In Praise of Saiva Siddhanta
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MINISTER'S MESSAGE

In Praise of Saiva Siddhanta

The head of an ancient Saiva monastery expounds on dharma and God's all-givingness

Sri Gnanasambanda Desika

In Saiva Siddhanta, the blessings and grace of Lord Siva are paramount. God's manifestations include Parvathi Devi, Muruga, Vinayaga and other forms of the Divine Mother, like Sivagamasundari, Meenakshiamman, Raja Rajeswari, Mariamman, Karumariamman, Chandumariamman and Muthumariamman. Saiva Siddhanta was not created or started by any individual or a group of people; it existed at the same time when the world and human civilization started. Saiva Siddhanta received the Almighty God's grace and blessings in being the first and eldest religion in the world. Other religions of the world started after Saiva Siddhanta. The worship of Siva Linga as the form of Lord Siva began 10,000 years ago in Harappa, China, Japan, Australia, US, Burma, Sri Lanka and many other places.

Our Madurai Aadheenam was started in the 7th century by Saint Tirujnana Sambandar, 1,330 years ago. He is one of the four great saints of the Saiva religion, along with Appar,

Sundarar and Manikavasagar. Saint Sambandar had the great blessings of Lord Siva and sang thousands of Devaram songs to extol the greatness of Lord Siva after receiving the Milk of Wisdom directly from Goddess Parvati. He enhanced the Tamil language, Saiva religion and explained the greatness of vibuthi, holy ash, to the whole world. Due to Saint Sambandar, the Pandiyan king of the time reconverted to Saivism from Jainism. Ours is one of the oldest monasteries in India. Until 1765 the famed temples of Meenakshi in Madurai and Ramanathaswami at Rameswaram were under its control and management.

Saiva Siddhanta is a world-class religion which never criticizes or seeks to become the enemy of any other religion. Saiva Siddhanta accepts and respects the existence and faith of other religions without creating any clashes. This makes Saiva Siddhanta a well respected and a very special religion in the world.

A Siva Linga, the main object of worship in our faith, has three main sections (pakam). The lower part is called Brahma Pakam, the middle is called Vishnu Pakam and the top part is known as Siva Pakam. The Brahma Pakam belongs to earth, the Vishnu Pakam belongs to water and the Siva Pakam belongs to fire. Therefore, in worshiping Siva Linga we are actually worshiping Brahma, Vishnu and also Siva. Therefore a central concept in Siva Linga worship is that there should not be a differentiation of Saivism and Vaishnavism.

According to the basic philosophy of Saiva Siddhanta, every individual came to this world with a impartial judgment of Lord

Siva according to our past karma done by us in our previous birth. Past karma is the fundamental theory of Saiva Siddhanta religion. All the people in this world should lead a proper life with good human qualities and a correct understanding of their current situation. When we came to this world, we didn't bring anything. And when we die, we are also not going to take anything along--not our wealth, nor our clothes, vehicles or bungalows--which come to us when live in this world. Everyone should understand this truth: everything is not permanent. Therefore, realize this and live a life in accordance with the principles of Saiva Siddhanta.

The key of our house, locker and safe is in our hands, but the death key of our life is in the hands of the Almighty God. That is because the Almighty God Lord Siva is the Director of directors, the Engineer of engineers, the Prime Minister of the Prime Ministers, the President of Presidents, the Guru Maha Sannidhanam of the Guru Maha Sannidhanams, the Doctor of doctors. He's all in all, the powerful Almighty, omnipotent and omnipresent Iraivan, the "Worshipful One." Although God is invisible to our eyes, He is present everywhere. God is before us, behind us, above us. Wherever we go, wherever we sit, wherever we stand, wherever we do our discourse and whatever we do in our daily life, Lord Siva is actually watching all our activities, recording and delivering judgment. This judgment delivered by the Almighty Lord Siva is the impartial one, because the Government of Lord Siva is the eternal one. That Government is bribeless. That Government appoints all prime ministers, all presidents, all chief ministers, all Guru Maha Sannidhanams. Lord Siva is the owner and sole proprietor of this whole universe.

With the grace of Almighty God, in 1984 I visited US for a period of four months and in England about two months. While, in 1987 we visited China, Hong Kong, Malaysia and Singapore. Therefore, I hope that more religious gatherings are held in these places and to be invited, too. All the people living in this world should lead a proper life with good qualities and understand each other. I will pray and seek for Lord Siva's blessings. And my blessings are always flowing to all of you.

Sri-la-sri Arunagirinatha Sri Gnanasambanda Desika Paramachariya Swamigal, 54, is the 292nd Guru Mahasannidhanam of the ancient Madurai Aadheenam, located in the temple town of the same name in Tamil Nadu, South India.