

[Qualifications for Mukti](#)

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Qualifications for Mukti

Vanmikanathan, G. I would like to speak to you on three books which in my opinion are the basic scriptures for Saiva Siddhanta. You may expect me to say that the Sivagnana Botham is one of them. I would not do so, because that is for the specialist, the theologian. But for ordinary people, householders, the important books are those which would tell them a way of life, a highly practical way of life. What the common man needs are not highly theological books or books on metaphysics or philosophy. What he really needs is something to tell him how to live from moment to moment of the day as a householder.

As the first book I chose the Tirukural, as the second the Tiruvachakam and as the third the Periyapuram, as it is commonly and popularly called. But the name given it by the author was Thiruthondar Puranam ("Stories of the Holy Servants").

Most of you are familiar with the Tirukural, so I would only say that from birth to death it takes you by the hand and leads you to live a life worthy of being born as a man worthy of the God who created you. It is a highly practical book. Nobody can say, "Well this is alright, but I cannot follow this." Nobody. It's exceedingly practical and it is so simple, so deceptively simple that anyone can say, "Yes, I shall live by this Tirukural." But he will not be a millionaire or a billionaire. That's different thing. But he will be a very happy man.

The second book is the Tiruvachakam. Again, many of you may be familiar with the book. Last year when you were gracious enough to come and visit our land, in Tiruchirapalli I in the hands of Subramuniaswamiji a copy of a second edition of the Tiruvachakam in English. It was not a mere translation, but an interpretation of the Tiruvachakam, decaded by decaded, showing how man, step by step, goes up to Sivan. "God transformed me into Siva and enslaved me." To that bliss, to that final stage, Tiruvachakam leads. In the second edition, the step is represented by a ladder on the cover.

The third book is the Periyapuram. The Periyapuram tells us of the lives of people who lived by these two other books. If somebody says, "Well, I can't do it," I can produce the book and say, "A' has lived by this; 'B' has lived by this, 'C' has lived by this." And I can ask him, "How can you say that you cannot live by this book?" Remember, they were all householders. Every one was a married man and several of them had children...

The Periyapuram is totally revolutionary, in a sense. And it represents a vertical cross section of the entire humanity. There was Nandanar, coming out of a clan who eat the dead flesh of the cow. Then there was a potter. There was a man who tapped coconut trees for toddy. There was a poi monger, a fisherman and a hunter. It went up the scale to peasants, to brahmins and to kings.

The Periyapuram is a book explaining the truth and saying that here are sixty-three people who apprehended God, and many of them were not educated at all. Surely Nandanar could not have been a greatly literate man, nor Kannapa the hunter. And Kannapa certainly was not even a vegetarian. He killed a boar, roasted it and tasted it and offered it to God saying, "Here is something very sweet. I have tasted it." And there was a fisherman. Surely he did not catch fish for fun; it was his living. You go along, and you find that in no way, according to our notions of today, would many of them be qualified for mukti. But the Periyapuram says that all sixty-three of them gained mukti - integration with God.

What was the qualification by which God said, "Yes, you are fit for mukti?" Love, bhakti. Not ordinary love but, as mystics say, "a love which is more than human." A saint is one who approaches God by a love which is more than human. It's not easily practiced - a total love - love which does not possess nor is possessed. That is the only qualification God asks. He doesn't weigh the individual qualifications or merits of your act. One man gave his alms bowl. He was a potter, he made pots for a living, and along with that he made a few alms bowls and gave them away. That was all. A weaver presented clothing to sadhaks. A washerman said, "Come along, I shall wash your dirty laundry, free." You see? For each saint, whatever was his means of living was his means of service. This is the Periyapuram.

The extraordinary thing about it is that you and I cannot say, "No, I can't like that." No. We are not asking for your money. To serve and to love God and to love man, that's all you are asked can say, "This is beyond my ability." This is the Periyapuram. These three books - Tirukural, Tiruvachakam and Periyapuram -

form a triad which can help us to live our life as good Saiva Siddhanta.

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