How it should be conducted is detailed in other *srutis* and *Kalpa Sutras*. Thus, the *Vedic* injunction ‘Perform *Siva Púja*’ is not detailed there. How to perform it are elaborated in *Kāmika* and other *Āgamas*. This is well – explained in the “*Chathurveda Tātparya Samgraha*” of *Haradatta Sivacharyār* (*Sivajñāna Munivar*, 18)

Above all, *Sveda*, *Upamanyu*, *Agastya* and other *Rishis* received *Siva Diksha* and bestowed it on others. So certainly the *Siva Āgamas* were embraced and accepted by the Noble.

As the *Vāma Tantra* and *Pāsúpata Tantra* speak of non – *Vedic rites*, they are not *Pramana* texts.

*Āgamas* are classified into two kinds:

1. *Srauta āgamas* (*Āgamas* affiliated to the *Veda* (*Sruti*))
2. *A-srauta āgamas* (*Āgamas* contrary to *Sruti*)

*Srauta āgamas* support the *Sruti*; while others are meant to delude some type of souls, who are not evolved. These *Vāma*, *Pāsúpata*, *Lākula* and such.

### The *Veda* and *Āgama* as *Srutis*

After the final dissolution of the Universe at the end of a *Kalpa* (*Brahmā*, the Creator’s hundred years’ end) i.e. the end of *Mahā Samhāra*, the creation begins once again. *Parama Sivam*’s Power - *Parasakti* glances at *Kudilai* (*Pranavam*). Her first intention of creation is expressed. *Vedas* and *Āgamas* appear from *Suddha Māyā* in the form of *Nādā* (Eternal sound) and again in the form of *Bindu*. Finally, the “circle” appears. *Parama Siva* takes the form of *Pancha Brahma Mantras* (Five *Mantras* namely – *Ísána*, *Tatpurusha*, *Aghora*, *Vāmadeva*, *Satyojāta*). Now He assumes the two holy forms *Sakala* (Combined with *Kalā*) and *Nishkala* (devoid of *Kalā*). Now his form is known as *Sadā Siva* (The Eternal *Siva*). In this form the four faces *Tatpurusha*, *Aghora*, *Vāmadeva*, *Satyojata* exhibit the four *Vedas* and the *Ísána* exhumes the 28 *Āgamas*.

The *Veda* is propagated, through *Ananta Deva*<sup>5</sup> (Dominic Goodall 2015 : xxviii), to *Brahmā*, the creator. *Pranava* and other ten higher deities, and the another eight beginning with *Maha Sútra*. All these 28 *Āgamas* are subdivided into *Siva Bheda* and *Rudra Bheda*. All were collectively presented to *Ananta*, the first of the eight *Vidyasvaras*. *Ananta* taught it to Sri Kanta *Rudra* the chief of 118 *Rudras*.<sup>6</sup> (*Sivajñāna Munivar*, 113) He in turn, taught it to *Nandi*, who is directed to teach it to *Devas*, *Ganas* and *Sages* (*Munis*). Many of our *Āgamas*, declare the coming

down of the Mantra truth in this manner.

### The General and the Special

The truthfulness of the sentences soars high as they are uttered by men, or gods. The words of *Rishis* cannot be undermined by the words of men because the *Rishis* have broader and deeper vision of Truth. Similarly, the words of the gods and goddesses are superior to those of rishis. The utterances of *Brahma*, the creator is superior to those of other gods (*devas*, or even the King of *devas* – *Indra*). Whereas *Vishnu* can over – ride the words of *Brahma* in this hierarchy of seniority *Siva* and *Sri Rudras* stand supreme - *Siva* reveals the Eternal Word of God. *Sri Rudra* gives expression to parts of it to *Uma* and *Skanda* according to their need at a particular time. The Authority of *Siva's* utterances to higher divinities stand higher than those, to the *rishis*. All *Sastras* that are non – contrary to *Āgamas* are acceptable to the *Saivas*. Others that contradict the *Āgamas* are not valuable. *Mahabharata* states that *Kāmika* and other *Āgamas* were revealed to hear by *Mahesvara*, whereas the 18 *Purānas* were, told by *Dwaipāyana Vyasa*, the son of *Satyavathi* and taught to *Sūta Purānika*, who again taught it to *Vaisampāyana* and other *rishis*. So we value more the *Āgamas* and hold their teachings superior to *Purānas*.

All (divine) works (*Nool*) are evaluated into two classes “strong” (*vanmai*) and “soft” (*menmai*). Hence the stronger works can contradict the weaker. This depends on the listener’s capacity to understand levels of truth. For, example, the *Taitriya Upanishad* states (to the beginner) that *Anna maya gosha* (The Body formed by Food is *Brahman* - Truth). When the practitioner meditates on it and is ready to go beyond it, he is taught that *Prāna* (Breath) is the Sheath that makes the *Brahman*. Thus the Seeker after Truth is led beyond the five sheaths step by step.<sup>7</sup> (*Eight Upanishad* 1953). In the beginning gross sheaths are presented as *Brahman* but the thinking man soon frees himself from it and seeks a nobler truth satisfactory to his intellect. Finally, the subtlest quality is expressed as the quality of *Brahman*. The gradation is to satisfy the intellectual capacity of the listener. The *Kowshītaki Upanishad* a *daitya* is taught by *Indra* that he himself was the *Supreme Brahman*. [A *daitya* is a son of *diti*, the second wife of *Kāsyapa* and not a demon as the translators show. *Ādityas* are sons of *Aditi*, the first wife of *Kāsyapa* ]

Thus *Veda* and *Siddhānta Saiva* texts are the highest authority to the Southern Tamil *Saivas*. As *Veda* and *Āgama* are non-different to the noble, they are treated at two levels. The *Veda* is meant for the deserving (pakvins), who have the intellectual capacity for superior Knowledge. *Āgama* is given to be followed by the ready capable among the four castes. The *Sūdra* who is cleansed by following ritualistic strict rules meant for the spiritually elevated will be ready to be

blessed by Siva Sakti. During the *yugas* (Ages) when *Vedic dharma* (Ethics) was regularly followed by all, caste had its distinct significance. But it deteriorated as *Kaliyuga* – dawned and progressed. (as the Greeks would call the Iron Age). This is pointed out by *Umapathi Sivam*, the commentator on *Pauskara Āgama*.

*Neelakanda's Sivādvita Saiva Bhāshyam* states clearly, “We find no difference between *Veda* and *Sivāgama*. As *Siva* is the author of both can be termed by the same word, i.e. *Veda* = *Sivāgama*. Both have the common authorship of *Siva* and *Siva* alone. This is said in *Srutī*; *Purāna* and *Sivāgama*. *Pancha Brahma Mantras*, the terminology of the triple eternal “objects” of *Pasu*, *Pathi* and *Pāsa*, the smearing of *Vibhūti* in the forms of *Uddūlanam* and *Thripundaram*, wearing *rudrāksha*, performing daily *Siva Pūja* are all *Sivadharma*s – all these are stated in both *Veda* and *Sivāgama*.

Again, these dual works (Scriptures), refer to the *Bhedda* state (tightly held by the *malas* as nets, and finally released –*mukti* state). The fettered state is not eternal. *Ānava* is the only fetter since the beginning of the soul’s journey. *Karma* and *Māyā* came into the scene half – way. This intermediary state is temporary. They last until the soul attains final Release. Hence, it is called a general state, while *Mukti* is termed Real state. (Mani 2001 : 54) *Pauskara*, *Mirgendra*, *Matanga* are *āgamas* describing the fettered state of the Soul. Hence they are general. *Sarvajñānottara* speak of *Mukti* state; therefore the former should be given secondary importance, whereas *Sarvajñānottara* should be given top priority. Another reason is *Pauskara* and other *Āgamas* were taught to rishis, whereas *Sarvajñānottara* was revealed to *Skanda* and *Ganapati* - the *Sivakumaras*. The former are inferior to *Sivakumaras* in *pakuvam* (maturity). Those with superior understanding will naturally be taught *Súkshma* subjects. As such, *Sarvajñānottara* should be given top priority over other above said *Āgamas*.<sup>8</sup> (*Sivajñāna Munivar* 2008 : 9)

Another example given by *Sivajñāna Munivar* is: Truths enunciated by *Atharvasikā* and other *Upanishads*, when compared to the teachings of the *Āgamas* is like *sūtra* and *bhāshya* (Text and Commentary).

He brings *Sthula Arundhati Nyāya*<sup>9</sup> to justify his comparison of Text and Commentary. (*Sivajñāna Munivar*, 2008, 7) This is agreeable to Dr.V.Ponniah as well. The recent developments in Western Philosophy, namely, hermeneutics upholds this fallacy. P.Kailaspathi completely denies this: The original author of the *Sūtra* has attained a very high state in divine vision. The commentator who tries to explain it to the charlatans (the common people) can never dream of attaining that spiritual height. So he utters what he has learnt from texts with the help of his petty understanding. He tries to impose his own thought on the original *Sūtrakāra*. That is what happened in the case of the Classical

commentators – Sankara, Ramanuja and others. *Sivajñāna Munivar's* exposition of the *Venbā*. “*Akāra Ukaram*” (*Sivajñāna Bodham Sūtra adhikaranal*) also clearly shows he was merely repeating what he learnt from texts. (Mani 2001, 60)

He classifies the Upanishads thus:

1. *Kapāla* and others are general
2. *Chaādogya* and others are general – special
3. *Atharva Sikhā*, *Atharvasiras*, *Svetāsvatara*, *Kaivalya* and other *Upanishads* reveal true *Mukti* – state- i.e. Practice (*Sādhanai*) and result (*Payan*). Hence they are supreme

*Sivajñāna Munivar* upholds his gradation and definitely states that the last list of *Special Saiva Āgamas* should be held in top priority.

### Sect of Āgama Pramāna

*Saiva Pirakāsanam*, the important work of Sankara Panditar of Neervely, divides *Veda* into *Karma* and *Jñāna Khāndas*. Again it is divided into *Mantra* and *Pramānam*. They teach us *Sthothram* (Prayers) and *Sāstram* (Knowledge). *Pramāna* is, again, subdivided into *Vidhi Vādam* (Rules) and *Artha Vādam*. *Vidhi* explains how it has two branches. *Karma Vidhi* and *Jñāna Vidhi*. The former teaches persons who don't follow the path of knowledge. *Niyama Vidhi* praises the rules for “must” (those that should be done). The rules of exemption specifically speak ill of the undesirable activities, show examples of other peoples' acts, point old events that may be followed. Thus *Vidhi* (Rules) are emphasized.

Here too *Āgama* is given priority above the *Veda*. *Saiva Saints* too, point out in their *Thevāram* and *Tiruvāsakam* hymns that the *Veda* and *Āgama* is the creation of God *Siva*. The 14 *Meikanda Sāstras* also give priority to *Veda* and *Āgama*. “He, who manifests as *Āgama* and makes the soul get near him.” The *Vedas* invoked you as “Sire!”, you grew lofty, deep, broad and subtle. Knowledge of *Veda* is not sufficient to know him. *Āgama* is necessary!

*Mahabhārata Sānti parvan*, and *Brahma Sūtra* of *Vyāsa* contain *Āgamic* thought. *Bhagavate* and other researchers conclude the *Veda* and *Āgama* are equally ancient.

*Sivajñāna Siddhiyār* and *Tattva Prakasam* divide *Āgamas* into *Tantra*, *Mantra* and *Upadesa Kalās*. *Tattva Prakasam* uses the terms *Tantrāgamam*, *Mantrāgamam* and *Upadesāgamam*. Generally, *āgamas* divide the content into *Charyā*, *Kriya*, *Yoga* and *Jñāna Pādams*. *Sivāgrayogi* explains the connection between the type divisions.

*Charyā* and *Kriya*, are included in the *Tantra* section. *Yoga* is explained in the *Mantra* section. *Upadesā* comes under *Jñāna*. The *Vedic* division of *Karma*, *Upāsana* and *Jñāna Khandas* are parallel to this *Āgamic Tantra, Mantra and Upadesā Kalā*. *Sivajñāna Munivar* has similar explanation.

*Tantra Kalā* is first introduced in verse 13 of *Siddhiyār*. “*Yama, Nyama* and other limbs of the eight of old *yoga* burn the force of the *malas*, and the resulting higher knowledge is *Yoga Kādchi*. (Thiruvilangam 2010, 38)

### **Mantra Kalā**

This is necessary for the *yoga mārḡa* starting with *mantra dyāna*. (Meditation on the mantra) Those, starting worship from inner *pūjāh* shall first dedicate their mind to God. *Arulnandi Sivāchārya* describes it as: “*Mantras* are the truths that are used to control the *Antahkaranāms* (*Manas, Buddhi* etc.) and worship the deities.(Thiruvilangam 2010, 38) *Mantras* not mere sounds. They result in control of mind and a climb to the heights of Truth.

The 25 Mahesvara *bhedams- Sabapathi, Dukshināmurti, Lingotbhava* are having parallel *Mantra* forms along with *Rūpa* form. Having mastered the mind – *Ahamkara, Buddhi* etc. controlling them and not permitting them to wander away from the self, and allowing them to rest in peace, the *Sādaka* practices *dhyāna* constantly.

***Mantra* has *man* = to think, as the root; *tra* is the suffix meaning = to protect.**

So *Mantra* is explained as the protector of the Thinker, (or Meditator) by *Sivāgrayogi*. One, who meditates on God as a person with the form of a particular *Mantra* is protected constantly by that deity, believes that he relates the *Mantra Bhāga* of the *Āgama* is the path to *yoga* form of worship.

In *charyā* form of worship, the initiate (who received *dikshā* or initiation) the novice begins his *yogic* type of worship thus:

1. ***Mantra Nyāsa***: Touching those parts of body (*Anga nyāsa and Kara nyāsa*). This trims the body ready for meditation by investing grace on the *angas*.
2. ***Rishi***: That sage, who “saw” (with his inner eye) that particular Vedic *Mantra* is honoured with thanks.
3. ***Chandas***: The prosody explaining that hymn Being one of the six *Vedāngas*, its knowledge is a “must” for understanding the *Veda – mantra*
4. ***Adi devatā***: Each mantra has an *adi devatā*, presiding deity.
5. ***Beejākshara***: The seed, origin, the letter that forms, the seed of that mantra.
6. ***Sakti***: The power or spiritual strength attained by the *Sādhaka*, who meditates on that *mantra*.



## Upadésa Kala

*Sivāgrayogi* gives the meaning of the word *Upadésa* thus: inform, shows the direction, make you know. As such, the *Upadésa Kala* explains the *Svarúpa* (Real form) of *Siva*. He is far above birth and death. Soul is bound by the body. This body is subject to birth and death. Of *Pāsa* (fetters), he distinguishes three *Ānava*, *Karma* and *Māyā* – that form the special cause of birth and death.

## Results and Findings

*Saiva Siddhānta* accepts *Veda* and *Āgama* as chief *Pramāna*. These scriptures are not what we see in print. They were created /revealed by *Sadasiva murti* in the time of primary creation, hence the name *Veda Sabda* for this Eternal Knowledge. *Mimāṃsakas* call the *Veda*, *Sabda Pramāna*, eternal. Their argument is: the letters (*akshara*) that form the *Vedas* are non-destructible. Therefore the *Vedas* are also non-destructible. The *Saiva Siddhānta* scholars argue that the letters are momentary. They exist in sound form at the moment of their utterance. But physical sound that is comprehended by the ear is momentary. But as the revelation of *Sadāsiva Múrti*, were received by the sages (*Rishis* and *Munis*) whose *andhahkaranas* are not like ours, due to their high purity and communicated to *pakvins* (deserving pupils). Just as we have constructed gadgets that replay the sounds recorded in them, the sacred *rishis* could convey their *Vedic* truths to proper listeners. The *Vedāgamas* eternally exist in their *súkshma* sound form. The *Kārana* form exists, though the *Kārya* form may perish.

*Sivajñāna Munivar's* gradation that teaching to those in high levels like *Sivakumaras*, *Devas*, *Rishis* and men are capable of receiving Higher Knowledge is also acceptable to scholars. Because, *Ānma Chit-sakti* is the highest *Pramāna* for *Siddhāntins*. The recipient's understanding will depend on the strength of the *Moola Mala* (*Ānava*) that envelops him. For example, *Devikalottaram* confirms that *Charyā* and *Kiriyā* will have no effect (*prayojanam*) for those matured in *Jñāna*.

*Arulnandhi Sivāchārya* tabulated *Āgama Pramāna* into three: 1. *Tantra Āgama*, 2. *Mantra Āgama*, 3. *Upadesa Āgama*. The commentators combine the *Karma Khānda*, *Upāsanā Khānda* and *Jñāna Khānda* with the above three classifications and explain the overlapping nature of the two. But *Saiva Pirakāsanam* puts forward *Sruti* as *Karma* and *Jñāna Khāndas*. *Arulnandhi's* division seems to be deep and meaningful.

## Conclusion

In Indian philosophy, *Sabdha Pramāna* holds an important place as a means of knowledge, rather it is the chief instrument of knowledge. Most of the six

systems of Indian philosophy embrace *veda* as *Sabdha Pramāna* and exclude *Āgama*. But *Saiva Siddhānta* accepts *Veda* and *Āgama* as combined *Sruti Pramāna*. This is the *param+artha*, the supreme object. But considering their 'weightiness' or 'highness' of these *āgamas*, some are classified as 'special' and off them, '*Sarvajñānottaram*' and '*Devikālottaram*' are given the highest priority by the commentators.

If there are any contradictions in the *Āgamas*, these are given weight in knowledge. The classification and analysis of the *Saiva Siddhāntin* with his *Tantra*, *Mantra* and *Upadesakalās* seem to be unique.

## End Notes

1. "அநாதியே அமலனாய அறிவநூல் ஆகமம் தான்" (*Sivajñāna Siddhiyār Subakkam* 19)
2. அவனன்றி ஒரு அனுவம் அசையாது எனும் பெரிய ஆப்தர் மொழி ஒன்று" (*Thāyūmānavar Swamikal Pādal* 10.1)
3. The Jaffna man proudly remembers that this 'farmer of Neervely' spoke on Tarka (Logic) for six hours, - nonstop in an assembly of great scholars at Pachaiyappan College - then known as Pachchaiya's High School in Madras. He spoke in pure Sanskrit. those were days when Sanskrit and Tamil were treated equally, Aryo - Dravidian animosity had not cropped. (Sangara Pandithar 43)
4. வேதநூல் சைவநூல் என்று இரண்டே நூல்கள், வேறு உரைக்கும் நூல் இவற்றின் விரிந்த நூல்கள். ஆதிநூல் அநாதி அமலன் தரு நூல் இரண்டும். ஆரணநூல் பொது: சைவம் அரும் சிறப்பு நூலாம். நீதியினால் உலகர்க்கும் சத்தி நிபாதர்க்கும். நிகழ்த்தியது நீள் மறையின் ஒழி பொருள் வேதநாதம். பிறநூல் திகழ் பூவம்: சிவாகமங்கள் சித்தநாதம் ஆகும். (Thiruvilangam 267)
5. Lord *Ananta Bhattāraka*, or *Anantesa* is the vice - regent of Siva, who initiates a period of cosmic emanation (*Sruti*). *Ananta*, with his powers irradiate *Māyā* and so cause it to birth to bodies, faculties, etc. Dominic Goodall., The (*Parākhyā Tantra* xxviii)
6. The ten *Rudras* posted in the ten directions are positioned thus: *Surapā*-East, *Rudra Valmi* -South East, *Samyama*-South, *Mārana*-South West, *Abjala*-West, *Sighrala*-North West, *Saumyada*-North, *Pinga*-North East. *Sambhu* - Up. above. *Andala*-Below (*Parahya Tantra* 313)
7. *Annādvai prajāhā prajāyante* (*Taitiriya Upanishad* (*dvitīya:anuvakah*) The *Taitiriya Upanishad* (Chap. 2) " All sorts of races of creatures that have their refuge upon earth, are begotten from food ...very they who worship the Eternal as food, attain the mastery of food. There is a second and inner self which is other than this. It is made of the vital stuff called *Prāna* (Vital Breath) those who worship it as Brahman. Then they are taught that *Mano Maya Kosha* is Brahman. They realize it after deeper mediation. Again *Vijñāna Maya Kosha* (knowledge), the sheath of Atma (soul) is presented as *Brahman*. Then comes the presentation of Anānda. Bliss as *Brahman*. It is regrettable that modern science is translated as *Vijñānam* in Tamil, quite contrary to the word's traditional meaning. [*Vi+ñānam* = Higher Knowledges; Pra + *ñānam* = Knowledge] (*Eight Upanishad*, 1953)

8. Recent Western researchers feel that Pauskara *Āgama Vrithi* – Commentary is not the work of Umapathi Sivam, the author of Siddhanta Sastras. They present cogent arguments that, it and *Sarvajñānottara* are not very old *āgamas*. (Sivajñāna Munivar 9).
9. *Sthula Arundhati Nyāya* is a common example frequently put forward by Saiva Writers. In the *Akasa* above (heaven) on the Northern hemisphere are the seven stars (*Sapta Rishii Mandala*) in the form of Question Mark, the first two stars may be connected to the pole star by a straight line. The fifth star is *Vasishtha* and his spouse *Arundhati* is faint by *Vasishtha*. This *Nyāya* tells us how a gross object can be shown first and the indistinct one later – with the aid of the former. (Sivajñāna Munivar 7).

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