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Saivism's Vision of Oneness

For centuries the Guru Paramparai of Kauai Aadheenam has taught a view of God, soul and world called monistic theism. It is a venerable philosophy and a theology, reaching back in time beyond the beginnings of all other religions. Its simplest summary is this: God Siva is Creator and Creation. Of course, there is more to it, much more, yet these six words capture its essence and have important, and perhaps surprising, implications.

Monistic theism has its roots in the Vedas. "The Svetasvatara Upanishad is theistic in character and identifies [?] the Supreme Brahman with Rudra (Siva) who is conceived as the material and the efficient cause of the world...Nature or pradhana is not an independent entity, but belongs to the self of the Divine, devatma-sakti. God is the "Mayin," the maker of the world which is "maya" or made by Him. The Upanishad teaches the unity of the souls and the world in the one Supreme Reality (of Siva)."

This quote, taken from page 707 of "the Principle Upanishads" by the renowned Indian philosopher Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, summarizes the essence of monistic theism which is the essential teaching of Hinduism, of Saivism and of Saiva Siddhanta. One cannot read the Vedas, the Upanishads or the holy Tirumurai without being overwhelmed with theism and with monism.

In the West these two have historically been held in opposition. The theists (Aristotle, Augustine, Aquinas, Descartes, Ramanuja, Kant and virtually all devout Christians and Moslems) held that there is eternal duality between God and world, good and bad, Creator and created. Though they believed in God as Lord and Creator, He was a distant God, ever separate, ever aloof from man and the world.

The monists, on the other hand, tended to be pantheists (Sankara, Spinoza, the Stoics, Buddhism's Asvaghosha, etc.) and their views did not permit of a God in the normal sense as Lord and Creator. Taken separately, both monism and theism are fatally flawed for neither alone encompasses the whole of truth. This is the conclusion of the greatest rishis, siddhars, Sat Gurus and even Western philosophical. The greatest philosophical minds throughout history have thus been what Professor William L. Reese terms "dipolar" in their philosophical conclusions. In other words, it is not a matter of either the God-is-man-and-world monism of pantheism or the God-is-separate-from-man-and-world duality of classical theism; it is both. The truest view reconciles these opposites.

"Panentheism" is the formal philosophical term for the view that embrace the polarities of oneness and twoness. To the pantheist God is immanent, temporal, becoming-He is creation itself (the material cause). To the theist He is transcendent, eternal, Being Creator (as efficient cause). But each of these limits the Unlimited, views only one side of God's Being and is thus incomplete. For the panentheist (the monistic theist), He is both transcendent and immanent, eternal and temporal, Being and becoming. Creator and created, absolute and relative, efficient and material cause. This view holds that the world is included in God (and God in the world) but that God is nevertheless more than the world. This is the conclusion of the Upanishads, as seen above. It is also the conclusion of the Vedas, Agamas and the Tirumurai. This is the essence of monistic theism, the doctrine of monistic Saiva Siddhanta. It is to the credit of the ancient Saivite saints and siddhars that their profound comprehension of the ultimate nature of things is only now being understood and adopted by modern philosophers as the definitive conclusion which corrects the errors (and incorporates the strengths) of both monism and dualism in a truly enlightened way. All of this is cogently summarized in our affirmation of faith: God Siva is immanent Love and Absolute Reality.

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