T.C.
MARMARA ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ
FELSEFE VE DIN BILIMLERI BILIM DALI

HİNDU BHAKTİ HAREKETİNİN ORTAYA ÇIKIŞI VE İSLAMIN ETKİSİ

Doktora Tezi

MOHAMMED HANEEFA THOTTY

İstanbul, 2022

T.C.
MARMARA ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ
FELSEFE VE DIN BILIMLERI BILIM DALI

HİNDU BHAKTİ HAREKETİNİN ORTAYA ÇIKIŞI VE İSLAMIN ETKİSİ

Doktora Tezi

MOHAMMED HANEEFA THOTTY

Danışman: PROF. DR. İSMAİL TAŞPINAR

İstanbul, 2022

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of Contents……..……...……..I

Abstract……...……..…..IV

Özet…….……..…....V

List of Abbreviations.…….……..…...VI

INTRODUCTION 1

Subject and Problem of research 2

Objective and Importance of Research 5

Methodology and Data Analysis..... 5

Literature Review 7

The Place of Bhakti in Hindu Theology 8

Etymological Analysis of Bhakti 9

Definition of Bhakti 11

CHAPTER ONE

BHAKTI MOVEMENT: HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

1.1. PRE-BHAKTI PERIOD 15

1.1.1. Nastika Sects 17

1.1.1.1. Buddhism 17

1.1.1.2. Jainism 20

1.1.1.2. Charvakism 21

1.1.2. Astika sects 23

1.1.2.1. Nyaya 24

1.1.2.2. Vaisheshika 26

1.1.2.3. Samkhya 28

1.1.2.4. Yoga 30

1.1.2.5. Mimamsa 33

1.1.2.6. Vedanta 35

Shankaracharya 37

1.1.3. Theological Sects 41

1.1.3.1. Shaivism 42

1.1.3.2. Vaishnavism 44

1.1.3.3. Shaktism 46

1.2. BHAKTI PERIOD 47

1.2.1. Alvars 48

1.2.1.1. Poygai, Puttatar and Pey 52

1.2.1.2. Tirumalisai 54

1.2.1.3. Tondaradippodi 56

1.2.1.4. Kulasekara 57

1.2.1.5. Periyalvar 58

1.2.1.6. Andal 59

1.2.1.7. Tirumangai 61

1.2.1.8. Tiruppan 63

1.2.1.10. Madhurakavi 67

1.2.1.11. Nalayira Divya Prabandham 67

Ramanuja 73

1.2.2 Nayanmars 79

1.2.2.1 Tevaram 83

Sambandar 85

Appar 88

Sundarar 90

1.2.2.2 Tiruvachakam 91

1.2.2.3 Tiruvicaippa and Tiruppallantu 93

1.2.2.4 Tirumantiram 94

1.2.2.5 Prabandhams 97

Karaikkal Ammaiyar 99

Cheraman Perumal 102

1.2.2.6 Periya Puranam 103

1.2.3 MAJOR BHAKTI SAINTS 104

1.2.3.1 Basavanna 105

1.2.3.2 Akkamahadevi 109

1.2.3.3 Ramanand 111

1.2.3.4 Kabir 112

1.2.3.5 Guru Nanak 115

1.2.3.6 Vallaba 118

1.2.3.7 Chaitanya 120

1.2.3.8 Mira Bai 123

1.2.3.9 Surdas 124

1.2.3.10 Tulsidas 125

1.2.3.11 Tukaram 127

1.3. Major Impacts of Bhakti 129

1.3.1. Lingayat; a new religion within religion 129

1.3.2. Sikhism 133

CHAPTER TWO

BHAKTI IN HINDU SCRIPTURES

2.1. Bhagavad-Gita 140

2.2. Nalayira Divya Prabandham 150

2.3. Panniru Tirumurai 166

2.3.1. Tevaram 166

2.3.2. Tiruvachakam 175

2.3.3. Tirukkovaiyar 178

2.3.4. Tiruvicaippa and Tiruppallandu 179

2.3.5. Tirumantiram 180

2.3.6. Eleventh Tirumurai 184

2.4. Bhagavat-Purana 186

2.5. Shandilya Bhaktisutra 194

2.6. Narada Bhaktisutra 208

CHAPTER THREE

THEORIES ON EMERGENCE OF BHAKTI AND INFLUENCE OF ISLAM

3.1. Indigenous Emergence 219

3.2. Religion's Influence on Bhakti Emergence 221

3.2.1 Buddhist and Jain Influence 221

3.2.2 Christian Influence 223

3.3. Islamic Influence 226

3.3.1 Advent of Muslims to Indian Subcontinent 226

3.3.2. Similarities between Islam and Bhakti ideology 233

CONCLUSION 241

BIBLIOGRAPHY.....250

IAbstract

Bhakti in Hinduism offers salvation to the followers through ardent devotion and love to God and considered as one of three paths of moksha other than Jnana and Karma. It had triggered a popular movement that may had changed the course of Hinduism paving the way for two new religions; Sikhism and Lingayats. Our study aims to explore and rightly present the emergence of Alvars and Nayanmars, whose contributions are often neglected in literature on Bhakti. To figure out this objective comprehensively, a concise history of pre-Bhakti period is given, then it elaborates each and everyone of Alvars and Nayanmars. Their personal history as well as tradition are tried to be unfold since these personalities hardly recounted in Bhakti literatuters. Contribution of Ramanuja, the first one to systematically present Bhakti, is sufficiently higlighted in the work. Brief mentions on key figures of Bhakti also done though it is out of research-focus. I also tried to illustrate Sikhism and Lingayats; two new religions in Indian sub-continent that evolved with influence of Bhakti. Texts that discusses Bhakti are unfolded to inspect the emergence of Bhakti thoughts in Hindu theology. Hymns in Bhagavat-Gita, foremost text of Bhakti, are expounded as well as Nalayira Divya Prabandham and Shaiva Tirumurai the canonized collections of Alvars and Nayanmars respectively. Other Bhakti texts like Bhagavat Purana, Narada Bhaktisutra and Shandilya Bhaktisutra are also investigated. In the end of study, a succinct note on different theories of influence on emergence of Bhakti is outlined as well as a conclusion of our research.

Key words: Bhakti, Alvars, Nayanmars, Bhagavat-Gita, Nalayira Divya Prabandham, Shaiva Tirumurai, Narada Bhaktisutra and Shandilya Bhaktisutra.

Özet

Takipçilerine tanrıya coşkulu bir bağlılık ve sevgiyle kurtuluş sunan Bhakti düşüncesi Jnana ve Karma ile birlikte Hinduizmde mokşaya ulaşmanın üçüncü bir yolu olarak kabul edilmektedir. Bhakti düşüncesi aynı zamanda Sihizm ve Lingayatlar olarak bilinen iki yeni dinin ortaya çıkmasında da önemli rol oynamıştır. Bu çalışmamızdaki temel amacımız Bhakti düşüncesiyle ilgili araştırmalarda genellikle ihmal edilen Alvarlar ve Nayanmarların Bhakti hareketinin ortaya çıkmasındaki rolünü sunmaktır. Kapsamlı ve daha doğru sonuçların elde edilebilmesi için Bhakti öncesi dönemin kısa bir tarihinden başlayarak sırasıyla Alvarlar ve Nayanmarlar ayrıntılı bir şekilde incelenmiştir. Bhakti literatüründe neredeyse hiç anlatılmayan bu şairlerin hayatlarına dair bilgiler verdikten sonra geleneklerine katkıları ve gelenek içerisindeki konumları da tespit edilmeye çalışılmıştır. Bu çalışmamızda aynı zamanda Bhakti düşünceisini sistematik olarak ilk kez anlatan Ramanuja'nın katkılarına ışık tutulmuştur. Araştırmamızın ana konusu Bhakti hareketi olmasından ötürü Bhakti'nin diğer önemli figürlerine ilişkin de bilgiler verilmiştir. Daha sonra Bhakti'nin etkisiyle Hint alt kıtasında gelişen iki yeni din olan Sihizmi ve Lingayatlar da ele alınmıştır. Bhakti'nin en önemli dini metni Bhagavat-Gita'daki ilahiler, sırasıyla, Alvarlar ve Nayanmarlar'ın şiirlerin koleksiyonları olan *Nalayira Divya Prabandham ve Shaiva Tirumurai* da incelenmiştir. Ayrıca Bhakti düşüncesini konu edinen *Bhagavat Purana, Narada Bhaktisutra ve Shandilya Bhaktisutra* gibi temel metinler analiz edilmiştir. Son olarak çalışmamız Bhakti düşüncesinin ortaya çıkışını tetikleyen faktörlerle ilgili öne sürülen farklı teorilerine dair bir değerlendirme ve sonuç bölümünden oluşmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeleri: Bhakti, Alvarlar, Nayanmarlar, Bhagavat-Gita, Nalayira Divya Prabandham, Shaiva Tirumurai, Narada Bhaktisutra and Shandilya Bhaktisutra.

List of abbreviations

BCE.	= Before Common Era
BhG.	= Bhagavat-Gita
BhP.	= Bhagavata Purana
CE.	= Common Era
NdBhS.	= Narada Bhaktisutra
NlDvPb.	= Nalayira Divya Prabandham
P.	= Page
PtYgSr.	= Patanjali Yogasutra
RgV.	= Rigveda
RjGtBh.	= Ramanuja Gitabhashya
ShBhS.	= Shandilya Bhaktisutra
ShTsVtr.	= Shvetashvatara Upanishad
V.	= Volume

INTRODUCTION

While mysticism is a common phenomenon found in religions, the crux of some religions itself is imbued and developed with it. Even though we can understand mysticism as a metaphysical explanation of sacred texts or concepts of religion, it's very complicated and complex to define it exactly. If the particular elements of each religions left aside, the mystic interpretations are corresponding each other in most cases like the merging with highest existence is considered as the zenith of mysticism.

When Mysticism is represented by Sufism in Islam, Kabala in Judaism and monastic culture in Christianity, Bhakti is marked as mystical exposure in Hinduism the religion originated and developed in Indian subcontinent where ascetism had sprouted. Starting from Veda period, Hindu religious tradition revolved around rigid rituals as well as philosophical discussions about the nature of soul, God and mode of salvation. Producing a vast collection of materials including Upanishads and Brahmanas, Hinduism had turned into six *Astika* (orthodox) sects and some other *Nastika* (heterodox) sects. After a long course of philosophical discourses, Hinduism takes a turn towards theistic expressions that marked by Bhakti and its movement. Bhakti, more than a mysticism, seems to have played a revivalist role in *Sanadhana* Dharma-how Hinduism was mentioned before seventeenth century- attracting large mass to Dharma fold. Contrary to Brahmanism that restricted moksha only for selected upper castes, Bhakti had offered eternal salvation for all irrespective of caste and creed, gaining popularity. It taught that everyone can attain moksha the eternal salvation in Hinduism with divine devotion and dedication, replacing the earlier belief of attaining it only after obeying strict socio-religious orders and rituals. Bhakti movement, originating from south India roughly in 7th century, had been developed in central India from 12th century onwards and touched its peak in Northern India from 15th to 17th centuries. Even though Bhakti faded from the scenario with the conquest of Indian subcontinent by British army in 18th century, it had already influenced extensively both Hindus and Indian people. Even though works on Bhakti movement are abundant, the work that deals with the emerging period of the movement is rare, therefore it invites for research on the topic that can depict how Bhakti

and movement were emerged and accommodated within Hinduism that was ritualistic religion till then.

Even though Bhakti had developed and flourished in central and northern India throughout different communities in its history of one millennium, it had originated in south India. Contrary to other parts of India, southern India–thanks to its geographical specialties- had familiarized with religions and movements that erupted in other parts of the world in earlier period than rest of India as it engaged with different states and communities through the sailing merchants who passed in the Arabian and Indian seas. As the principles of belief, proposed social structure had visible changes in Hinduism before and after Bhakti movement, it may denote that Bhakti is not a movement from inner circle of the religion itself but a trend that developed with the influence from external sources most likely other religions. The advent of Islam to the subcontinent soon after the demise of Prophet Muhammed in 7th century through the sea merchants is clear in the documents. Since Islam entered south India and Bhakti originated in south India in same time span as well, examining the possible influence of Islam on Bhakti is inevitable. As it shows great similarity between principles of Islam and Bhakti's teachings on beliefs, methods towards moksha and social structure, it should be worthful to conduct research to check whether it had influenced or not, that focuses on the emergence of Bhakti movement and influence of Islam as well as other religions.

Subject and Problem of research

Even though Bhakti movement had developed and flourished in central and northern India throughout different communities in its history of one millennium, its emergence as an ideology had brought different narratives. Many historians had attributed its origin to Ramanuja (d.1137) a Hindu theologian lived in twelfth century while some others focus, when they discuss Bhakti movement, only on Bhakti's development in central India and Northern India that happened from 12th to 18th centuries. Moreover, while discussing Bhakti and its movement, excessive focus of scholarly circle on Ramanuja and limiting on medieval poets like Kabir (d.1518) and contemporaries had created a shrinking of Bhakti to these images only. While assigning Bhakti's origin to

Ramanuja seems as s misunderstanding, the limiting of Bhakti to medieval poets is might be because of incomprehension of Bhakti movement. Even though the works that discuss Bhakti movement only, mentioning of Alvars and *Nayanmar*s and their enormous composition in which Bhakti really awakes, was often ignored. These cases also motivate research that scrutinizes the emergence of Bhakti in Hinduism especially its origin as a movement in south India. In the research, vast texts of Alvars and Nayanmars must be inspected thoroughly especially their contribution in awakening Bhakti in Hindu religion.

In Vedic scriptures, Bhakti was only regarded as one of three of paths to salvation along with Karma and Jnana *Marga*s and that was only in later texts like Bhagavat-Gita. Later, the concept was strengthened through poets and their poems that are widely circulated to the people, and persuaded them to hug the Hinduism. It is to be noticed that these poems were written in vernacular languages instead of Sanskrit that may be conceived as formal or authoritative language of Hinduism in which Brahmins are considered superior. Along with the movement's strengthening across Indian subcontinent through engaging with different societies, Bhakti split up to different streams, and different forms of Bhakti had developed. Since the principles of belief, proposed social structure had visible changes in Hinduism before and after Bhakti movement, some historians noted that Bhakti is not a movement from inner circle of the religion itself but a trend that developed with the influence from external sources most likely other religions. Considering different reasons, many theories are raised by different historians ranging from indigenous identity of the movement to external influence of religions like local religion of Buddhism and foreign religions of Christianity and Islam. When different theories are looked over, some historians have made effort to connect it with their background like orientalists who were eager to bridge it with Christianity as well as some Muslim historians who tried to link it with Islam. To better understand these theories and conclude, it needs an unbiased and objective inspection of Bhakti movement's emergence and influence of other religions, thus it highlights the vitality of a research on its emergence.

The research will focus on both historical and doctrinal emergence of Bhakti and its movement especially those developments in the emerging period. The subject of research constitutes around how Bhakti and its movement were emerged both in texts and history. Considering the problem and subject of research, the research focus is only on period before tenth century the end of emerging period. The problem of scrutinization is how Bhakti and its movement were emerged in Hinduism, therefore, the research will revolve mainly around Alvars and *Nayanamar*s, the first proponents of Bhakti. Meantime, popular images of Bhakti especially developments happened after eleventh century is out of research's scope, yet these are mentioned briefly to fill the gap if avoids.

In nutshell, the main questions that aim to answer it throughout our research are as follows;

A. "What is Bhakti and what are its main teachings?"
B. "Was Bhakti mentioned in Vedas. What are other scriptures that discuss Bhakti?."
C. The prime question of research is "how Bhakti was emerged in Hinduism in both doctrine and tradition?" Regarding this question, I aim to answer the question of "what is the role of Bhagavat-Gita in Bhakti movement?"
D. "what are the roles of Alvar and Nayanmar poets in Bhakti movement and its emergence?"
E. "What are the teachings of great canons of *Nalayira Divya Prabandham* and *Panniru Tirumurai* and how these canons contributed in the emergence of Bhakti?"
F. "Is Ramanuja the first one to introduce Bhakti?" Regarding this question, I closely examine the notion that Ramanuja was the first one to introduce Bhakti.
G. "What is the influence of Islam in the emergence of Bhakti and its teachings?"
H. To clearly answer the last question, I aim to answer the question whether religion other than Islam had influenced in the emergence of Bhakti.

Objective and Importance of Research

The prime objective of research is to understand the emergence of Bhakti and its movement in Hinduism. Since different theories arose on emergence and influence of other religions to ignite this emergence, an unbiased and objective description of emergence is another prime motive. Research that scrutinizes these different theories and conclude, therefore, the research is important and unavoidable one in the field.

The great Bhakti canons of four thousand hymns of Alvars and more than fifteen thousand hymns of Nayanmars, were little discussed in academic texts on Bhakti and its movement. Raising the gloomy curtains on enormous compositions of Alvars and *Nayanmar*s is also one of the objectives of the research. Beside these, it is also aimed to present a scholarly study on mystic movement of Hinduism, thus it may help the comparative religious discourses on mysticism especially when different theories of cross-cultural and religious influence revolve around mysticism. As few works on mystical movements of Hinduism are done in Turkey, the research can contribute well to the field and encourage researchers to compose works on the subject and related fields. These objectives of research illustrate the importance of the topic. Research that focuses on emergence of mysticism in Hinduism will help to comprehend the synchronizations of ideologies, a major significance of research.

Methodology and Data Analysis

Since the research is on the field of History of Religions, I aim to use its own methods. For this reason, I plan to portray the subject from an internal perspective and to discuss it using descriptive method from the information given in the sources. Rather than depending on secondary sources that describes Bhakti, I collected data from first sources of Bhakti as much as possible. I had also depended on precise translation-materials of many texts rather than translating ourself that may bring false understandings. In the first part of first chapter, I tried to summarize pre-Bhakti Hinduism as a step to our subject and as a helping note for first reader of Hinduism. In the section, I had also used secondary sources to easily summarize long history. In the study, data is collected from relevant

literature, especially the first sources of the movement, in accordance with current research methods.

In our research, resources like books, articles, theses, periodicals, web pages that are written on the subject are used. When I analyzed the various scriptures, most authentic translations were used as well as understanding from original language where possible. When historical data is not available other than traditional documents, I had mentioned it deliberately. The sources that obtained, will be read and recorded after being classified within the framework of hypotheses. The obtained data will be evaluated in accordance with the concepts formed within the framework of the topic which are put forward by the research questions. Thus, I try to examine the works within the framework of principles of rationality, objectivity and coherence.

An introduction to understand Bhakti, its etymology and definition is the first part of our study. The first part of first chapter traces pre-Bhakti state of Hinduism in order to better understand of Bhakti and the changes it had brought. Next, I closely inspect the emergence of movement historically, then proceeds to mention some important figures of Bhakti movement. I also try an aftermath picture of Hinduism after Bhakti movement developments in order to understand how Bhakti influenced Hinduism as well as Indian society. In the second chapter, I closely examine Bhakti in various scriptures of Hinduism starting from Bhagavat-Gita to *Panniru Tirumurai* including *Nalayira Divya Prabandham* the collection of *Naynamar*s and Alvars respectively. I use descriptive method when I analyze the emergence because it will suit our objectivity, so a deliberate effort is done to present it as it is. As I noted earlier, the advent period and geography of Islam to Indian subcontinent resembles the emerging period and geography of Bhakti as well. So, I discuss the possible influence of Islam on the emergence of Bhakti along with different theories on the emergence. In the section, I had used comparative method while discussing these theories of influence from Christianity, Buddhism or Islam rather than descriptive method.

Literature Review

Even though there are vast works on Bhakti, the literature that specially focuses on the emerging period of Bhakti highlighting the contributions of Alvars and Nayanmars is very rare. Most of works on Bhakti, revolve around main Bhakti figures in central and northern India. Many works attribute Ramanuja, the first one to systematically present Bhakti, as the founder of Bhakti diminishing the enormous contribution of Alvars and Nayanmars.

While giving an introduction and a short History of Bhakti period, I had relied on primary sources as well as secondary sources in order to get concise history. Since I couldn't find a single text that elaborately discusses each and every twelve Alvar poets, we had used different works that discusses different or some Alvar poets. Yet, a short chronological note is available in '*Religion and Philosophy of Nalayiram with special reference to Nammalvar*' of N. Subbu Reddiar (d.2006), on which we depended to rightly present the chronology of these poets among different dating in various texts. To trace the history of Alvars as well as their contribution to Bhakti literature, I had mainly referred '*Alvars of South India'* of K.C Varadachari (d.1971), '*Philosophy and theistic mysticism of the Āḻvārs*' of S. M. Srinivasa Chari, and '*Krishna: A Source Book*' of Vasudha Narayanan. Even though all four thousand hymns of '*Nalayira Divya Prabandham'* were collected and translated in '*The Sacred Book of Four Thousand'* of Srirama Bharati, I also referred various works that discussed specified Alvar and his poems. Moreover, I had collected poems or hymns only with very little mention about the author. I had extensively relied on English translations of these hymns wherever available to escape from the faults while translating.

Like in the case of Alvars, there is not any historical text that gives enough details on each and every 63 poet-saints of Nayanmars, so I inspected their history from various works. Even though '*Sixty-Three Nayanar Saints*' of Sivananda mentions all 63 Nayanmars, the work is hagiography rather a historical text. Since historicity of Nayanmars except very few is not sure, I had depended on the text where historical note is not available. Other works that I depended to trace the history of Nayanmars are

'*Mysticism of Love in Saiva Tirumurais*' of V.C. Sasivali, '*The Historical Study of Tevaram Hymns'* of A.M Paramasivanandan and unpublished thesis 'Sanskrit Words in Tevaram' of B. Sreenivas. As in the case of personal history, I couldn't find any work that collect all 12 Tirumurai of Nayanars. Since these twelve Tirumurais are scattered, I had separately inspected Bhakti hymns from hymns more than fifteen thousand. In the last part of our research where external influence was discussed, I inspected various texts to examine different opinions of different authors from different backgrounds who studied about Bhakti. In the section, texts of authors who defend indigenous origin of Bhakti movement are also inspected.

The Place of Bhakti in Hindu Theology

According to *Sanadhana Dharma*[1] philosophy of life, popularly known as Hinduism nowadays, one *Sanadhin*, a Hindu, should move on his life with four principles; *Kama, Artha, Dharma* and *Moksha.* Starting with *Kama*, he must continue his life with *Artha* and *Dharma* aiming *Moksha* the salvation that saves his from *Samsara*[2] cycle. While *Kama* means emotion and points to the necessity of marital life to satisfy emotions, *Artha* means earnings and encourages to make a living in good manner. Since *Dharma* means ethics, it instructs to follow religious duties till he attains *Moksha* or *Mukti,* the liberation achieved through realization of God.[3] Dharma are those instructions in Veda and its auxilary texts. Ther term 'Moksha' is derived from 'much' in that means discharge, release or let go. The term 'Moksha' means freedom, liberty or emanicipation and it is used in Hinduism to denote eternal salvation from Samsara cycle or cycle of birth

---

[1] *Sanadhana Dharma* is a Sanskrit term that means 'eternal duties.' This is how Hindus identify their religion. For more information, pls refer Saduseelan K Paramesvara Pillai, *Hindu Dharma Parichayam* (Thrissur: Sri Ramakrishna Madam, 2001), p. 7.

[2] *Samsara* is cycle of birth and death. One suffers because of his birth; therefore, salvation is to be free from the cycle.

[3] Bhaskarananda, *The essentials of Hinduism: a comprehensive overview of the world's oldest religion* (Mylapore, Chennai: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1998), p. 7.

and death.[4] There are three paths (marga) to attain the salvation; Karma Marga (the path of action), Jnana Marga (the path of knowlege) and Bhakti Marga (the path of devotion and love).[5]

The term 'Karma' is derived from 'Kri' which means 'to do' in Sanskrit. In Hinduism, it is also used to denote the effects of actions and our actions in the past are the the causes of these effects.[6] Karma, as a path (marga) towards liberation, is acting rightly to please the God.[7] According to Karma, a Sanadhin can get his desired result if the *Yajna* (Vedic sacrifice) perfomed correctly as presrcibed in Vedas without any false.[8] *Yajna* should be organized as instructed in Brahmana in the presence of numerous priests reciting the mantras in particular accent assigned to that specific ritual without giving any chance of minute faults as it may spoil the deed itself. Moreover, it needs many resources like rice and milk and even animal to complete *Yajna* and may long two days to 12 years to successfully complete the ritual.[9] Jnana Marga, the path of knowledge, is another path towards liberation and will be discussed in detail in first chapter. Third path of Moksha is Bhakti Marga the path of love and devotion and it is the core subject of our research.

Etymological Analysis of Bhakti

Even though different opinions are put forward by many researchers on terminological analysis of term '*Bhakti*', I try to describe almost of them as it will help

---

[4] Rhys Davids., "Moksha." V. VIII, p. 770.

[5] W. J. Johnson, *A dictionary of Hinduism*, 1st ed (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 53. In some relatively later texts, four paths are mentioned instead of three. But three is regarded here as in most texts.

[6] Swami Vivekananda, *The complete works of Swami Vivekananda* (Culcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1958), v. I, p. 27.

[7] Bhaskarananda, *The essentials of Hinduism: a comprehensive overview of the world's oldest religion,* p. 133.

[8] W. J. Johnson, *A dictionary of Hinduism*, p. 170.

[9] S.N. Dasgupta, *Hindu Mysticism* (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1959), p. 4-7. For detailed reading on Karma-Yoga, please refer; Vivekananda, *Karma Yoga and Bhakti Yoga*.

us to understand the term from diverse perspectives. The term *'Bhakti'* is derived from Sanskrit term '*bhaj*' which carries meanings like divide, distribute, dispense, supply, provide, get one's share- as in Vedic usages-, revere, serve, and worship.[10] The term '*bhaj*' is also used in Rigveda to mean 'worship' as it says "*A asya jananto nama chid vivkatna mahas te Vishno sumatim bhajamahe* (O Lord Vishnu, we worship you, and we are fully conscious of the spiritual nature of your holy names enjoy the grace of thee the mighty one) (RgV. 1/156)."[11] (The suffix of '*ktin* (ti)'- that used generally to give form of an action or agent noun- is added, thus the term '*Bhakti'* can mean reverence, experience, practice and recourse.[12] '*Bhakti'* was used in earliest times as a condition where one has share in others, for the term carried the meaning of 'share'.[13]

Acting from *'Bhakti'* is being derived from '*bhaj*' which means 'divide, distribute, share and take part'; some scholars assert that *'Bhakti'* comes for 'possession' or 'dividend'. In early usages, while term *'bhagavat'* was used for tribal chief as he was the owner of wealth, term *'Bhakti'* was used for a dividend of the wealth and term *'bhakta'* for one who possesses it. In *Panini Sutra*, one of ancient religious texts, *'Bhakti'* was used to denote material wealth that possessed by anyone and it was also, in early days, used in place of *'Prasada'* the term used by Hindus nowadays for any gift that symbolizes fondness of God. Then, it was being used to denote the fondness and commitment between them but it hadn't carried any kind of degree in the meaning, neither of one who gives nor of one who accepts; thus, it was used for both fondness of God to servant and servant to God. And in texts next to them, *'Bhakti'* gradually used only for

---

[10] https://www.sanskritlexicon.unikoeln.de/scans/MW72Scan/2014/web/webtc/servepdf.php?page=0695, retrieved on 12/1/20.

[11] Ralph T.H Griffith, trans., *Rigveda* (Benares: E.J Lazarus and Co., 1896), v. I, p. 209.

[12] Krishna Sharma, *Bhakti and The Bhakti Movement: A New Perspective* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1987), p. 40.

[13] Vasudha Narayanan, "Bhakti," *Brill's Encyclopedia of Hinduism*, ed. Knut. A Jacobson (Leiden: BRILL, 2010), p. 710.

servants' dedication and fondness to God, while term *'bhagavat'* for God and *'bhakta'* for anyone committed towards him.[14]

'Bhakti', though it was being used for extensive dedication and limitless love of servant to God in Bhagavad-Gita part of Mahabharata legend, labelled and addressed a new path that proposed *Bhakti Marga* (path) for moksha the eternal salvation along with *Karma* and *Jnana Marga*s. In short, while *'Bhakti'* was used for material possession in ancient texts, later it denoted a *Marga* that projected way of dedication and love to attain moksha the eternal salvation for Hindus.

Definition of Bhakti

Bhakti was defined differently by various proponents of Bhakti, which will help us to understand Bhakti through different dimensions. Ramanuja (d.1137), the first one to present Bhakti systematically, says defining Bhakti yoga "*Bhakti Yoga is abidance in meditation and other forms of adoration with one-pointed love for the supreme Being* (RjGtBh 1/15,16,24)."[15] He places 'Brahman', as object of meditation, so Bhakti is continuous loving meditation of the beloved.[16]

In Narada Bhaktisutra Bhakti is defned like this "*Bhakti is of the nature of highest love for this one (God). And of the nature of immortal bliss* (NrBhSr. 1/2,3)."[17] Shandilya Bhaktisutra defines as follows:

---

[14] Jaiswal, *The Origin and Development of Vaisnavism*, p. 111.

[15] Rāmānuja, *Śrī Rāmānuja Gītā bhāṣya*, trans. Adi Adidevananda (Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 2009), p. 6.

[16] Krishna Datta Bharadwaj, *The philosophy of Ramanuja* (New Delhi: Shri Shankar Lal Charitable Trust Society, 1958), p. 169-170.

[17] Y. Subrahmanya Sarma, *Narada's aphorisms on Bhakti* (Mysore: The Adhyatma Prakasha Karyalaya, 1938), p. 2.

"That (Bhakti) is to have supreme, true, undiluted and untainted love and attachment (*paranurakti*) for the Supreme Being, the Lord God of creation (*risvare*) (ShBhSr. 1/1/2)."[18]

Swami Vivekananda (d.1902), the famous figure of Hinduism in modern times, says defining Bhakti:

"Bhakti-Yoga is a real search after the Lord, a search beginning, continuing, and ending in love. One single moment of the madness of extreme love to God brings us eternal freedom."[19]

In all these definitions, great reverance and attachment towards God with lovely approach is witnessed, thus in Bhakti, moksha is attained through love and devotion.

Even though there are different categorization of Bhakti based on various principles, it differs mainly as *Saguna* (with attributes) and *Nirguna* (without attributes) Bhakti. In *Saguna* Bhakti, devotees are keeping relation with God who has forms and attributes often represented by images or statues whereas *Nirguna* Bhakti proposes a God without forms. According to the classification, Alvars and Nayanmars were proponents of *Saguna* Bhakti while Basvanna (1196), Ravidas (1520), Mirabai (d.1547), Surdas (d.1584), Tulsidas (d.1623) and most importantly Kabir imagined God as *Nirguna*. Regarding the source of each kind, *Nirguna* is *Jnanshrayi* (rooted in knowledge) while *Saguna* is *Premashrayi* (rooted in love).[20] As some theologians tried to trace the origin of Bhakti in Vedas, they understood call for genuine spirit of worship as first step of devotion and named it as *Shraddha*[21] Bhakti.[22]

---

[18] Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia, trans., *Shandilya Bhaktisutra, Aphorisms for devotion to god and The principles of the philosophy of love for Him,* (Faizabad: Pothi online publishers, 2018), p. 17.

[19] Swami Vivekananda, *The complete works of Swami Vivekananda* (Culcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1958), v. III, p. 31.

[20] Karen Pechilis, *The embodiment of Bhakti* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 21.

[21] '*Shraddha'* means 'genuine regard'. For more information on Sraddha Bhakti, pls refer; Shastri, *The Bhakti Cult in Ancient India*.

[22] Bhagwat Kumar Goswami Shastri, *The Bhakti Cult in Ancient India* (Delhi: Oriental Publishers and Distributors, 1924), p. 2-3.

CHAPTER ONE

BHAKTI MOVEMENT: HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

Hinduism, one of the oldest religions in the world, is a general denotation to wide range of religious practices and ideas of communities lived in Indian subcontinent that have evolved over three millennia through cross-cultural interconnections which led to divine worship in diverse forms. Even there is a hot debate on whether Hinduism is religion or tradition of the native lived beyond Indus River, a scholarly consensus is being prevailed in academic circle that the term rightly denotes the religion which was identified by its followers as '*Sanadhana Dharma*',[23] however, it is notable that the term 'Hinduism' which refers a pan-Indic set of religious practices and ideals, was firstly used by Raja Ram Mohan Roy (d.1833) and that was only in 1816.[24]

Although most Hindu communities recognize the authority of Vedas the name used for vast collection of scriptures in general and for 4 Vedas in particular namely Rigveda, Yajurveda, Atharvaveda and Samaveda,[25] it is tough task to distinguish each practices and beliefs that every Hindu is associated.[26] Indeed, defining Hindu as one who accepts the Veda as revelation is popular,[27] yet almost of them believe the incarnation of divine in variety of forms and the *Samasara* cycle that makes *Atma* or *Jiva* the eternal soul to be reborn in body after another due to karma the reverberation of human actions, till he attains moksha the relieving amalgamation of one's *Atma* in *Brahma* the divine existence. To be more precise, those who respects Vedas are considered as Hindus until

---

[23] Saduseelan K Paramesvara Pillai, *Hindu Dharma Parichayam* (Thrissur: Sri Ramakrishna Madam, 2001), p. 7.

[24] "Hinduism," *Pluralism Project* (Harvard: Divinity School, Harvard University, 2015), p. 10.

[25] Swami Vivekananda, *The complete works of Swami Vivekananda* (Culcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1962), v. 8, p. 329.

[26] "Hinduism.", p. 5.

[27] Gavin Flood, *An introduction to Hinduism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 35.

they openly oppose Vedas, that's why Buddhism and Jainism are labelled as *Nastika* (heterodox) and sects like classical *Samkhya* philosophy that ignores the God's existence is called *Astika* (orthodox). Thus, the sects that not explicitly disrespect Vedas, come to Hindu fold even they have not any direct connection with Vedas.[28]

To date back the tradition of Hinduism, it prolongs, for many of scholars, to Indus valley civilization that flourished in Harappa and Mohen Jedaro the cities in the river banks of Indus from which the term 'Hinduism' is originated.[29] The genesis of Hinduism lies in two ancient cultures; the Indus valley civilization that developed from 2500 BCE to 1500 BCE and the Aryan culture that flourished from 2000 BCE to 1000 BCE. Two theories are interpreted to decode the syncretism of these two cultures; the Aryan migration theory and theory of Aryan culture is a development from Indus valley civilization. Aryan migration theory that suggests Indo-European people from Caucasus region migrated into South Asia via central Asia after the declination of Indus valley civilization, is supported by many historians. The view is supported by the evidences like the close resemblance between the Iranian religion of *Avesta* the sacred scripture of Zoroastrianism and the religion of Veda, and the linguists' grouping Sanskrit the language of Veda in Indo-European languages.[30] Another theory proposes that there was no migration from outside but the Aryan culture was a development from the civilization itself. However, whether migration happened or not, Hinduism originated and developed in next 2 millennia through interaction of Aryan culture and local Dravidian culture with Aryan culture acting as dominant factor.[31] Even some scholars make explicit division

---

[28] Sudhakara Chattopadhyaya, *Evolution of Hindu sects up to the time of Shankaracharya* (New Delhi: Munshi Ram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd, 2000), p. 2.

[29] Jawaharlal Nehru, *Discovery of India* (London: Asia Publishing House, 1947), p. 62.

[30] Flood, *An Introduction to Hinduism*, p. 30-31, Jawaharlal Nehru, *Discovery of India,* p. 61-63.

[31] T Muhammed, *Bharateeya Samskaarathinte Adiyozhukkukal* (Kozhikode: Islamic Publishing House, 2011), p. 59, Gavin Flood, *An introduction to Hinduism*, p. 23.

between Vedism and Hinduism as Aryan religion based on rituals, and mixture of Aryan religion with non-Aryan beliefs based on devotion respectively.[32]

When the 5 millennial long history of Hinduism is considered, Indologists categorize into three;[33]

1) Classical period that starts from genesis to roughly 7th century, the epoch witnessed for introspection of its own visions and policies and for the emergence of new parallel religions namely Buddhism and Jainism,

2) Medieval period (800-1850) that characterized with Bhakti movement's sprawling throughout India and its interconnections with Islam that lead to a syncretic production of new religion the Sikhism,

3) Modern period that stretches from 1850s to present day in which reform movements are flourished to integrate with modern values, and spreading of the religion beyond Indian sub-continent through its migrants, is spotted. Another approach in the categorization is also available adding 'ancient period'[34] before the 'classical period', but categorization into three epochs naming it as pre-Bhakti period, Bhakti period and post-Bhakti period that resemble with Indologists' categorization in its timelines, is considered here regarding the scope of our research. We go through these periods in our first chapter and in the part of pre-Bhakti period, a short history of Hinduism is outlined for a general understanding.

1.1. PRE-BHAKTI PERIOD

Pre-Bhakti period of Hindu history had witnessed the origin of Vedas the basic sacred texts of Hinduism namely Rigveda, Yajurveda, Samaveda and Atharvaveda, yet the genesis period of the scriptures is argued but it is generally agreed that these were

---

[32] Chattopadhyaya, *Evolution of Hindu Sects up to the Time of Shankaracharya*, p. 2.

[33] Flood, *An Introduction to Hinduism*, p. 32.

[34] Flood, *An Introduction to Hinduism*, p. 21.

composed between 1500-1000 BCE at earliest.[35] Among four Vedas, Rigveda is the oldest one which is said to have composed in the period between 1500-1200 BCE, which is often termed as Rigvedic period. Other 3 Vedas were composed between 1200-1000 BCE, the period that witnessed the expansion of Vedic people from Indus valley to Ganga and Yamuna banks. In the epoch, systematization of Vedic form of Hinduism is held facilitating its religious dominance in Indian subcontinent for next 500 years. *Kuru* kingdom that favored Vedism was established in the period and their domain *Kurukşetra* (field of *Kuru*s) is famous center of Sanskrit tradition. As a part of systematization under the patronage of *Kuru*s, the classifying of people based on the occupations and duties of them in society, is done and that is understood, by many scholars, as the root of *Varna* dharma or caste system in Hinduism.[36]

The epoch is often named as Vedic period as these scriptures directed and dominated the Hindu religious tradition during the period, and lines from these were chanted as hymns and *Mantra*s, thus these were transmitted to next generations orally and verbally. The epoch is characterized by ritualistic tradition that based on Vedas' teachings often discriminatory like *Varna* dharma the doctrine of obligations based on hereditary caste division namely Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaisya and *Şudra* in hierarchical order. The doctrine that commanded superiority of one caste over another, relegation of disobedient of this dharma to untouchable caste and prohibition of sacred texts to low castes, triggered irritations and infuriation among followers, thus these paved way for formations of heterodox sects which later developed to indigenous religions like Buddhism and Jainism. Let us briefly examine these heterodox sects which are referred as *Nastika* in Hindu tradition as well as orthodox (*Astika*) sects.

---

[35] Ali İhsan Yıtık, *Doğu Dinleri*, (Istanbul: ISAM Yayınları, 2014), p. 49.

[36] Theodore Proferes, "Vedic Period (1750-400 BCE)," *Brill's encyclopedia of Hinduism*, ed. Knut A. Jacobsen - Johannes Bronkhorst (Leiden: Brill, 2012), v.4, p. 21-25.

1.1.1. Nastika Sects

In Hindu tradition, sects are classified as orthodox and heterodox or *Astika* and *Nastika* based on its acceptance or rejection of Vedas' authority regardless of its character as theistic or atheistic, thus a system can be both orthodox and atheistic. So, sects that accept the authority of Vedas are considered as orthodox or *Astika* while the sects that reject the authority of Vedas are named as *Nastika* or heterodox.[37] The term '*Nastika'* is a Sanskrit term which means 'it is not' (*na asti*) while the term *'Asti'* means 'it is'.[38] There are six orthodox sects that didn't reject Vedas and these are *Samkya,* Yoga *Nyaya*, *Vaisheshika*, *Mimamsa* and Vedanta. These six systems are coupled as Yoga-*Samkya*, *Nyaya-Vaisheshika* and *Mimamsa*-Vedanta based on the phenomenon that one of two is theorical and other one is practical. While Yoga is practical method to realize the truths taught by *Samkya*, *Vaisheshika* is a metaphysical system supported by *Nyaya*. However, prominent *Nastika* traditions that reject the authority of Vedas are Buddhism which is a prominent religion in nowadays, Jainism and *Charvakism* or materialism.[39] Even though Buddhism and Jainism later developed into indigenous religions, these religions emerged as heterodox sects in Hinduism. Let us go through these *Nastika* traditions shortly.

1.1.1.1. Buddhism

Buddha (d. 483 BCE) the central character of Buddhism is assumed to be born around 500 BCE, a neutral period between those who believe his birth date in fourth or fifth century BCE and those who believe in fifth or sixth century BCE,[40] yet, some scholars on Buddhism like Ananda k. Coomaraswamy points out with some kind of certainty that

---

[37] Ramakrishna Puligandala, *Fundamentals of Indian Philosophy* (New Delhi: D.K. Print world, 2008), p. 10.

[38] Surendranath Dasgupta, *A History of Indian philosophy. Vol. 4: Indian Pluralism* (London: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2009), v. 1, p. 67; Damodaran K, *Bharatiya Chinda* (Calicut: Current Books, 2011), p. 102.

[39] Puligandala, *Fundamentals of Indian Philosophy*, p. 10.

[40] Flood, *An Introduction to Hinduism*, p. 37.

he was born in 563 BCE and died in 483 BCE.[41] Buddha's original name is Siddhartha Gautama and also known as *Shakyamuni* (sage of *Shakya* clan),[42] who born as the heir of *Shakhya*s the ruling family, got fed up with his life of luxury due to its uncertainty and mortality, and left his home as wanderer in his search of immortal truth.[43] His teachings of equality and leading of ascetic life abandoning his royal life had attracted many followers who dignified or worshipped, as some sects do, him after his life, thus Buddhism a new religion was emerged.

In Hinduism of Vedic age that dominated by Brahmanism, the authority to teach the religious texts was exclusively reserved for Brahmins which is hereditary but Buddhism taught the authority is decided on personal merits not based on birth.[44] Buddha rejected the authority of Vedas, that's why they were not considered as Hindus. Likewise, he denied the existence of Brahman the notion of God in Vedas and of Atman the human self, but he advocated the same bliss in attainment of moksha through the theory of Nirvana.[45] More importantly, he denounced the caste system and the superiority of Brahmins over others based on birth and evaluated one's deeds as basis of merit. As Hinduism was confused with many theories, sects and complex ritual rites, ideas of Buddha were welcomed by many who kept same dissent on Brahmanism.[46] In early times of Buddhism, it was considered as a path of some group who lead an ascetic life in monasteries near Ganga planes denouncing Brahmanism. Yet, it managed to organize a council that acted as core of the Buddhism itself and was attended by about 500 Buddha disciples in the same year that Buddha died. The council that took place in Rajagriha

---

[41] Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, *Budha and Gospel of Buddhism* (USA: Kessinger Publications, n.d.), p. 9.

[42] Vasudha Narayanan, "Buddhism," in *Eastern religions: origins, beliefs, practices, holy texts, sacred places*, ed. Micheal David Coogan (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 119.

[43] Coomaraswamy, *Budha and Gospel of Buddhism*, p. 9-12.

[44] Richard H. Robinson - Willard L. Johnson, *The Buddhist Religion; a Historical Introduction* (Massachusetts: Duxbury Press, 1977), p. 12.

[45] Elizebeth Seeger, *Eastern Religions* (New York: Y. Crowell Company, 1973), p. 57.

[46] Seeger, *Eastern Religions*, p. 57-58.

accepted two sacred scriptures namely *Vinaya Pitaka* and *Sutta Pitaka*, the crux of Buddhist holy literatures, thus the Buddhism was officially emerged.[47]

The Ashoka (d.232 BCE) period of Buddhism witnessed a dramatic growth of Buddhism as Ashoka the great ruler embraced it and made it as official religion of empire. Even though Buddhism had already divided into sects on the basis of different approaches in particular matters, Ashoka had organized a council in Pataliputra in his presidency, in order to make a mutual understanding between different sects, to canonize Buddhist sacred texts and to preach Buddhist ideas to different parts of the world, but the first one was unsuccessful while other two were almost successful. As Ashoka ruled almost parts of Indian subcontinent, Buddhism spread all over the area as well as other neighboring states from Afghanistan to Hellenistic world like Greece and Egypt. A lot of stupas in the memory of Buddha were built in different parts of India to show his attachment with Buddhism.[48]

After the death of Ashoka and power was transferred into the hands of Sunga dynasty, Buddhists were forced to migrate as the king of *Sunga*s was a rigorous Brahmin and ordered to demolish all stupas, to turn *Vihara*s the temples of Buddhism into Hindu temples and even to kill the monks lived there.[49] The period witnessed for political embracement of religions in the subcontinent in order to consolidate their influence, and for interferences of religious sentiments in politics like assassination of Brhadratha the last king of Mauryan empire (320-185 BCE) by brahmin general Pusyamitra Sunga (d. 149 BCE).[50] Pusyamitra the assassin of last Mauryan, brought back Vedic sacrificial religion and even performed human sacrifice as the celebration.[51] The royal patronage for Buddhism by many kingdoms like *Satavahana*s in Deccan continued well after 200 BCE

[47] Yıtık, *Doğu Dinleri*, p. 85.

[48] Yıtık, *Doğu Dinleri*, p. 87-88.

[49] Yıtık, *Doğu Dinleri*, p. 87-88.

[50] Flood, *An Introduction to Hinduism*, p. 51.

[51] Yıtık, *Doğu Dinleri*, p. 87-88.

which made Buddhism to be flourished to different parts of the sub-continent. While some *Satavahana* queens who were Buddhists and some other kingdoms were donating lands to Buddhists foreseeing that giving land to monasteries may create conflict free zone, therefore, it is easy to rule and prolong their supremacy.[52] Even though the official religions of kingdoms changed, Brahmanical ideology managed to consolidate its hold on politics of Indian sub-continent which controlled royal rituals and various social obligations.[53]

Buddhism separated into many sects throughout its history but a new sect in the name of *Mantrayana*/*Vajrayana* that focused on magical and mysterious rites and on reciting of mantras in order to achieve spiritual results, was emerged and the sect used to accept many practices that belonged to Hinduism; therefore, it was classified often as a sect of Hinduism.[54]

1.1.1.2. Jainism

Like Buddhism, Jainism is also another *Nastika* sect that emerged as an outcome of dissent on Brahmanism especially on its divisive caste system and blood shedding animal sacrifices. With close similarity between Jainism and Buddhism like its origins in sixth century BCE and in Ganga planes, antagonism towards Brahmanism, denial of God's existence and ascetic lifestyles, Jainism often considered as a sect in Buddhism. Like Buddhism was sprouted around Buddha, Jainism was also emerged around Vardhamana (d.527 BCE) who born in north India. The life of Vardhamana is also similar to Buddha in his birth in Hindu ruling family, his ascetic way of life, his attainment of eternal bliss and many more.[55] Jains were often mentioned as *Arhata*s, *Vratya*s, *Sramana*s, *Nirgranth*as and *Jina*s, and they were one of three prominent communities in

[52] Greg Bailey, "Hinduism and Buddhism, Ancient Period," *Brill's encyclopedia of Hinduism*, ed. Knut A. Jacobsen - Johannes Bronkhorst (Leiden: Brill, 2012), v. 4, p. 490.

[53] Flood, *An Introduction to Hinduism*, p. 52.

[54] Yıtık, *Doğu Dinleri (Eastern Religions)*, p. 89.

[55] Yıtık, *Doğu Dinleri*, p. 139-142.

India till the advent of Islam. Jainism is famous for its theory of *Ahimsa* (non-violence) which forbids its followers eating meats or fish because slaughtering them is a violence and therefore, most of Jains are pure vegetarians.

The embracement of Jainism by Chandra Gupta (d.335) of Maurya empire who ruled a great portion of India, and designating it as official religion fueled the spread of Jainism throughout the empire and, in the period, Jainism witnessed its maximum outreach in the history.[56] Both Buddhism and Jainism were reactionary movements against Brahmanism the version of Hinduism in Vedic period due to its divisive ideologies. Among *Nastika* sects, Buddhism and Jainism are characterized by asceticism as both systems advocated for simple and monkish lifestyles but there is also a sect that applause material life.

1.1.1.2. Charvakism

Charvakism, often mentioned as Indian materialism, is also one of *Nastika* sects in Hindu tradition but the sect was not enough influential nor developed in the history, so the school is often neglected. While *Charvaka* tradition says that sage Charvaka founded the school, some scholars believe that he was the disciple of Brihaspati (10th century BCE) who is actual founder of the school. However, the term '*Charvaka'* derives from the root '*charv*' that means to chew or eat, later it turned to denote anyone who is understood as materialist or follower of the doctrine 'eat, drink and be merry'.[57] Some scholars describe the term as the combination of two words '*charv*' that means to chew and the word '*vak*' that means words, thus *Charvaka* means 'sweet tongued' pointing to the general of feeling about this philosophy of pleasure. *Charvaka* is also called '*Lokayata*' which means 'that

[56] Yıtık, *Doğu Dinleri*, p. 143.

[57] Puligandala, *Fundamentals of Indian Philosophy*, p. 13.

is prevalent among the common people', as the term is combination of two words; '*loka*' that means the world and '*ayata*' that means 'basis or prevalence.'[58]

*Charvaka*s did not accept the authority of Vedas or any other sacred scripture and believe there is no rebirth after the body is burnt. *Charvaka*s divide into two groups as *Dhrutta Charvaka*s who believe there is no soul at all and life and body is result of atomic combination of four elements; earth, water, fire and air, and as *Susikshita Charvakas* who believe there is soul other than body but will be deliberated through deliberation of the body.[59] The foundational text of the school is *Charvakasutra* or *Lokayatasutra* of Brihaspati and there is no other available early texts of school except *Tattvopaplavasimgha* of Jayarasi Bhatta but there is an argument that text is not a complete *Charvaka* text.[60]

Charvakism's concept of epistemology, universe and life may be conceived shortly as said in *Prabodha-Chandrayaya*;

"The Shastra (Charvaka) whose doctrines are obvious to all, and which is founded on the evidence of the senses; which admits only the elements of earth, water, fire, air, which maintains the sustenance and love are the objects of human existence; which asserts that matter possesses intelligence, which denies the existence of separate spirits and affirms that death is blessedness."[61]

In Hinduism, there are four human values (*Purushartas*) namely pleasure (*Kama*), wealth (*Arta*), religious morality (Dharma) and salvation (Moksha) but *Charvaka*s accept only two; *Kama* and *Arta* rejecting dharma and moksha.[62] Even though

---

[58] Bibhu Padhi - Minakshi Padhi, *Indian Philosophy and Religion; a reader's guide* (New Delhi: D.K. Print world, 2005), p. 48.

[59] Surendranath Dasgupta, v. 1, p. 67.

[60] Padhi - Padhi, *Indian Philosophy and Religion; a Reader's Guide*, p. 50.

[61] Krishna Mishra, *Prabodha Chandrodaya*, trans. J. Taylor (Bombay: Vinayakarao Gopalarao Ghosalkar, 1872), p. 26-27.

[62] Padhi - Padhi, *Indian Philosophy and Religion; a Reader's Guide*, p. 60.

Charvakism is identical with materialistic hedonism in matter of ethics and conduct of life, many thinkers differentiate between egoistic hedonism and altruistic hedonism, so need for the law and order in society is recognized with pleasure and enjoyment and self-discipline is necessary within *Charvaka* circle.[63]

The period between 400 BCE and 200 BCE witnessed the composition of Brahmana texts often called as *Vedanga* the limbs of Vedas. Along with Vedanta texts like *Aranyaka*, Upanishads, *Samhita*s and *Sutra*s composed in the period, *Purana*s and *Itihasa*s also penned down in the subsequent centuries. While the early epoch of pre-Bhakti period is centered around Brahmanism, the later epoch witnessed splitting of Hinduism into various sects and groups for variety of reasons. The proliferation of religious literatures from 400 BCE to approximately 7th century and absence of clear criterion of what makes one a Hindu, prompted to the sprouting of numerous groups based on religious philosophies and practices, thus Hinduism remained as a common name for variety of traditions that prevailed in Indian sub-continent.

1.1.2. Astika sects

Speculations and confusions in Vedas on conceiving eternal God and cosmology, salvation and its path, ritualism and its efficacy and on nature of soul and death, led to various interpretations of these matters, which eventually resulted in the emergence of different schools of thought like *Purva Mimamsa*, Vedanta, *Samkhya*, *Nyaya*, *Vaisheshika* and Yoga among other numerous schools of thought. But these six schools are referred as *Sadıdarshana*s the six orthodox (*Astika*) Hindu philosophical sects.[64] As some scholars put forward, these schools are not conflicting or competing each other but these are different viewpoints as the term '*darshana*', this is how these schools mentioned in Hindu tradition, is derived from root '*drish*' which means to see.[65] These

---

[63] Puligandala, *Fundamentals of Indian Philosophy*, p. 21.

[64] Jessica Frazier, ed., *The Bloomsburry Companion of Hindu Studies* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), p.25.

[65] René Guénon, *Introduction to the Study of Hindu Doctrines*, trans. Marco Pallis (Hillsdale New York: Sophia Perennis, 2004), p. 163.

six schools offer Moksha through Jnana Marga the path of knowledge. We inspect these sects in order to better understanding of Jnana Marga and how these offer Moksha through Knowledge.

A common feature that seen in all *Darshana*s is that basic teachings of the sect are condensed into *Sutra*s (leading threads) that expresses precise summary of thoughts and are easy to be memorized. The sects develop through the expansion of these *Sutra*s especially with commentaries that describe each term of *Sutra*s with depicting the key differences of the sect with other sects and showing evidences on the righteousness of the sect. As the *Sutra*s are not understandable without commentary, the commentary work (*Bashya*) is most referred, thus it turned as authoritative text of the sect itself, prompting to the writing of many sub commentaries. Considering the subject matters of each *Darshana*s, these six sects stereotypically classified into three; *Nyaya-Vaisheshika*, *Samkhya*-Yoga, and *Purva Mimamsa-Uthara Mimamsa* or Vedanta,[66] and these six schools are famous six Indian schools of philosophy. In our context, we go lightly through these *Astika* traditions in order to better understanding of history of pre-Bhakti Hinduism.

1.1.2.1. Nyaya

Even though *Nyaya* school is based on *Nyayasutra* of Gautama[67] and is believed to be originated by at least by 2th century BCE, the school developed systematically after the composition of *Nyayabashya* the legendary commentary by Vatsayana who lived around 450-500. *Nyayabashya* subjected to many commentaries when scholars of the school penned down many works to defend their school of thought as *Nyaya-Vaisheshika* were prime targets of contemporary Buddhist philosophers like Vasubandhu (d.569). Other works like *Nyayamanjari* composed by Jayanta Bhatta (d.900), and *Nyayasara* and *Nyayabushana* written by Basaravajna (9th century) in second half of the 9th century

[66] Klaus K Klostermaier, *Hinduism; a Short History* (Oxford: One world, 2000), p. 230-231.

[67] Klostermaier, *Hinduism; a Short History*, p. 232.

remain as the important works of the school. Udayana (d.1100) was exceptional and considered as one of the greatest philosophers of the school as he wrote 7 qualified works like *Atmatattvaviveka* that penned against Buddhists and *Nyayakusumanjali* which considered as magnum opus of Udayana.[68]

As the term '*Nyaya*' means 'logic' or 'method' and used to denote the school, it turned as synonym for 'logic'[69] but *Nyaya* as a school includes two parts; *Adhyatmavidya* the metaphysics and *Tarkashastra* the logic. The school deals with science of debate with acute analysis, as well as theories of soul, its suffering and salvation. The school starts with theory that knowledge of the true character of sixteen categories will lead to the attainment of salvation and these 16 categories (*Padarta*s) are; the means of right cognition, the objects of right cognition, doubt, example, motive, theory, cogitation, factors of inference, demonstrated truth, discussion, disputation, fallacious reason, wrangling, casuistry, futile rejoinder and clinchers.[70]

In the epistemology of *Navya-Nyaya*, *Pratyksha* is perception that occurs when any one of the senses is contacted with object; it is unassociated with names, uncontradicted and indefinite. *Anumana* is three kinds: *Purvavat* the inference from cause to effect, *sheshvat* the inference from effect to cause and *Samayatodrishta* the inference from common characteristics. *Upamana* is the knowing of anything through similarity like giving examples and *Shabda* is the testimony of authoritative texts like Veda. The syllogism of *Nyaya* philosophy is consisting of five elements; *pratinja* the statement, *hetu* the reason, *udaharana* the example, *Upanaya* the corroboration by the instance and the final assertion.[71]

Nyaya school seek to establish that real salvation is possible through true cognition of reality and they agree with metaphysics of *Vaisheshika* when they denote

---

[68] Encylopedia of Indian philosophies, edi. Karl H. Potter, v. II, p. 2-8.

[69] Guénon, *Introduction to the Study of Hindu Doctrines*, p. 169.

[70] Guénon, *Introduction to the Study of Hindu Doctrines*, p. 236-237.

[71] Guénon, *Introduction to the Study of Hindu Doctrines*, p. 238-239.

moksha as absolute freedom from pain, therefore *Jivanmukta* the condition of immortality is possible only after bodily death. *Nyaya* school demonstrates the existence of *Ishvara* the lord as it argues that experience of activity and individual existence requires an unseen cause responsible for joys and sorrows of human life and that is lord. The lord is one who has right knowledge free from *adharma* or *mithya jnana* (false knowledge) and his grace is needed for the positive results of peoples' efforts.[72] The notion of *Ishvara* by Nyaya school is somehow parallel with Islamic views of God. As the '*Ishvara*' is originally a name of *Siva*, most of *Nyayayikas* (followers of *Nyaya* school), were Saivites (worshippers of Siva) and their concept of God is monotheistic not pantheistic.[73]

Even though *Nyaya* and *Vaisheshika* counted as different schools in *Sadıdarshana*s, there is a mutual understanding between two often accepting theories each other. Both schools had considered themselves mutually supportive as *Vaisheshika* specialized in metaphysics while *Nyaya* in epistemology and methodology.[74] Therefore, *Nyaya-Vaisheshika* is full scale philosophical school which deal with logic, ethics, theory of value, metaphysics, epistemology, methodology and moksha.[75]

1.1.2.2. Vaisheshika

Vaisheshika school is attributed to Kanada (6th century BCE) and is based on his work *Vaisheshikasutra*.[76] The name '*Vaisheshika*' is derived from the term '*vishesha*' which means 'distinctive character' and 'individual thing', so this school deals with knowledge of individual things in their distinctive mode. While *Vaisheshika* treats things

---

[72] Guénon, *Introduction to the Study of Hindu Doctrines*, p. 239.

[73] Karl H. Potter, ed., *The encyclopedia of Indian philosophies, Indian Metaphysics and Epistemology: The Tradition of Nyaya-Vaisesika up to Gangesa*, 1st ed (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1970), v. II, p. 21-23.

[74]Karl H. Potter, ed., *The encyclopedia of Indian philosophies, Indian Metaphysics and Epistemology: The Tradition of Nyaya-Vaisesika up to Gangesa*, v. II, p. 12.

[75] Karl H. Potter, ed., *The encyclopedia of Indian philosophies, Indian Metaphysics and Epistemology: The Tradition of Nyaya-Vaisesika up to Gangesa*, v. II, p. 1.

[76] Klostermaier, *Hinduism; A Short History*, p. 232.

directly for what they are in themselves, *Nyaya* considers them in their relationship with human understanding.[77]

The early classical commentaries and sub commentaries on *Vaisheshikasutra* is seemed to be lost with other independent works in the school, yet some *Sutra*s or some quotes are available and known as *Vaisheshikasutravakayas. Vaisheshika* school is further systematized through *Padartadarmasangraha,* therefore the work is subjected for commentaries and is most referred by scholars of the schools. Another major text of the school is *Dasapadartshastra* which is preserved only in its Chinese translation. Later, this school is developed through the works of *Nyaya* school scholars as the two schools are mutually syncretic in nature.[78]

As in Vedic thoughts, *Vaisheshika* also emphasizes on dharma as method of salvation and prosperity. Achieving salvation is the result of cognition of six categories; action, quality, concept, class, inherence and particularity, of substances that are water, fire, earth, time, ether, air, space, mind and atman. School also teaches that there are many *atman*s separated by their relative and specific *Visheshas*. A normal man can recognize their distinction based on their external actions but a yogi has the insight to realize its essence and the real cause of their diversity. Atman is eternal but the actions of atman are non-eternal and bound to physical body with which it is united. *Manas* or mind that given to every atman is its instrument which couldn't produce anything but with cooperation.[79]

Vaisheshika teaches that Mukti is a state of qualitylesness in which it remains itself in its own purity, and therefore moksha is not s state of pure knowledge nor a bliss. For Kanada, the substances are eternal and their movement is because of impersonal and eternal principle of *adrsta* (unseen). Later *Vaisheshika* scholars introduced an omnipresent *Ishavara* who is responsible for the universal order of atoms and their

---

[77] Guénon, *Introduction to the Study of Hindu Doctrines*, p. 174

[78] Karın Preisendanz, "Vaisesika," *Brill's encyclopedia of Hinduism*, ed. Knut A. Jacobsen - Johannes Bronkhorst (Leiden: Brill, 2011), v. III.3, p. 705-709.

[79] Guénon, *Introduction to the Study of Hindu Doctrines*, p. 232.

movements but atman and *anu* (atom) don't require to a creator for their existence and they are independent and eternal. The difference between atman and *Ishvara* is that *Ishvara* never tangled with *Samsara* the birth recycles.[80]

1.1.2.3. Samkhya

Each of Hindu schools of thought normally based on a foundation text and the school is being developed through commentaries and sub-commentaries of this foundation text. In *Samkhya*'s case, this foundation text is *Samkhyakarik*a of Ishvarakrishna (350-400 BCE) and tradition develops through Sanskrit commentaries on it but Kapila is considered as founder of *Samkhya* thought [81] as his work '*Samkhyasutra*' describes the school in detail whereas former is consisted of only seventy aphorisms.[82] *Samkhya* thoughts are dominant in numerous Indian knowledge traditions such as *Ayurveda* the Indian knowledge of medicine, classification of living beings and so on. *Samkhya* ideas have great influence on theological systems of *Saiva*, *Vaishnava* and *Shakta*. *Samkhya* categorization of fundamental principles is also fundamental in religious and social teachings of Bhagavad-Gita.[83]

The term '*Samkhya*' means that 'related to number, calculation or enumeration' and it defined as

"a specific system of dualist philosophizing that proceed by a method of enumerating the contents of experience and world for the purpose of attaining radical liberation."[84]

---

[80] Guénon, *Introduction to the Study of Hindu Doctrines*, p. 236.

[81] Knut A. Jacobsen, "The Bloomsburry Companion to Hindu Studies," ed. Jessica Frazier (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), p. 75.

[82] Klostermaier, *Hinduism; a Short History*, p. 242.

[83] Knut A Jacobson, p. 75.

[84] Gerald James Larson - Ram Shankar Bhattacharya, eds., *The encyclopedia of Indian philosophies, Samkhya: A Dualist Tradition in Indian Philosophy*, 1st ed (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1970) , v. IV, p. 3.

as prescribed in encyclopedia of Indian philosophies. As per *Samkhya* thoughts, it starts from *Prakriti* or *Pradana* which is unmanifested and undifferentiated universal substance but from which all things proceed through modifications. There are twenty-five *tattva*s or true principles that corresponds to degrees of each substance in their hierarchical order. The first *tattva* is *mula* the root of manifestation, then its modifications in different stages is represented by *tattva*s. In this stage, *Samkhya* sees things in its universal sense but to consider those things, it needs to a complementary principle that can be called 'essence' and this principle is named as *Purusha* or *Pumas*,[85] thus, *Samkhya* thought envisions a dualism of universe through *Prakriti* and *Purusha* or *Pradana* and *Pumas*, the female and male principle, matter and spirit.[86]

Prakriti and *Purusha*, the beginningless two realities were existing separately in polarity before their concrete existences and are interacted and combined in actual existence. *Purusha* which is pure consciousness experiences the changes through *Prakriti* in her three *guna*s (qualities) in varying degrees of *Sattva* the pure essence, *rajas* the passion and *tamas* the ignorance or darkness. By the interaction of *Purusha* with *Prakriti*, the balance of three *guna*s start to change and evolution happens. The first product of this evolution is called *Budhi* the intellect, then it produces *ahamkara* the principle of individuation, thus, it enumerates 24 basic elements that evolve through varying degrees of these three *guna*s. While *sattva* the *guna* (quality) of essence dominates in saintly people, *rajas* the passion dominates in ordinary people and *tamas* the darkness in animals.[87]

The salvation happens when *Purusha* understands *Prakriti* as *Prakriti* without *guna*s in its pure consciousness and she is the reason for the changes that leads to suffering, but he is incapable of acting himself when he is associated with *Prakriti* even though he is free through salvation. When the bodily separation takes place, *Prakriti*

---

[85] Guénon, *Introduction to the Study of Hindu Doctrines*, p. 181-182.

[86] Klostermaier, *Hinduism; a Short History*, p. 243.

[87] Klostermaier, *Hinduism; a Short History*, p. 243.

ceases to be active and then only *Purusha* reaches pure salvation or freedom through perfect aloneness and the stage is denoted as *kaivalya*. It's the stage when spirit realizes matter was the cause of his restlessness.[88]

Samkhya school is paired with Yoga school and the pair is very influential in different sects of Hinduism like in *Saivism*, *Vaishnavism* and *Şaktism. Samkhya*-Yoga was proposed numerous times as path of salvation in *Purana*s till Vedanta became dominant school of theology in Hinduism. *Mahabharata* the great epic sees Kapila the founder of *Samkhya* school as the son of Brahman while he is an avatar of *Vishnu* in *Bagavatapurana*, who teaches *Samkhya* as a path of salvation through which his mother attains the moksha. while *Samkhya* school doesn't recognize sacred scriptures as base of their thoughts as most of schools do, and it doesn't designate *Shruti* (revealed texts) higher than reasoning, moreover it doesn't acknowledge a lord beyond *Purusha* and *Prakriti*. For these reasons, polemics between *Samkhya* and Vedanta philosophy were inevitable.[89]

1.1.2.4. Yoga

Although the Yoga is one of six school of Hindu philosophy, the term is turned to a popular one nowadays as it denotes the method of meditation that produces peace of mind. Yoga, as a philosophical school, is mentioned often with *Samkhya* philosophy for both are interdependent. While *Samkhya* deals mainly with attributes of substance through *Purusha* and *Prakriti*, Yoga discusses more about path of salvation and its way of practicing with proper rules. The school starts with Yoga sutra of Patanjali who is believed to be lived around 350-450, the text is popularly known as *Patanjaliyogasutra*. Contrary to what we witnessed earlier in other schools, *Vyasabashya* is the commentary on *Yoga sutra* by Vyasa that describes the school in detail, but *Patanjaliyogasutra* didn't lose its importance in the tradition as many others also commented on it. Some scholars claim that even Shankara (d.820) the famous Vedanta philosopher had also penned down

[88] Guénon, *Introduction to the Study of Hindu Doctrines*, p. 244.

[89] Guénon, *Introduction to the Study of Hindu Doctrines*, p. 241-242.

a commentary on the text with a title of *Patanjaliyogasutravivarana* irrespective of strong polemics between Vedanta and Samkhya-Yoga. The close relation of Samkhya and Yoga philosophies is obvious as *Vyasabashya* identified itself as *Samkhyaprachana* that means 'explanation of Samkhya philosophy'.[90]

The great grammarian Panini (d. 350 BCE) describes that the term 'yoga' means 'union with supreme God' for the term was derived from '*yuj*' that means to join. While Vedanta philosophers say that Yoga denotes the return of *Jivatman* the individual being to its union with *Paramatman,* Patanjali itself defines it as "Concentration, or Yoga, is the hindering of the modifications of the thinking principle (PtygSr. 1/2),[91] thus the definition shows its relation with Samkhya philosophy. But in many Hindu scriptures, the term is also used generally as a synonym to *Marga* the path like in *Karma-yoga* and *Bhakti yoga*. As the term Yoga corresponded to a wide range of practices, the term 'Samkhya-Yoga' is used to denote Yoga as a philosophic school described in *Patanjaliyogasutra*, which is also known as Raja Yoga.[92]

Patanjaliyogasutra, a text with only ten pages in original,[93] is divided into four parts i.e., the four *Pada*s of Yoga; these are trance (*Samadhi*), means of realization (*Sadhana*), pre-natural accomplishment (*Vibhuti*) and ultimate aim (*Kaivalya*).[94] The first sutra of the text defines Yoga as cessation of all changes in the consciousness, in which *Chitta* is identical with *Mahat* the first evolved in Samkhya, whose changes are the reason for all kind of suffering. Cessation of *Chitta* means merging into Prakriti, that is when Prakriti disassociated from Purusha, Purusha achieves *Ekagrata* the one pointedness or *Kaivalya* the aloneness, or state of being with himself only, being nothing but

---

[90] Gerald James Larson - Karl H. Potter, eds., *Yoga: India's philosophy of meditation*, 1. ed (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2008), v. 12, p. 21-23.

[91] Patanjali, *The Yoga Aphorisms of Patanjali*, trans. William Q. Judge (New York: The Path, 1890), p. 2.

[92] Guénon, *Introduction to the Study of Hindu Doctrines*, p. 240-242.

[93] Patanjali, *The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, trans. Charles Johnston (New York: Charles Johnston, 1912), p. 3.

[94] Patanjali, *The Yoga-system of Patanjali*, trans. James Haughton Woods, p. XXIV- XXVIII.

consciousness. In Fivefold changes that affect *Chitta* are imagination, perception, deep sleep, delusion and memory which are removable with *Abhyasa* the dialectic interaction of positive efforts and *Vairagya* the renunciation. Contrary to Samkhya, Yoga introduces lord (*Ishvara*) as point of concentration who is a Purusha without sufferings and activities and is denoted by the term '*Om*'. Continuous recitation of 'Om' is recommended to Yogi in order to attain *Kaivalya* as he can help to remove obstacles that obstruct self-realization like pains, indecisions and so on. Truthfulness, compassion with other positive traits and breath control are described as remedies for these obstacles and are recommended in *Sutra*.[95]

Sadhana in Yoga is the means of realization and is consisted of austerities (*Tapas)*, scriptural study (*Svadhyaya*) and meditation with lord (*Ishvara Pradana)* which are practiced to attain inner peace (*Samadhi*) and to terminate frustrations (*Klesha*s). Practicing austerities purifies sins and give some supernatural abilities (*Sidi*s) to *Yogin* the one who practices Yoga. The study of scriptures (*Svadhyaya*) brings him to his favorite lord (*Ishtadevata*) and surrender to Lord (*Ishvara pranidhana*) leads to *Samadhi*. Lack of wisdom (*Avidya*) is root cause of all sufferings and it can be seen in four forms mainly; egoism (*Asmita*), attachment (*Raga*), aversion (*Dvesha*) and love of physical life (*Abinivesha*). To liberate from *avidya* the ignorance, knowledge (*Viveka*) is essential as it discriminates the real from illusory, and this is achieved only after the impurities of mind are removed through 8 limbs of Yoga or *Yoganga*s and that are; ethical commands and prohibitions (*Yama* and *Niyama*), bodily postures (*Asana*), breath control (*Pranayama*), concentration (*Dharana*), meditation (*Dharana*), withdrawal of the senses

[95] Patanjali, *The Yoga-system of Patanjali*, trans. James Haughton Woods, p. 1-101; Guénon, *Introduction to the Study of Hindu Doctrines*, p. 244-245.

(*Pratyahara*) and trance (*Samadhi*). There are 84 postures (*Asana*s) that enables *Yogin* to be motionless for a long time and without straining or falling asleep in that position.[96]

The third *pada* (*Vibhuti*) is a state of achieving supernatural abilities (*sidi*s) but Patanjali warns *Yogin* that *sidi*s never should be the aim of Yoga as it will distract him from the true and real goal that is spiritual realization. In the fourth *Pada* (*Kaivalya*), one reaches salvation the ultimate realization.[97]

1.1.2.5. Mimamsa

Mimamsa is philosophy or science of language, grammar and meaning evolved from instructions to correct pronunciations of mantras and enactment of rituals prescribed in Vedas.[98] The word '*mimamsa*' means 'profound thought' through which deep study of Vedas is done and it was used to understand the precise meaning of Vedas and Vedanta. There is *Purva Mimamsa* and *Uthara Mimamsa* that developed to understand the persons in Vedas especially Brahman the divine and Atman the soul along with causes, nature and efficacy of rituals. Considering the concerned matter of both, Purva Mimamsa also named as *Karma Mimamsa* as it deals with realm of action while *Uttara mimamsa* is referred as *Brahma mimamsa* as it explores knowledge of Brahman. The second *Mimamsa* is also constitutes Vedanta texts, therefore is well known as Vedanta while *Purva Mimamsa* is intended in case of the term '*Mimamsa*' only mentioned as the title here.[99] The common feature of both *Mimamsa*s is that they develop their school of theology based on *Shruti* scriptures of Hinduism the Vedas.[100] While the *Purva Mimamsa* is based upon the first two parts of Vedas the *Samhitas* and *Brahmanas*, *Uttara Mimamsa* is based upon next

---

[96]Patanjali, *The Yoga Darsana; The Sutras of Patanjali with the Bashya of Vyasa*, trans. Ganganatha Jha (Bombay: Bombay Theosophical Publication, 1907), p. XVII-XVIII; René Guénon, *Introduction to the Study of Hindu Doctrines*, trans. Marco Pallis, p. 245-246.

[97] Guénon, *Introduction to the Study of Hindu Doctrines*, p. 247.

[98] Frazier, *The Bloomsburry Companion of Hindu Studies*, p. 25.

[99] Guénon, *Introduction to the Study of Hindu Doctrines*, p. 191.

[100] Klaus K. Klostermaier, p. 250.

two parts of Vedas namely Aranyaka and Upanishads.[101] Although both schools differ at many points, they are supportive of each other and considered as two most orthodox schools of *Sadıdarshana*s but *Purva Mimamsa* is most orthodox one.[102]

Even though *Mimamsa* school is attributed to Jaimini (4th century BCE) and his work *Mimamsasutra* is considered as foundational text of school, almost literatures in the school are based in its oldest commentary '*Mimamsasutrabashya*' due to difficulty to understand the former text comprehensively. The school is said to have emerged by the start of second mid of first millennium BC and developed in subsequent centuries. In the 7th century, main two subdivisions of the school; *Batta Mimamsa* on the basis of Kumarilabatta's (7th century) works and *Prabakra Mimamsa* on the base of Prabhakara's (7th century) works, were emerged.[103]

While early *Mimamsaka*s were reluctant to use the term moksha and were using *Swarga* the heaven, later *Mimamskas*, with Vedanta's influence, started to use the term moksha the salvation.[104] In *Mimamsa* school, different opinions including mistaken about a question are put forward and then rejected, and finally the correct solution of the question is given as a conclusion. The study aims to display proofs and rationale behind the *Karmas* the rituals prescribed in Vedas in keeping one's dharma. It also defends the theory of infallibility of the traditional doctrine, and if any wrong is noticed, then its mistake of the person who compose that, therefore, only one who well versed with Veda and its science is qualified to compose sacred traditional scriptures. *Mimamsa* is necessary to understand the scriptures with true pronunciation and correct spelling as taught by *Shiksha* the modus operandi, and describes different classes of mantras based

---

[101] Karl H. Potter, ed., *The encyclopedia of Indian philosophies, Philosophy of Purva Mimamsa*, 1st ed (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1970), v. 16, p. 22.

[102] Klaus K. Klostermaier, p. 250.

[103] Lawrence J. McCrea, "Mimamsa," *Brill's encyclopedia of Hinduism*, ed. Knut A. Jacobsen - Johannes Bronkhorst (Leiden: Brill, 2011), v. 3, p. 643-650.

[104] Guénon, *Introduction to the Study of Hindu Doctrines*, p. 251.

on proper rhythms as per Chandas the principles of tempo. Close inspection of words and meanings with *Vyakarana* the grammar in order to differentiate various usages of the word used in Veda and to find suitable one, is another aspect of *Mimamsa*. *Mimamsa* also deals with jurisprudential matters that concerns with Vedas.[105] Considering these aspects of *Mimamsa*, it is also known as 'science of sentences' (*Vakyashastra*), 'science of words' (*Pada shastra*) and 'science of valid knowledge' (*Paramanshastra*) and was considered popularly as kernel of Brahmanical education. [106]

1.1.2.6. Vedanta

As we discussed earlier, Vedanta is *Uttara Mimamsa* that deals with aspects for intellectual basis of rituals prescribed in Vedas especially about Brahman, Atman and moksha's realities. Even though Vedanta is common name for all schools that serves as the explanations of Veda scriptures, this *Advaita* Vedanta is denoted when the term 'Vedanta' is used as this school was popularly considered as authentic and right teachings of Vedas especially after the contribution of Shankaracharya, the prominent exponent of this school, to the school.[107] Vedanta school has divided itself to many sects like *Vishishtadvaita* Vedanta of Ramanuja and Vallabha's (d.1531) *Dvaita* Vedanta but *Advaita* Vedanta that establishes non dualism *(Advaita*) of Brahman and Atman, and advocated by Shankaracharya, had secured great prominence in the tradition.[108] Out of ten recognized schools of Vedanta, *Advaita* Vedanta is non theistic Vedanta philosophy, *Vaishnavism* and *Saivism* are examples of theistic philosophy which have close ties with Bhakti[109]. *Advaita* Vedanta focuses on the ultimate teachings of Upanishads, that is non

[105] Guénon, *Introduction to the Study of Hindu Doctrines*, p. 191-194.

[106] Lawrence J. McCrea, "Mimamsa," v.3, p. 643.

[107] Karl H. Potter, ed., *Advaita Vedānta up to Śaṃkara and his pupils*, Reprint (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2008), v. 3, p. 6.

[108] Richard King, *Indian Philosophy and Introduction to Hindu and Buddhist thoughts* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Universtiy Press, 1999), p. 53.

[109] Klostermaier, *Hinduism; A Short History*, p. 254.

dualism in which Atman is identical with Brahman or monism which means there is only one kind of thing that exists.[110]

As in cases of other schools, Vedanta school flourished on the basis of Shankara's (d. 820) *Brahmasutrabashya*, even though the foundation script of the school is attributed to *Brahmasutra* of Badrayana (5th century BCE).[111] All traditions (*sampradaya*) of Vedanta accept Upanishads, *Brahmasutra* and *Bhagavad Gita* as three foundations of the school and name it as *Prastanatraya* (three foundations).[112] *Vedantasutra* is divided into four chapters (*adhyaya*) in which first chapter completely discusses about Brahman the supreme being and rejects all systems that teach otherwise as heretical. While the second chapter discusses evolvement of universe and rejects Samkhya and *Vaisheshika* schools, third chapter describes about *Jivatman* (soul) and its conditions in dream, dreamless sleep and after death. The last chapter deals with meditations towards Brahman and state of *Mukta*s those who attained the liberation through knowing of Brahman.[113] *Advaita* Vedanta school teaches that there is no distinction between Atman the one's self and Brahman the eternal being but the illusion (*Maya*) arisen by ignorance (*Avidya*) is the reason behind one's perception of different things. The illusion forces one to Samsara the rebirth cycle till he gets moksha through Jnana or Vidya the knowledge. The excessive knowledge leads to the realization of one's self that he is not different from Brahman and he is identical with Brahman the eternal being, so he is eternally liberated from rebirth cycle.[114] Non dualism of Atman and Brahman is often justified or described through famous quoting from Upanishad, that are "*aham Brahmasam*" that means "I am the Brahman" and "*tat tvam asi*" that means "that is what you are." The school teaches that when one's self obtains moksha he is freed from

---

[110] Christopher Bartley, "Vedanta, Advaita Vedanta and the Schools of Vedanta," *Brill's encyclopedia of Hinduism*, ed. Knut A. Jacobsen - Johannes Bronkhorst (Leiden: Brill, 2011), v. 3, p. 719.

[111] Karl H. Potter, ed., *Advaita Vedānta up to Śaṃkara and his pupils*, v.3, p. 6.

[112] King, *Indian Philosophy and Introduction to Hindu and Buddhist Thoughts*, p. 53.

[113] Klostermaier, *Hinduism; A Short History*, p. 254.

[114] Karl H. Potter, ed., *Advaita Vedānta up to Śaṃkara and his pupils*, v. 3, p. 6.

all bonds by his merging with the Universal, and through this realization alone one becomes a Yogi while he is called *Jivan mukta* if he delivered during life in contrast with *Videha mukta* who delivered it when he was out of the bodily form and reached this realization only after death and cessation of his bodily wastes.[115]

Among numerous orthodox (*Astika*) and heterodox (*Nastika*) schools in Hinduism, Vedanta school emerged as dominant divine and philosophical thought system in Hinduism especially with efforts of Shankaracharya, therefore, he is considered great revivalist in the history of Hinduism itself and some scholars classify Hindu theology as pre-Shankara and post-Shankara. A brief description on him and his contributions in the theology of Hinduism is must be useful one and unavoidable.

Shankaracharya

The great philosopher, even compared with western philosophers like Plato, Shankara holds a distinguished place in history of Hinduism as well as Indian philosophy for his enormous efforts in the field through his philosophy of non-duality or *Advaita* Vedanta as popularly known. It is said that he systematized and reformed Hinduism from a ritualistic and mythical one to sophisticated philosophical religion. Based on hagiographies of Shankara, it is believed that he was an exceptional Sannyasin (ascetic) who engaged in debates with sectarian Hinduism, which lead to the acceptance of Shankara's ideology. It may be concluded that he was a legend, often attributing his as incarnation of God itself, in the history of Hinduism as he synthesized different sects of Hinduism to a common Hindu line. When we move out of hagiographies, it is understood that Shankara affirmed traditional orthodoxy and its exclusionary social visions as he defended the Varnashrama dharma the principle that leads to caste system, and founded Sringeri *Matha* the religious school where only brahmins were allowed. And in his theory of salvation, only brahmins were eligible to perform Nitya (necessary) and *Naimittika*

[115] Guénon, *Introduction to the Study of Hindu Doctrines*, p. 202.

(occasional) duties that makes one capable for close inquiry with Brahman the eternal God.[116]

Shankara born in Kaladi, a province in south India, had lived only 32 years from 788-820 as most of historians pointed out, while some others pushed back to an earlier epoch between 700 and 750.[117] He was born for Shivaguru (8th century) and Aryamba (8th century) couple in a brahmin family namely *Nambudiri* and was named as Shankara which is a name of Siva the God and means 'accomplisher of peace and good.' He left his home renouncing this world as a Sannyasin in the age of 8 after demise of his father, and reached banks of Narmada River where he acquired traditional Vedic instructions under Govinda (8th century). Then he walked by bare foot to Kashi where he started his public debates and teachings and three of his famous four disciples namely Padmapada (8th century), Hastamalaka (8th century) and Totaka (8th century) had joined him. According to some records, he had travelled to Badrinath in Himalayas where he stayed there for four years penning down his works and had completed his major works there before the age of sixteen. Returning to Kashi, he restarted his public life as a debater and his debate with Mandana is famous as the later gave up his argument and joined Shankara as his disciple. In order to hand over right Vedanta teachings, he established monasteries (*matha*) of Vedic instructions in four directions: Dwarka in the west, Puri in the east, Badrinath in the north and Sringeri in the south.[118] He appointed his four disciples as head (Acharya) of each one; Suesvara (8th century) at Sringeri, Padmapada at Badrinath, Hastamalaka at Dwaraka and Totaka at Puri. In some traditions, Kanchipuram is considered as fifth center of *Matha*. Moreover, Shankara had established 10 renunciation order associated with each monastery (*Matha)*; *Saraswati*, *Puri*, and *Bharati* orders associated with Sringeri, *Vana* and *Ananya* orders associated with Puri, *Asrama* and

---

[116] Forsthoefel, "Handbook of Oriental Studies.", v. 4, p.388.

[117] Bradely J. Malkovsky, *The Role of Divine Grace in the Soteriology of Samkraracharya* (Leiden: BRILL, 2001), p.1-10.

[118] Swami Mukhyananda, *Sri Shankaracharya life and Philosophy* (Kolkata: Advaita Ashrama, 2015), p. 6-11.

Thirtha orders associated with Dwaraka, and *Sagara*, *Giri* and *Parvata* orders associated with Badrinath (8th century), and the supreme of leader of all 10 orders of *Dashanami,* who is also the abbot of the Puri, was named as *Jagadguru* (teacher of the universe) while heads of four *Matha*s were named as Acharya. These 10 ascetic orders were instrumental in eradicating Buddhism and Jainism from south India and also in giving a pan Indian identity for orthodox Vedic tradition while for some scholars these are learned and most orthodox of Hindu ascetics. He had died in Kedarnath in Himalayas at the age of 32, leaving a great footprint in Hinduism and influence of his legacy in the tradition continues. Some later traditions designated him as incarnation of Siva but it was rejected as Shankara himself favors Vishnu in most of his works.[119]

Even though there are over 400 of works attributed to Shankara, scholars had examined authenticity and confirmed that very few of them are written by Shankara himself. Among all his works, *Brahmasutrabashya* is most important and considered as magnum opus of *Advaita* Vedanta. Other works with proven authority are *Upadeshashasri, Bagavatgitabashya,* commentaries on ten Upanishads; *Chandogya, Aitareya, Taittiriya, Brhadaranyaka, Katha, Isopa, Kena, Prashna, Mandukya and Mundaka*.[120]

Shankara's significant contribution to Hinduism as well as Indian philosophy is *Advaita* Vedanta (non-dualism) which rejects the duality of Atman the self and Brahman the eternal being. In classical Hinduism, amalgamation of mortal Atman with immortal Brahman is moksha and the path for this amalgamation is described in Vedas in which rituals hold the importance. *Advaita* rejects this duality and proposes that Atman itself is Brahman because Brahman is real being and eternal while all others are mortal and unreal,

---

[119] Thomas Forsthoefel, "Sankara," v.4, p. 391.

[120] Joseph Payyappilly, *The Concept of Man in The Advaita Vedanta of Sankara; an Inquiry to theological persepectives* (New York: Peter Lang, 2004), p. 40.

through *Mahavakya*s (passage of great excellence) put forward by Upanishads and these are;

- *Tat tvam asi* (that you are),
- *Aham Brahma asmi* (I am Brahma)
- *Ayam atma Brahma* (that self indeed is Brahman)
- *Sarvam khalu Brahma* (verily all this is Brahman).[121]

Moreover, Shankara attributes the eternal being as a being that doesn't suffer changes in three-time phases; past, present and future (*trikale abadhyatva*). One's misguided notion to consider changing one as changeless is source of suffering and, in Shankara's view, this ignorance brings S*amsara* (rebirth) cycle, that is why, the solution is only liberating knowledge. Therefore, *Advaita* Vedanta prefers knowledge portion (*Jnana Kanda*) over action portion (*Karma Kanda*).[122]

Energized from Shankara's efforts, Vedanta dominated Hindu theological thoughts and prevailed as theology of Hinduism itself. But Vedanta further divided to many divisions like *Vishishtadvaita* propounded by Ramanuja who was also considered as great master in Bhakti tradition also. Even though sects based on the Gods were in existence before him, Vaishnava sect who worships lord Vishnu in his various forms embraced *Vishishtadvaita*, and the sect flourished throughout Hindu mass in Indian subcontinent, the phenomenon marked the development of both Bhakti and *Vishishtadvaita*. In nutshell, there are recognized six orthodox schools of Hinduism but Vedanta dominated in the philosophical or intellectual thoughts of Hindu theology.

---

[121] Payyappilly, *The Concept of Man in The Advaita Vedanta of Sankara; an Inquiry to Theological Persepectives*, p. 40-41.

[122] Thomas Forsthoefel, "Sankara," v.4, p. 392.

1.1.3. Theological Sects

Contrary to most of religions, the concept of God in Hinduism is complex as wide range of Gods are worshipped by followers, the phenomenon caused Hinduism to be denoted as a pantheistic religion. Mentioning of various names in Vedas led to different sects as each one worshipped one of those names, eventually it turned into pantheism. Even though the numbering of these Gods arbitrary but generally reckoned as 33, the classification of powers and functions of these Gods holds some importance. Based on primary location and domain of functions,[123] Gods in Vedic age are classified into three;

1. Heavenly Gods like Surya, Pusha, Mitra, Sabita, Varuna, Vishnu and Usha, etc.
2. Atmospheric Gods like Vayu, Rudra, Maruta, Indra, and Aja, etc.
3. Earthly Gods like Soma, Brhaspati, Agni and Sarasvati, etc.[124]

The Gods are known as Deva and each God was assigned with some natural powers like Varuna[125] was guardian of cosmic order while Mitra was solar God assisting Varuna and a friend of men.[126] Among many Gods with assigned natural functions, Indra the God famous for warfare[127] and Rudra the supreme God of storms had some importance but the later was greatest of Vedic Gods for his velour against enemy of men. Agni[128] the God of fire and central figure in sacrifices also turned into primary Gods when Hindus concentrated on rituals and sacrifices.[129] Scholars hold different views on whether there was image worship in Vedic age itself, but it is generally agreed that the start of

---

[123] Thomas J. Hopkins, *The Hindu Religious Tradition* (California: Wadswoth Publishing Company, 1971), p. 11.

[124] Chattopadhyaya, *Evolution of Hindu Sects up to the Time of Shankaracharya*, p. 7.

[125] Ralph T.H Griffith, trans., *Rig Veda* (Benares: E.J Lazarus and Co., 1889), v. I, p. 43-44 (1/25), v. I, p. 379-380 (2/28).

[126] Ralph T.H Griffith, trans., *Rig Veda,* v. III, p. 77-87 (7/60-67).

[127] Indra is mentioned over 250 times in Rigveda alone. Ralph T.H Griffith, *Rigveda* (Benares: E.J Lazarus and Co., 1920), v. I, p. 43-47 (1/32,33).

[128] Rigveda starts with hymns glorifying Agni. Ralph T.H Griffith, trans., *Rig Veda*, p. 1-2.

[129] Hopkins, *The Hindu Religious Tradition*, p. 11-21.

image worship led to sectarianism.[130] However, spread of Vaishnavism and Shaivism through Bhakti in middle ages had prompted historians to conclude the sects based on Gods mainly into three; Shaivism and Vaishnavism along with *Şaktism* the another sect without much prominence.

1.1.3.1. Shaivism

Along with popular Gods of Vedic period like Varuna and Indra, the God Siva is also had existed in early Vedic period but was not popular as in middle ages.[131] While God Rudra of Vedic age was considered as ascendant of Siva,[132] inscriptions that found in the first century CE denoting the names '*Shivarakshita*' that means 'protected by Siva' and '*Shivasena*' that means 'army of *Siva*', point to its existence in earlier periods.[133] The term '*Shiva*' means 'auspicious' but he was considered as a destroyer in earlier times.[134] Based on different mentions in various scriptures, a subsect of *Shaivism* namely *Pashupata* was existed in many parts of Indian sub-continent as early as fourth century BCE.[135] Some historians like Thomas J. Hopkins view its origin in Indus cult itself as earlier as 3rd millennium BCE because Veda criticize the sect that worships *Phallus* which is early form of Shaivism in his view.[136] Along with *Pashupata*s, *Pashupata-Lakulisa*s, a subsect of *Pashupata*s known for extreme ascetic practices like being naked and sleeping on ashes or dirts, and *Smarta*s represent early forms of Shaivism.[137] While Panini in fourth century refers to some images of Siva, Kadphises who was a Kushana king and lived in

[130] Chattopadhyaya, *Evolution of Hindu Sects up to the Time of Shankaracharya*, p. 7.

[131] Nirad C. Chaudhari, *Hinduism; a Religion to Live by* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 45.

[132] Chaudhari, *Hinduism; a Religion to Live By*, p. 239.

[133] Chaudhari, *Hinduism; a Religion to Live By*, p. 45.

[134] F. Kingsbury - G.E Philips, *Hymns of Tamil Saivite Saints* (Culcutta: Association Press, 1921), p. 3-4.

[135] Chattopadhyaya, *Evolution of Hindu Sects up to the Time of Shankaracharya*, p. 91.

[136] Hopkins, *The Hindu Religious Tradition*, p. 10.

[137] Hopkins, *The Hindu Religious Tradition*, p. 99.

2nd century BCE, had circulated coins with Siva-in scripted images describing himself as a Siva devotee.[138]

In Shaivism, lord Siva is attributed often as Ishvara (Lord) or Maheshvara (Great Lord) while the followers of the cult call themselves Parama-Maheshvara. Beside these names, Siva is also referred with many mythological names like Bhutpati, Mahadeva, Parameshvara, Pashupati, Pinakin, Shulapani and so on.[139] Many observations suggest that Shaivism had emerged before Vaishnavism due to many reasons including seeking of Krishna, the Godly incarnation of Vishnu, help from Siva as depicted in Mahabharata, a legendary text that is believed to be composed in 2nd century BCE.[140] In Mahabharata, Siva is worshiped as the creator of the universe who is unborn and powerful.[141] Some theologians argue that Shaivism may be the one and only monotheistic Hinduism since some of Siva worshippers argued that Siva is the only supreme God and defended his association with Goddesses like Durga and Kali as polymorphous, the argument is almost rejected by academicians while they name the argument as polymorphous monotheism. As we will witness in *Shakta* cult, Siva is often mentioned with his consort Parvati who is named as Kali or Durga and by other names, and worshipped together.[142]

To understand Siva followers, they used to dress themselves with the skin of wild beasts and had clubs as their weapons. They are also famous for worship of Linga, which is a single rock curved roundly on the top and may be easily understandable symbol of the sect. The term '*Ling'* means penis and it may indirectly denote the vegetation of Siva[143] and the worship of Lingam is reported as early as Indus civilization about 3rd millennium BCE.[144] Two stories of Lingam attached with Siva are reported. In first one,

---

[138] Hopkins, *The Hindu Religious Tradition*, p. 60-62.

[139] Chattopadhyaya, *Evolution of Hindu Sects up to the Time of Shankaracharya*, p. 47.

[140] Chattopadhyaya, *Evolution of Hindu Sects up to the Time of Shankaracharya*, p. 89.

[141] Hopkins, *The Hindu Religious Tradition*, p. 88.

[142] Chattopadhyaya, *Evolution of Hindu Sects up to the Time of Shankaracharya*, p. 241.

[143] Chattopadhyaya, *Evolution of Hindu Sects up to the Time of Shankaracharya*, p. 84-88.

[144] Hopkins, *The Hindu Religious Tradition*, p. 11.

Siva the great creator slashed his penis (Lingam) as he realized no need of it and went for ascetic life, and the Lingam sticks up in the ground. Another one story describes that Siva is God whose penis (Lingam) is worshiped by men and his creatures bear his symbol the Lingam or his wife's the vulva or *Yoni*.[145] In Shaivism, both Yoga and Bhakti are combined together with much emphasis on Yoga.[146] Shaivism flourished in the sub-continent through Nayanmar poets who wandered the regions in south singing devotional songs to Lord Siva. As Nayanmar poets were also exponents of Bhakti, we will discuss comprehensively in coming part.

1.1.3.2. Vaishnavism

Vaishnavism is another major theological sect in Hinduism who worships God Vishnu. In Rigveda, five hymens were addressed to him mentioning his name more than hundred times and he was ranked fourth representing the form of sun.[147] As in case of Siva too, Vishnu was also not major God in early Vedic times, but he was worshipped in other manifestations by some sects like Bhagavatas. Vasudeva, the earliest version of Vishnu, was worshipped by devotees who called themselves as Bhagavatas the worshippers of Bhagavan 'the Generous Lord.'[148] While Panini pointed to images of Vishnu, Heliodors (d.175 BCE), a Greek ambassador in India lived in second century BCE, described himself as a Bhagavata.[149] In Brahmanas, Vishnu was called as highest of the Gods after he won earth for Gods against *Asura*s (demons). Vishnu was also referred as Narayana who was eternal supreme deity in some Brahmana texts as well as in Dharma Sutras while he was called by name Hari in *Taittirya Aranyaka*. In Mahabharata, Vasudeva, who was merged with Krishna and known as Vasudeva Krishna,

---

[145] Hopkins, *The Hindu Religious Tradition*, p. 88.

[146] Chattopadhyaya, *Evolution of Hindu Sects up to the Time of Shankaracharya*, p. 84-88.

[147] Suvira Jaiswal, *The origin and development of Vaisnavism* (Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Oriental Publishers and Booksellers, 1967), p. 50.

[148] Hopkins, *The Hindu Religious Tradition*, p. 89

[149] Hopkins, *The Hindu Religious Tradition*, p. 60-62

was identified with Vedic God Vishnu. In short, all these Gods namely Vasudeva, Krishna, Narayana, Hari, Shankar and Vishnu were used to refer Lord Bhagavan in Mahabharata.[150] Yet, names of different sects who worship different manifestations of same God were mentioned in the epic like Bhagavatas, *Pancaratra*s, Ekantins, Sattvatas and Vaishnavas but the God is same Vishnu around whom the tradition developed later.[151] Bhagavat-Gita acts as a doctrinal basis of Vaishnavism merging different Gods to one God Vishnu. Even though Siva had some importance in early portions of Mahabharata, Vaishnavism was turned as dominant theology in the final stages of the epic.[152]

Other Purana texts like Vishnu purana, a product of Pancaratra sect of Vaishnavism, and *Harivamsa purana* give details about Vaishnavi teachings of creation and avatars the incarnations of God Vishnu. By second century BCE, the earliest Vaishnavi center of worship and column of Heliodors that were dedicated to Vasudeva, were located in nearby areas of Mathura on the banks of Jumna River.[153] *Silappadhikaram* a Tamil poem of fifth century mentions about Krishna temples in Madura and Kaveripattanam in South India. Stone inscriptions dated to fifth century found in Gadhwa, Guwahati, Mandor and Pahapur also descript the existence of Vishnu worship or his manifestations.[154] In third century, Guptas established their own strong empire and endorsed Vaishnavism as they referred themselves as *Parama*-Bhagavatas (chief Bhagavatas) devoting Vasudeva-Krishna avatar (incarnation) of Vishnu. Incarnation of Vishnu as boar with the name of Varaha gained some importance as it incarnated to save earth from destruction. The avatar doctrine was adopted by royal circle including Guptas and *Chalukya* rulers of the south as they considered themselves as preservers of the world, thus boar symbolized royal power.[155] From these evidences, it may conclude that

---

[150] Hopkins, *The Hindu Religious Tradition*, p. 88-89

[151] Jaiswal, *The Origin and Development of Vaisnavism*, p. 32

[152] Hopkins, *The Hindu Religious Tradition*, p. 88-89.

[153] Hopkins, *The Hindu Religious Tradition*, p. 97-103.

[154] Jaiswal, *The Origin and Development of Vaisnavism*, p. 59-60.

[155] Hopkins, *The Hindu Religious Tradition*, p. 108-109.

Vaishnavism was popularly existed from north to south of India through worship of Vishnu or his other manifestations. Vaishnavism was flourished in next centuries through glorifying poems of Alvars who are also exponents of Bhakti.

1.1.3.3. Shaktism

Shaktism means worshipping Goddesses but was not powerful sect as Shaivism and Vaishnavism. But the cult flourished with both Shaivism and Vaishnavism as a feminine counterpart of them was accommodated within their sects. Worship of female deities that prevailed in villages turned to semiautonomous cult when they adopted as consorts and wives of Siva and Vishnu. In *Sri Sukta* a supplement of Rig Veda, Goddess Sri Lakshmi was eulogized as a deity and in later texts, she was considered as Goddess of fertility, wealth, prosperity and luck. As she was regarded as Goddess of prosperity, she was attracted by all sections of Hindu society turning the worship of Goddess to a popular cult, moreover Vaisyas were more indulged in her worship as the class was obliged for trade and commerce. Worship of Goddess was traced as early as first century BCE since coin inscriptions of Sunga kings, kings of Ajodhya and Mathura, point out and Shakti cult worship was almost emerged within the second century CE.[156]

Worship of Goddess accompanied, without few exceptional cases, a male partner God starting from Indra the Vedic God to Siva and Vishnu. In *Sri Sukta*, she was associated with Kubera the God of wealth and riches while she was seen as his wife in some passages of Mahabharata. In fourth or fifth century, her association with Vishnu in his various incarnations gained popularity within Vaishnavas often portraying her as wife of Vasudeva-Krishna incarnation of him, and in later periods, both of them seen as couples giving much more importance than before.[157] Meanwhile, worship of Goddess

[156] Jaiswal, *The Origin and Development of Vaisnavism*, p. 84-96.

[157] Jaiswal, *The Origin and Development of Vaisnavism*, p. 96-106.

Durga had also received much importance as she was worshipped, in Mahabharata, for granting victory in battlefield.[158]

Shaktism based on worship of Goddess was existed as Sri Lakshmi in Vaishnavism and as Durga in Shaivism. Shaktism developed through tantrism since feminine figure played active role in tantric practices. Goddesses played role of energy *(*shakti) for creation of universe in tantrism which believed that unification of masculine and feminine characters represents the universe. They believed that divine is embodied within every woman since highest deity is women, thus it led to esoteric and orgy practices of tantrism. Moving from the fact that women womb is source of all life, Shakta followers thought that supreme creator should be feminine and focused on worshipping Goddesses. As Devi (Goddess) is also source of Shakti (energy), all other Gods like Siva and Vishnu are within her.[159]

In short, by ninth century, there were numerous philosophical and theological sects of Hinduism as well as heterodox sects. Vishnu, Siva along with Goddess were main deities but different names, forms or incarnations of them were worshipped often constituting their own sects and these sects were powered by one of six orthodox philosophical schools. In subsequent centuries, some group of poets emerged in south India who worshipped their Gods with great devotion and love often rejecting traditional practices within religion. These poets were classified mainly into two, Alvars who were devotees of Vishnu and Nayanmar who were devotees of Siva and the common feature of devotion found in them transformed to a movement the Bhakti movement.

1.2. BHAKTI PERIOD

Even though it is hard to clearly point out the exact genesis of Bhakti period, the period starts with Alvars and Nayanmars. Bhakti movement, originated through these

---

[158] R.G Bhandarkar, *Vaisnavism, Saivism and Other Minor Religious Systems* (Varanasi: Indological Book House, 1965), p. 142.

[159] Sir John Woodroffe, *Shakti and Shakta* (Celephias Press, 2009), p. 111.

poets, influenced almost parts of India for one millennium forming different sects, groups and even syncretic religious traditions. Bhakti was scarcely mentioned in Vedas, but in Bhagavad-Gita of Mahabharata the popular text among Hindus presented it as one of three paths of salvation. Moreover, the text served as basic scripture of Bhakti tradition for those who wanted to accommodate it within the Brahminic religion. To be clear on whether the text infuriated a new tradition or served as a foundation text for a movement that developed later, we must go through Bhakti tradition deeply especially its period of genesis.

Buddhism and Jainism had grown much in south India and established their supremacy in the region in 6th and succeeding centuries. But *Pallava* kingdom, the first monarchial power of south India, had granted royal patronage to Hinduism irrespective cults and sects. As a result of Tamil and Aryan interaction with influence of Sangam poetries,[160] some group of wandering poets praising their Gods emerged in the region in a period between 8th and 10th centuries. Even though they devoted to different Gods within Hinduism occasionally fighting each other, they united to tear down the supremacy and influence of Buddhists and Jains in the region. The main Gods of these poets were Siva and Vishnu or his incarnations, later these poets named as Nayanmars and Alvars respectively. Under the royal patronage, the culture of these poets namely Shaivism and Vaishnavism sprouted in the region.[161] So let us discuss elaborately about Alvars and Nayanmars who were first group to introduce Bhakti through their poems.

1.2.1. Alvars

Alvars are saint poets who wandered from temple to temple in south India singing panegyric songs that expressed their intense devotion and love to God Vishnu or his incarnations. Their poems are considered as revealed as Vedas among Vaishnavas,

---

[160] *Sangam* is referred to age between 3rd century BCE and 3rd century CE, in which poets of Tamil land were used to gather in a specified place. Later, these poems known as *Sangam* poetry.

[161] N. Subbu Reddiar, *Religion and Philosophy of Nalayiram with special reference to Nammalvar* (Tirupati: Sri Venkateswara University, 1977), p. 199.

along with accepting four Vedas, Vedangas and epics like Mahabharata and Ramayana.[162] The term 'Alvar' is derived from '*al*' a Tamil word with meaning of 'dive' and the title '*alvar*' will mean that 'one dived in God or divinity.' Vaishnava tradition consecrates these Alvars often elevating to the level of divinity even surpassing the God of whom he was a devotee.[163] The title of 'Alvar' is given to 12 poets who were ardent devotees of Vishnu and they are; Poygai (d.713), Bhuttat (Puttatar) (d.713), Pey (d.713), Tirumalisai (d.720), Tondaradipodi (d.726), Kulasekara (d.767), Tiruppan (d.781), Tirumangai (d.776), Periya (d.785), Andal (d.767), Nammalavar (d.798) and Madhurakavi (d.800). Out of 12 Alvars, 11 are men while Andal is a poetess whose icon is worshipped in many Sri Vaishnava temples. Their 24 poems with 4 thousand verses are combined in the collection known as *Nalayira Divya Prabandham* (Divine collection of 4 thousand verses) which is popularly called as *Divya Prabandham*. The poems were collected by Nathamuni (d.823) a brahmin scholar lived in ninth century and considered later as first Acharya (master) of Sri Vaishnava community. According to the tradition, he heard elven stanzas of later identified as *Tiruvayamoli* from some wandering devotional singers and these verses forced to him search more as he felt after hearing eleventh one that there should be one thousand more stanzas. In the search, he found all stanzas, more than thousand, of *Tiruvayamoli* and blessed with revelation of different three short poems of same poet and about 20 poems of others. Therefore, *Tiruvaymoli* which was penned by Sathakopan, popularly called as Nammalavar (our Alvar), holds a parent status along with its author and regarded as equal to Sama Veda by Vaishnava community.[164]

While Vaishnavism is claimed as monotheistic with ultimate divine of Vishnu only, Shri Vaishnavas assign the ultimacy to his consort Shri Lakshmi along with him, therefore the cult is also mentioned as Shri Sampradaya. Vaishnavas worship different names and incarnations of Vishnu, meanwhile Shri Vaishnavas favorably name him as

---

[162] Vasudha Narayanan, *Krishna: A Source Book*, ed. Edwin F. Brayant (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 187-189.

[163] Reddiar, *Religion and Philosophy of Nalayiram with Special Reference to Nammalvar*, p. 197.

[164] Narayanan, *Krishna: A Source Book*, p. 187-189.

Narayana since Alvars like Tirumangai and Tirumalsai designated him so. Alvars composed their poems in the praise of *Tirumal* (*Mal* with *Tiru-Shri*- or Holy *Mal*) a south Indian deity which later identified as Vishnu. *Alvar*s' strong emotional lines in folk style heavily influenced local mass, thus their devotionalism conveyed in Sanskrit too through *Bhagavat Purana* which caused to influence much of Hindu societies.[165] Since Alvars were wandering poets, they sang their poems in different cities, forests and mountains, therefore Vaishnava tradition celebrates the places glorified in poems. The places are counted as 106, most of them in South India, along with two places of hereafter life; *Vaikuntha* the heavenly abode of Vishnu and ocean of milk upon which Vishnu relaxes.[166]

More than being mere some poets and poems, Alvars and their poems are significant in Hindu tradition as these brought salient reforms within religion. Firstly, these poems were composed in a vernacular language of Tamil instead of Sanskrit the language of Vedas and other sacred scriptures. Uplifting poems that are written in a vernacular language to the status of revealed, challenged supremacy of Sanskrit in the tradition which was accessible for upper castes only. Secondly, these poets come from different castes even from low castes who were forbidden from religious activities and studies, like Tiruppanalvar who was from *Panjama* an outcaste,[167] moreover these poets are regarded as saints in the Vaishnava tradition questioning autonomy of brahmins to be priestly class. The tradition of Shri Vaishnava also questioned male supremacy as they included Andal a woman in Alvar poets while women were also forbidden from religious studies. These reforms in the religion materialized only when they projected Bhakti above all other features like hereditary merit.

As the tradition described, Alvars are incarnations of God Vishnu as first four poets were considered as incarnations of Vishnu's weapons, thus, Poygai was incarnation

---

[165] Jaun Paul Sydnor, "Jaimini, Shankara and the Alvars; Ramanuja's Enduring Synthesis" 22/2 (2014), p. 6.

[166] Narayanan, *Krishna: A Source Book*, p. 190.

[167] Narayanan, *Krishna: A Source Book*, p. 188.

of *Sankha* (conch), Puttatar was of *Gada* (mace), Pey was of *Nandaka* (sword) and Tirumalasai was of *Chakra* (discus). While Nammalvar was mentioned as incarnation of divine angel namely *Vishvaksena*, Kulasekara was considered as *Kaustubha* (ornament worn by Vishnu in chest). The other incarnations were; Periya was of *Garuda* (divine bird), Tondaradippodi was of *Vanamala* (the garland born by Vishnu), Tirumangai of *Saranga* (bow of Vishnu) and Tiruppan was of *Srivatsa* (the mole in Vishnu's chest). While Andal was considered as a manifestation of Bhudevi, one of Vishnu's consorts, Madhurakavi is taken as representing *Vishnuguna*'s chief.[168] The underlying motive behind these mythical traditions is belief of *avatar* (incarnation) which states God Vishnu will incarnate in the forms of human beings or other animals to protect human world when it submerges in the darkness of evils.[169]

Works like *Divyasuri-Charitam* (history of divine saints), written in Sanskrit by Garudavahana Pandita in 11th century and *Guruprambaras* (lineage of Masters) give most of available biographical details of Alvars. Based on *Divyasuri Charitam*, two more works are penned down; first one by Pinpalakiyaperumal Jiyar (13th century) in *Manipravala*[170] style with a title of '*Guruprambaraprabhavam-arayirappadi* (origin of Master's lineage-six thousand units) and second one by Tritya Brahmatantra Parakalasvami (14th century) with a title of *Guruprambaraprabhavam-moovayirappadi* (origin of Master's lineage-six thousand units). But it is necessary to keep in mind that these *Guruparampara* texts are encomiums in style rather than credible historical works.[171]

---

[168] S. M. Srinivasa Chari, *Philosophy and theistic mysticism of the Āḻvārs*, 1st ed (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidas, 1997), p. 13-14.

[169] R.G Bhandarkar, *Vaisnavism, Saivism and Other Minor Religious Systems* (Varanasi: Indological Book House, 1965), p. 13.

[170] A hybrid language emerged through combination of Tamil and Sanskrit languages.

[171] Srinivasa Chari, *Philosophy and Theistic Mysticism of the Āḻvārs*, p. 10.

Tradition considers these Alvars as divine incarnations who lived between 4200 BCE and 2700 BCE but scholars place them in very late period ranging from fifth, at earliest, to ninth centuries CE. According to *Guruparampara*, Poygai, Puttattar, Pey and Tirumalisai were born in 4200 BCE while Madhurakavi was born in 3222 BCE, a timeline that falls under *Dvaparayuga* (era of *Dvapara*) as tradition describes. Next four Alvars including Nammalvar, Kulasekara, Periya and Andal who was believed as an adopted girl of Periya, are dated between 3101 BCE and 3003 BCE, the first century of *Kaliyuga* (era of *Kali*) according to tradition. Remaining Alvars namely Tondaradippodi, Tiruppan and Tirumangai are believed to be born in 2803 BCE, 2758 BCE and 2702 BCE respectively, a timeline that corresponds *Kaliyuga* (era of *Kali*).[172] Even though scholars differ on the birth years of these *Alvar*s and place them in centuries ranging from fifth to ninth, Dr. N. Subba Reddiar (d. 2006) had presented much possible dating as follows; Firs three *Alvar*s namely Poygai, Puttattar, and Pey in (d.713), Tirumalisai in (d.720), Tondaradippodi in (d.726), Kulasekara and Andal in (d.767), Tirumangai in (d.776), Tiruppan (d.781), Periya in (d.785), Nammalvar in (d.798), Madhurakavi in (d.800). It may be a reliable dating of Alvars but two problems are pointed out against dating that Andal was an adopted girl of Periya, therefore Periya should succeed her and Nammalvar was older than all except first four. However, it is asserted that they lived before Nathamuni (d.823) who collected their poems into *Nalayira Divayaprabandham*. Based on this chronological order, time span of Alvars is fixed from 700 to 800.[173]

1.2.1.1. Poygai, Puttatar and Pey

The first and oldest three *Alvar*s namely Poygai, Puttatar and Pey are known as '*Mudal-Alvargal*' and these three were contemporaries but Poygai was oldest of them.[174] The tradition describes that they were born in consecutive three days in same month and

[172] Srinivasa Chari, *Philosophy and Theistic Mysticism of the Āḻvārs*, p. 10-11.

[173] Reddiar, *Religion and Philosophy of Nalayiram with Special Reference to Nammalvar*, p. 170-194.

[174] R. Balasubramanian, *The Mysticism of Poygai Alvar* (Madras: Vedanta Publications, 1976), p. IX.

year.[175] These three *Alvar*s namely Poygai, Puttatar and Pey were mythically believed to be born of golden lotus at Kanci, *Kurukatti*[176] flower at Mahabalipuram and red lotus at Madras respectively.[177] Another myth narrates a story of their accidental meet under one roof in the temple city of Tirukoilur when there was rain. The first to enter the shelter which had space for one person to lie down, was Poygai and second one was Puttattar who asked permission saying that the space will be enough for two people to sit down. Then Pey entered the shelter pointing that space for two people to sit down is enough for three to stand. They felt the presence of fourth one who was invisible while they stood together there waiting rain to stop and they realized that it was the supreme being. Poygai sensed God's existence through his transcendental knowledge (*Paranjana*) while Puttattar perceived it through his mystical devotion (*Para Bhakti*). Pey attained the supreme vision of God's form with his consort through combining knowledge with Bhakti (*ParamaBhakti*).[178]

The first Alvar Poygai was born in a water tank (*poygai*) in the courtyard of *Yathoktakari* temple in Kanchi and this is the reason to be named as Poygai. He was also named *Sarayogi* referring his birth in *Sara* (tank).[179] Poygai had composed devotional poems that included in *Divya Prabandham* and known as *Mutal Tiruvantadi* which includes one hundred verses. *Antadi* is combination of two words; '*anti'* which means 'end' and '*adi*' which means 'start'. *Antadi* refers to a kind of poems found in Tamil language in which last syllable or word of preceding stanza is the opening syllable or word of succeeding stanza. Considering his prominence, Vaishnavas refer him as *Adikavi* (first poet) and as *Kavikulaşabha* (eminent among galaxy of poets).[180]

---

[175] Srinivasa Chari, *Philosophy and Theistic Mysticism of the Āḻvārs*, p. 16.

[176] A kind of flower commonly seen in south India with scientific name of Hiptage benghalensis.

[177] K.C Varadachari, *Alvars of South India* (Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1966), p. 1.

[178] K.C Varadachari, *Alvars of South India*, p. 2.

[179] Srinivasa Chari, *Philosophy and Theistic Mysticism of the Āḻvārs*, p. 16.

[180] Balasubramanian, *The Mysticism of Poygai Alvar*, p. IX.

The second Alvar Puttatar's poem also constitutes one hundred verses and known as '*Irandam Tiruvantadi'*. During the meeting of *Mudhal Alvargal*, he identifies the supreme being as he saw him in the form of Narayana and describes it in the first verse of his *Tiruvantadi*.[181] Puttatar is important in the tradition as he molded *Paranjana* (transcendent knowledge) into *Para Bhakti* (transcendent devotion), so he explains that he saw the God which is different from 'he knew the God.'[182]

Peyalvar, the last of *Mudhal Alvargal*, goes further and gives the details of what he had witnessed in the first verse of *Tiruvantadi* which is known as *Munram Tiruvantadi*. His greatness lies in his perception of God's duo unity combining Narayana and his wife Shri. Shri is a symbol of transcendent love and the heart of divine. Shri Vaishnava sect, to which Alvars belong, got its name from this vision of Shri as divine consort.[183]

1.2.1.2. Tirumalisai

Tirumalisai is the fourth *Alvar* and was born in the time span of *Mudhal Alvargal* in Tirumalisai. He was also named in tradition as Bhaktisara that means 'essence of Bhakti' for his personification of Bhakti. Tradition narrates that Tirumalisai was born to a sage named Bhargava[184] who was enticed by a celestial nymph during his penance and the baby born out of this union was deserted by the nymph in a jungle.[185] Tradition continues that he was brought up by a childless cowherd named as Tiruvalan[186] after he found Tirumalisai abandoned in forest. Upon his feeding disorders, they consulted him to a sage and he offered him milk. He drank some and requested his foster mother to drink

[181] Balasubramanian, *The Mysticism of Poygai Alvar*, p. IX.

[182] Varadachari, *Alvars of South India*, p. 17.

[183] Varadachari, *Alvars of South India*, p. 21-23.

[184] Srinivasa Chari, *Philosophy and Theistic Mysticism of the Āḻvārs*, p. 177.

[185] Srinivasa Chari, *Philosophy and Theistic Mysticism of the Āḻvārs*, p. 14.

[186] Reddiar, *Religion and Philosophy of Nalayiram with Special Reference to Nammalvar*, p. 177.

saying she will have a child soon and the born child was named Kanikanna who stayed with Bhaktisara during his lifetime.[187]

Bhaktisara was well versed with different religious and philosophical schools of the time as he wandered shrine to shrine after his renounce of food for seven years from the incident of milk, as the tradition describes. During his wanderings, he practiced yoga, became Siddha an ardent devotee of God Siva and adopted *Maunavrata* (oath of silence). Peyalvar the last of *Mudhal Alvargal*, engaged with Bhaktisara after he came to know Bhaktisara as great devotee but of Siva, arguing the supremacy of Narayana. As a result of argument series, Tirumalisai accepted the supremacy of Narayana and he composed poems which is called as *Nanmukan Tiruvantadi*.[188] The work is composed of 96 verses in the style of first three *Tiruvantadi* and first Vaishnava treatise that establishes the supremacy of Narayana or Vishnu rather than any other Gods like Brahma and Rudra.[189]

Tiumalisai was known as Bhaktisara because his knowledge has transfigured into devotion in whom transcendental knowledge (*Paranjana*) of Poygai, transcendental devotion (*Para Bhakti)* of Puttatar and supreme devotion *(Parama Bhakti*) of Pey were rightly assembled. There are several stories of his supernatural powers available in the tradition like changing rosary into precious stones and much more.[190] Another work of Tirumalasai with title of '*Tiruchandaviruttam*' comprising of 120 hymns that describe chief metaphysical principles of *Vishishatadvaita* Vedanta.[191] Final days of Tirumalisai were spent at Kumbhakonam where he died.[192]

---

[187] Varadachari, *Alvars of South India*, p. 28.

[188] Varadachari, *Alvars of South India*, p. 28-29.

[189] Srinivasa Chari, *Philosophy and Theistic Mysticism of the Āḻvārs*, p. 14.

[190] Varadachari, *Alvars of South India*, p. 29.

[191] Varadachari, *Alvars of South India*, p. 14.

[192] Varadachari, *Alvars of South India*, p. 31.

1.2.1.3. Tondaradippodi

Tondaradippodi Alvar's story of sinner turned to saint is famous within the tradition as it portrays protection and affection of God towards his devotee even his time of sins. Vipranarayana, later known as Tondaradippodi, born in an orthodox brahmin family in Tanjavaur and acquired knowledge of Vedas in his early years.[193] He spent most of his time in caretaking the garden in Srirangam and offering flowers to Lord Ranganatha the deity of temple in Srirangam. A gorgeous girl of village named as Devadevi, who passed by his garden and informed by her companion that the owner of garden is a pious devotee, decided to allure him. In the next day, Devadevi approached him wearing plain clothes but Vipranarayana who was keen in his devotional services to God neglected her. Understanding the reaction, she begged him pardon and informed him her desire to service of Gods abandoning her hereditary profession of dancing. Upon the request, he permitted her to work in his garden for the service of Gods. But in a rainy day, he lost his control on her seductive beauty when they took shelter under one roof. Slowly, he used to neglect his Brahmanical duties as well his services in garden as he lost himself in her beauty. Davadevi made use of the situation even by seizing his properties.[194]

The tradition narrates that Lord Ranganatha and his wife Mahalakshmi desire to rescue him from this pathetic condition. Ranganatha gave the golden vessels that used to perform daily worships in his temple, to Devadevi in the form of a man introducing him as a servant of Vipranarayana. In the next morning, local chieftain ordered for a search upon missing of vessels in the temple and found it in the house of Devadevi. When Devadevi described that the servant of Vipranarayana gave it her, he denied it and even cut the relation with his servant. In the night, lord Ranganatha unfolded the story to chieftain through dream and described his intention was to bring back both of them to God services and the humiliation in the public is enough for them to understand their pathetic situation, thus they were released in the next morning. Realizing God's grace, he

[193] Reddiar, *Religion and Philosophy of Nalayiram with Special Reference to Nammalvar*, p. 180.

[194] Varadachari, *Alvars of South India*, p. 83.

once again started to concentrate on divine services. To repent from his sexuality, he pledged to worship the feet of God devotees and to stick the dust under their footstep on his head. Therefore, he named as Tondaradippodi meaning that wearer of foot dust of devotees (*tondar*s),[195] and for the same reason, he also known as Bhaktanghrirenu. He penned down 45 hymns with a title of *Tirumalai* (sacred garland) describing his experiences of sin and repentance and offering it to Lord Ranganatha.[196] While his story was shortly described in the verses from 23 and 40, his practice of sticking devotee's feet dust even of low castes, is depicted in verses from 39 to 42.[197]

Another poem of Tondaradippodi consisting 10 verses with a title of *Tiruppalliyelucci* was penned down to wake up lord Ranganatha from his *Yoga-nidra* (yogic nap) and is celebrated as morning song. The poem illustrates pleasing natural phenomenon in early mornings as well as noble acts of God during incarnations.[198]

1.2.1.4. Kulasekara

Kulasekara was born to royal family of *Chera* kingdom who ruled present state of Kerala. His birth place is Tiruvancikkulam in Malabar and was crown prince of Kerala region. He was known as *Kolikkon* (lord of Uraiyur), *Kutal Nayakan* (the lord of Madurai) and *Kollikavalan* (king of Kolli) and it points that he was crown prince of Chola, Pantiya and Kerala regions.[199] But he was not interested in royal duties, instead he spent time with Bhagavatas indulging in religious matters as he was a devotee of Vishnu. Aware of this situation, ministers plotted a theft scenario of family deity's ornament in order to blame Bhagavatas and to bring back him to royal duties. But Kulasekara stood with Bhagavatas and tried to expose their innocence even by inserting his hand to a pot with poisonous

[195] Varadachari, *Alvars of South India*, p. 84.

[196] Srinivasa Chari, *Philosophy and Theistic Mysticism of the Āḻvārs*, p. 26-27.

[197] Varadachari, *Alvars of South India*, p. 85.

[198] Srinivasa Chari, *Philosophy and Theistic Mysticism of the Āḻvārs*, p. 27-28.

[199] Reddiar, *Religion and Philosophy of Nalayiram with Special Reference to Nammalvar*, p. 182.

cobra. After a while, he moved to Srirangam after abdicating throne for dedicated service of God and Godly men.[200]

Kulasekara Alvar's contribution in Divya prabandaham is his poem of 105 hymns with a title of Perumal Tirumoli which is divided to ten decads. In first 5 decads, he glorifies the deities in temples. While first three dedicated only to deity at Srirangam, the next two composed to glorify deities at Chidambaram, Tirumalai and Tiruvakkodu. In other decads, he discusses his mystic experiences with God. His major contribution to Vaishnava theology is the doctrines of Bhagavat *kainkarya* (service to God) and Bhagavata *kainkarya* (service to devotees of God). Tondaradippodi's poems serve as basis of *Bhagavata kainkarya* (service to the devotees of Bhagavan) principle which evolved as a major doctrine in the tradition.[201]

1.2.1.5. Periyalvar

Periyalvar, whose real name is Vishnucittan (one who thinks Vishnu), born in a brahmin family in Ramanatathapuram but was not received intense Veda teachings and was, therefore, not well versed with Vedas unlike other brahmins.[202] Energized by the doctrine of *Kainkarya* (divine service),[203] he used to spend his times making garlands of flowers that plucked from his garden and serving it to deity of local temple. But his great devotion to Shri Krishna caused for divine bliss and it was expressed through his songs later known as *Periyalvar Tirumoli*.[204]

Distinction of Periyalavar among other Alvars lies in his story of establishing God *Mal* (Narayana) as Para tattva (Supreme truth). The tradition depicts that he was summoned by Pandya king Vallabh deva (d. 862) to elucidate the essence of Veda and to

---

[200] Srinivasa Chari, *Philosophy and Theistic Mysticism of the Āḻvārs*, p. 14.

[201] Srinivasa Chari, *Philosophy and Theistic Mysticism of the Āḻvārs*, p. 14.

[202] Reddiar, *Religion and Philosophy of Nalayiram with Special Reference to Nammalvar*, p. 190

[203] Srinivasa Chari, *Philosophy and Theistic Mysticism of the Āḻvārs*, p. 23

[204] Varadachari, *Alvars of South India*, p. 126

win prize. Initially he hesitated to respond as he was not mastered Vedas but accepted the challenge upon divine command. Surprisingly, he recited core verses of Vedas in front of other pandits and establishing Narayana is Para tattva and won the prize. Tradition continues that he was blessed by holy vision of Lord Vishnu with his consort Shri Lakshmi seated on his celestial vehicle *(Garuda*) while he was taken on the royal elephant through the streets as a mark of royal admiration. Upon the vision, he burst into joy and sang the famous hymns which later known as *Pallandu*[205] and are being recited nowadays in all most Vaishnava temples.[206]

Periyalvar penned down two main pomes; *Tiruppallandu* consisting 12 verses and *Tirumoli* consisted of 461 verses. *Tiruppallandu* was sung as a prayer for eternal existence of the lord while *Tirumoli* depicts the glory of Krishna incarnation of the God. He illustrates his love of God as mother's love to her child. Besides, he also sings for Rama incarnation and Arca deities in different religious centers. The other significance of Periayalvar is that he nurtured another Alvar too as Andal was adopted by him and brought up as divine gift after he found her in his garden abandoned.[207]

1.2.1.6. Andal

Andal the only one women poet saint of Alvars, was adopted by Periyalvar when he found her as an infant lying in one of flowers in his garden. She is believed to be born in Srivilliputtur and also known as Goda which means 'giver of light and revelation.'[208] She was used to make up herself with flower garland that was prepared by her foster father Periyalvar to be offered to deity. Realizing the situation, Periyavalar did not offer the same garland but he dreamt of lord expressing his dissent for not offering the same garland that used by her and wishing to accept the same from now on. Realizing her divine

[205] Srinivasa Chari, *Philosophy and Theistic Mysticism of the Āḻvārs*, p. 23.

[206] Varadachari, *Alvars of South India*, p. 127.

[207] Srinivasa Chari, *Philosophy and Theistic Mysticism of the Āḻvārs*, p. 23.

[208] Varadachari, *Alvars of South India*, p. 133.

affection, he called her '*Uddikodutta-Nacciyar'* (the Goddess who offered the garland worn by her).[209]

Andal devoted herself with intense love towards Krishna and desired to marry him alone. She prepared herself for the marriage with Krishna and had penned down a poem consisted of 30 hymns describing her preparation to get him as husband. The work is titled as '*Tiruppavai'* and it contains a refrain at the end of each hymn that call for the help of Katyayani the divine mother. According to religious customs, young unmarried women used to observe a special religious rite (*Vrata*) offered to Katyayani aiming to get her wished one as her husband. When they observe this *Vrata* in autumn season, they get up early and go to temple after bath singing hymns. While normal girls were used to observe this *Vrata* to get normal human being, Andal did it to get lord as her beloved husband. She transformed the desire for physical union with beloved one to the desire of mystical union with God.[210] As she refuted marriage with normal human beings in order to get married with her beloved God Krishna, it caused a headache for her foster father Periyalvar. But he dreamt divine command of lord Ranganatha to take her to his temple in Srirangam and present her to him in order to get married. Obeying the command, he took her to the temple and presented her to lord Ranganatha. Myth continues that she was absorbed as deity as soon as she entered the sanctum sanctorum of deity.[211]

In her work of *Tiruppavai*, she details her experiences of love towards Krishna and efforts to marry him. In the first five hymns, she notes down conditions that enables one for divine attainment and explains that one must devote to mental and physical purity for divine attainment. In next verses, she sketches the essence of bridal mysticism that getting God as husband is important than any other.[212] Another work of Andal is known as *'Nacciyar Tirumoli',* comprised of about140 hymns in fourteen sections. The work

---

[209] Srinivasa Chari, *Philosophy and Theistic Mysticism of the Āḻvārs*, p. 24.

[210] Varadachari, *Alvars of South India*, p. 133-134.

[211] Srinivasa Chari, *Philosophy and Theistic Mysticism of the Āḻvārs*, p. 24-25.

[212] Varadachari, *Alvars of South India*, p. 134.

deals with various stages of her love towards Krishna including her mental conditions of love, desperations and anger in different situations. She reiterates the prominence of total surrender towards loved ones, thus, her ideal of total surrender made significant impacts in Bhakti tradition.[213] In later centuries, her image was consecrated as incarnation of *Bhudevi* (Goddess of earth) or *Nila devi* a wife of Vishnu and is being worshipped in temples dedicated to her.[214]

1.2.1.7. Tirumangai

Tirumangai was born in Tanjavaur for a couple of *Kalla* caste who named him as Kaliyan and had been a brigade in his young ages.[215] He was also known as *Parakalan* (beyond time) and *Kalidamin* (destroyer of Kali).[216] Due to his mastery in archery, he was appointed as chieftain under *Chola* king with Tirumnagai as its headquarters and was given the title of *Tirumangaimannan* (the chief of Tirumangai). Even though he was turned to poet saint, he retained his name as Tirumangai. His story differs from other Alvars for his transformation from brigadier to a saint due to his romance. Tradition narrates that he came to know Kumudavalli, a beautiful adopted girl of Vaishnava doctor, and wanted to marry her but she refused unless he becomes a true Vaishnavi and feeds 1008 Bhagavata all day for a year. Unfortunately, he was forced to engage in robbery to carry out these conditions. In one occasion, he tried to rob the ornament worn by a newly married bride but he realized that the couple are lord Narayana and his wife. In turn, lord Narayana decided to turn him as a saint and bestowed him with spiritual knowledge.[217]

When he became staunch Vaishnava devotee after the incident, he gave up his administrational duties and departed for pilgrimage throughout the country including Himalayas. It is said that he had visited 86 of 108 sacred temples of Vaishnavas and had

---

[213] Srinivasa Chari, *Philosophy and Theistic Mysticism of the Āḻvārs*, p. 25.

[214] Narayanan, *Krishna: A Source Book*, p. 189.

[215] Reddiar, *Religion and Philosophy of Nalayiram with Special Reference to Nammalvar*, p. 185.

[216] Varadachari, *Alvars of South India*, p. 109.

[217] Srinivasa Chari, *Philosophy and Theistic Mysticism of the Āḻvārs*, p. 9-30.

sung for deities of each. As a man of wealth sometime through robbery, he spent a large amount to build fourth wall of Srirangam temple which has been known nowadays a *Tirumangai mannan tirumatil* (sacred all of Tirumangi chieftain).[218]

Tirumangai is said to be most learned of Alvars even among Vaishnava saints as he composed 6 poems which consist 1361 verses and are included in *Divyaprabandham*. Some scholars believe that 4 works of 6 poems are supplements to Nammalvar's four poems, therefore these 4 poems are considered as *Vedanga*s (tail of Vedas) while Nammalvar's work are regarded as Veda. He composed his poems in 4 different kinds of poetry namely *Chitra*, *Matura*, *Achu* and *Vitara*, thus he also called as *Narkavipperumal* (Master of four kinds of poetry).[219] His 6 works are;

1) *Periya Tirumoli* with 1084 hymns,
2) *Tiruneduntadakam* with 30 verses,
3) *Tirukkuruntadakam* with 20 verses,
4) *Siriya Tirumadal* of 155 lines,
5) *Tiruvelukurrirukal* with 47 lines,
6) *Periya Tirumudal* with 97 lines.[220]

In these 6 poetical works, *Periya Tirumoli* is most important of them as first ten hymns describe his transformation from a thief to saint after learning the meaning of Narayana mantra, a mantra considered sacred by Vaishnava Acharyas as they believe it encompasses the quintessence of Veda. The work includes glorification of deities in 86 sacred temples and depict the pains of human beings because of bondage and God's attributes experienced by him.[221] Other two works namely *Tiruneduntadakam* and *Tirukkuruntadakam* fall under the category of *Tandakam* poetry in which God is regarded as source of support as term '*Tandakam'* literally means a long stick that used for

---

[218] Reddiar, *Religion and Philosophy of Nalayiram with Special Reference to Nammalvar*, p. 185.

[219] Reddiar, *Religion and Philosophy of Nalayiram with Special Reference to Nammalvar*, p. 186.

[220] Srinivasa Chari, *Philosophy and Theistic Mysticism of the Āḻvārs*, p. 30.

[221] Srinivasa Chari, *Philosophy and Theistic Mysticism of the Āḻvārs*, p. 30.

climbing hill. *Kuru* and *Nedu* indicate the lengths of poems based on number of verses or meter. *Tirukkuruntadakam* establishes that importance of need and support of God for salvation and can be achieved through worship and prayers to him while *Tiruneduntadakam* sketches the mystical experiences of saint with God. He also shares his distress caused by God separation through the tongue of *Nayaki* (consort) who is separated from his *Nayaka* (lord). Another poem *Tiruvelukurrirukai* describes about the importance of total surrender of soul to God, path of attaining of moksha and nature of God.[222] Other works namely *Siriya Tirumudal* and *Periya Tirumudal* are two poems penned down in relation with traditional custom of *Madal*. *Madal* is a custom in which any lover man or women want to secure that loved person, therefore they openly demonstrate his or her love to the concerned person in public. Then person has to take a ride in public street on palmyra stem using it as a horse, so the person is subjected for a public scandal. Then the person has to resort to his lover showing that lover is his or her resort in bad situations. Here in these poems, Tirumangai used this custom of *Madal* to portray his intensive love and devotion to God, so he can experience mystical union with him, and express his mystical feelings. This mood (*bhava*) of Bhakti is represented as of a maiden towards his lover.[223]

1.2.1.8. Tiruppan

Tiruppanalvar was born to a low caste family in Tiruchirappali, therefore he was forbidden from entering the premises of temple in Srirangam. For he was great devotee of Sri Ranganatha, the deity of the temple, he used to sing the praises of him in bank of Kaveri facing the temple. Realizing his devotion, lord Ranganatha ordered the temple priest named as Lokasarangamuni to bring him to the temple on his shoulders, so he was also named as *Munivahana* (one who carried by Muni). Tradition describes that he vanished into divinity after he was taken to the temple. When he had witnessed lord Ranganatha, he sang ten verses praising the lord, the verses are also included in

[222] Srinivasa Chari, *Philosophy and Theistic Mysticism of the Āḻvārs*, p. 31.

[223] Srinivasa Chari, *Philosophy and Theistic Mysticism of the Āḻvārs*, p. 31.

Divyaprabandham with a title of *Amalanadipiran* and this is only one poem of Tiruppan.[224] The lord Amalan, which was used in the end of poem and got title from, means one who hasn't any blemishes and denotes the God. Tiruppan describes the beauty of divine body from the feet to head, with ecstasy in his verses.[225] He also called as *Kavishwara* (lord of poets) for his excellent sweet hymns.[226] Highlighting feature of Tiruppanalvar is his inclusion in Alvar poet saints and even his vanishing as deity is questioning the varna dharma.

1.2.1.9. Nammalvar

Nammalvar is may be the most significant poet saint in Alvars for his enormous contributions in Bhakti and its thoughts. He was born to Udayanangaiyar and Kariyar, who were Vishnu devotees, in *Vallala* family located in Tirukkuruhur. They named him as Maran while he was also known as *Parankusa* and *Shatakopan* the name he used in identify himself in his hymns. Besides, tradition fondly calls him as *Nammalvar* (our saint) and *Kulapati* (the founder of Vaishnava community).[227]

Tradition explains that he had entered to yogic meditation from his infancy itself and regarded as divine incarnation. When he was taken to local Vishnu temple due to his abnormality as infant, he sat under a tamarind tree in the premise of the temple and remained there in meditation for sixteen years.[228] Tradition continues that when Madhurakavi who was on a pilgrimage in north India noticed an effulgence coming from south and followed it, thus he reached the temple and realized that it was originated from a man under tamarind tree. When he realized his spiritual supremacy and woke him up asking "If soul is born of matter what does it eat and where does rests." Upon question he woke up replying "It eats That and There it rests" and spontaneously recited hymns which

---

[224] Reddiar, *Religion and Philosophy of Nalayiram with Special Reference to Nammalvar*, p. 186.

[225] Srinivasa Chari, *Philosophy and Theistic Mysticism of the Āḻvārs*, p. 19.

[226] Varadachari, *Alvars of South India*, p. 105.

[227] Srinivasa Chari, *Philosophy and Theistic Mysticism of the Āḻvārs*, p. 19.

[228] Srinivasa Chari, *Philosophy and Theistic Mysticism of the Āḻvārs*, p. 19.

are known as *Tiruvaymoli* (divine utterance). Here Madhurakavi discovered that the person is an emancipated soul and had taken birth in mortal body but they dwell in God and He is all for them from food to wisdom. It means that he is a liberated soul, cut the *samsara* cycle with union with God, thus he enjoying him all ways, moving, living and having his being in God.[229] His claim in *Tiruvayamoli* that lord speaks through him and Vaishnavas showcases the verse as evidence of being revealed. He also glorified *Arca* deities of 33 shrines. The poem is recited by Vaishnava followers irrespective of their caste unlike Vedas, therefore the poem is very popular as devotional songs diffused from south to north of India.

The devotion sprouted in *Tiruvayamoli* was transmitted to Sanskrit hymns and oral traditions influencing teachings and cult of Vallabha, Chaitanya, Kabir and guru Nanak.[230] *Tiruvayamoli* had subjected for numerous commentaries by Vaishnava Acharya and those are; Tirukkurukai Piran (1068), Nanjiyar (1113), Vadakkutiruvidi Pilla (1167), Periyavachan Pilla (1168), Alakiyamanvala Jivar (1242), Vedanta Deshika (1268), Rangaramanuja (1650), Periya Paraklasvami (1676) and Shaktaswami (1700).[231]

Tiruvaymoli is divided to ten divisions of 100 verses known as *Pattu* which is subdivided into *Pasuram* that consists eleven verses. *Tiruvaymoli* deals with glory of the God and his experiences of direct communication with God while central theme of the work is understood as explaining and proving that God as *Para tattva* (ultimate reality) is the aim of all human endeavors and God himself is the mean of salvation. The *Pattu* discusses a specific matter related to this central theme and *Pasuram* support *Pattu* in its discussions. Thus, the work presents a detailed discussion of five principles of Vishishtadvaita Vedanta viz., *Prapya* (God to be attained), *Prapta* (the seeker),

---

[229] Varadachari, *Alvars of South India*, p. 141-142.

[230] Narayanan, *Krishna: A Source Book*, p. 189.

[231] Srinivasa Chari, *Philosophy and Theistic Mysticism of the Āḻvārs*, p. 23.

Praptyupaya (means of attainment) *Praptivirodhi* (obstacles of attainment) and *Phala* (goals to be attained).[232]

Four works of Nammalvar namely *Tiruvasiriyam* with 7 stanzas, *Tiruviruttam* with 100 verses, *Periya Tiruvantadi* with 87 verses and large one *Tiruvaymoli* with 1102 verses clearly speak about Vaishnava theology, theistic mysticism and Vishishtadvaita Vedanta.[233] In *Tiruviruttam*, Nammalvar considers himself as *Nayaki* (consort) separated from *Nayaka* (God) and describes his psychological and physical states of desperations caused by separation and ambition for a direct union with him.[234] The title correspond to both *Viruttam*, a poetry style and *Vrtattanta* the concept of divine realization by saint. He wrote *Periya Tiruvantadi* to express his intense love of God in *Atandi* poetry style but differentiated from *Antadi* of first three by calling it *Periya Tiruvantadi* (big *Antadi*).[235] He confirms in the poem that God is only one rescuer of all and we must worship him in all possible ways with sincere devotional services. Another work *Tiruvasiriyam* explains, in *Asiriyappa* poetry style and named after this, about God, his glories, and paths of attaining him. These Four works are dealt with high admiration within Vaishnava community even comparing these our works with four Vedas. Some Vaishnava Acharyas like Nathamuni consider *Tiruvayamoli* as *Dravida* Veda for its inclusion of Vedic teachings, while some others like Vedanta Deshika (d.1369) regard it as *Dravida Upanishad.*[236] Many traditionalists correspond *Tiruviruttam* to Rigveda, *Tiruvasiriyam* to Yajurveda, *Tiruvaymoli* to Sama Veda, and *Periya Tiruvantadi* to Atharva Veda. In later years, Nammalvar was elevated to divine status portraying him as the feet of God and his icon was placed in every temple of Vaishnava*s*.[237]

---

[232] Srinivasa Chari, *Philosophy and Theistic Mysticism of the Āḻvārs*, p. 21.

[233] Srinivasa Chari, *Philosophy and Theistic Mysticism of the Āḻvārs*, p. 20.

[234] Srinivasa Chari, *Philosophy and Theistic Mysticism of the Āḻvārs*, p. 20.

[235] Varadachari, *Alvars of South India*, p. 143-172.

[236] Srinivasa Chari, *Philosophy and Theistic Mysticism of the Āḻvārs*, p. 20.

[237] Varadachari, *Alvars of South India*, p. 143.

1.2.1.10. Madhurakavi

Madhurakavi, who was a contemporary of Nammalvar, was born in a brahmin family in Tirkkolur. As we mentioned him in Nammalvar's story, he had requested mentorship of Nammalvar and was accepted by Nammalvar. Madhurakavi represent as the clear example of Acharya Bhakti (deep devotion of a disciple to his guru), an important concept among Vaishnavas. His devotion to his guru Nammalvar is considered as devotion to God for he was an incarnation of God. His contribution of 11 verses under the title of *Kanninum Siruttambu* talks much about his devotion to his guru, thus the poem serves as a doctrine of Acharya Bhakti and was included in *Divya Prabandham* too.[238] His name Madhurakavi means sweet tongued poet and was named after his sweet lines about his master.[239]

1.2.1.11. Nalayira Divya Prabandham

As we mentioned earlier, Nathamuni collected, in the last of 9th century or first of 10th century, different poems sung by Alvars in a period ranging from 7th to 8th centuries and the collection is named as *Nalayira Divya Prabandham*. Even though the poets of the collection were not high intellectuals or well versed with philosophy of religions, they shared one common feature in their poems; the Bhakti. Their mystical experiences with God and enjoyments through union with God are depicted in these hymns. In their poems, intense devotion and love to their God either Vishnu or his incarnations were highlighted, leading to daily recitations of mass in Tamil region. Later the collection was translated to Sanskrit and other vernacular languages leading to a pan Indian influence of the collection.[240]

Nathamuni was born in Kattumunnar koyil and had led a pious life devoting to local deity but considered as first Acharya of Vaishnavas. Nathamuni, the collector of

---

[238] Srinivasa Chari, *Philosophy and Theistic Mysticism of the Ālvārs*, p. 22.

[239] Varadachari, *Alvars of South India*, p. 193.

[240] Reddiar, *Religion and Philosophy of Nalayiram with Special Reference to Nammalvar*, p. 197.

Divya Prabandham, along with Ramanuja the fifth Acharya but prominent because of his theological and philosophical contributions, are regarded high within Vaishnava tradition often to the level of Alvars itself. The context of codifying is described that Nathamuni came to hear some worshippers reciting ten verses from *Tiruvaymoli* of Nammalvar and he was attracted. He inquired about these verses, its author and about other thousand verses that hinted in the end of last verse as *Ayirattil ippattum* (these ten verses from out of the one thousand verses). The worshippers suggested him to visit Kurukar the birth place of Nammalavar and from where he collected *Divya Prabandham*. Different stories are narrated in the tradition on how he could collect all these poems but most rational of them is that he met Mathurakavi Alvar who was disciple of Nammalvar. He learnt from him that Nammalvar had attained salvation after he composed a big book of hymns in Tamil but the local people had thrown the book to *Tampraparani* a river nearby since they feared that the book will damage Vedic religion. The only one page with Mathurakavi's poem *Kanninum* Siruttampu was saved while all others lost. To his quest, he recited the poem 12000 times in order to get complete book to be revealed but only purport of the book was revealed to him by Nammalvar. Yet he was suggested to approach a local artisan from whom the entire book was received by Nathamuni.[241]

Another tradition narrates that Nathamuni went to the spot under tamarind tree where Nammalvar had meditated wishing to meet the spirit of Nammalvar. When he couldn't attain the wish, he recited *Kanninum Siruttampu* that was taught by Parankusadasa (d.9th century) a disciple of Madhurakavi, in front of the tree where an idol of Nammalvar was installed. Tradition continues that Nammalvar appeared to him with his disciple Madhurakavi and recited for him all his four *Prabandham*s with meaning. Some story describes all four thousand verses were taught to Nathamuni during this meeting. Later, Nathamuni codified these poems and tried to popularize it even with organizing festivals in which the collection was recited by trained choir.[242]

---

[241] Reddiar, *Religion and Philosophy of Nalayiram with Special Reference to Nammalvar*, p. 199.

[242] Reddiar, *Religion and Philosophy of Nalayiram with Special Reference to Nammalvar*, p. 200-201.

Nalayira Divaya Prabandham is a collection that includes 24 poems of 12 Alvars, Vaishnava Acharyas holds different views when they organize these 4000 verses. Manavalamamuni (d.1450) and his followers organize *Nalayira Divya Prabandham* chronologically as follows;

1.	Poygai	: *Mudal Tiruvantadi*	100	verses
2.	Puttatar	: *Irandam Tiruvantadi*	100	verses
3.	Pey	: *Munram Tiruvantadi*	100	verses
4.	Tirumalisai	: *Nanmukam Tiruvantadi*	96	verses
		: *Tiruccanda Viruttam*	120	verses
5.	Nammalvar	: *Tiruviruttam*	100	verses
		: *Tiruvasiriyam*	7	verses
		: *Periya Tiruvantadi*	87	verses
		: *Periya Tiruvamoli*	1102	verses
6.	Madhurakavi	: *Kanninum Siruttambu*	11	verses
7.	Kulasekara	: *Perumal Tirumoli*	105	verses
8.	Periyalvar	: *Tiruppallandu*	12	verses
		: *Periyalvar Tirumoli*	461	verses
9.	Andal	: *Tiruppavai*	30	verses
		: *Nacciyar Tirumoli*	143	verses
10.	Tondaradippodi: *Tiruppalli-ellucci*		10	verses
		: *Tirumalai*	45	verses
11.	Tiruppan	: *Amalanadipiran*	10	verses
12.	Tirumangai	: *Periya Tirumoli*	1084	verses
		: *Tirukkuruntadakam*	20	verses
		: *Tirunedutadakam*	30	verses
		: *Tiruvelukurrirukal*	1	verses
		: *Siriya Tirumudal*	77.5	verses

: *Periya Tirumudal* 148.5 verses.[243]

But *Tiruppallandu* of Periyalvar is not recognized by Vedanta Deshika and his followers, instead they consider *Ramanuja-nurrantadi* composed by Tiruvarangattamudanar (n.d.) as sacred and include it in *Divya Prabandham*. The work that praises Ramanuja, most prominent Acharya of Vaishnavas, consists 108 hymns and was accommodated in *Divya Prabandham* after slashing hymns of *Siriya Tirumudal* and *Periya Tirumudal* of Tirumangai to 40 and 78 from 77.5 and 148.5 respectively. They justify their inclusion of the work that praises a later Acharya, showing *Kanninun-Siruttambu* of Madhurakavi praising his guru Nammalvar as an example.[244] When *Ramanuja-nurrantadi*, which was composed by his ardent devotee Tiruvarangattamudanar, was released in the presence of Ranganatha the deity of Srirangam, he ordered it to include the work in *Nalayira Divya Prabandham.* But the instruction was rejected by those who don't include it in *Divya Prabandham* pointing that poem praising a human being shouldn't accommodate with poems praising Gods. The inclusion is rejected by later masters also pointing inclusion is later addition as Nathamuni didn't codify so and he was lived before Ramanuja. It said that Vedanta Deshika, who lived in later period, was one who determined the number of poems for each Alvar and number of total hymns, moreover he was the first to fix the number of hymns to four thousand and to name it as *Nalayira Divay Prabandham*.[245]

Nathamuni codified *Divya Prabandham* in order to present a Tamil scripture that is equal to Veda, so he reshuffled the poems on the basis of its recitations in temples ignoring chronological, personal or religious topography. *Nalayira Divya Prabandham* is divided into four parts according to 24 *Prabandham*s and first part which

---

[243] Srinivasa Chari, *Philosophy and Theistic Mysticism of the Āḻvārs*, p. 233

[244] Srinivasa Chari, *Philosophy and Theistic Mysticism of the Āḻvārs*, p. 233.

[245] Reddiar, *Religion and Philosophy of Nalayiram with Special Reference to Nammalvar*, p. 206-209.

known as *Mutalayiram* (the first thousand) constitutes *Tirumoli* of Periyalvar, *Tiruppavai* and *Nacciyar Tirumoli* of Andal, *Perumal Tirumoli* of Kulasekara, *Tiruccanta Viruttam* of Tirumalisai, *Tirumalai* and *Tiruppalliyelucci* of Tondaradippodi, *Amalanatipiran* of Tiruppan and *Kunninun Siruttampu* of Madhurakavi. *Periya Tirumoli* (1084 verses), *Tirukkuruntadakam* (20 verses) and *Tiruneduntadakam* (30 verses) of Tirumangai form second part that is known as *Periya Tirumoli* while third part which known as *Tiruvaymoli* constitutes *Tiruvaymoli* of Nammalvar with 1102 verses. Other poems are included in fourth part and known as *Ivarpa* whereas first three also known as *Icaipa*. The basis of division is that *Icaipa* part are recited with fine music tunings unlike *Ivarpa* without any musical form, in the festivals organized by Nathamuni to recite *Divya Prabandham*.[246] Tradition states that these *Prabandham*s are exposing the essence of Vaishnavism which is contained in its three mantras namely *Astksara Shloka*, *Dvaya Shloka* and *Charamashloka*, and the division of *Divya Prabandham* into four divisions is based on the order of these esoteric doctrines.[247]

Nathamuni has composed four introductory verses, known as '*Taniyan*', that expose the greatness of addressed Alvars. First one, which is in Sanskrit, is dedicated to Periyalvar and is recited before the recitation of Periyalvar's *Tiruvaymoli*. The verse showcases the importance of Periyalvar as he was father-in-law of lord Ranganatha, according to the tradition, and his establishment of Vishnu's superiority over other Gods through Vedas. Two verses are dedicated to Mathurakavi both in Tamil and Sanskrit and are recited before his poem of *Kanninum Siruttampu*. In the first verse, he states that Mathurakavi is the only savior of him and through Mathurakavi only he could collect the *Divya Parabandham*. In another verse, he describes the attachment and relation between Mathurakavi and Nammmalvar. The last one in Sanskrit again, is dedicated to Nammalvar

[246] Reddiar, *Religion and Philosophy of Nalayiram with Special Reference to Nammalvar*, p. 202-204.

[247] Srinivasa Chari, *Philosophy and Theistic Mysticism of the Āḻvārs*, p. 233.

and is recited before his *Tiruvaymoli*. The verse talks about the importance of *Tiruvaymoli* and its author Nammalvar along with its equality to Sama Veda.[248]

Two Acharyas of Vaishnavism namely Periya Parakalaswami and Periyavaccan Pillai had commented on all 24 *Prabandham*s of the collection in *Manipravala*. *Tiruvaymoli* of Nammalavar was commented by many including Tirukkurukaipiran Pillan (1068) a disciple of Ramanuja and was directed by Ramanuja to write. The work titled as *Arayirappadi* (six thousand units) is really a masterpiece as it precisely explains philosophical and theological aspects of hymns and reliable one.[249]

Even though *Nalayira Divya Prabandham* was considered as Veda within Vaishnava tradition, it is not accepted within the framework of Hinduism. Term Veda refers, as orthodox schools particularly *Mimamsa* and Vedanta describe, to revealed scriptures in Sanskrit, which are eternal (*nitya*) and beginningless (*anadi*) and are not attributed to a human being (*apaurusheya*). Therefore, the work shouldn't be considered as Veda based on this benchmark but there are some Vaishnavas who argue *Divya Prabandham* is *Anadi*, *Nitya* and *Apuarusheya*.[250] However, these poems which project Bhakti above all other forms of worships flourished throughout Tamil region in first phase, then to central India and North India, thus the collection is more popular than Veda itself. The collection served as doctrinal support for popular cult that sprouted in the name of Bhakti.

When the authority and sanctity of *Nalayira Divya Prabandham* was established within Vaishnava tradition and questioned within Hinduism, it needed for some learned scholars who can prove the authority of *Divya Prabandham* based on sacred scriptures of Hinduism like Vedas and Smriti collections, thus Acharya cult was established within the tradition. Therefore, Acharyas are also important as Alvars within

---

[248] Reddiar, *Religion and Philosophy of Nalayiram with Special Reference to Nammalvar*, p. 701-702.

[249] Reddiar, *Religion and Philosophy of Nalayiram with Special Reference to Nammalvar*, p. 234.

[250] Reddiar, *Religion and Philosophy of Nalayiram with Special Reference to Nammalvar*, p. 222-223.

the tradition and the most prominent Acharya Ramanuja is considered no lesser than Alvars. As we mentioned earlier, *Ramanuja nurrantadi*, a work praising Ramanuja, was included even in *Divya Prabandham* by some followers. Let us briefly look into Ramanuja and his contributions.

Ramanuja

Ramanuja is considered as great theologian of Advaita Vedanta (non-dualism), he is also founding father of *Vishishtadvaita* Vedanta (qualified non-dualism). Even though Ramanuja is fifth Acharya in the tradition of Shri Vaishnava, he was the first one to describe devotional theology of Shri Vaishnavas through interpretation of Sanskrit texts. He tried to reconcile intense devotional theism of Alvars with Vedantic tradition of ritualism and this led him to mold a new model of Advaita i.e., Vishishtadvaita.[251] Ramanuja's enormous contributions to Bhakti had led to statements like first one to introduce Bhakti.

Ramanuja was born in *Vadama* subcaste of brahmins who had strong Vedic scholarship, at Sriperumbudur in 1017. After losing his father in his age of sixteen, he moved to Kanchi to learn under renowned *Advaitan* (follower of *Advaita*) Yadava Prakasha (11th century) but he leaves him because of arguments on Advaita.[252] After leaving Yadava Prakasha, he accepts Vaishnavism and mastered in Vaishnava texts. He became fifth Acharya of Shri Vaishnavas after his predecessor Yamuna (d.1036) but they were not met each other in their lifetimes. According to tradition, Yamuna had summoned Ramanuja through his disciple after he left his teacher Yadava Prakasha. Unfortunately, Ramanuja couldn't meet him as Yamuna died before their meeting but he could attend funeral ceremonies of him. Ramanuja noticed three closed fingers of Yamuna and he learnt that Yamunacharya had three wishes; to write a commentary on Nammalvar's

[251] Sydnor, "Jaimini, Shankara and the Alvars; Ramanuja's Enduring Synthesis.", p. 6.

[252] Srinivasa Aiyengar, *The Life and Teachings of Sri Ramanujacharya* (Madras: R. Venkateshwar Rao, 1908), p. 45-50.

Tiruvaymoli to preach Bhakti, to write commentary on Vedantasutra of Badrayana according to Vishishtadvatia, and to nurture a great Vaishnava.[253] Then Ramanuja promised to fulfill his three wishes and three fingers had straightened up with divine help. Witnessing the incident disciples of Yamuna proclaimed him as next Acharya (master).[254]

Ramanuja opted for proper instructions under Periya Nambi (11th century) refusing the successorship. Ramanuja and his wife lived together with Periya Nambi and his wife, but an insult from Ramanuja's wife to Periya Nambi's wife led him to divorce her and become as Sannyasi (ascetic) and established a small monastic house in Kanchi. According to tradition, Yamuna's disciples a message from lord Ranganatha, an incarnation of Vishnu, to lord Varda another Vishnu incarnation whom Ramanuja used to worship, to make him presider of lord Ranganatha's temple in Srirangam. Eventually Ramanuja designated as Acharya at Srirangam where he learnt Alvar hymns and mastered it in quick time.[255]

Another story describes that he revealed, to a number of Shri Vaishnava devotees, the secret of *'Om Nama Narayana'* mantra which was taught by Tirukottiyur Nambiar (11th century) after swearing strict secrecy. Upon betrayal, Nambiar commanded for an explanation and Ramanuja acknowledged that disobeying guru (teacher) is hell causing sin but he affirmed that it was worthful to do so as it helped for salvation of others. Hearing Ramanuja'a response Nambiar realized Ramanuja's spiritual superiority and called him as *Emberumanar* (Our Lord). After his instruction at Srirangam, he travelled across India debating *Saivites* and non-theistic *Advaitin*s, which helped him to sharpen his own thoughts on *Advaita* and led him to present a new form of Vedanta in the name of Vishishtadvaita.[256]

---

[253] Swami Tapsasyananda, *Bhakti schools of Vedanta* (Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 2010), p. 7-9.

[254] Sydnor, "Jaimini, Shankara and the Alvars; Ramanuja's Enduring Synthesis.", p. 6.

[255] Swami Ramakrishnananda, *Life of Sri Ramanuja* (Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1959), p. 85-113.

[256] Sydnor, "Jaimini, Shankara and the Alvars; Ramanuja's Enduring Synthesis." p. 6-7.

Since he was well-attracted by hymns of Alvars especially Tiruvaymoli of Nammalvar, Ramanuja, in turn, promoted those works. So, it is said that if Nammalvar is mother of Tiruvaymoli, then Ramanuja is foster-mother. He also uses, in his works like Gitabhashya, the same rhetoric delivered by Alvars when he describes the ultimate God, *Parama Purusha*. Throughout his commentary on Gita and Sutras, an imprint of excessive influence of Divya Prabandham is seen.[257]

Ramanuja states that most distinguished attributes of God are power, knowledge and love or mercy (Karuna). His creation of world and his help to those who seek salvation is because of his mercy.[258] He proposes, through his ideology of *Vishistadvaita*, that these attributes are also real and identical with God. He continues that these glorious qualities make His transcendence and greatness over all-else. He was also convinced that Saguna lord (God with qualities) of devotees is supreme as Nirguna (God without attributes) lord of Jnanins (one who follows Jnana *Marga*).[259]

Since Alvars preached the doctrine of devotion to personal God and salvation by his grace, the succeeding Acharyas of Vaishnavism made efforts to establish philosophical and theological basis of Alvars' doctrines. While Nathamuni collected hymns of Alvars and canonized into 'Nalayira Divya Prabandham', Yamunacharya had also strived to defend theology of Alvars through his books. Ramanuja's efforts to reconcile theistic ideas of Vedas, Upanishads and puranas with faith and belief of Alvars, were immense to be considered as first one present Bhakti philosophically and theologically. Ramanuja presented the doctrine of moksha through Bhakti as central

---

[257] K.A Manavalan, "The İnfluence of Divya Prabandha on Ramanuja" (All India Seminar on Ramanuja and his Social Philosophy, Madras: Sri Ramanuja Vedanta Center,1980), p. 159-163.

[258] S. Radakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, p. 683.

[259] Eric J. Lott, "Sri Ramanuja's Sarira-Sariri-Bhava: a Conceptual Analysis" (All India Seminar on Ramanuja and his Social Philosophy, Madras: Sri Ramanuja Vedanta Center, 1980), p. 32.

teachings of Upanishads and Bhagavad-Gita.[260] So he says in the beginning of his magnum opus Gitabhashya:

"In the scripture known as the Bhagavad Gita, Naryana, the Supreme Brahman, is declared. He is attainable by Bhakti alone, which is to be brought about by the observance of one's own Dharma, acquisition of knowledge and renunciation of attachment (RjGtBh 1/1)."[261]

As we witness here, Ramanuja proposes Bhakti as sole path of salvation without rejecting other two paths namely Karma and Jnana but incorporating both with Bhakti. Because of his large contributions to Bhakti, he is often mentioned as first proponent of Bhakti. According to Ramanuja, Bhakti is the essence of eleventh, twelfth and eighteenth- which is last chapters of Bhagavat-Gita are and says:

"In the eleventh chapter, it is stated that the divine eye which can give an immediate vision of Him as He is, was given to Arjuna, and accordingly it is stated that Bhakti is the only means of knowing and attaining him in the way described. In the twelfth chapter, are taught the superiority of Bhakti Yoga, the means thereto, to the direction for the one unqualified to meditate on the self, the details of the qualities to be acquired and modes of Sadhana to be practiced for that end, and the immense love of the Lord for the devotees. The last chapter present the mental state required for ascribing the agency to the Lord, the necessity of cultivating the Sattvic quality, the spiritual culmination of discharging one's duties, and Bhakti Yoga which form the essence of the Gita Sastra (RjGtBh 1/15,16,22)."[262]

After describing Karma yoga as resorting to acts like sacrifices and pilgrimage, and Jnana yoga as abiding of those who controlled their minds, in the purified self,[263] Ramanuja says defining Bhakti yoga "*Bhakti Yoga is abidance in meditation and other*

---

[260] S. Radakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, (New York: Macmillan Company, 1929), v. II, p. 668-669.

[261] Rāmānuja, *Śrī Rāmānuja Gītā bhāṣya*, trans. Adi Adidevananda (Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 2009), p. 1.

[262] Rāmānuja, *Śrī Rāmānuja Gītā bhāṣya*, trans. Adi Adidevananda, p. 4-6.

[263] Rāmānuja, *Śrī Rāmānuja Gītā bhāṣya*, trans. Adi Adidevananda, p. 6.

*forms of adoration with one-pointed love for the supreme Being (*RjGtBh 1/15,16,24)."[264] He places 'Brahman', who is very lovely, is object of contemplation, so Bhakti is continuous loving meditation of the beloved. Bhakti is nature of bliss since deep meditation, in which devotee experience vision of God, of soul devoted to God brings immense joy and pleasure in devotional services.[265] Ramanuja explains how to attin supreme Bhakti, the last of three stages of Bhakti and says:

"When one's nescience is removed and one percieves the self as subservient to the Supeme, one attains supreme devotion and through it alone reaches His realms. There is Vaidhi-Bhakti or discipline-bound devotion, next Para-Bhakti (higher devotion of love) and then the final stage Param-Bhakti or pre-eminently supreme love (RjGtBh 1/26)."[266]

In the first stage of Vaidhi Bhakti, which also known as Sadhana Bhakti, devotee must have strong fatith in God as the highest value and a sense of utter transitoriness of wordly achievements. Meantime, he also perform religious duties along with understanding one's self, nature and God. Ramanuja didn't reject other two paths as he instructs to practise them together becuase they are complimentary, yet he will perform these without any attachement to wordly pleasure but for the sake of God.[267] He enlists seven stages to from Sadhana Bhakti to Para Bhakti and these are;

1. Viveka: Practice to discriminate all things taken through senses especially foods, so eat only pure foods prepared by pure persons.
2. Vimoka: Resisting impulses of passions like sex, anger, jealousy etc.
3. Abhyasa: Practising worships, reciting glorified-names of God, pilgrimage to holy places, etc.

---

[264] Rāmānuja, *Śrī Rāmānuja Gītā bhāṣya*, trans. Adi Adidevananda, p. 6.

[265] Krishna Datta Bharadwaj, *The philosophy of Ramanuja* (New Delhi: Shri Shankar Lal Charitable Trust Society, 1958), p. 169-170.

[266] Rāmānuja, *Śrī Rāmānuja Gītā bhāṣya*, trans. Adi Adidevananda, p. 7.

[267] Swami Tapsasyananda, *Bhakti schools of Vedanta,* p.77.

4. Kriya: performing five-fold duties of life which are duties to divine spirits, great seers, ancestors, society and brute creations like animals and plants
5. Kalyana: to practice good virtues like truth (satya), kindness (daya), non-violence (ahimsa) straightforwardness (arjava) and benevolance (dana).
6. Anavasada: freedom from negative traits like pessimism and preservation of positives like optimism.
7. Anuddharsa: keeping coolness and calmness in the situations of excitements and depressions.[268]

Ramanuja also introduces *Prapatti* (special acquirement or reaching (of God)[269] along with Bhakti in the path of attaining salvation, which are very close but different. Bhakti means practicing various steps of devotional services and love to God with a belief of that if one takes these steps, he can attain God. But Prapatti is to accept one's helplessness to redeem it by any means resigning oneself to God and accepting him as both as means and the end. This difference is explained through two illustrations; *Markata-Kisoranyaya* and *Marjara-Kisoranyaya*. *Markata* is an infant monkey who holds on tightly to the mother for the safety and chance to reach the destination with strength of mother. The metaphor is identical with Bhakti in which is active and agile. Second one *Marjara* is kitten who remains placed in the mouth of cat and he is carried to destination along with mother without any effort. Prapatti is this kind of absolute resignation in which devotee remains passive making God both as means and end.[270] Ramanuja had attributed God as most merciful, refuge of all, protector of people irrespective of differences of caste, creed or any other, so he expressed that Bhakti is open for all even women and sinners. Ramanuja asserts the universality of Bhakti as he thinks

---

[268] Swami Tapsasyananda, *Bhakti schools of Vedanta,* p.77-78.

[269] J. Parthasarathi, "The Prappatti-Marga" (All India Seminar on Ramanuja and his Social Philosophy, Madras: Sri Ramanuja Vedanta Center, 1980), p. 87.

[270] Rāmānuja, *Śrī Rāmānuja Gītā bhāṣya*, trans. Adi Adidevananda, p. 33-34.

worship of God will destroy sins and devotion to God is that matters.[271] In short, Ramanuja's contributions to systematically present Bhakti as a path of salvation were enormous enough to be misconceived as first one to introduce Bhakti.

1.2.2 Nayanmars

As aforementioned, Nayanmars were also saint poets who preached Bhakti in their poems but were ardent devotees of Siva unlike Alvars who were devotees of Vishnu or his incarnations. Historical background of Nayanmars is also almost identical with Alvars as both traditions sprouted in almost same region and same period. While Alvars constitute 12 saint poets, Nayanmars are consisted of 63 poet saints who are also known as 'Nayanars' which means 'servitors of the God' and the God here is Siva.[272]

Among 63 Nayanmars, some saints have special importance in the tradition rather than others like Sundarar (8th century), Appar (7th century), and Sambandar (7th century). Sundarar was first one to enlist these 63 Nayanmars through his poem of "*Tiru Tondar Togai Pathikam* (assembly of the sacred slaves)" that was sung in the premise of Tiruvarur temple inspired by his lord Siva. He enlisted them spontaneously but the listing was sanctified as it was believed to be commanded by lord Siva himself but the list was elaborated by Nambi Andar Nambi (10th century) and the history of these 63 Nayanmars was described in *Periya Purana* (the great epic) compiled by Sekkizhar (11th) century. Sundarar enlisted these 63 saints as follows;

1. Tiru-Nilkantar
2. Iyarpagai
3. Marar
4. Meyporul
5. Viramindar

---

[271] Krishna Datta Bharadwaj, *The philosophy of Ramanuja,* p.176-177.

[272] B. Sreenivas, *Sanskrit Words in Tevaram* (Unpublished PhD Thesis, Bharatidasan University, 2013), p. 13.

6. Amarnithi
7. Eripathar
8. Enathi
9. Kanappar
10. Kalayar
11. Manakanjarar
12. Ariyavatar
13. Anayar
14. Murthi
15. Muruga
16. Rudra-Pasupathi
17. Tirunalaipovar
18. Tirukuripputhondar
19. Chandesar Perumaan
20. Appar
21. Kulachirai
22. Kurumbar
23. Karaikkal Ammaiyar
24. Apputhi Adigal
25. Thirunilanakkar
26. Naminandi Adigal
27. Tirunjnana Sampandar
28. Kalikamar
29. Tirumular
30. Dandi Adigal
31. Murkhar
32. Somasi Marar
33. Sakkiyar
34. Sirappuli
35. Siruthondar
36. Cheraman perumal

37. Gananathar
38. Kutuvar
39. Pugal cholar
40. Narasinga Munaiyar
41. Athipathar
42. Kalikambar
43. Kaliyar
44. Sathi
45. Aiyadigal Kadavarkon
46. Kanampullar
47. Kariyar
48. Nedumaran
49. Vayilar
50. Munai Aduvar
51. Kalar singar
52. Idankaliyar
53. Seruthunaiyar
54. Pugalthunaiyar
55. Kotupuliyar
56. Pusalar
57. Mangaiyarakarasi
58. Nesar
59. Senganar
60. Tiru Nilakantha Yalpannar
61. Sadaiyar
62. Isaijnani
63. Sundarar.[273]

[273] B. Sreenivas, Sanskrit Words in Tevaram, p. 13.

Devotional hymns of these 63 *Nayanmar*s were celebrated by Tamil region and these hymns were collected in twelve works that are known as *Shaiva Tirumurai*s (sacred methods or works).[274] These twelve *Tirumurai*s are also known as *Panniru Tirumurai* which means 'twelve holy books.'[275] These twelve *Tirumurai*s are believed to be compiled within a period of six centuries starting from 7th century and ending by 11th century.[276]

The first seven *Tirumurai*s are constituted by *Tevaram* of three *Nayanmar*s namely Sambandar, Appar and Sundarar [277] who were probably lived between 6th and 8th centuries[278] and the collection of these seven *Tiumurai*s are also known as *Atankanmurai* (complete canon).[279] Among these seven *Tirumurai*s, first three are compositions of Sambandar, followed by works of Appar as next three and of Sundarar as seventh. While *Tevaram* of Sambandar is made up of his work '*Tirukkadaikaappu'*, Sundarar's *Tevaram* is represented by his poem *Tiruppattu*. Eighth *Tirumurai* is represented by *Tiruvachakam* and *Tirukkovaiyar* of Manikavacakar while ninth *Tirumurai* is by *Tiruppallantu* and *Tiruvicaippa* that are composed by 9 poets namely Chendhanar, Tirumaligaithevar, Punturutti Kadanambi, Karuvurthevar, Venattadikal, Kandaradittar, Purudottama Nambi, Tiruvaliyamudanar and Chedhirayar. Tenth *Tirumurai* is *Tirumantiram* of Tirumular and eleventh *Tirumurai* is a collection of 41 *Prabandham*s (poems) that are authored by twelve poets namely Karaikkal Ammaiyar, Tiru Alvayudaiyar, Cheraman Perumal, Aiyadikal Kadavarkon, Kalladar, Nakkirar, Paranar, Kapilar, Adiravadikal, Ilamperuman Adikal, Nambi Andar Nambi and Pattinattup Pillaiyar. The last and twelfth *Tirumurai* is

---

[274] V.C. Sasivali, *Mysticism of Love in Saiva Tirumurais* (Madras: International Institute of Tamil Studies, 1995), p. X.

[275] B. Sreenivas, Sanskrit Words in Tevaram, p.15.

[276] A.M Paramasivanandan, *The Historical Study of Tevaram Hymns* (Madras: Tamilkalai Publishing House, 1982) , p. 22.

[277] Sri Swami Sivananda, *SixtyThree Nayanar Saints* (Uttar Pradesh: Divine Life Society Publications, 1999), p. 12.

[278] Kingsbury - Philips, *Hymns of Tamil Saivite Saints*, p. 2.

[279] Paramasivanandan, *The Historical Study of Tevaram Hymns*, p. 22.

Periya Puranam authored by Sekkizhar, which describes stories of 63 *Nayanmar*s.[280] Considering subject matter, *Tirumurai*s are classified into four;

I. *Sthothram*-praising hymns- *Tirumurai*s from1 to 9
II. *Shastram*- philosophical discourse -10th *Tirumurai*
III. *Prabandham*s – different poems- 11th *Tirumurai*
IV. Purana (history)- historical descriptions.

As we noticed here, not all of these 63 saints are attributed with poems that included in *Tirumurai* but 27 or 28 saints from Sambandar to Sekkizhar authored these *Tirumurai*s.[281] Therefore, we discuss elaborately about *Nayanmar*s on the basis of *Tirumurai*s not on the basis of common enlisting as in the tradition, thus we discuss *Nayanmar*s on the basis of their prominence in the tradition.

1.2.2.1 Tevaram

Among *Panniru Tirumurai*, *Tevaram*s are sublime works that considered as equal to Veda by Shaivites,[282] therefore the importance of *Tevaram*s in the tradition is immense. *Tevaram*s serve as primary scripture (*marai*) of *Shaiva* philosophy and were subjected to many commentaries. Based on its' importance, authors of *Tevaram*s, namely Sambandar, Appar and Sundarar are regarded special among Nayanamars and known as *Muvar Mutalikal* in the tradition (first three saints). Surprisingly, these three saint poets recount the saints before them, yet the tradition titles them as first three saints and as pioneers of the tradition.[283] Let us go through these *Muvar Mutalikal* poets.

[280] B. Sreenivas, Sanskrit Words in Tevaram, p. 16.

[281] Sasivali, *Mysticism of Love in Saiva Tirumurais*, p. X.

[282] Sasivali, *Mysticism of Love in Saiva Tirumurais*, p. 33.

[283] Indira Viswanathan Peterson, *The Hymns of Tamil Saints* (New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidas Publishers, 2007), p. 15.

As some scholars suggest, the word '*Tevaram'* may be originated from word *'Varam'* that used to denote songs which are addressed to deity.[284] Some other studies suggest *Tevaram* means 'garland of God' as the term is combined two terms; *'teva'* that means God and *'aram'* which means garland. As mentioned earlier, *Tevaram* which consisted by works of three Nayanmars constitutes first seven *Tirumurai*s. *Tirukkadaikkappu* of Sambandar constitutes his *Tevaram* which is also first three *Tirumurai*s, while *Tevaram* of Appar constitutes next three *Tirumurai*s. The last *Tevaram* is *Tiruppattu* of Sundarar. Even though *Tevaram* is title for works of each one, the term denotes these seven *Tirumurai*s and are considered as single work in the tradition.[285] *Tevaram* consists a total of 796 hymns; 383 hymns of Sambandar, 313 hymns of Appar and 100 hymns of Sundarar and each hymn is made up of ten or eleven verses. Thus, number of total verses is about eight thousand and each of the verses is formed by four lines and a refrain.[286]

Most distinguished aspect of *Tevaram* is that most of its hymns are dedicated to Siva temple where the poet had reached amid his wandering. *Muvar Mutalikal* had sang for 274 Siva shrines and 269 of them are in South India while rest belongs to North India. Out of 269 shrines in south India, 190 belongs to Tamil region and rest are divided between Tontainatu (32), Natunatu (22), Pantinatu (14), Konkanatu (7) and Malainatu (1) which are adjacent to Tamil region. These places constitute sacred Siva geography which turned as pilgrimage centers for later followers. When local kings like Cholas welcomed *Shaivism*, they renovated Siva shrines and built stone temples in the places visited by Nayanmars which are later known as *patal perra talam* 'a place sung by the saints.' A prefix of '*Tiru'* that means 'sacred' was affixed to shrines' names like *Tiru*-Varur.[287]

---

[284] Peterson, *The Hymns of Tamil Saints*, p. 22.

[285] B. Sreenivas, Sanskrit Words in Tevaram, p. 45.

[286] Peterson, *The Hymns of Tamil Saints*, p. 22.

[287] Peterson, *The Hymns of Tamil Saints*, p. 12-14.

While *Tevaram* was transmitted orally in earlier centuries, it was collected in written form along with other parts of *Tirumurai*s by Nampi Antar Nampi (11th century). *Tirumuraikanta Puranam* (the story of *Tirumurai*'s discovery) which was written by *Shaiva* teacher Umapati Sivan (d.1313), narrates a story regarding its discovery. According to narration, Nampi Antar Nampi was directed by Chola king of the time, Apayakulashekaran (11th century), to expose Nayanmars, their lives and hymns to the world. He was guided by lord Ganesha, son of Siva, in his efforts to collect and was able to find manuscript of *Tirumurai* in the golden hall of Siva temple in Chidambaram. The manuscript was half eaten by white ants, so he could get only the hymns of *Tevaram* that constitutes first seven books of *Panniru Tirumurai*. But he managed to collect the lost part with help of musician who accompanied him and of his daughter.[288]

Songs of Tirumurai especially of Tevaram turned very popular in the region and being sung everywhere in the Shaiva tradition from homes to temples. During the times of Pallavas and Cholas, special persons called as 'Otuvar' were employed only to sing selected parts from Tirumurai and the custom continues till the day in major Siva temples.[289]

Sambandar

Among different available dating of birth of *Muvar Mutalikal*, dating that supposes the life period of Sambandar the first one and of Appar between 570 and 670 seems closer to reality. According to this dating, Sundarar lived a century later in eighth century. Sambandar's full name is Tirunjana Sambandar or Nanasambandar ("one who attached to God through divine wisdom").[290]

Sambandar was born in Siyali or Piramapuram in Tanjaore to the couple of Ivapata Virutayar (7th century) and his wife Pakavatiyar (7th century), who were

[288] Peterson, *The Hymns of Tamil Saints*, p. 14-16.

[289] Peterson, *The Hymns of Tamil Saints*, p. 51.

[290] Peterson, *The Hymns of Tamil Saints*, p. 19-20.

staunch Brahmin Saivites.[291] Tradition narrates a story regarding his birth that his father, an ardent Saivite, prayed to Siva to bestow him a son who can win people to Shaivism[292] as the region was filled with Jainism under the royal patronage. Tradition continues that when he was taken to the local temple by his parents at the age of three and was left on the top of a tank as they went for bath. Upon his cry on missing parents, lord Siva and his wife Uma appeared before him to console and fed him milk mingled with divine wisdom. By drinking the divine milk, he turned to great saint with miracles and divine wisdom, so he named as Tirunjana Sambandar (the one connected with divine wisdom)[293] and also as Aludaiya Pillayar (one who enjoys the protection of the lord).[294] When father inquired him, seeing milk drops in his lips, on from where he got milk, he pointed to sky and starting reciting *Todudaya viyan*, the first verse of his *Tevaram*.[295] In the next day, he went to Tirukkolakka and recited poem for *Siva* clapping his hands in accordance with hymns, the act had pleased *Siva* who gifted him a pair of golden cymbals to not get his palms get sored due to continuous clapping, then Sambandar continued to sing with help of cymbals.[296] In the iconography, Sambandar is portrayed as a child holding the cymbals that are believed to be gifted by lord Siva himself.[297] He continued his praiseful verses dedicated to Siva and is said to be expounded the Veda at least by age of seven.[298] From young ages , he roamed Siva temples in the region reciting devotional hymns to Siva there along with other Nayanar Tirunavukkarar, popularly known as Appar.[299] He was accompanied, in his pilgrimages to various temples, by *Panar*, a low caste untouchable whose original name is Tirunelakantayalppanar (7th century) and whenever Sambandar

---

[291] Sasivali, *Mysticism of Love in Saiva Tirumurais*, p. 33.

[292] Kingsbury - Philips, *Hymns of Tamil Saivite Saints*, p. 10.

[293] Sasivali, *Mysticism of Love in Saiva Tirumurais*, p. 34.

[294] Sivananda, *Sixty-Three Nayanar Saints*, p. 40.

[295] B. Sreenivas, Sanskrit Words in Tevaram, p. 17.

[296] Sivananda, *Sixty-Three Nayanar Saints*, p. 41.

[297] Peterson, *The Hymns of Tamil Saints*, p. 20.

[298] B. Sreenivas, Sanskrit Words in Tevaram, p. 17.

[299] Sasivali, *Mysticism of Love in Saiva Tirumurais*, p. 34.

recited the hymns, Panar was used to play his musical instrument *Veena*[300] according to lines.[301] He had paid pilgrimages to many Siva shrines in the region and reciting poems there including shrines of Chidambaram, Tiru Pachilasramam, Senkunurur and Dharmapuram which are later turned as pilgrimage centers of Siva worshippers. A lots of miracle stories of Sambandar and often with his contemporary Nayanar Appar, are connected with these shrines.[302]

A traditional story depicts that he had converted Kun Pandiyan (7th century) the Pandiyan king of Madurai who was a Jain and was opposing Shaivism. It was when he was invited by his wife Mangayarkarasi (7th century) after the king fell ill, then he recited song which cured the disease, thus it led to his embracement of Shaivism.[303] But another story narrates that king embraced Jain religion with his subjects while queen and her loyal ones remained in Shaivism and invited Sambandar to royal court to establish Shaivism. Even though he faced large crowd of Jains in royal presence, he could reconvert him to Shaivism again. Tradition presents the same kind of stories like converting a crowd of Buddhists also to Shaivism. However, it may be historically true that he was fighting with Jains and Buddhas in the region during the period and history shows the diminishing of both from the region in same period. Considering his efforts against them, he adored in the tradition as *Shivacaryar* (Saivite preceptor).[304]

Another miracle is recorded in the tradition that his marriage was arranged in the temple of Tirunallurpperumanam but *Siva* appeared as a blaze and invited them to join with him during the wedding. Here Sambandar attained mystic union with God (*Siva*

---

[300] An Indian musical instrument, with four main and three auxiliary strings.

[301] Paramasivanandan, *The Historical Study of Tevaram Hymns*, p. 26-27.

[302] Sivananda, *Sixty-Three Nayanar Saints*, p. 41-46.

[303] B. Sreenivas, p. 18.

[304] Kingsbury - Philips, *Hymns of Tamil Saivite Saints*, p. 11.

Jyothi) who also included attendees of marriage too in his union while Sambandar was vanished,[305] and all this was happened in his sixteenth age.[306]

Appar

Appar was born to Pukalanar (7th century) and Matiniyar (7th century) a pious Shaiva couple from *Vellala* caste in Tiruvamur but he was named by them as Marulnikkiyar (the remover of darkness or ignorance).[307] He had a sister named as Tilakavatiar who was engaged with Kalaipahayar a military commander of Pallava army but was killed in a battle before marriage. Meantime, his father had died, so his mother performed *Sati*[308] which made him an orphan. His sister also tried to perform *Sati* but was obstructed by him, so she lived an ascetic life to bring him up and acted as mother for him.[309]

In the period he lived, Jainism was popular religion and was under royal patronage. Marulnikkiyar was attracted to Jainism after he learnt its doctrines especially *Ahimsa* (nonviolence) and had embraced Jainism. He stayed in Pataliputra the religious center of Jainism often preaching Jainism and was nick named as *Dharmasena* for his contributions. Hearing the conversion of her brother, Tilakavatiar recurred her prays to *Siva* for his return to Shaivism and she was promised so by the lord through dream. During his time in Pataliputra, he fell ill due to stomach pain called as '*Culai*' and was subjected to many medical and spiritual efforts by Jains to cure the illness but all were in failure. Then he returned to his sister who brought him to the temple and smeared him with sacred ashes (*Tirunuru*).[310] When he started to pray there for cure and forgiveness, he was

---

[305] Peterson, *The Hymns of Tamil Saints*, p. 21.

[306] Sasivali, *Mysticism of Love in Saiva Tirumurais*, p. 34.

[307] Sasivali, *Mysticism of Love in Saiva Tirumurais*, p. 35.

[308] A custom practiced by Hindus in which widows are jumping to the pyre of husband and committing death with husband.

[309] Sivananda, *Sixty-Three Nayanar Saints*, p. 30.

[310] Paramasivanandan, *The Historical Study of Tevaram Hymns*, p. 27-28.

blessed with divine hymns and he started to recite the lines. When he finished first ten verses, his pain was removed and cured and voice naming him as *Tirunavukkaracu* (king of divine speech) echoed in the ear, thus he earned the name.[311]

Appar's conversion created panic among Jains as they feared the loss of Jain supremacy in the region and even conversion of king himself, so they influenced king to proclaim him as deceitful. He ordered to summon Appar before court but he disobeyed the order. Later, he decided to surrender before the court under divine command but he faced many trials from Jains but he escaped from all miraculously.[312] In one of these disturbances, he was thrown to burning kiln and was tied in for seven days but he continued to devote his mind in God repeating his name, thus the heat was transformed into cool breeze.[313] In the end, he was thrown to sea but he managed to get shore, the incident influenced *Pallava* king Gunapara (7th century), so he embraced the Shaivism. Upon his embracement, he ordered to destroy all Jain temples in Pataliputra and to build a Siva temple that named as *Gunaparavicharam*.[314] He also wandered the *Siva* temples in the region reciting devotional songs there, and it is said that he had visited about 15 Siva temples. Moreover, he cleaned the temple and premises even smaller ones,[315] so he is portrayed, in iconography, as one holding a hoe that was used for cleaning. The symbol also represents his farming family's -*Vellala*- attachment to the land and Saivite doctrine of humble service (*tontu*). In pilgrimages to Siva temples, he was also accompanied by his contemporary Nayanar Sambandar who fondly addressed him as Appar (my father) by which he is more famous.[316] He had died in his age of 81 in Tirupugalur.[317]

---

[311] Sasivali, *Mysticism of Love in Saiva Tirumurais*, p. 35.

[312] Paramasivanandan, *The Historical Study of Tevaram Hymns*, p. 28-29.

[313] Sivananda, *Sixty-Three Nayanar Saints*, p. 31.

[314] Paramasivanandan, *The Historical Study of Tevaram Hymns*, p. 29.

[315] B. Sreenivas, Sanskrit Words in Tevaram, p. 19.

[316] Peterson, *The Hymns of Tamil Saints*, p. 21.

[317] B. Sreenivas, Sanskrit Words in Tevaram, p.19.

Sundarar

Sundarar is a unique Nayanar as he was born to a Nayanmar couple; Sadayanar and Isaignani in Tirunavalur an epicenter of Saivites and had lived around 8th century. Even though he was named as Nambi Arurar (prince of Arur), he is popularly known as Sundarar (the handsome one) for his charming beauty. Attracted by his beauty, Narasingamunairayar (8th century) the local chieftain of Tirumunaipadunadu adopted him with parent's consent and brough up him as his own.[318] One other noticeable point in his life is that he neglected Varna dharma as he married two non-brahmin girls even though he was a brahmin whose parents were temple priests. He married a dancing girl in Siva temple and a *Vellala* women but his polygamous life was not smoother as he troubled even for food, yet he was very pleased with God and praised him.[319] In iconography, he is sketched as well dressed young handsome prince often with his wives.[320]

Legend describes that when the marriage ceremony of Sundarar was about to begin, an old man approached there claiming Sundarar's slavery to him according to his grandfather's agreement. Sundarar opposed him even using harsh words but local body found that old man was correct as he produced document too, thus Sundarar was forced to go with him. But he realized that old man was none other than lord Siva himself and attained vision of Siva with his wife seated on the sacred bull.[321] Lord called him as *Vanthodan* (the devotee who used harsh word) as he had quarreled him earlier using harsh words. Siva instructed him to compose a poem praising him and starting with word *Pithan* (mad) the word used by Sundarar when he addressed the old man, so he sang the poem of '*Pitha Pirai Soodi'*.[322] Like other authors of *Tevaram*, he also wandered Siva shrines

---

[318] B. Sreenivas, Sanskrit Words in Tevaram, p.20.

[319] Kingsbury - Philips, *Hymns of Tamil Saivite Saints*, p. 71.

[320] Peterson, *The Hymns of Tamil Saints*, p. 21.

[321] Sasivali, *Mysticism of Love in Saiva Tirumurais*, p. 35.

[322] Sivananda, *Sixty-Three Nayanar Saints,* p. 3.

in the region, often with his contemporary Nayanar Cheraman Perumal (8th century) a Chera ruler and with other contemporary Nayanmars.[323]

Sundarar is the first one to mention 63 *Nayanamar*s enlisting them in his poem '*Tiru Tondar Togai'* which serves as basis of *Periya Puranam* that recount the historical details of 63 *Nayanmar*s.[324] His hymns also describe his autobiography especially his life with his two wives. He is believed to ascend to heaven on white elephant with his contemporary Nayanar Cheraman Perumal.[325]

1.2.2.2 Tiruvachakam

The eighth *Tirumurai* consists both *Tiruvacakam* and *Tirukkovaiyar* that are attributed to Manikkavachakar. His poems *Tiruvachakam* and *Tirukkovaiya*r clearly depict his devotional experience with God, the reason behind the inclusion in *Tirumurai* collection. For his excellent services to Shaivism, Manikkavachakar along with *Muvar Mutalikal* are known as *Samayakuravar* (preceptors of faith)[326] or simply *Nalvar*.[327] He was born in Tiruvatavarur and he was called by his father as Vatavarur, connecting to his native place. His excellency in learning of scriptures along with his superb personality made him famous even in royal circles. Heard of his attributes, Arimardana *Pandyan* the king of Madurai appointed him as his prime minister. He performed his duties brilliantly, thus he won the title of '*Tennavan Paramarayar'* the highest honor from kingdom.[328]

Tradition narrates his story of conversion to a saint that he was given the duty of purchasing new horses and was handed over with great sum of money. He set out for journey to buy these horses and also with hope to meet his real mentor as he was got

---

[323] Paramasivanandan, *The Historical Study of Tevaram Hymns*, p. 32.

[324] B. Sreenivas, Sanskrit Words in Tevaram, p. 19.

[325] Peterson, *The Hymns of Tamil Saints*, p. 21.

[326] Peterson, *The Hymns of Tamil Saints*, p. 51.

[327] B. Sreenivas, Sanskrit Words in Tevaram, p. 16.

[328] Sivananda, *Sixty-Three Nayanar Saints*, p. 64.

fed up with administration and wanted to enjoy eternal bliss. Amid this journey, he was blessed with divine vision at Perunturai temple and he started to sing praising lines dedicated to God. Pleased with his devotional poems, he called him as *Manikavachakar* (one who has sentences like gems).[329] With money he had, Manikavachakar built a temple which is an architectural marvel in Tiruperunturai.[330] It is said that he had composed a spiritual work named as *Tirukkovaiayar* of hundred hymns along with his famous *Tiruvachakam* which has 50 hymns.[331] He wandered shrine to shrine forgetting his duty as prime minister till he reached Chidambaram where he sang his famous poem '*Tiruvachakam*'.[332]

Manikavachakar's irresponsible actions infuriated king as horses were not delivered and no information was passed. Even though horses were delivered by God himself as tradition describes, he was punished and tortured but nothing couldn't hurt him. Realizing Manikavachakar's sainthood, he begged pardon and offered him the rulership but Manikavachakar refused and set out for pilgrimages.[333] He was wandering in Tamil region till he reached Chidambaram where he merged with lord according to tradition.[334]

Manikavacakar speaks about his full-hearted devotion to Siva in his hymns of *Tiruvacakam* along with talking about the supremacy of *Siva* and doctrines in Shaivism, thus he is one, among four *Samayakuravar*, who speaks most on the principles in the Shaivism. As in some lines of *Tevaram* too, Manikavachakar imagines himself as maiden and calls other maids to sing the songs of love towards Siva and these songs constitute the songs of love in *Tiruvachakam*. Moreover, Manikavachakar highlights

---

[329] Sivananda, *Sixty-Three Nayanar Saints*, p. 64.

[330] B. Sreenivas, Sanskrit Words in Tevaram, p. 20.

[331] Sasivali, *Mysticism of Love in Saiva Tirumurais*, p. 52

[332] Sivananda, *Sixty-Three Nayanar Saints*, p. 67

[333] Sasivali, *Mysticism of Love in Saiva Tirumurais*, p. 52

[334] B. Sreenivas, Sanskrit Words in Tevaram, p. 21.

philosophical ideas through his mystic language of love. But his next work '*Tirukkovaiyar'* is dedicated to explain the growth and progress of his love towards Siva.[335]

As we found in the case of Alvar Andal who composed a poem regarding a *Vrata* custom to get his wished one as companion, Manikavachakar also composed a poem for the custom of '*Pavai nompu'* and is titled as '*Tiruvempavai*'. In the poem, different aspects of maidens who observe *Pavai nompu* to get their desired ones as bridegrooms are depicted. He composed this maiden's song in the praise of Siva at Tiruvannamalai. Another poem composed by Manikavachakar in the name of *Tiruammanai* express his love through a popular play known as '*Ammanai'* in which young girl also take part in the game along with hero who must shower his grace on these girls. As in *Ammanai*, Manikavachakar portrays himself as young girl engaged in *Ammanai* game singing hero's virtues and expecting blessings of hero who is Siva here in the poem.[336]

1.2.2.3 Tiruvicaippa and Tiruppallantu

Ninth *Tirumurai* is made up from *Tiruvicaippa* and *Tiruppallantu*. *Tiruvicaippa* is composed by nine saints namely Karuvurttevar, Centanar, Tirumalikaittevar, Venattikal, Kantraratittar, Nampikatava Nampi, Cetirayar, Purtottaman Nampi and Tiruvaliyamutanar and means songs that can be set to music.[337] Contributions of each author in the collection are as follows;

1.	Karuvurttevar	10 hymns (*patikam*)
2.	Tirumalikaittevar	4 hymns
3.	Tiruvaliyamutanar	4 hymns
4.	Centanar	3 hymns

[335] Sasivali, *Mysticism of Love in Saiva Tirumurais*, p. 55-56.

[336] Sasivali, *Mysticism of Love in Saiva Tirumurais*, p. 56-59.

[337] Sasivali, *Mysticism of Love in Saiva Tirumurais*, p. 111.

5.	Punturutti Nampi	2 hymns
6.	Purutottama Nampi	2 hymns
7.	Kantaratittar	1 hymn
8.	Venattatikal	1 hymn
9.	Cetiriyar	1 hymn, *Tiruppallantu*.[338]

Out of 28 hymns in *Tiruvicaippa* and *Tiruppallantu*, ten of them completely dedicated to express love that found in ladies towards expressing Siva as their lover.[339] Karuvurttevar, born in Karuvur, had composed ten hymns out of 27 hymns in *Tiruvicaippa* and his hymn that called as *Tirailokkiya Cuntaram patikam*, expresses his love towards God. Tirumalikaittevar was lived in Tiruvavatuturai and was contemporary of other two authors of *Tiruvicaiappa* namely Karuvurttevar and Centarar. His available four hymns are dedicated to express his love but through the tongue of lover's mother. Three hymns of *Tiruvicaippa* are attributed to Centanar a poet who lived in Tiruvilamilai and two of these three are in the form of love lyrics; *Tiruvitaikkali patikam* and *Tiruvavaturai patikam*. Tiruvaliyamutanar was born in Tirvalinatu and contributed four hymns in *Tiruvicaippa*. Cetiriyar was ruler of *Ceti* land and one hymn in love form is connected with him.[340]

1.2.2.4 Tirumantiram

Tenth *Tirumurai* is represented by *Tirumantiram* of Tirumular or Tirumula Nayanar who was considered as key figure in molding Shaivism and its philosophy. *Tirumantiram* is a term combined from '*Tiru'* which means 'sacred' and *'Mantiram'* (mantra or hymns) giving a meaning of 'sacred hymns.' As his name was mentioned by Sundarar, who lived in 8th century, in his '*Tiru Tondar Togai'*, it is assumed that

[338] Kamil Veith Zvelebil, *Tamil Literature; a History of Indian Literature*, ed. Jan Gonda (Germany: Otto Harrassowitz, 1974), p. 92.

[339] Sasivali, *Mysticism of Love in Saiva Tirumurais*, p. 111.

[340] Sasivali, *Mysticism of Love in Saiva Tirumurais*, p. 113-127.

Tirumular must had lived before 8th century.[341] Some scholars like Venakataraman, suggest there were two different *Tirumular,* one of them is among 63 Nayanmars and supposed to be lived before 8th century while other is one who lived in tenth or eleventh century and wrote this *Tirumantiram*.[342]

Tradition narrates a miraculous story of Tirumular connecting to his composition of *Tirumantiram* that he was a brahmin Yogi and was travelling from Kailasa, which is believed to be in north east of Kashmir, to south India till he reached the banks of Kaveri where he found a dead body of cowherd and his cow bemoans on the death. Tradition continues that he himself transmitted to the body of cowherd in order to drive cattle to home but refused to be approached by his wife when he reached home. She was informed by those who saw him that he is one of great yogis and it's the reason for not having any relation with you. Here he meditated upon God and a work with three thousand stanzas was penned down by him but at rate of one stanza per year, so it is believed in the tradition that he lived for three thousand years. The work mainly focused on philosophical aspects of Shaivism but includes devotional aspects too and he returned to the world of Siva after compilation.[343]

Tirumantiram is divided into nine *Tantra*s (chapters) and introduction or *Payiram*, which contain three thousand stanzas[344] and 232 *adhikaram*s (sections).[345] While first Tantra starts with *Upadesha* (advice) and deals with rules of morality and ethics, the second Tantra describes about Siva and his glories appealing for spiritual endurance in the end. Third Tantra discusses about Ashtanga Yoga (eightfold yoga) that proposed by him and about 16 *Kala*s, the wheel of time. Guidelines and methods of

---

[341] C.V. Narayanan Ayyar, *Origin and Early History of Saivism in South India* (Madras: University of Madras, 1974), p. 204.

[342] Carlos Neya Mena, *The Hermeneutics of The Tirumantiram* (University of California), p. 11.

[343] Ayyar, *Origin and Early History of Saivism in South India*, p. 204-206.

[344] Ayyar, *Origin and Early History of Saivism in South India*, p. 229.

[345] Mena, *The Hermeneutics of The Tirumantiram*, p. 15.

practicing meditation (*Upasana Marga*) are detailed in fourth Tantra of *Tirumantiram*. Fifth Tantra of *Tirumantiram* is special as it describes four kinds of *Shaivism* namely *Shudha* Shaivism (pure Shaivism), *Ashudha* Shaivism (impure Shaivism), *Marga* Shaivism (medium Shaivism) and *Kadum Shudha* Shaivism (extremely pure Shaivism) and identifies true path. True path (*SanMarga*), according to Tirumular, is divided to three versions and are; *Dasa Marga* in which God is regarded as master and devotee as his slave, *Satputra Marga* in which God is considered as parent and *Sakha Margam* in which God is perceived as friend. The Tantra also describes the four realizations of devotees with God, starting from *Saloka* the state of living in the world of God, passing through *Samipya* the state of proximity and *Sarupya* the state of attaining equality with God and ending in *Sayujya* the state of union with God.[346]

While sixth Tantra of *Tirumantiram* talks on *Siva guru Darshana* in which knowledge has an edge as it means 'the sight of *Siva* as teacher or *guru*', the next Tantra deals with many philosophical doctrines in Shaivism along with illumination he had. Eighth Tantra tries to establish the supremacy of Siva over Vishnu and Brahma with philosophical ideas that supports it. The last and ninth Tantra discusses about divine bliss through devotion, mystic union with God and divine dance at sacred temple of Chidambaram. In nutshell, it may conceive that Tirumulur had penned down *Tirumantiram* to establish theoretically and philosophically Shaivism as right path of Mukti,[347] and to integrate three paths of salvation referred by him as *Arivu* (knowledge), *Adakkam* (*Yoga*) and *Anbu* (Bhakti). But in the introduction or *Payiram* which include fifty verses he prefers the Bhakti and importance of Bhakti and God's grace in attainment of Mukti.[348]

---

[346] Sasivali, *Mysticism of Love in Saiva Tirumurais*, p. 229-234.

[347] Sasivali, *Mysticism of Love in Saiva Tirumurais*, p. 234-236.

[348] Mena, *The Hermeneutics of The Tirumantiram*, p. 15.

1.2.2.5 Prabandhams

Forty-one works of twelve poets with love towards God as central theme are collected in the eleventh *Tirumurai*. These poems are composed in different poetic forms of *Antadi*, *Nanmanimalai*, *Mummanikkovai*, *Kalampakam* and *Ula*. As we discussed earlier, *Antadi* is a prosody in which last word of the last line is the opening word of next line. Twenty-four poems out of 41 works in eleventh *Tirumurai* are composed in *Antadi* style and 8 of them bear the name *Antadi*. In these 8 poems, 6 works deal with subjective themes and these are;

1. *Ponvannattantadi* of Cheraman Perumal Nayanar
2. *Tiruvekampamutaiyar Tiruvantadi* of Pattinattu Pillaiyar
3. *Kayilaipati kalattipati Antadi* of Nakkirateva Nayanar
4. *Sivaperuman Tiruvantadi* of Kapilateva Nayanar
5. *Sivaperuman Tiruvantadi* of Paranateva Nayanar
6. *Alutaiya Pillaiyar Tiruvantadi* of Nampi Antar Nampi.[349]

Kayilaipati Kalattipati Antadi is consisted of 150 verses and one hundred of them are connected with Kayilayam temple. *Alutaiya Pillaiyar Tiruvantadi* is an *Antadi* poem written in the praise of Sambandar by Nampi Antar Nampi and it follows the various stages of life prescribed in *Tirukkovaiyar* the eighth *Tirumurai*.[350]

Nanmanimalai is a kind of poem in which forty stanzas of four different kind of verse namely *Venpa*, *Viruttam*, *Akval* and *Kattalaikaliturai* are found. Pattinattar's composition of *Koyil Nanmanimalai* is an example of this kind of poetry and the composition also deals with mystic love with God. *Mummanikkovai* is a kind of poem with thirty stanzas in which *Venpa*, *Akval* and *Kattalaikkaliturai* forms of verses occur

[349] Mena, *The Hermeneutics of The Tirumantiram*, p. 128.

[350] Sasivali, *Mysticism of Love in Saiva Tirumurais*, p. 137.

serially one after one. There are six *Mummanikkovai* poems that deal with love, out of seven *Mummanikovai* poems included in eleventh *Tirumurai* and are;

1. *Tiruvalaculi Mummanikkovai* of Nakkirateva Nayanmar
2. *Tiruvarur Mummanikkovai* of Cheraman Perumal Nayanmar
3. *Alutaiya Pillaiyar Tirumummanikkovai* of Nampi Antar Nampi
4. *Sivaperuman Tirumummanikkovai* of Ilamperuman Atikal
5. *Tirukkalumala Mummanikkovai* of Pattinattup Pillaiyar
6. *Tiruvitaimarutur Mummanikkovai* of Pattinattup Pillaiyar.[351]

While in all of these *Mummanikkova*i poems *Siva* is praised and worshipped with devotion projecting him as lover, *Alutaiya Pillaiyar Tirumummanikovai* of of Nampi Antar Nampi praises Sambandar but he had penned one praising *Siva* also with title of *Sivaperuman Tiumummaninkkovai*.[352]

Kalampakam is one of 96 kinds of *Prabandham*s that consist different kinds of stanzas with different meters. In *Kalampakam* poems, names of praised Gods are referred by names of their abodes, but *Kalampakam*s referring the names of men are also seen like *Alutaiya Pillaiyar Tiukalampakam* composed by Nampi Antar Nampi praising Sambandar. *Ula* is a kind of poem in which a story of hero or deity who go in procession through streets and young women are expressing their loves towards him, is depicted. Cheraman Perumal's *Tirukkayilaya Nanaula*, named after *Tirukkayilayapati* the background of story, is an example of *Ula* poem in which women are falling in love with God Siva. The work is considered as most ancient and marvelous work in *Ula* kind of poetry; thus, it is named as *Atiula* (the first *Ula*). It also named as *'Teyvika Ula'* (divine *Ula*) as it composed in devotional atmosphere depicting mystic love with God. Nampi

[351] Sasivali, *Mysticism of Love in Saiva Tirumurais*, p. 140.

[352] Sasivali, *Mysticism of Love in Saiva Tirumurais*, p. 140-150.

Antar Nampi had also composed one in *Ula* style with title of *Alutaiya Pillayiyar Tiruvulamali* praising Sambandar.[353]

In *Ula* kind of devotional poetry, the mystic love felt by soul of devotees towards God is identified and classified in seven stages and these are;

1. *Petai* (wish) : desiring to see the God
2. *Petumpai* (meditation) : meditating about the deeds of God
3. *Mankai* (contemplation) : continuous contemplation about God
4. *Matantai* (desire) : an intense desire to experience the God
5. *Arivai* (taste) : aiming to be blessed with God
6. *Terivai* (devotion) : seeing God in all worldy things
7. *Perilampen* (highest devotion): surrendering one's soul to God.[354]

As we witnessed in most of *Tirumurai* collection, devotion to God in the form of love is expressed by many Nayanmars and other poet saints of Shaivism. This kind of devotion is denoted as *Madhura Bhava* (mood of sweet or love) in Bhakti tradition.

Karaikkal Ammaiyar

Karaikkal Ammaiyar is a unique Nayanar for she was a woman poet saint among 63 Nayanmars as Andal among Alvars. The story of Karaikkal Ammaiyar is famous within tradition as she had considerable attention in *Periya Puranam* of Sekkizhar with 64 stanzas narrating her while other Nayanmars were described in one or two stanzas. Among 63 Nayanmars, women saints are two including Karaikkal Ammaiyar namely Mangaiyarkkarasiyar and Isaignaniyar, the mother of Sundarar, but received less attention in *Periya Puranam*, may be because of scarcity of available details. Sekkizhar had delineated Mangaiyarakkarasiyar who was considered as foster mother of Sambandar and had tried to convert king back to Shaivism with help of Sambandar, in two and half

[353] Sasivali, *Mysticism of Love in Saiva Tirumurais*, p. 154-167.

[354] Sasivali, *Mysticism of Love in Saiva Tirumurais*, p. 169.

stanzas. Mangaiyarakkarasiyar as a virtuous queen of *Chola* dynasty often referred and equated with Goddess Lakshmi. Even though Isaignaniar was mother of great Nayanar Sundarar, she was described with only one stanza in Periya Puranam while Sundarar himself narrated her in a couple of lines. As a Siva devotee, she kept hostility towards non-Saivites and even she shattered three citadels of enemies. While Sundarar narrates her as a devotee who desired for one who rescues the world of evil filled with non Saivites, Nampi Antar Nampi venerates her as a queen.[355]

In *Tiru Tondar Togai* of Sundarar which lists 62 *Nayanmar*s, Karaikkal Ammaiyar is referred as *Peyar* (the revered one who is demon) but Nampi Antar Nampi doesn't call her as *Pey*.[356] This referance comes from her own identification in her four works as a demon or ghoul (*Pey*).[357] Karaikkal Ammaiyar's intense devotion is the reason behind her prominence in the tradition unlike Mangaiyarakkarasiyar and Isaignaniar whose motherhood or maternity are more highlighted. She renounces the world neglecting her charming beauty to get gruesome look that is presented as her proof of devotion; thus, she attains blessed feet of Siva.[358]

Sekkizhar narrates that Karaikkal Ammaiyar was born as a daughter of Danatattan a virtuous and wealthy merchant of Karaikkal town and was named as Punitavati by her parents. As a gorgeous girl, she was married to Paramatattan who was also merchant but was requested to stay in the house nearby that was constructed by Danatattan since she was his one and only child. While they were leading an austere life there, one day Paramatattan sent two mangoes home that he received from his business clients. Before he reached his home in afternoon, one of the mangoes was given along

---

[355] Thallam, "Cekkilar's Periya Puranam and The Story of Karaikkal Ammayi.", Journal of South Asian Studies, 2013, p. 84.

[356] Thallam., p. 83.

[357] Elaine Craddock, *Women Lives, Women Rituals in The Hindu Tradition*, ed. Tracy Pintchman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 134.

[358] Thallam, "Cekkilar's Periya Puranam and The Story of Karaikkal Ammayi.", p. 83-85.

with rice to Siva devotee who came their house. Paramatattan, uninformed about the situation, asked for second one too when he had lunch and struck by unusual sweetness of mango that served to him. When she prayed to Siva, he miraculously dropped mangoes but Paramatattan realized second one was even sweeter. When he realized the truth upon enquiry, he insisted her to produce new one too and she did it for him. Bewildered on divinity immersed within his wife, he abandoned nuptial ties with her and left for another town on the excuse of business. When his business flourished there also, he married and had a daughter who was named as Punitavati. She was unaware of the situation as she was leading an austere life with divine bliss but when her parent discovered truth brought him to her. Realizing the situation, she renounced her life as house holder (*grihastini*) to a devoted life seeking eternal liberation at the feet of Siva.[359]

When Karaikkal Ammaiyar decided to give up *grihastini* life, she begged *Siva* to transform her beautiful body to a ghoulish one in order to present it as a proof of devotion and she was granted. As her devotion outpoured, she composed *Tirvirettai Manimalai* (sacred double garland of verses) and *Arputa Tiruvantadi* (sacred linked verses of wonder) dedicated to Siva. She is said to be the first Nayanar to compose *Antadi* kind of poem even before Sundarar and Sambandar.[360] Some scholars argue that she was first poet among Nayanmar to recite hymns dedicated to Şiva and that was in mid-eighth century.[361] Then she made pilgrimage to *Kailasa* to see Siva with his consort Parvati she had walked to *Kailasa* which is abode of Siva on her hand to not impure the abode with her dirty foot. When she reached the abode, Siva welcomed her as *Ammai* (mother) and she was named after that. Her house at Karaikkal turned to a temple dedicated to her while temples dedicated to her also seen in Karnataka and she is known a *Karaikkal matha* (mother) in Kerala.[362]

---

[359] Thallam., p. 85.

[360] Thallam., p. 85.

[361] Craddock, *Women Lives, Women Rituals in The Hindu Tradition*, p. 131.

[362] Thallam, "Cekkilar's Periya Puranam and The Story of Karaikkal Ammayi.", p. 85.

To be greeted as mother by Siva is indeed a great blessing since all devotional songs including *Tevaram* glorify him as father and mother of universe. She was also invited to watch his cosmic dance and had witnessed *Siva oorthuva tandava* (thunderous dance). Here she sang *Tiruvalankattu Muta Tirupatikangal* (sacred senior songs of Tiruvalankattu) and led her rest of live as his devoted servant. Here, she descended from *Kailasa* to sing praising songs of Siva when he performed the dance in cremation ground of Tiruvalankatu. In iconography, she had been shown as a singer playing cymbals at feet of Siva. Her tomb is in the premises of this temple and some of her verses are seen engraved in the temple.[363]

Cheraman Perumal

Cheraman Perumal (8th century) was born in royal family of *Kothayar*s who ruled *Malainadu* the present-day Kerala headquartered at Kodunkolur. While his original name is Perumamakothayar, *Cheraman* is denoted who belong to *Chera* kingdom and he adopted name of *Perumal* after his coronation. Not interested in administration, he renounced the world and set out to Tiru Anchaikalam for devoted worship of lord there. But when current ruler Sengol Porayan abdicated the throne and Perumamakothayar was requested to ascend the throne, he accepted under the divine command on the condition that he should continue his daily worship without any interruption. It is believed that he knows many languages including language of birds and had ruled the country with prosperity.[364]

Perumal's devotion to God was very intense and this was exposed when he fell from royal elephant to the feet of washerman whose body was smeared with white and mud and looked like Siva. In return, lord Siva sent a Saivite devotee and musician to Cheraman with his own song praising Cheraman who rolled on the ground when he heard the song. He had devoted himself to Nataraja, a cosmic dancer form of Siva and was used

[363] Craddock, *Women Lives, Women Rituals in The Hindu Tradition*., p. 136.

[364] Sivananda, *Sixty-Three Nayanar Saints*, p. 53.

to worship him daily. During his daily prayers, he was bestowed with hearing of musical sound that produced from lord's anklets while dancing. But when he couldn't hear the sound one day, he tried to kill himself with sword thinking that he didn't hear the voice because of great sin. Suddenly, he heard a sound from sky explaining that lord was absorbed in the sweet song of Sundarar and he gave up from the suicide. God also praised so much about Sundarar in order to get both of them befriended, thus Perumal set out to Chidambaram to worship Nataraja and to meet Sundarar there. When he reached Chidambaram, he was bestowed with lord vision and he burst to joy singing his song *Ponvannattantadi*. But he couldn't meet Sundarar there as he left to Tiruvarur, therefore he went to Tiruvarur where they met each other. Here, he composed his famous *'Tiru Mummanikovi'* dedicated to lord *Tyagaraja*. From there, they together made pilgrimages to many shrines like Vedaranyma where he composed *Tiruantadi* dedicating to deity of the temple. He returned back to Kodunkalur again with Sundarar, and attained the liberation there and he became the servant of Siva in Kailasa as tradition narrates. Cheraman Perumal is considered as one of 63 Nayanmars and his poems are included in *Tirumurai*.[365]

1.2.2.6 Periya Puranam

Periya Puranam of Sekkizhar is the last and twelfth *Tirumurai* and it presents the historical details of 63 Nayanmars enlisted firstly by Sambandar. Sekkizhar was prime minister of Kulothunga *Chola* (d.1150) who ruled some parts of Tamil region. *Periya Puranam* is also known as *Tiru Tondar Puranam*, and is based on *Tiruthondar Tiruvantadi* of Nampi Antar Nampi and '*Tiru Tondar Togai'* of Sundarar. For its enormous historical details with Bhakti poets as underlying theme, the work is considered next to *Tevaram* and *Tiruvacakam* in the tradition.[366] The work that consisted of 4286[367]

[365] Sivananda, *Sixty-Three Nayanar Saints*, p. 54.

[366] N. Mahalingam, *Edited and Condensed English Version of Periya Puranam by Sekkizhar* (Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, n.d.), p. V-VI.

[367] B. Sreenivas, Sanskrit Words in Tevaram, p. 16.

verses depict the life style, devotional method and devotional poems of sixty-three Naynamars who are from different casts including low one, classes and professions but united in their unending intense devotional worship to God *Siva*. Based on their poetic contributions in the tradition, 26 *Nayanmars* whose composed poems are found are called as vocal devotees whereas other devotees are called as dumb devotees.[368]

Sekkizhar was a minister and poet's chief of Kulothunga Chola II who ruled between 1133 and 1150 for kingdom of Cholas who are known for their Siva Bhakti and for their enmity against Buddhism, Jainism and Vaishnavism. Even though he was devotee of Siva in the form of Nataraja and propagated it as his ancestors, he was influenced with *Jivaka Cihntamani* a Jain Tamil text that composed as a poem of love. Disturbed by king's captivation, he induced king, hoping to reverse his religious interests, to read the works of Sundarar and Nampi Antar Nampi which depict the lives of *Nayanmar*s. For the same reason, he imitated to compose a poem that comprehensively depicts the lives of all *Nayanmar*s and he was successful to produce a complete hagiography of *Nayanmar*s which later named as *Periya Puranam* (big story). He composed his poem in thousand pillared hall of famous Chidambaram temple using his advantages as minister and the composition brought back the king to Shaivism. King organized a massive festival for the release of book dedicating to Siva at golden hall of Nataraja at Ponnambalam and the work was presented to public through a year by Sekkizhar at Chidambaram. This magnum opus of Shaiva tradition considered by some followers as fifth Veda and was included in *Tirumurai* collection as twelfth volume.[369]

1.2.3 MAJOR BHAKTI SAINTS

Originating from *Alvar*s and *Nayanmar*s in Tamil region, Bhakti as a movement moved further influencing adjacent geographies in south India and developed to its maximum in succeeding centuries mainly in north India. It is not exaggerated if we say

---

[368] Mahalingam, *Edited and Condensed English Version of Periya Puranam by Sekkizhar*, p. 1.

[369] Sarada Thallam, "Cekkilar's Periya Puranam and The Story of Karaikkal Ammayi," p. 83-84.

Bhakti tradition diffused all over India from south to north and from west to east with sprouting of different varieties of saints, groups and Bhakti philosophies. Surely, it is hard to comprehend it in a work itself, so here we go through only major Bhakti saints to get an overall outlook of Bhakti's development and it is out of our work's scope to discuss deeply about all Bhakti saints and groups since problem of our research around Bhakti movement's emergence only.

1.2.3.1 Basavanna

Basavanna (d.1196), as popularly known, is the founding father of Lingayats or Veerashaivas a poetic bhakta group mainly centered in Kalyana, in modern Karnataka state in south India. Some historians mark his life between 1105 and 1167 while some others mark between 1134-1196. He proposed a different way of Bhakti that compromises devotion with social life and political consciousness conveying his philosophies on poetry.[370]

Basavanna was born to Shaiva brahmin couples namely Madarasa (12th century) and Madalambike (12th century) in 1134 in Karnataka a southern state of India. His sister Nagamma (12th century) had influenced him greatly in his revolutionary and reformative ideas, so she is regarded as first Guru (religious teacher) of Basava. As an intelligent child and very aware about society and practices, he refused to undergo Upanayana (religious initiation) ceremony which marks the beginning of Vedic studies for brahmin boys pointing that he only accepts the ceremony only when his sister also undergoes the same. Even in his early ages, he was condemning unjust practices in the society like casteism, untouchability and bad treatment towards women.[371] Then he moved to Kudala to join the Gurukula (religious school) headed by Eashanaya (12th century) guru and stayed there for 8 years. It is said that he had married two girls Neelambike (12th century) the foster

[370] Harish Harsoor - Muslim Yadgir, *Basava Philosophy and Islam*, First edition (New Delhi: White Dot Publishers, 2014), p. 10.

[371] Harsoor - Yadgir, *Basava Philosophy and Islam*, p. 10-11.

sister of king Bijjala of Mangalwad (12th century) and Gangambike (12th century) the daughter of Baladev (12th century) who was minister of king Bijjala. He worked as a clerk in the court of Bijjala and when Bijjala became the ruler of Chalukya kingdom, he moved to Kalyana in 1155. It is reported that he could read the script in copper plate found in Bijjala and king could discover huge treasure buried under the throne. Impressed by intelligence and honesty of Basava, king appointed him as *Mahamantri* (chief of ministers). In Kalyana, he relentlessly worked for social reformations based on devotional worship of Siva and could attract a vast number of followers who later known as Lingayat. They consider themselves as a separate religion from Hinduism based on *Vachana*s (utterances) of Basavanna as they admired him.[372] *Vachana*s, which are short and concise sayings that include deep meaning and thoughts, of Basavanna and other fellow Lingayats have decisive impact in the Lingayat *traditon.* These *Vachanas* constitute a great portion of Kannada literature and are famous within the region since these *Vachana*s often repeated by non-Lingayats even illiterates.[373]

Basavanna fought against priest centric worship of God in which priest was no less than God and all worships and offerings to God were incomplete without priests. Worship of God was limited to temples where majority of society hadn't access. Opposing this culture, he advocated for devotional worship of God open for all sections of the society including women and untouchables. In his *Vachana*s, he advises to keep one's mind and body submissive to God and his commandments and to be satisfied with all acts of whether it is an honor or dishonor to him.[374]

Basavanna established *Anubhava mantapa* a center for religious learning where all people can join irrespective of their caste and gender and discuss religious matters often in poetic style. The center in Kalyana attracted Hindus from different parts of the

---

[372] Harsoor - Yadgir, *Basava Philosophy and Islam*, p. 11-12.

[373] S.M. Hunashal, *The Lingayat Movement; a Social Revolution in Karnataka* (Karnataka Sahitya Mandir Dharwar: Dharwar, 1947), p. XVI.

[374] Harsoor - Yadgir, *Basava Philosophy and Islam*, p. 15-18.

region and it turned epicenter of followers later known as Lingayats, Veerashaivas, or Sharanas. As Basavanna rejected monk life neglecting society and family, he proposed to take up a task and make a living. Contrary to many spiritual entities, Basavanna strongly opposed ascetic life without fulfilling needs of the society and family, so he was very sensitive in political issues too. He laid down the complete surrender and intense devotion as basis of God worship and salvation opposing the unjust and divisive customs prevailed in the society. Therefore, the center turned as a meeting point for devotees from different sects, professions and genders like Basavanna a minister, Akkamahadevi (1160) a woman ascetic, Machayya (12th century) a washerman, Ramayye (12th century) a weaver and Ramideva (12th century) a constable but all considered same while devotion is only parameter of merit.[375]

Most distinguishing feature of Basavanna is that he preached pure monotheism rejecting polytheism as he said in one of his *Vachana*s that there is only one God, to speak about two Gods is false and Kudalasangamahadeva is the only God. They were devotees of Siva whom they called as Kudalasangamahadeva but they were strict in Saivite monotheism. As the followers of Basavanna were ardent and fanatic Siva devotees, they were called as Veerashaivas (strong devotees of Siva). For them, *Sarvanga Lingasthala* is ultimate ideal where mysterious eternal life is existed and life is divinized completely. They also discouraged image worship as much as possible while they encouraged worship of Siva in one's own *Ishtalinga* which was kept by them all time wherever they go. The Linga was given by Guru in the time of initiation; thus, it rejects the worship of *Sthavaralinga* which placed in temples. In the tradition of Lingayats, a dictum which states that a hand touched Linga is pure while the body that wear Linga is temple itself. Even though they accepted Vedas, they examined it in the light of *Vichara* and *Anubhava* (reason and experience). They used to discuss all religious matters in *Anubhava mantapa* in Kalyana and attendees normally express their ideas in *Vachana*s which are recorded by a Lingayat named as *Shantaras* and later compiled into a book called as *Shunya*

[375] Harsoor - Yadgir, *Basava Philosophy and Islam*, p. 33-36.

Sampadana (attainment of the void).[376] Basava insisted through his poems that all persons should be evaluated on the basis of their depth in devotion not by their wealth, lineage or other measures. He was also empathic towards socially oppressed classes and furious to undeserved supremacy of brahmins in religion, so he supported participation of women in devotional life as he praised Mahadeviayakka in the presence of his companions even though they were confused about her good-looking naked position. While he condemns ritualistic religious activities, Basavanna values honest worldly occupations with feeling of devotion.[377]

Basava's *Vachana*s flourish today in devotional songs and many other media since these remain as his best contribution. His *Vachana*s stand for themes like simple individual devotion with social conscience with empathy towards socially backward classes especially women, focus on personal and social morality with frustration against rituals and forms of established religion, contempt against undeserved privileges of brahmins the hereditary priestly group, and fanatic adoration and devotion to Lord Siva.[378]

In nutshell, Basava's personality as social and religious reformer, his anti-ritualism, vernacularism, social egalitarianism and devotional individualism continue to inspire the community nowadays as contemporary *Lingayats* proclaims their distinction from Hinduism and their autonomy as a religion. He was very successful in his mission of Bhakti; thus, it attracted large mass especially in the region known today as Karnataka. It is notable that they proclaim their own identity as a separate religion from Hinduism and it is more sensitive issue in current India where Hindutva right wing want to transform democratic India to Hindu nation oppressing religious minorities like Muslims.

---

[376] S.M. Hunashal, *The Lingayat Movement; a Social Revolution in Karnataka* (Karnataka Sahitya Mandir Dharwar: Dharwar, 1947), p. 41-82.

[377] S.M. Hunashal, *The Lingayat Movement; a Social Revolution in Karnataka,* p. 90-93.

[378] S.S. Basawanal - K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar, *Musings of Basava* (Manglore: Basel Mission Press, 1940), p. 17-19.

1.2.3.2 Akkamahadevi

Female poet saint Akkamahadevi is a key figure in Bhakti tradition as she proved Bhakti's inclusive policy that proposes the devotion as key factor of sainthood irrespective of gender and she is one of few female religious figures in the history of Bhakti itself.

Akkamahadevi is said to had born in Shimoga, Karnataka and was married to local chieftain, Kausika (12th century) who was Jain. She was forced to be married with him for her beauty but she was not satisfied with him, thus it eventually led to her fleeing from his home as naked.[379] Her inclination to spirituality led her way to Kalyana where Veerashaivas or Lingayats the Siva devotees gathered. She was not welcomed warmly in the community as she was naked the *Digambara* style, yet they sheltered her due to their respect for wandering ascetics. Basava, the Lingayat community leader, advocated for practicing spirituality through leading normal life but Akkamahadevi's absolute ascetism was not coping with fellow bhakta sisters, therefore she left Kalyana and continued her wandering.[380] She reached Srisailam where temple of Mallikarjuna, her favorite God, situated and she stayed there till her death in early twenties. Tradition says that she attained the ultimate mystical experience through a complete union with her divine God.[381]

Even though Akkamahadevi left the *Lingayats,* she is one of foremost saints in community for her exceptional poetry and community's special focus on poetry. Poetry had a special role in the community as they were communicating with each other through

[379] S.S. Basawanal - K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar, *Musings of Basava*, p. 34-35.

[380] Jan Peter Schouten, edi. Knut A. Jacobsen, Brill's encyclopedia of Hinduism, BRILL, Leiden, 2012, p. 150.

[381] Chandra Y Mudaliar, "Religious Experiences of Hindu Women: A Study of Akka Mahadevi," *Mystics Quarterly* 17/3 (1991), p. 137.

small poetic lines which later called as *Vachana*s in the tradition.[382] Basavanna used to organize a meeting for religious discussions but was communicated through small poems and the aim was to encourage each devotee for personal contribution to the development of religious tradition, thus it also encouraged vernacular religious literature of Kannada instead of dominant Sanskrit. The contribution later named as *Vachana* literature in which she is one of most prominent *Vachanakara*s (authors of *Vachana*s) for her qualified 430 *Vachana*s that composed in different situations of her life.[383]

Along with 430 *Vachana*s, she also compiled small collections of the poetry in which *Yogangatrividhi* with 67 verses is famous one. But her *Vachana*s are masterpiece which made her famous as Cannabasava the successor of Basavanna said that her one poem is enough for ten poems of Basavanna himself. When *Vachana*s normally are poems free from forms, short, simple and easy to memorize manner but her verses were highly poetic with imagery and good use of Kannada language.[384] In the last lines of *Vachana*s, certain remarking of his/her personal deity is done which is called as *Ankita* or *Mudrike*. In the case of AkkaMahadevi, it was Mallikarjuna whom she fondly mentions as her husband. As Mallikarjuna was the deity worshipped in the temple of Srisailam which is one of 12 places (*Jyotirlinga*) where God Siva is said to have appeared, she was always felt attracted to the place, therefore she stayed there till her death.[385]

Akkamahadevi's poetry is considered as part of Bhakti literature as her verses express love and devotion to her personal God the Siva in his Mallikarjuna form and as a continuation of Nayanmar for its resemblance with Siva devout poetries of former century. As in many Bhakti poets, she also begs God for liberation from desires and can join with him as she believed liberation cannot be achieved with human, but only divine

---

[382] Susie J. Tharu - Ke Lalita, eds., *Women writing in India: 600 B.C. to the present* (New York: Feminist Press at the City University of New York: Distributed by Talman Co, 1991), p. 78.

[383] Jan Peter Schouten, edi. Knut A. Jacobsen, Brill's encyclopedia of Hinduism, p. 150.

[384] Jan Peter Schouten, edi. Knut A. Jacobsen, Brill's encyclopedia of Hinduism, p. 150.

[385] Susie J. Tharu - Ke Lalita, eds., *Women writing in India: 600 B.C. to the present*, p. 78-79.

powers can bestow it. Her poetry also constitutes *SatipatiBhakti* the devotion as the love of a women for her husband since she expresses her relationship with God as her husband through erotic verses. In this type of Bhakti, the mystical union with personal God is narrated as marital experiences with him. Other than Akkamahadevi, there are many female bhakta poets had expressed *SatipatiBhakti* like Mira Bai (d.1547) as well as some male poets who designate female Gods as their personal Gods. As a result of these works' extolling her mystical achievements, a large statue of her built in Uduthadi where she was born and had turned into a pilgrimage center. Along with her image is worshipped in the local temple and places she visited like Kalyana and Srisailam turned to sacred places, a cave in the name of Akkamahadevi is turned as pilgrimage center.[386]

1.2.3.3 Ramanand

Known as fifth master of Sri Vaishnava tradition, Ramanand (d.1475) who was religious scholar and well-educated philosopher, had created his own space in the history of Bhakti. Born in Brahmin family to the couple of Punyasadan (15th century) and Suseela (15th century), he set off to Benaras to finish his religious education. After his wandering throughout India, he established his own sect in Sri Vaishnava tradition rejecting the caste-based discriminations. As per Sri Vaishnava tradition, the master should be brahmin, must obey and follow caste-based purity and rules.[387] He declared emancipation through knowledge for all of his disciple whom he called as *Avadhuta* (liberated) and will be treated equal without any basis. It may be noted that Ramanand's rejection of image worship had influenced his most famous disciple Kabir who was proponent of *Nirguna* Bhakti. His teachings had continued to influence Bhakti saints of next generations too like Raidas (d.1520), Guru Nanak (d.1539) and Tulsidas, so his teachings were also included in *Adi Granth* the sacred text of Sikhs. Since his teachings were open to all, he

[386] Jan Peter Schouten, edi. Knut A. Jacobsen, Brill's encyclopedia of Hinduism, p. 150.

[387] G.A Natesan, *Ramanad to Ram Tirth; Lives of The Saints of Northern India Including Sikh Gurus* (Madras, n.d.), p. 2-3.

had disciples from various sects, castes and even from non-Hindus too like Kabir (d.1518).[388]

Ramanand's Bhakti teachings mainly emphasis on two principles that perfect Bhakti is perfect love directed towards God and all devotees are brothers. His most known 12 disciples come from various castes, religions and backgrounds as Kabir a weaver, Pipa a soldier, Sena (15th century) a barber, Rai Dasa (15th century) a leather worker from low caste, Sukhanand (15th century) and Anantanand (15th century) who were brahmins and Dhana (15th century) from low caste while Surasari (15th century) and Padmavati (15th century) were women disciples. It must be noted that Ramanand had also taught Vedas for low castes too along with offering them the salvation through Jnana itself. He hadn't left notable poems or textual works other than some lines in *Adi Granth* in his long 111 years starting from 1299 to 1410 but his fame and influence had passed through his disciples.[389]

1.2.3.4 Kabir

Kabir, one of key figures in Bhakti tradition of medieval period, was a proponent of formless Bhakti (*Nirguna* Bhakti) in which Bhakti was not expressed to a deity or idol, unlike Alvars and Nayanmars who were *Saguna* bhaktas (devotees of God with forms) and their devotion was expressed to their deities. He influenced large mass in central and northern India since many founders of different sects acknowledge their reverence to Kabir. Among these founders, Guru Nanak the founder of Sikhism is prominent one and he had met his master at his age of 7. In *Adi Granth* the sacred text of Sikhism, devotional lines of Kabir are placed. Dadu (d.1603) the founder of *Panth*, Jag Jivan Das (d.1760) the

[388] Lala Sita Ram, *Selections from Hindi Literature; Book IV Saints* (Allahabad: University of Culcutta, 1921), p. I-A - I-E.

[389] Sita Ram, *Selections from Hindi Literature; Book IV Saints*, p. 5-16.

founder of at *Nami* sect and Birbhan (16th century) the founder of *Sadh* community, are among influenced by Kabir.[390]

Historians had enlisted various birth dates of Kabir but almost of them agree that he was lived in fifteenth century, yet a prominent historian, Dr. Govind Trigunayat, had identified 1398 as birth year of Kabir after comparing available records. Among different birth places attributed to him, Megahar village of Azamgarh is most dependable one.[391] There are different legends on his birth but it is agreed that he was brought up in a Muslim house whose profession was weaving and he had grown up with both Muslim and Hindu friends. It is said that he practiced Hindu lifestyle reciting the name of Hindu Gods like Rama and Narayana while accepting the studentship of Ramanand a Hindu scholar. Some other accounts describe that he married Loi (14th century) and had two children; Kamal (14th century) and Kamali (14th century). Meantime, he accompanied the shaykh Taqqi (14th century) and his father Shabanul Millat (d.1359) who were Sufi *Peer*s. He roamed and lived around Banaras searching *Peer*s and accompanying them but it is reported that Shaykh Taqqi had complained the Muslim ruler of the time on divinity claiming of Kabir and, therefore, must be punished with death. Upon his explanation, emperor let him free. Paradoxically, he was accused by Hindu brahmin too to cross the limit of Hindu religion. All account agree that he died in Gorakhpur in his old age, yet tradition describe that Hindus wanted to cremate him while Muslims to bury him. Legend continues that when the clothes that covered the dead body of Kabir were removed, they found heap of flowers and half of them burnt in Benaras while another half was buried in Megahar.[392]

To put an endnote to understand Kabir's syncretic religious practices, his poem stating himself as neither Hindu or Muslim is considerable one. He continues in the poem that Hindus chant the name of Rama while Muslims of One God but the lord of Kabir pervades everything. As in the case of birth year too, historians had placed his death year

---

[390] G.H Wetcott, *Kabir and The Kabir Panth* (Varanasi: Bharatiya Publishing House, 1907), p. 1.

[391] Prabhakar Machwe, *Kabir* (New Delhi: Sahitya Academy, 1968), p. 10.

[392] Wetcott, *Kabir and The Kabir Panth*, p. 4-24.

as 1447, 1511, 1517 and 1518, according most of these dating he is believed to be lived long for 120 years. In nutshell, he left behind great poetic Hindi literature on Bhakti with strict monotheism and abhorrence of idolatry based on teachings of Upanishads.[393]

Since Kabir perceived his God as impersonal and immanent, his Bhakti was monotheistic in nature. Instead of indulging in scholastic discussions to establish *Nirguna* or non-dual nature of God, he spread his understandings of God in his poems. Kabir was reluctant in naming his God without shape and form as Krishna or any other since he couldn't be grasped by identifying as a person or through philosophical expositions but only through personal encounter and experience of him with utter devotion (Bhakti). But, his recurring mentions of Rama a Vishnu-avatar, had prompted historian to regard him a Vaishnava. His usage of Rama is only in symbolic to point an undefinable God which is found within himself, so Rama as incarnation or personal deity has no significance for Kabir. His Rama was not person who was described in Puranas or *Itihasa*s. He moves much closer to Islam as he said that the eternal God shouldn't be worshipped in the form of a person because he must be free from human parentages.[394]

According to Kabir, knowledge or Jnana is integral part for enlightenment and spiritual awakening because He must be known properly to be worshipped and to be devoted. He relates it that knowledge has no meaning without Bhakti and true Bhakti is not existent without knowledge, so the real Guru must impart both Jnana and Bhakti to his disciples. But Kabir reiterates that this knowledge is not taken from books but from his spiritual experience, yet he almost neglected those who are well versed with scriptures but with little spiritual experience. Moreover, he believed that essence of religion may be lost within increased writings and continuous verbal expositions. For him, one can be man of true knowledge through his spiritual experiences even he hadn't scholastic

---

[393] Machwe, *Kabir*, p. 11-16.

[394] Krishna Sharma, *Early Indian Bhakti with Special Reference to Kabir; a Historical Analysis and Re-Interpretation* (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of London, 1964), p. 227.

learnings. He states that one's own intellect is source of knowledge and it can discriminate truth and false through thinking, so he is not in need to external sources.[395]

Kabir perceived his God as one reality permeated the entire universe and whatever he sees is the truth nothing else. As this reality is existent within one's self, searching it outside is futile, so he regarded religious practices as worthless without this consciousness. Thus, realizing his great self is realizing the God as He abides bodiless within him, so he disregarded searching him through forms they created and established outside of their Atman. Here, it is very clear that he proposed *Nirguna* Bhakti (devotion to a formless God) and dismissed the *Saguna* Bhakti. His teachings of one must give up sense of duality and recognize the oneness of things to experience God, points to his monistic views. He moves further that Bhakti is also futile until he recognizes the God who abides within him and whenever he realizes this highest knowledge he is merged with God. In *Nirguna* Bhakti, God is devoted as higher self while devotee considers him as lower self and God may be far from him in the absence of true devotion to him.[396]

1.2.3.5 Guru Nanak

May be the foremost figure of Bhakti in medieval period is Guru Nanak whose religious philosophy enrooted in devotion turned to be formed as new religion itself named as 'Sikhism', winning the large mass across northern India especially in Punjab. As he was deeply influenced by Kabir, his religious philosophy may be conceived as a syncretic religion synthesized from religious philosophies of Hinduism and Islam with Bhakti acting as catalyst.

---

[395] Sharma, *Early Indian Bhakti with Special Reference to Kabir; a Historical Analysis and Re-Interpretation*, p. 227-233.

[396] Sharma, *Early Indian Bhakti with Special Referance to Kabir; a Historical Analysis and Re-Interpretation*, p. 233-238.

Born in 1469 in central Punjab (now in west Pakistan) as son of Mehta Kalu (d.1522) an administration officer for a Pathan chief, and Tripta (15th century).[397] Guru Nanak had learned under Pandit Gopal (15th century), Sharma Nath (15th century) and Qutubudheen (15th century) when he was 11 years old. In 1487, he had married Sulakhni (15th century) and had two children; Baba Sri Tara Chand (d. 1629) and Baba Lakshmi Das (16th century). Tradition says that, after Godly revelation in 1497, he had travelled from south to North and from west to east to preach his thoughts and religion, and had influenced many to his religion,[398] Moreover, his travels hold importance in the religion and are known in the tradition as *Udasi*.[399] So he is known as Nanak Pir Wali Hind in Arabian countries, Rimpoche of Amritsar in Tibet, Balagdheen in Afghanistan and as Baba Nanak, Guru Nanak and Rishi Nanak in other places while Yogis of Hinduism try to bring him to their fold.[400] After his expeditions to different parts of the world, he settled in Kartarpur leading a householder's life but with total devotion to the God. Giving up ascetic life, he started his new life with farming and lecturing to local people about God and devotion to him and about comprehensive method of life often accompanied with Kirtan the songs with melodies. His life in Kartarpur attracted many to the region, thus new religion, Sikhism, gradually evolved around the teachings of Guru Nanak centered at Kartarpur.[401]

Guru Nanak's magnum opus *Adi Granth,* which is also considered as sacred scripture of Sikhism, is collection his poems that he sung throughout his life since he identifies himself as *Nanak Shair* which means Nanak the poet. He selected Punjabi, Sahaskriti and colloquial Persian to convey his messages regarding the language of

---

[397] Sarjit Singh Bal, *Life of Guru Nanak* (Chandigarh: Publishing Bureau of Punjab University, 1984), p. 17.

[398] Surinder Singh Kohli, *Philosophy of Guru Nanak* (Chandigarh: Publishing Bureau of Punjab University, 1980), p. 1-7.

[399] Bal, *Life of Guru Nanak*, p. 48.

[400] Kohli, *Philosophy of Guru Nanak*, p. vi.

[401] Bal, *Life of Guru Nanak*, p. 113-119.

audience and he had understood selecting a foreign language as slavery. Besides *Adi Granth*, his major works include *Asa ki var*, *Japji*, *Majh ki var*, *Sidh Ghoshta*, *Dakhni Oamkar* and *Malar ki var*.[402]

While accepting mystic ideas of Bhakti, Guru Nanak, like his master Kabir, had rejected theological aspects of Vaishnavism or Shaivism like avatar doctrine and idol worship, following *Nirguna Sampradaya* of Bhakti.[403] Although there are different evaluation of Guru Nanak's teachings proposed by many historians, the common point in most of these conclusions is syncretism of Hinduism and Islam in his mystic or devotional ideas.[404] Guru Nanak describes his God as *Nirguna* Brahma and asserts eternal oneness of God without subjecting to any change or duality, where his concept of God is almost identical with monotheism in Islam. He identifies him with negative affirmations like *Nirguna* (without attributes), *Niranakar* (formless) and *adrisht* (unseen) and with positive statements like *Ek-oankar* (The one all pervading), *Satnam* (his name is true) and *Karta-purkh* (Creator-immanent one).[405] He reiterates further that he is attributed with all auspicious qualities while he is free from all defects and he has no beginnings (*Anadi)* or ends (*Amar*).[406] Therefore, it may easily concluded that his idea of God was largely influenced by *Tauhid* in Islam or almost identical with it. He had emphasized to dedicate one' contemplation and devotion to a *Nirankar* (formless), *Niranjan* (Immaculate) and *Nirguna* (without attributes) God.[407] Guru Nanak described Bhakti as intense devotion and complete surrender towards God in which knowledge and actions are necessary and must be proceed with faith and love but rejects different modes of worship and rituals.[408]

---

[402] Kohli, *Philosophy of Guru Nanak*, p. 7-9.

[403] Dewan Singh, *Mysticism of Guru Nanak* (Punjab University, 1973), p. 122.

[404] Singh, *Mysticism of Guru Nanak*, p. 132-139.

[405] Singh, *Mysticism of Guru Nanak*, p. 184-186.

[406] Kohli, *Philosophy of Guru Nanak*, p. 28-29.

[407] Singh, *Mysticism of Guru Nanak*, p. 186-191.

[408] Kohli, *Philosophy of Guru Nanak*, p. 143.

In nutshell, Guru Nanak as most important figure of Bhakti in *Nirguna sampradaya*, had initiated a new life style imbued in Bhakti, which later transformed to a new religion Sikhism. As his philosophy on God, religion and salvation was much indebted to both Hinduism and Islam, he may be the most explicit example of Bhakti's interconnections with both religions. From its origin, Bhakti movement had interconnected and engaged with and within religions and its different cults, thus it prompted to a syncretic religion; Sikhism.

1.2.3.6 Vallaba

Another notable figure in Bhakti tradition is Vallaba (d.1531) who lived in sixteenth century and propounded *Shuddadvaita* (pure non-dualism) school of Vedanta that harmonized with Bhakti towards God Krishna. While he accepts doctrine of pure (*Shudda*) in Upanishad to put forward his *Shuddadvaita*, he accepts *Jnana Marga* as a method of salvation but affirms superiority of Bhakti *Marga* as the path of salvation. To present his religious philosophy, he had penned down '*Anubhasya*' a partial commentary on Brahma sutra and '*Subodhini'* a commentary on Bhagavat Purana, moreover it is said that he had commented on Upanishads and Bhagavad-Gita too.[409] As his teachings attracted large mass, a new Bhakti cult under the guideship of Vallaba was evolved.

There are two available birth dates of Vallabacharya; 1473[410] and 1479 but the former seems to be historically valid. Born in a family of Krishna devotees, Vallabha started his learning at his age of six under the instruction of Narayan Bhatt (16th century) and it is said in the tradition that he learned Vedas, Upanishads and six *Astika* schools within four months. When he lost his father at his age of 11, he left his mother and native place Gokul to the banks of Yamuna and for pilgrimage throughout India. He wandered all over India for nine years till he settled in Banaras[411] leading a life of Acharya (teacher)

---

[409] G.H Bhatt, *Sri Vallabhacharya and his Doctrines* (Baroda: Sri Vallabha Publications, 1984), p. 8.

[410] Bhatt, *Sri Vallabhacharya and His Doctrines*, p. 7.

[411] karsandas Mulji, *History of the Sect of Maharajas, Or Vallabhacharyas, in Western India* (London: Trübner and Company, 1865), p. 35-43.

the title honored by king of Vijayanagara, giving lectures and writing books till his death in 1531.[412]

Vallabha put forward pure non-duality (*Shuddadvaita*) establishing cause and effect being pure and one and rejecting Maya. He emphasized that divine grace (*Pushti*) is most powerful instrument and unfailing mode towards salvation, therefore his path is also known as *PushtiMarga* too, but he didn't reject other paths of *Jnana* and *Karma* (knowledge and ritual) as Kabir does. He proposes *Maryada Marga* in which one has to follow instructions of Vedas and has to practice different modes of worship till he starts his love to God but it is open only for males of three upper casts; Brahmanas, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas whereas *PushtiMarga* is open for all irrespective of caste and gender. He continues that his time is unfavorable for *Maryada Marga* as it excludes women, Sudras and other outcast people. He describes the relation with God is found in eight sentiments (*rasa*); love, fury, wonder, horror, heroism, humor, pathos and love (*Srngara*). In these eight sentiments, love (*Srngara*) is most prominent that is enjoyed by the devotees in two different stages of *Viprayoga* (separation) and *Samyoga* (union). Devotee enjoys the happiness of union during *Samyoga* while he thinks about him only during the time of *Viprayoga.* He understands that divine grace is recognized by many schools but they follow *Maryada Marga* when they worship, so he strongly points to his followers that their Bhakti should be *Snehatmaka* (consisted of love).[413]

Vallabacharya didn't reject *Varnashrama dharma* completely but he disregards it as it is unfavorable to time and he continues that whenever *Varnashrama dharma* (service based on caste) conflicts with *Bhagavata dharma* (service of the lord), he must prefer latter over the former. When one enters *PushtiMarga*, he must give up his independent existence and all his properties dedicating it to lord, therefore he couldn't possess any material property. When he uses anything, he must dedicate it to God and then use it with his prior permission. The form of lord in the tradition is popularly known

---

[412] Bhatt, *Sri Vallabhacharya and His Doctrines*, p. 9.

[413] Bhatt, *Sri Vallabhacharya and His Doctrines*, p. 9-19.

as Srinathji whose shrine is situated in Mewar. While he sees it as *Purna Purushottama* the highest form of the lord, he also accepts for other forms of God but inferior to *Purna Purushottama* and these are Sankarasana, Vasudeva, Aniruddha and Pradyumna.[414] As his ideology was attracted many to follow him, it gradually developed to a cult. After his death, his cult spread all over India especially in western India through his seven sons.[415] In short, Vallabhacharya and his followers were among key faces of the Bhakti movement in sixteenth century.

1.2.3.7 Chaitanya

With original name of Gauranga Mahaprabhu (d.1534), Sri Chaitanya has fueled for a mass movement in eastern India especially in Bengal, Orissa and Assam, which later known as Chaitanya movement.[416] Chaitanya was born in the year of 1486 in Mayapore a well-known Brahminic center in Bengal. His parents are Jagnnath Mishra (15th century) and Sachi (15th century) who were well versed with Vedas and its traditions. Losing their eight children, they were very fond of their child whom they named as Nimai while he was fondly called as 'Gauranga' by colleagues and as 'Viswambhara' by the scholars of the region.[417] As his parents were pious Vaishnava devotees of Krishna, he grown up with Bhakti tradition itself. In his age of 16, he was turned as renowned scholar in Vedas with much knowledge in Sanskrit language. But in his age of 22, he became a devout bhakta under the guideship of Isvara Puri (15th century) after his trip to Gaya a well-known Buddhist center. After his transformation, he gave up all scholastic efforts and circle too to join Vaishnava devotees in the region. His fervent devotion to Krishna and his well-established fame made him the leader of Vaishnava community of the region. As he had

[414] Bhatt, *Sri Vallabhacharya and His Doctrines*, p. 21-22.

[415] Mulji, *History of the Sect of Maharajas, Or Vallabhacharyas, in Western India*, p. 43.

[416] B.H Bon, *Sree Chaitanya* (Bombay: The Popular Book Depot, 1940), p. IX.

[417] Bon, *Sree Chaitanya*, p. 7.

sweet voice, he mastered Kirtans (religious songs) and his sweet songs attracted many to him even Muslims as tradition claims.[418]

Chaitanya's Kirtan was developed further to *Nagarakirtan* (songs of towns) in which songs of devotion to Krishna are carried to the streets of town, thus the movement was turned to much popular movement and Navadvip where he stayed then turned to a Vaishnava center. Chaitanya sent two of his colleagues to neighboring towns to preach the cult initiated by Chaitanya. Even though Bhakti revivalism of Chaitanya had attracted large mass and became popular, the noble men of the region especially learned scholars and pandits were reluctant to his movement, moreover they were opposing him whenever they had a chance to intervene. When their opposition grew up, he decided to give up all his relation with movement in order to be a true Sannyasin (ascetic). Main reason of the decision was to win the hearts of Pandits too and for the reason, he set out as homeless wanderer. As a *Sannyasin*, he wandered all over India including south India, Banaras and Puri where he stayed till his death in 1534. During his pilgrimages and staying in Puri, many pandits were embraced Chaitanya movement witnessing Bhakti of Chaitanya and realizing its superiority towards salvation.[419]

Chaitanya put forward the idea of '*Dvaitadvaitavad*' (non-dualism within dualism) in which devotional aspect is stressed. He continues that human soul forgets his own existence when he reaches the perfection in faith and devotion. It may be perceived as refined form of dualism in the highest stage of devotion.[420] Ascetic lines and control of passions are main component of devotion preached by Chaitanya. While he proposed his followers to keep abstinence, he also discouraged too much study. He attracted people through highlighting the emotional side of religion as he used to forget himself in the stages of Kirtan passing through trance. According to Chaitanya's devotional principles,

---

[418] Kennedy Melville T, *The Chaithanya Movement; a Study of The Vaishnavism of Bengal* (Culcutta: Association Press, 1925), p. 14-24.

[419] Melville T, *The Chaithanya Movement; a Study of The Vaishnavism of Bengal*, p. 24-51.

[420] Dinesh Chandra Sen, *Chaitanya and His Age* (Culcutta: University of Culcutta, 1922), p. 322.

five *rasa*s namely *Shanta*, *Dasya*, *Sakhya* and *Vatsalya* and *Madurya* are expressed in hierarchical stages. In the first stage of *Shanta rasa* (sentiment of quietness) devotee should give up all his desires, while in the second stage of *Dasya* (service), he must create a relation with God as the relation of a servant towards his master. In the next stage, he must develop his relation to God in *Sakhya* (friendship) mood in which the distance with God is minimized. Then he moves to the stage of *Vatsalya* (affection) in which devotee perceives God as his child. Here his approach towards God filled with fondness and affection. In the last stage, sentiment of devotee towards God is *Madurya* (love). Here his love of God is as love of a man for women and his emotions are expressed at its fullest.[421]

Like most of Bhakti saints, Chaitanya had also fought against caste system and he had conducted serious efforts to root out it from Hindu society, so he used to advice his missionaries whom he sent to different regions, to make effort to eradicate it. His public proclamation neglecting the caste and standing with untouchables were main factors of attraction to his cult and of hate from upper castes too.[422] Contrary to many Bhakti Saints, he didn't oppose rituals completely but rejected ritualism in which salvation is only obtained through rituals only. He continues that devotion is important whether he performed rituals or not and understood himself as one who don't need rituals since he approached the God through devotion only.[423] As he was against the salvation through knowledge, notable works on religious philosophy are not found other than compilation of his followers about his lifestyle and religious views. His cult grew region to region through his various colleagues whom he sent to different parts, so in the cult of Chaitanya persons and personal experiences are important that texts. Among his disciples.[424] In nutshell, Chaitanya and his cult advocated Bhakti as the path of salvation

---

[421] Chandra Sen, *Chaitanya and His Age*, p. 327-330.

[422] Chandra Sen, *Chaitanya and His Age*, p. 281-283.

[423] Chandra Sen, *Chaitanya and His Age*, p. 289.

[424] Chandra Sen, *Chaitanya and His Age*, p. XVI-XIX.

winning the large mass in eastern India. Contrary to other Bhakti cults, empirical Bhakti is emphasized in which Bhakti poems or texts have no space.

1.2.3.8 Mira Bai

Mira Bai is among key figures of Bhakti tradition since she was one of women presence in the tradition and her poems in three different languages namely Rajasthani, Gujarati and Hindi attracted many to the tradition. As she lived in Rajasthan in first half of her life and later moved to Vrindavan in the east and Dwaraka in the west, her name was quiet famous within contemporary Bhakti circles.[425] Mira Bai's Bhakti was immersed in *Prema Lakshna* (romantic approach) and *Madura bhava* (sweet mood).[426]

Among different documents stating birth duration of Mira's life, scholars came to a consensus that she was born in 1498. Mira bai felt herself as devoted and wedded to Krishna idol that was gifted by a *Sadhu*.[427] She had earned a love with Sri Krishna in her early childhood itself since her mother replied Giridhara Gopala pointing to Krishna idol for her childish question to identify her bridegroom.[428] Getting fed up with the situation in the palace and with atrocities from younger brothers of her deceased husband who hated her ascetic life as queen, she left to Vrindavan the holy pilgrimage center of Krishna devotees of the time. After staying there for a period of time with devotion and seeking blessings from Krishna, she moved to Dwaraka where Sri Krishna had chosen as his capital and it is said she had died there in her old ages. Some hagiographic accounts describe that she had returned to Mewad the birth place and died there.[429]

---

[425] Anantrai Raval, "Mira," in *Devotional Poets and Mystics* (New Delhi: Publication Division; Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1991), II, p. 17-20.

[426] S.S Mehta, *A Monograph on Mirabai the Saint of Mewad* (Bombay, n.d.), p. 15.

[427] Raval, "Mira.", p. 17-18.

[428] Bankey Behari, *The Story of Mira Bai* (Gorakhpur: Gita Press, 2009) , p. 5.

[429] Raval, "Mira." p. 17-20.

Mira Bai was a Vaishnava devotee with Krishna as personal God naming him as Giridhar whom she regards as play mate in first stage known as *Vilasa* and continues devotion in different stages till she identifies herself as Radha the lover of Krishna in Vaishnava mythology.[430] Mira Bai's intense devotion in the form of love to Krishna was highlighted in her poems which attracted many. In her early days she spent in Rajasthan, she had expressed her solitude and desperation of separation from him and her prayers to join with him too. But in later days after her time spending in Vrindavan, she expresses her bliss and joy to join with him, therefore she understands that her prayers were granted.[431]

1.2.3.9 Surdas

Even though he was blind by birth, Surdas's devotional poems had crossed the boundaries influencing the bhaktas all over the region. His fame as a great singer of his devotional poems attracted many towards him especially Vallabhacharya, a renowned bhakta of the time, who listened him and requested to sing for Bhagavat *lila* (lord's creative play). He left behind 3 massive poetic compositions namely *Sur-Saravali*, *Sahitya-Lahari* and *Sur-sagar*.[432] He had also translated Bhagavat Purana to Brajbhasha[433] a vernacular language and two works namely *Naladamayanti* and *Byahlo* are also ascribed to him.[434] In the tradition, Surdas along with Tulsidas are considered as translators; Tulsidas translating Sanskrit texts into Avadhi while Surdas to Brajbhasa.[435]

---

[430] Ananth Nath Basu, *Mirabai Saint And Singer of India* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1934), p. 8.

[431]Raval, "Mira." p. 20-23.

[432] J.R Verma, "Surdas," in *Devotional Poets and Mystics* (New Delhi: Publication Division; Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1991), II, p. 3.

[433]John Stratton Hawley, *Three Bhakti Voices; Mirabai, Surdas and Kabir in Thier Time and Ours* (Oxford; New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 194.

[434] Lala Sita Ram, *Selections from Hindi Literature Book II; Krishna Cult of Vraja* (Allahabad: University of Culcutta, 1921) , p. 9.

[435] Hawley, *Three Bhakti Voices; Mirabai, Surdas and Kabir in Thier Time and Ours*, p. 194.

Evaluating different accounts on his mysterious life, it may safe to conclude that he had born in 1483 in Siri Village in Delhi. As a blind, he wandered seeking truth and illumination till he reached Vishram Ghat in Mathura in his age of 18. After Shifting from there to Gau Ghat on the banks of Yamuna, he permanently settled in Vraj the famous place which is believed as playground of child Krishna. He stayed there singing devotional pomes that was spontaneously composed by him dedicating to Krishna, till he dies there in 1584.[436] Some historians report that Akbar (1605) had summoned him to his court after hearing his poems and requested to sing for him too but Surdas had rejected it.[437] His famous work *Sur Saravali* which is said to be consisted of one lakh verses, was composed based on analogy of Holi festival. In the work, he speaks about Krishna's creative play (*Bhagavat lila*) and his ecstasy connecting him with different incarnations of God. *Sahitya-Lahari,* which consisted of 118 verses, is full of emotional contents expressed in good merits of literature with Bhakti as main core of discussion. *Sur-Sagar,* his masterpiece work, is an epitome of his life in Vraj and depicts the life of Krishna along with explaining the methods of devotion to him with spirituality. He portrayed Krishna in *Sur-Sagar* as sport loving friend saving his devotees from demons. His depiction of Radha the love of Krishna is also noteworthy as he expressed her deep affection and devotion even in the time of separation, in marvelous poetic form that attracted thousands toward his poetry imbued with Bhakti.[438]

1.2.3.10 Tulsidas

Since he authored *Ramcharitha manas* as a great devotee of God Rama, his fame in Bhakti tradition is unique. He had translated Ramayana the Sanskrit text to local vernacular language of Awadhi, so he was hailed as reincarnation of Valmiki by many traditionalists. Within two centuries after the death of Tulsidas, his text '*Ramcharitha*

[436] Verma, "Surdas." p. 2-3.

[437] Hawley, *Three Bhakti Voices; Mirabai, Surdas and Kabir in Thier Time and Ours*, p. 183.

[438] Verma, "Surdas." p. 3-7.

manas' may had turned as holy scripture of *Sanatin*s, in which devotional egalitarianism was preached while maintaining the core of *Sanatana Dharma.*[439]

Based on researches and comparing different accounts, it may be concluded that he was born to Brahmin couples in 1532 in Tari on the banks of Yamuna. Orphaned in early ages, he was brought up through public charity and had married Ratnawali but their son was also died in his infancy. Although he was settled in Banaras where he died in 1623, he had made some journeys to Lucknow, Chitrakut and Ayodhya where he finished his magnum opus; *Ramacharita manas.* Beside *Ramcharitha manas* which is also known as *Tulsikrit* Ramayana, there are many works attributed to him but very few of them are historically valid. Contrary to what is popularly believed, *Ramcharita manas* is not exact translation of Ramayana of Valmiki, but an independent work based on Ramayana of Valmiki but also from other sources like *Adhyatma Ramayana*, *Prasanna Raghava, Bushundi Ramayana* and *Vasishta Samhita*.[440] Banaras rulers of the time promoted the work in many methods supporting scholarships on the work and popularizing it. The period from 1835 to 1839 is termed as golden age of *Ramcharitha manas*.[441]

Kavittawali text that glorifies again Rama and his powers to encourage devotees, is another major work of Tulsidas. The language of the text is Awadhi but mixed with Brajabhasha also. He had penned down lovely songs of God in Brajabhasha in another book named as *Gitavali*. Another work in which author requests God's protection by expressing devotee's intimate feelings and reverence, is named as *Vinaya-pattrika* which means 'petition'. *Ramalalanahachu*, composed by Tulsidas, is short poem that deals with nail pairing ceremony of Rama. *Vairagya Sandipini*, *Janki Mangal*, *Parvati Mangal*,

---

[439] Philp Lutgendorf, *According to Tradition; Hagiographical Writing in India*, ed. M. Callewart - Rupert Snell (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1994), p. 79

[440] Lala Sita Ram, *Selections from Hindi Literature Book III Tulsidas* (Allahabad: University of Culcutta, 1921), p. II-XII.

[441] Lutgendorf, *According to Tradition; Hagiographical Writing in India*, p. 76.

Ramajna, *Krishna Gitawali* and *Dohawalli* are some other historically proven works of Tulsidas.[442]

1.2.3.11 Tukaram

Born in low caste and illiterate, Tukaram (d.1650) had attracted mass especially in Maratha region through his marvelous devotional poems. In his poems with more than thousand lines, Bhakti was highlighted.[443] Even though historians suggest his birth date in different years like 1568, 1577, 1608 and 1598, they had agreed 1650 as his death year. Born in Puna in a poor family of Bolhoba and Janaki, his early life was miserable. He had lost his parents, first wife and son before his age of 21 but in 1619, as tradition describes, he was illuminated by Babaji Chaitanya.[444] Then he memorized the poems of Bhakti saints including Kabir.[445] After illumination, he gave up his trade and started to sing Kirtans in different temples in Puna and nearby regions. His devotional lines were dedicated to his personal God; Vithoba of Pandharpur. His simple and sincere lines of devotion spread throughout Maratha region inspiring all sects and classes of the society. He inspired many poets and disciples from different corner of the society, so he is considered as an all-time key figure of Bhakti in Maratha region. The great contribution of Tukaram is his Gatha the collection of poems.[446]

Concentration of mind and heart on God, personal self-examination and self-surrender were three main highlighted points of Tukaram's Bhakti. One different aspect of Tukarm is his emphasis on practicing meditation together with other saints, moreover, he had tried to place the obedience to saints as obedience to God itself.[447] He used to

---

[442] Sita Ram, *Selections from Hindi Literature Book III Tulsidas*, p. VIII-XIX.

[443] Prabhakar Machwe, "Tukaram," in *Devotional Poets and Mystics Part II* (New Delhi: Publication Division; Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1921), II, p. 82.

[444] Machwe. p. 83.

[445] Nelson Fraser - J.F Edwards, *The Life and Teaching of Tukaram* (London: Probsthain, 1922) , p. 86

[446] Machwe, "Tukaram." p. 83-84.

[447] Fraser - Edwards, *The Life and Teaching of Tukaram*, p. 227.

criticize the paradoxical nature of some religious orators who don't lead a pious life and professional Kirtan singers.[448] He rejected *Advaita Vedanta* as he thought that *Advaita* is a form of pantheism in which human souls are also attributed with powers of God like creation,[449] but he believes that God is really present in the idols that worshipped. In spite of these, he says that images or idols of God are not necessary and the true image of God is his faithful people and hates mere idolatry with rituals and without spirituality. So, he had rejected rituals that offer a medium between human and God since he believed he can attain it through Bhakti. Surprisingly, his stand against caste system was mild and hadn't made any effective steps to oppose it, moreover he used to show much respect to brahmins. [450]

Tukaram proposes a path for salvation starting from repentance which will create goodwill towards all creatures, with firm belief in God that he will save him. For him, faith in God is all that enables him to reach God, enlightens from ignorance, makes him sufficed and that controls God himself. The basis for this faith is *Dan* (Charity), *Daman* (self-restraint) and *Dharma* (self-reverence). Desires for worldly life as well as learning and philosophical discussions are the hindrances to the salvation, but he was against complete renunciation in which duties are neglected, moreover he states that one can enjoy the pleasures that comes from duties. Relegating the *Jnana Marga*, he states that great recognition of religion is to hear God from heart. Starting from treating God as his master, he develops as our friend then he starts to serve the servant till their companionship turns to unity in which devotee feels God only in all of his actions. [451]

To be precise, Tukaram had been considered as key figure in the history of Bhakti in Maratha region as he had influenced large mass through his devotional poems.

---

[448] Fraser - Edwards, *The Life and Teaching of Tukaram*, p. 144.

[449] Fraser - Edwards, *The Life and Teaching of Tukaram*, p. 103.

[450] Fraser - Edwards, *The Life and Teaching of Tukaram*, p. 151-160.

[451] Fraser - Edwards, *The Life and Teaching of Tukaram*, p. 196-228.

Even though he was illiterate, his fame and considering him as a respected saint shows that how Bhakti had deeply influenced idea of religiosity itself.

1.3. Major Impacts of Bhakti

Bhakti period may roughly end in 18th century with advent of British to Indian subcontinent as socio, cultural areas were deeply affected by British method of rule. Before advent of them, Indian society were harmonious in nature, occasionally leading to syncretic religion like Sikhism. Bhakti and Sufi traditions were well established in the society and were mixed together especially with Kabir's contributions. To keep their foothold in India and establish their smooth administration, British evaluated these cooperation and unity of both Muslims and Hindu a possible threat to them, so they implemented divide and rule policy in India. Thus, they resorted to dividing method and they were successful. It may be notable that even the term Hinduism was firstly used to denote Sanadhana dharma in this epoch only. Even though development of Bhakti was stopped in 18th century, its influence in Hinduism was much visible and explicit since it transformed the religion from ritualistic one to a devotional one. It may be stated without any hesitation that Bhakti had great role in eradicating Buddhism and Jainism from Indian subcontinent. But Bhakti had engaged much with Islam influencing each other and leading to the formation of a new syncretic religion; Sikhism. Another major impact of Bhakti in Indian religious scenario is emergence of Lingayat as a new religion opposing its classification as a sect within Hinduism. The highlighting aspect of these new religions is evolvement from Bhakti saints namely Basavanna in the case of Lingayats and Guru Nanak in the case of Sikhism.

1.3.1. Lingayat; a new religion within religion

*Lingayat*s are ardent Siva devotees following the teachings of its founding father Basavanna a Bhakti saint lived in twelfth century. The term '*Lingayat*' means that one

who wears Linga the sacred symbol of Shaivism,[452] therefore each and every Lingayat usually wear Linga in their necks. Since Basava and his colleagues were stubborn opponents of brahmins and their ritualistic religion with social injustice, they tended to proclaim their community as distinct and separate religion from Hinduism itself. But, in general perspective, no one can identify them as a separate religion as they are ardent devotees of Siva the God in Hinduism, yet they are also known as 'Veerashaivas' for their intense devotion to Siva. Contrary to Hindu beliefs, they discouraged idol worship and pantheism promoting *Nirguna* Bhakti and monotheism. Considering all these aspects, it is better to identify Lingayts as a religion within religion. Nowadays, their strong opposition against Hindutva political parties had brought enough attention to their identity as a separate and distinct religion from Hinduism.

Even though Lingayat sect was historically regarded as followers of Basavanna, tradition argues that the religion was founded by five prophets namely Ekoramaradhya, Panditaradhya, Revanaradhya, Marularadhya and Vishwaradhya.[453] When we trace history we find that Basava had established *Sivanubhava Mantapa* where Siva devotees from different parts of the region irrespective caste, profession or gender gathered there, thus it gradually evolved to sect which later proclaimed as a distinct religion itself. Along with Basava the founder, Allama Prabhu (12th century) is also notable figure in the community and he was presided *Sivanubhava Mantapa* for a long time. They had advocated for Siva monotheism based on rationalism and empiricism which is Bhakti the salvation with experience (*anubhava*).[454] Along with their opposition to brahmins and inclusion of oppressed in their religious fold based on Bhakti, they also regarded women saints too to their community and it is reported there were about 60 women saints in 300 hundred saints in its early stage, out of whom Akka Mahadevi was most famous. Sayings of these saints after deep meditation expressing their experience of Bhakti and salvation

---

[452] M.R Sakhare, *History and Philosophy of Lingayat Religion* (Belgaum: Mahavir, 1942), p. 6.

[453] Sakhare, *History and Philosophy of Lingayat Religion*, p. 361.

[454] Hunashal, *The Lingayat Movement; a Social Revolution in Karnataka*, p. 73-76.

have great importance in the tradition since they are collected in '*Vachanashastra*' and regarded as sacred scripture of community.[455]

Even though Bhagavad-Gita is considered as basis of Bhakti in Hinduism, Basava rejects Bhagavad-Gita as it is an orthodox Brahminic script which accepts Varnashrama dharma.[456] From monotheism to Bhakti as the basis of salvation, Lingayat philosophy is analogous with Islamic principles in many aspects.[457] Like almost religions originated in Indian sub-continent had put forward their own theory of salvation, identified as moksha in Hinduism or nirvana in Buddhism, Lingayats also explained their perspective on salvation but these theories almost parallel flexing it to lines of their religious philosophy. For Lingayats, the self-realization and salvation are attained through *Sathsthala*s or six stages starting from *Bhaktasthala* (stage of devotion) and ending in *Aikyasthala* (stage of union). These six stages are;

I. *Bhaktasthala*: the stage is marked by intense devotion but he always follows his profession sincerely and offers his earnings to *Guru-Linga-Jangama* (master, self and fellow creatures). Keeping this function properly in this stage, he can develop his mind, virtues like affection and tolerance, and enrich himself with experience (*anubhava*). Here he should not discriminate people on the basis of caste, profession and color and must attend inter-caste marriage and dinner.

II. *Maheshasthala*: The stage advocates devotee to firm his devotion on *Guru-Linga-Jangama* in which he serves the society through writing, teaching and preaching. He shouldn't slaughter the goat for sacrifice, he shouldn't go on pilgrimages, he shouldn't touch other's property and look lustfully at women.

---

[455] Kumaraswamiji, Kumaraswamiji, *The Veerashaiva Philosophy and Mysticism* (Dharwar: V.R. Koppal, 1949), p. 1-2.

[456] Hunashal, *The Lingayat Movement; a Social Revolution in Karnataka*, p. 174.

[457] Hunashal, *The Lingayat Movement; a Social Revolution in Karnataka*, p. 192.

III. *Prasadisthala*: *Prasada* is leftover of his presentation to *Guru-Linga-Jangama* and he will eat it to attain the purity of mind.

IV. *Pranalingasthala*: If he was indulged in external affairs during previous stages, here in this stage his mind must be devoted in internal affairs. Here he attains *Pranalinga* through inner vision and it, when he concentrates on *Pranalinga*, leads to peace, non-violence and truth. He will also realize the Godhood in the lives of all creatures.

V. *Sharanasthala*: In the stage, *Sharana* (devotee) considers himself as wife to Linga, thus he is very near to God and attains the bliss in the devotion to Linga. Here he is unaware of his material existence.

VI. *Aikyasthala*: It is the stage where he unites and merges with God Siva himself. His individual soul (Linga) is merges with universal soul (Jungam) which is identical with Siva. Here he feels the omnipresence of God and blissful silence free from all disturbances.[458]

Keeping their dynamic presence in social, cultural and economic spheres in Karnataka, Lingayats continue to influence the people in Karnataka and they constitute 22 percent of Karnataka's population.[459] From its origin in 12th century, Lingayats had engaged with different political powers and Hindu religious bodies in the region showing vivid attitudes in the long stretch of history, often leading to formation of divisions within the community like a group who called themselves as *Veerashaiva*s and assimilated to Hindu religion accepting Brahminic hegemony. Because of their antagonism towards Brahmanism, Lingayats had kept their fight against brahmins of the region in educational, political, religious and cultural scenarios throughout their history. In 1988, Lingayats turned to organized body by arranging a large general meeting of followers called as *Sharanasammelana* and fixed six points of religion: the Guru is Basava, collection of *Vachana* is sacred literature, *Istalinga* is symbol of the religion, Kudalasangama is sacred

---

[458] Hunashal, *The Lingayat Movement; a Social Revolution in Karnataka*, p. 82-85.

[459] Di Tiziana Ripepi, *The Feet of Jangam; Identity and Ritual Issues Among the Virasaivas of Karnataka* (N.6-Luglio: Kervan-Rivista Internationle di Studi Afroasiatici, 2007), p. 69.

place to where pilgrimages are offered, Basava flag with six pointed triangle is religious flag and aim of the religion is edification of kingdom of Kalyana which is religious state free from class and caste.[460] Right from the date, Lingayats continue their efforts in much organized way to establish their identity as an indigenous religion based on Basava's and colleagues' teachings which are imbued with Bhakti tradition.

1.3.2. Sikhism

Sikhism is another major output of Bhakti tradition since the religion also evolved around the teachings of another Bhakti saints; Guru Nanak. As Sikhism is a religion based on Guru Nanak's teachings who was influenced by Kabir, the religion is syncretic which contains elements from both Islam and Hinduism. The term '*Sikh*' means 'learner' and implies to the significance of learning from the teacher and ten Gurus (religious teacher) in the tradition.[461] Guru Nanak had established a tradition which known as *Sikh Dharma* or *Gurumat* (path of Gurus) named after its spiritual teachers. In the tradition, there are ten most important Gurus starting from Guru Nanak and ending with Guru Gobind Singh who organized the religion in a systematic way. Other Gurus are Angad (d.1552), Amardas (d.1574), Ramdas (d.1581), Arjundev (d.1606), Hargobind (d.1644), Hari Rai (d.1661), Harikrishnan (d.1664) and Teg Bahadur (d.1675).[462] All sayings of Guru Nanak were collected by fifth *Guru* Arjundev in the collection known as *Shri Guru Granth Sahib* which turned as sacred text of Sikhs. The collection includes poems of other prominent Bhakti saints too like Kabir and Ravidas. In addition, the collection also includes sayings (*bani*s) of first five *Guru*s. Later, tenth and last *Guru* Gobid singh (d.1708) added sayings of his previous *Guru* Teg Bahadur to the collection.

---

[460] Ripepi, *The Feet of Jangam; Identity and Ritual Issues Among the Virasaivas of Karnataka*, p. 89.

[461] Eleanor Nesbitt, *A Guide to Sikhism* (Oxford: University of Leeds, 2007), p. 2.

[462] Maharishi Santsevi Ji Maharaj, *Harmony of all Religions*, trans. Veena Rani Howard (New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidas Publishers, 2006), p. 265.

Hymns of *Granth Sahib* which is in Gurmukhi language, are chanted daily in Gurdwaras the place for worship of Sikhs, especially in Golden temple of Amritsar.[463]

Guru Nanak had propagated monotheism in which God is omniscient, timeless and truth and had rejected polytheism since he was advocating for *Nirguna* Bhakti. He urged his followers to keep brotherhood with all human beings following true path, to serve the country and to be vigilant against enemies, and to chant name to true God by meditation.[464] Even though Guru Nanak had two sons, he didn't regard them as successors, instead he appointed his capable disciple Lehna, whom he named as Angad, as successor. When Guru Nanak came to know the enmity of his sons towards Angad, he prohibited them from the post of Guru whenever his disciples are alive, therefore Angad chose his disciple Amardas as next Guru. Ramdas had succeeded as Guru after Amardas and he was first one to appoint son as successor. But his son Arjundev, the fifth Guru, was great saint and had collected *Adi Granth* the popular name of Sikhs' sacred text. During his tenure as Guru, Sikhism flourished in the Punjab region and Amritsar turned as center of Sikhs[465] since he established a Gurudwara there and installed volume of scriptures there.[466] The next Gurus like Hargobind, Hari Rai, Harikrishnan and Teg Bahadur were members of same family either sons or first level kins.[467]

Guru Gobind Singh, the last guru, organized the community under the name of *Khalsa panth* (pure path) and insisted followers to keep five sacred symbols of Sikhs which are most visible identities of a Sikh nowadays. These five sacred symbols are; *Kesh* the uncut hair and unshaven beard resembling ancient sages, *Kangha* the comb to groom the hair and beard, *Kacha* a long underwear to represent energy, *Kara* a bracelet that

---

[463] Santsevi Ji Maharaj, *Harmony of All Religions*, p. 290.

[464] Santsevi Ji Maharaj, *Harmony of All Religions*, p. 291.

[465] W.L M'gregor, *The History of Sikhs* (London: James Madden, 1846), p. 48-60.

[466] Nesbitt, *A Guide to Sikhism*, p. 4.

[467] M'gregor, *The History of Sikhs*, p. 60-68.

symbolizes discipline and *Kripan* the sword for protection and self-defense.[468] Along with these symbols, he urged them to renounce four tenets; Brahminic authority, belief of transmigration of souls, distinction on the basis of castes and trades. To be ideal for the community, he took oath tying up his hair and changed his name to Singh, so he known afterwards as Govid Singh. The title of '*Guru'* was ceased with his death in 1708.[469] Those who strictly follow these symbols are known as *Khalsa* Sikhs and they start their religious initiation with sweet water (*Amrit*) like in baptism. According to Sikh tradition, everyone is given end name of 'Singh', therefore they are identified with their names itself. From their names to their dress including hair, Sikhs are vigilant in their identity and expressing themselves in public. Due to their rigorous attention to their identities they always tried to create their own nation, thus they had fought against Muslims, British and even modern Indian government. Sikhs had established their own sovereign kingdom which continued for 40 years from 1799 to 1839 under Maharaja Ranjit Singh (d.1839), the period often termed as golden ages of Sikhs. Yet, they were successful to keep their religious identity as it is and continue their presence in India especially in Punjab region and in foreign countries too through their migrants.[470]

As Sikhism is centered around religious philosophy of Guru Nanak, it's not a surprise that crux of Sikh theology is Bhakti. According to Guru Nanak, highest aim of a human being is God-realization which is achieved through experience only, so he rejected rituals. He continues that one couldn't achieve salvation with his efforts only but with the grace of God too, yet his self-discipline with self-surrender to God and meditations he can pave way for the grace. He was against customary rituals as well as self-torturing asceticism, instead he advocated to lead normal life keeping his mind meditated in God without indulging in material gains. While his monotheistic ideas are clear example of Islam's influence, his belief in Karma is indebted to Hinduism. When it comes to Bhakti, he also advocated for *Anuraga* Bhakti in which devotee is dedicated to God as a lover.

---

[468] Santsevi Ji Maharaj, *Harmony of All Religions*, p. 291-292.

[469] M'gregor, *The History of Sikhs*, p. 75-104.

[470] Nesbitt, *A Guide to Sikhism*, p. 4-7.

His emotional dedication has close resemblance with Bhakti of Alvar poets. Another main aspect of his Bhakti is his strong stand on *Nirguna Bhakti* in which one should devote to attribute-less, unborn and un-incarnated God.[471] In short, it is understood that Sikhism as is a syncretic religion influenced from both Hinduism and Islam with Bhakti acting as catalyst.

With advent of British, diminishing of Bhakti tradition is witnessed because focus of Indian society gradually turned against British and their despotic rule exploiting Indian people. Indian society engaged in agitations, rebellions and political movements; therefore, development of religious traditions and philosophies came into halt. From its origin in about 7th century through Alvars and Nayanmars the saint poets lived in south India, Bhakti developed through Lingayats in Karnataka in twelfth century and other devotional saints in different parts of the country, thus it reached to its zenith in Northern India through Kabir, Tulsidas and other many saints. Bhakti's engagements with Muslims especially in northern India paved way for many syncretic religious traditions and philosophies like Sikhism which later developed to Indigenous religion. Lingayats, though they were ardent devotees of Siva, one of three major Gods in Hinduism, claims as an independent religion as Sikhism. To a religion centered around philosophical discussions about the nature and attributes of God and human beings that paved way for 6 accepted school with supremacy of Advaita Vedanta school due to the efforts of Shankara, Bhakti enhanced mass appeal but with radical changes in the religion itself. Right from Bhakti's origin, philosophical discussions in Hinduism gave way to devotional themes, thus it dominated Hindu religious course. With great impacts from one millennia-long history of Bhakti, two new religions were emerged; Sikhism and Lingayats.

Within religious scholars of Hinduism, different perspectives on Bhakti's relation with Hinduism are put forward with accommodating to Brahminic religious fold of Hinduism and presenting as a radical religious movement. Historically speaking,

---

[471] Gopal Singh, *History of the Sikh People* (New Delhi: World Book Center, 1939), p. 135-140.

Bhakti movement emerged in much visible way only through devotional poems of Alvars and Nayanmars as we understood here. Yet we can also witness some reference about Bhakti in Vedic scriptures of Hinduism but very minimal compared to its mammoth collection of religious texts. As we discussed here historical origin and development of Bhakti, let us discuss, in next chapter, its emergence in Hindu theology from sacred scriptures to other major texts and poems that focus only on Bhakti.

CHAPTER TWO

BHAKTI IN HINDU SCRIPTURES

In the last chapter, we had discussed extensively about historical emergence of Bhakti movement and briefly about its historical development. We depicted pre-Bhakti Hindu society as well as major impacts of Bhakti in the community paving way to two new religions. In order to decode our research's problem, the emergence of Bhakti movement, we must also understand the origin or emergence of Bhakti in sacred texts of Hinduism inspecting its mammoth collection of sacred scriptures and other works that project Bhakti.

Even though sacred texts of Hinduism are constituted of vast literature, Bhakti was mentioned hardly mentioned. Even though Bhakti was seldom mentioned In Veda texts the basic sacred texts of Hinduism, some theologians had shown predetermined attempts to refer Bhakti from these texts. S. Radhakrishnan (d.1975), most famous modern Hindu theologian, had tried to trace back Bhakti-emphasized theism of Vaishnavas and Bhagavatas to worship of Vedic God Varuna because of his consciousness on sin and trust in forgiveness of Gods, so he lists some hymns from Vedas that talk on sin and repentance[472] but there is no mention of Bhakti in those hymns. Hiriyanna (d.1950), a modern Hindu theologian, also feels that there is Bhakti in God Varuna's inspiration of worship.[473] Besides, Radhakrishnan identifies Vedic God Indra with Vasudeva of Bhagavatas and Vishnu of Vaishnavas, still there is no mention of Bhakti regarding Indra also.[474] He also tries to link Bhakti and its origin to doctrine of Upasana (worshipping God by sitting) found in Brahmanas, Aranyakas and Upanishads.[475] Even there is a kind of contemplation in Upasana, but there is no

---

[472] S. Radakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, (New York: Macmillan Company, 1929), p. 77-78.

[473] Hiriyanna M.A, *Outlines of Indian Philosophy* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1932), p. 112.

[474] S. Radakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy,* p. 87.

[475] S. Radakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy,* p. 559, 525.

emotional approach or scope of love like in Bhakti. The attempt also may be percieved as deliberate strive to bring back Bhakti to Vedic texts. Hiriyanna sees some sort of Bhakti in emotional expression of 'father' in "*Be to us easy of approach, even as a father to his son: Agni, be with us for our weal* (RgV. 1/1)"[476] the very first hymn of Rigveda.[477] These kind of scholars notice the emotional part, which is very rare in vast hymns of Vedas, in those Bhakti-linking verses.

In Upanishads, Shvetasvatara Upanishad is the text to mention it.[478] It talks about necessity of devotion not only to God but also to one's Guru and says in the last hymn of the text:

"These truths, when taught, shine forth only in that high-souled one who has supreme devotion to God, and an equal degree of devotion to the spiritual teacher. They shine forth in that high-souled one only (ShVt. 6/23).[479]

Even though 'Bhakti' term is found in the hymn, most of commentators understands it only as a synonym of 'belief' without any appeal of love or devotion. Hiriyanna sees devotion in Katha Upanishad as it reminds worshipper about need of divine help to be saved, a doctrine found in Bhakti.[480] In short, we hardly find Bhakti in Vedas other than deliberate attempts made by some theologians. Likewise, there is only one mention of Bhakti in Upanishads but not in full scope of 'Bhakti' that we discuss here. But Bhagavad-Gita is the text that referred Bhakti very often and projected Bhakti as a new way of salvation.

---

[476] Ralph T.H Griffith, trans., *Rig Veda* (Benares: E.J Lazarus and Co., 1889), p. 2.

[477] Hiriyanna M.A, *Outlines of Indian Philosophy* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1932), p. 112.

[478] Cemil Kutluturk, *Hint Düşüncesinde İslam Algısı* (Istanbul: Dergah Yayınları, 2019), p. 129, Sharma, *A Sourcebook of Classical Hindu Thought*, p. 142.

[479] Swami Tyagisananda, trans., *Svetasvataropanishad* (Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1949), p. 133.

[480] Hiriyanna M.A, *Outlines of Indian Philosophy,* p. 112.

2.1. Bhagavad-Gita

To apprehend the Bhakti's position in Hinduism according to scriptures, we must first understand the position of Bhagavad-Gita in Hindu doctrines as the text is first source where Bhakti was comprehensively explained. Bhakti was not found very much in ancient doctrines of Hinduism, though it was put forward in later texts and gained great momentum throughout the common Hindus, and this makes research on Bhakti even worthier. Sacred texts of Hinduism are large collection of Vedas, *Brahmana*s, *Aranyka*s and Upanishads that fall under the category of *Shruti* which means 'revealed.'[481] When it comes to second category *Smriti* that are believed to be written by humans unlike *Shruti*, it includes epics, legendries, stories and law books like Mahabharata and Ramayana, *Purana*s, *Dharmashastra*s and *Manusmriti* respectively. Even though *Smriti*s are subsidiary to *Shruti*s in terms of doctrinal authority in Hinduism, *Smriti*s are more popular and widely used than *Shruti*s because of easily memorable fluent expressions and, more importantly, accessible by any sect of the Hindus unlike Vedas that are restricted to only some casts. Ramayana and Mahabharata epics are some of the popular texts among Hindus, which are thought to be written in first or second century after verbally transferred in previous times.[482]

Mahabharata that presents enormous details stretching from beliefs to worship, myths to philosophy of Hinduism, is seven time larger than Iliad and Odyssey of Homers. It had enhanced to assimilate the metaphysical ideology and philosophy to public, portraying it as a legendary especially the Bhagavad-Gita part had presented extensive features of soul and its methods of salvation through *Karma*, *Jnana* and Bhakti yoga, thus it had secured strong base among normal Hindus and it's like most referred and depended sacred text of Hinduism because of its popularity.[483] Bhagavad-Gita constitutes of 18 chapters from 25 to 42 of *Bhishmaparvan*, the sixth part of Mahabharata and consists 7

---

[481] Yıtık, *Doğu Dinleri (Eastern Religions)*, p. 49.

[482] Yıtık, *Doğu Dinleri (Eastern Religions)*, p. 63.

[483] Yıtık, *Doğu Dinleri (Eastern Religions)*, p. 64.

hundred verses[484] and later it was turned to an independent text. Arguments on the author/s of Bhagavad-Gita is varied, from those who argue that it was penned down by different authors or one author named Vyasa, but the view that at least the core of text was written by a single author namely Vyasa[485] a Hindu scholar, had widely accepted.[486] There are different opinions on the period of Bhagavat-Gita's compilation while some argue the text is pre-Buddhist while others like K.M. Sen (d.1960) defend that it is much later and it was compiled between 400 and 200 BCE.[487] Another famous Indologist Axel Michaels place it as a text that completed in the second century CE.[488] In short, even though traditionalists argue its primitivity as long as 8th century BCE, historians place it a later period between 4th century BCE at earliest and second century at latest.

Bhagavad-Gita is poetic expressions of dialogue between the epic hero Arjuna and his charioteer, the God Krishna, which takes place before the disastrous 18-day battle narrated in Mahabharata epic to be begun. The dialogue between these two heroes Arjuna and Krishna, is embedded in a framed dialogue, in which the patriarch of the two opposed branches of *Bharata* clan fight each other. The blind king Dhrtarastra and his bard Samajya, are the interlocutors.[489] The main theme of Mahabharata revolves around the throne battle between Kauravas and Pandavas, while lots of Hindu philosophical details, moral teachings and myths that related to theme directly or indirectly had recorded in the

---

[484] Korhan Kaya, trans., *Bhagavatgita; Hinduların kutsal kitabı* (Ankara: Dost Kitabevi yayınları, 2001), p. 10.

[485] According to Hindu philosophy, Vyasa is a generic term given to human forms who were selected by God to compose scriptures. For more details, refer R. Rangachari, "Veda Vyasa," in Valmiki and Vyasa (New Delhi: Publication Division; Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 2012), p. 33.

[486] Ömer Cemal Güngören, trans., *Bhagavatgita; Tanrının Şarkısı* (Istanbul: Yol yayınları, 2001), p. 12.

[487] K.M. Sen, *Hinduism* (New York: Penguin Books, 1976), p. 146.

[488] Axel Michaels, *Hinduism Past and Present* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2004), p. 59.

[489] Angelika Malinar, "Bhagavatgita," *Brill's Encylopedia of Hinduism*, ed. Knut. A Jacobson, (Leiden, BRILL, 2010), p. 95.

text.[490] Arjuna, one of five Pandava brothers who represent the right and Dharma (righteousness) as per Hindu philosophy, refuses to fight against Kauravas who are relatives of Pandava, pointing that no sense to secure the throne by shedding the blood of his kin and thinks to live a mendicant's life. As Bhagavad-Gita literally means 'song of the venerated one', the term *'gita'* gained significance as a song or recitation instructed by a divine being, a God or Goddess, thus the Bhagavad-Gita prototyped so called *Gita* literature.[491]

The Bhagavad-Gita begins with the deployment of two families Pandavas and Kauravas but from same clan in the battlefield of Kurukshetra, often termed as Dharmakshetra (field of Dharma) in Hindu philosophy and it continues as king Dhrtarashtra asks his bard what happened next. Then it focuses on Arjuna, one of Pandava brothers, and his conversation with his charioteer Krishna, the incarnation of God as believed by Hindus especially followers of Bhakti, since he was in dilemma to fight with his family as *Kuladharma* (law of family) and *Kshatriyadharma* (law of warrior) confronted. Chapter one ends by portraying Arjuna sitting on his chariot with the verse "*his heart immersed in grief*".[492]

Second chapter starts with Arjuna's request to Krishna to solve the dilemma and discussion on the reasons for this dilemma of Arjuna, and Krishna identifies desire and attachment as reasons. Second- and third-chapters' discussion revolves around the attitude toward action and duty that was exhibited by Arjuna as a follower of Veda and these chapters try to demonstrate the necessity of change in the attitude. While the chapters 4 and 5 deal with explaining Karma *Marga* the doctrine of ritual and social duties, chapters 6 along with 5, discuss more technical exposition of Karma *Marga* as a pathway to moksha. Sixth chapter begins with teaching that those who are practicing Karma *Marga* are entered the preparatory step to attain the liberation and it ends with

---

[490] Güngören, *Bhagavatgita; Tanrının Şarkısı*, p. 14.

[491] Malinar, "Bhagavatgita.", p. 96.

[492] Malinar., p. 96.

demonstrating the omnipresent divinity of Krishna the God in the verse "*He who is devoted to me as abiding in all beings* (BhG. 6.30-31)"[493] which seen as doorstep to unfold Bhakti the quintessence of chapters 7 to 12.[494] In broad evaluation of contents in Bhagavat-Gita, 1 to 6 chapters are discussed on Karma *Marga*, 7 to 12 are dedicated to Bhakti *Marga*, on which we will discuss later deeply, and 12-18 are focused on Jnana *Marga* (method of knowledge).[495] Even though chapters 12 to 18 are loosely connected with each other, it clarify the ideas and doubts that mentioned in previous chapters strengthening it with philosophical approach such as concepts of Samkhya philosophy (ch.13), the relationship between Krishna and Brahman (ch.14), the depiction of Krishna as 'supreme divine person' (ch.15), the nature and punishment of demonic creatures (ch.16), correct ritual method (ch.17), relationship between renunciation and relinquishment (ch.18).[496] Some theologians argue that, despite the fact that Bhagavad-Gita had mentioned each of three methods namely Karma, Bhakti and Jnana, it may be understood that the core teaching of the text is Bhakti *Marga* as the text concludes with verses:

> "Abandon all varieties of religion, surrender unto Me. I will liberate you from all kinds of sins, so do not despair, one who recounts the glories of this most hidden of all hidden treasures to My devotees – such a person, attaining supreme devotion for Me, will reach Me without a doubt (BhG. 18/ 66, 68)." [497] that endorses Bhakti itself.

As it was necessary to learn the sacred texts for attaining moksha through the paths of Karma and Jnana, women and the lower castes couldn't attain the liberation since these texts were forbidden to be studied and recited by them, thus those people were

---

[493] Swami Prabhupada, trans., *Bhagavad-gita as it is: complete edition: with original Sanskrit text, Roman transliteration and elaborate purports.* (New York: Collier Books, 1973), p. 338-340.

[494] Malinar, "Bhagavatgita." p. 96-98.

[495] Bhagavatgita*; Tanrının şarkısı*, tr. Ömer Cemal Güngören, p. 212.

[496] Malinar, "Bhagavatgita."p. 96-98.

[497] Swami Prabhupada, trans., *Srimad Bhagavad-Gita Güzel Tanrı'nın gizli hazinesi = The Hidden treasure of the sweet absolute.* (Batı Bengal: Saraswata Yayınları, 2005), p. 491-493.

marginalized from attaining moksha. In this context, the teachings of Bhagavat-Gita were much worthful when it put forward Bhakti *Marga* the path of devotion, to attain the liberation. Understanding the importance of Bhagavad-Gita and its influence throughout the Hindus, most of Hindu scholars had commented on Bhagavad-Gita but in order to rectify or endorse the ideas or visions that they already struck with, which led to different perspectives about the teachings of Bhagavad-Gita. Citing Bhagavad-Gita, many of these commentators have argued that three *Marga*s namely Karma, Jnana and Bhakti are interconnected while some others defended that all three are distinct ways to reach moksha, thus, those who advocate Bhakti as distinct path towards moksha had valorized Bhagavad-Gita and backed the idea that Bhakti is complete and comprehensive in itself, even without necessary knowledge, asceticism or prescribed rituals.[498] Bhagavad-Gita's teachings are so inclusive since it offers moksha through Bhakti even for those who are sin as cited in "*even if one commits the most abominable actions, if he is engaged in devotional service, he is to be considered saintly because he is properly situated*" (BhG. 9/30),[499] and when Krishna, God in Bhagavad-Gita, made his promise to Arjuna that if anyone surrenders to him, he will forgive that person of all sins.[500] In order to perceive the ideas and teachings of Bhagavad-Gita regarding Bhakti clearly, important clauses in Bhagavad-Gita is given down with explanation where needed.

The verse "*If one offers Me with love and devotion a leaf, a flower, fruit or water, I will accept it* (BhG. 9/26)"[501] which teaches that any kind of offering, be it silly as a leaf, will be accepted because of devotion and love, is a clear example on how teachings of Bhagavat-Gita or Bhakti is different from the concept and practices prevalent in Vedic society of Hinduism which applied lots of harsh conditions to present an offering. In early periods of Hinduism, or Veda religion as suggested by some researchers, there were hard conditions that needed more resources like animal, rice and milk etc. in the presence of

---

[498] Narayanan, "Bhakti." p. 711.

[499] Prabhupada, *Bhagavad-gita as it is*, p. 483.

[500] Narayanan, "Bhakti." p. 711.

[501] Prabhupada, *Bhagavad-gita as it is*, p. 478.

numerous priests, to complete *Yajna* the Hindu tradition of presenting an offering to God, which made poor and low cast people unable to offer it, thus they were restricted from attaining moksha the liberation. *Yajna* turned to a ritual that may long from two days to 12 years as in some cases, to be organized as instructed in Brahmana, reciting the mantras in particular accent assigned to that specific ritual without giving any chance of minute faults as it may spoil the deed itself, thus, Karma Marga of liberation turned to a ritualistic path.[502] It may be perceived that condition of offering should be in considerable size is abolished by acceptance of even a leaf or flower as offering, while the condition of to be arranged by priests is rejected by acceptance of offerings that presented by love and devotion. This clause also proves that Bhagavad-Gita keeps Bhakti *Marga* parallel to Karma and Jnana *Marga* not as interconnected.

As the verse "*O son of Kunti, all that you do, all that you eat, all that you offer and give away, as well as all austerities that you may perform, should be done as an offering to me* (BhG. 9/27)"[503] explained that even things that anyone eat or acts that performed, may be considered as an offering, it brings *Yajna* even more easily accessible for each and everyone. In other words, the clause underlines the importance of Bhakti since anything that offered with devotion and love from the deep heart will be considered as a *Yajna* without looking to its size or material value. The next verse "*In this way you will be freed from all reactions to good and evil deeds, and by this principle of renunciation you will be liberated and come to me* (BhG. 9/28)"[504] explicitly offers moksha if you follow the way prescribed in earlier clauses that validates Bhakti the path of dedication and love as an authentic way for the liberation.

The very next teaching of Bhagavad-Gita brings a decisive change in notion that may be perceived as turning point in theology of Hindu religion itself as Bhagavad-Gita says "*I am the same to all beings, and my love is ever the same; but those who worship*

---

[502] S.N. Dasgupta, *Hindu Mysticism* (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1959), p. 4-7.

[503] Prabhupada, *Bhagavad-gita as it is*, p. 480.

[504] Prabhupada, *Bhagavad-gita as it is*, p. 481.

me with devotion, they are in me and I am in them (BhG. 9/29)."[505] Vedic period Hinduism was struck to the idea of Varnashrama dharma in which all the believers were divided into hierarchical four casts namely Brahman, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra where upper cast were enjoying most while low classes were oppressed and even prohibited to liberation, and those who comes against the Varnashrama dharma were considered as lowest category. When we come to comparative religion studies, Varnashrama dharma may be the most apparent characteristic of Hinduism as it clearly lacks the vision and mission put forward normally by the religions. But Bhagavad-Gita clearly rejects the idea of Varnashrama dharma through the verse and it may be the reason for its widespread acceptance regardless of its low hierarchical position among the sacred texts of Hinduism. Teachings of Bhagavad-Gita that God is equal to all and he is not partial to anyone, counter the idea of Varnashrama dharma that restricts liberation, sacred texts and many more to some casts only and the clause also suggest Bhakti as path of liberation for all while Karma and Jnana *Marga* were limited to some casts only.

The clause "*O son of partha, those who take shelter in Me, though they be of lower birth –women, Vaishyas as well as Shudras can approach the supreme destination* (BhG. 9/32)"[506] clearly and evidently offers liberation to Vaishyas, Shudras and women, the classes who were unable and prohibited to attain moksha the liberation if they seek refuge in him. Counting Vaishyas and Shudras soon after declaring that all are equal to God, Bhagavad-Gita puts forward a new and challenging vision in Hinduism destroying the Varnashrama law. Mentioning women along with low cast people directs us to think that women also barred from attaining the liberation and it may be the reason for women poets' active presence in diffusion of Bhakti.

Another clause in Bhagavad-Gita offers the liberation even for culprits through Bhakti, the teaching that was strange to Hindu belief system prevailed in Vedic period which considers evils as blockade towards liberation and Bhagavad-Gita says "*Even if*

---

[505] Juan Mascaro, trans., *The Bhagavad Gita* (London: Rider and Company, 1970), p. 88.

[506] Prabhupada, *Bhagavad-gita as it is*, p. 486.

one committed the most abominable actions, if he is engaged in devotional service, he is to be considered saintly because he is properly situated (BhG. 9/30)."[507] In the clause also, Bhakti is the reason for considering even the culprits as the saints, thus Bhakti enlarges the liberation to each and every one of believers regardless of caste, creed and status, and it may be the one of key points that made Bhakti tradition accepted throughout the Hindu believers. The next clause "*And he shall soon become pure and reach everlasting peace. For this is my word of promise, that he who loves me shall not perish* (BhG. 9/31)"[508] describes how a culprit becomes saint. The clause also challenges the notion in Vedic period that who commits any evil must go with lots of ritual to combat that sin including offerings but Bhakti offers the same through only devotion.

With these teachings of Bhagavad-Gita, there happened a drastic change in beliefs about liberation since it put forward the Bhakti as path to liberation along with Karma and Jnana *Marga*s. While liberation through both Karma and Jnana were accessible for upper castes only as it was believed in Vedic period, Bhagavat-Gita made the liberation open for all through Bhakti that teaches it could be attained through devotion and pure love towards God. The transition in the ideology encourages the research on origin of Bhakti and any possible inner or outer influence behind this transition.

Soon after denoting low casts, the next clause talks on upper casts Brahman and Kshatriya as in "*How much greater are Brahmanas the righteous, the devotees and saintly kings who in this temporary miserable world engage in loving service unto me* (BhG. 9/33)."[509] Here in the clause, Bhagavad-Gita teaches that upper caste people are also working to be with me through love and devotion. Another attracting point in the verse is

---

[507] Prabhupada, *Bhagavad-gita as it is*, p. 483.

[508] Mascaro, *The Bhagavad Gita*, p. 89.

[509] Prabhupada, *Bhagavad-gita as it is*, p. 488.

counting devotees along with Brahmanas the upper caste and saintly kings, thus it lifts the position of devotees to the status of other two.

After suggesting Bhakti as a path for liberation and open to all, Bhagavad-Gita describes how to perform Bhakti and speaks

"Give me your heart, be dedicated to me in devotional service, and be absorbed in my worship. Offer prostrate obeisance unto Me alone. In this way, with mind and body dedicated in My service, taking full refuge in Me, you will certainly reach Me (BhG. 9/34)."[510]

Keeping mind always in God with worshiping him will lead him to absorb in God, thus the devotee is liberated from Samsara circle. The clauses in next chapter of Bhagavat-Gita,

"The thoughts of my pure devotee dwell in Me, their lives are surrendered to Me, and they derive great satisfaction and bliss enlightening one another and conversing about me. To those who are constantly devoted and worship me with love, I give the understanding by which they can come to me (BhG. 10/9,10)"[511]

offer the realization or knowing God as in Jnana *Marga* through Bhakti itself, thus Bhakti also replaces the Jnana *Marga* that requires the deep knowledge gained from sacred texts mainly from Vedas and Upanishads. The last clauses of eleventh chapter summarizes the teachings of the chapter and speaks:

"My dear *Arjuna*, only by undivided devotional service can I be understood as I am, standing before you, and can thus be seen directly. Only in this way can you enter into the mysteries of My understanding. My dear *Arjuna*, one who is engaged in My pure devotional

---

[510] Prabhupada, *Srimad Bhagavad-Gita Güzel Tanrı'nın gizli hazinesi = The Hidden treasure of the sweet absolute*, p. 263.

[511] Prabhupada, *Bhagavad-gita as it is*, p. 505-507.

service, free from the contaminations of previous activities and from mental speculation, who is friendly of every living entity, certainly comes to Me (BhG. 10/54,55)."[512]

Here in these verses, Bhakti is promoted as sole path to understand him and his mysteries, thus it neglects Jnana *Marga* that was mainly attributed to know the God and get liberated, and mentioning "*who is friendly to every living entity*" as one of characteristic of pure devotee, creates a new wave in Hindu theology that was imbued with derogatory approach towards low class human beings.

When all teachings of Bhagavat-Gita are evaluated, it may be wrong to conclude that the path of devotion (Bhakti) is sole path to salvation even it attributes so in the portion where Bhakti was discussed. Saints and scholars had tried to prefer one over other according to their religious philosophies but none of them can singly be regarded as sufficient one nor can any one of them isolated permanently from other since these three paths of Jnana, Karma and Bhakti are mutually dependent.[513] Yet it is a truth that Bhagavat-Gita is the first text to present Bhakti as an authentic path of salvation after Karma and Jnana which are supported by Vedas and Upanishads respectively. The all-embracing teachings of Bhagavat-Gita that focused mainly on Bhakti the path of devotion towards liberation, certainly acted as energy force to develop a new trend in in Hinduism itself, therefore many theologists and scholars showcases Bhagavat-Gita as the source of Bhakti. But, most importantly, Bhagavat-Gita hadn't ignited a movement soon after the emergence of the text and it existed as a part of great Purana or *Itihasa* among mammoth collection of Hindu sacred scriptures. Philosophical discussions and debates continued even after its emergence producing new Astika sects and texts. So, it may be not unfair to understand that only after the emergence of Alvars and Nayanmars and their poetries with Bhakti, Bhagavat-Gita could secure some importance since the text was first one to present Bhakti as a path of moksha.

---

[512] Prabhupada, *Bhagavad-gita as it is*, p. 588-591.

[513] I.C. Sharma, *Ethical Philosophies of India*, ed. Stanley M. Daugert (New York and Evanston: Harper Torchbooks, 1970), p. 266.

2.2. Nalayira Divya Prabandham

As we already discussed in first chapter, Nalayira Divya Prabandham (divine collection of four thousand hymns) was compiled by 12 poet saints known as Alvars dedicating to God Vishnu and is considered as fifth Veda by some sect of Vaishnavas. Since we had discussed elaborately in the first chapter about the collection, here we try to trace the Bhakti in their hymns.

As famous historian Hooper (d.1947) rightly said, the position of Alvar's work lies in between Bhagavat-Gita and Ramanuja as Bhagavat-Gita is textual source of Bhakti and Ramanuja is first one to philosophically present Bhakti as a path of salvation.[514] Therefore some historians mention him as first one to introduce Bhakti. Historians who studied the collection had agreed on the contribution of the text in the historical origin of Bhakti movement.[515] K.C. Varadachari (d.1971), another historian to research Alvars, holds the view that Alvars along with Nayanmars gave impetus to Bhakti tradition in south, thus it moved upward to North India where it flourished through various sects. He continues that deep devotion through love of personal God is explicit in whole text of Alvars expressed in awe, wonder and faith through songs and poems.[516] Another famous historian, S.M.S Chari to research about Vaishnava saints of South India, also accepts that Alvars heralded the significant movement of devotion i.e. Bhakti movement and propounded a tradition which later systematically developed by Acharyas like Nathamuni, Yamuna and Ramanuja.[517] N. Subbu Reddiar (d.2006), who did an extensive research on *Nalayira Divya Prabandham*, states that Alvars introduced God-experiencing spirituality through devotion in which intellect is overwhelmed by emotions and they are

---

[514] J.S.M Hooper, *Hymns of Alvars* (Culcutta: Association Press, 1929), p. 6.

[515] Hooper, *Hymns of Alvars*, p.18.

[516] K.C Varadachari, *Alvars of South India* (Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1966), p. IX-XIII.

[517] S. M. Srinivasa Chari, *Philosophy and theistic mysticism of the Āḻvārs*, 1st ed (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1997), p. IX.

either originators or premier proponents of devotional spirituality.[518] In light of these scholars' works, we understand Bhakti movement had been emerged through Alvars along with Nayanmars and the fact is accepted by almost authors researched on subject since they couldn't trace any movements or works that propose Bhakti solely before them. Yet, it may be wrong if we didn't recognize that origin of Bhakti as an ideology is owed to Bhagavat-Gita but it hadn't ignited or gave impetus to any movement that proposes Bhakti only soon after its emergence.

Nalayira Divya Prabandham (four thousand divine treatise), which was codified by Nathamuni in ninth or tenth century, was a continuance of anthological tradition of *Sangam* poets who were nomad poets in south India. When earlier poets gave a little attention to subject matters while giving importance on accuracy and literature of language, *Nalayira Prabandham* along with *Tirumurai* focused only on subject which was primary while language was secondary. Talking only around the Bhakti, the subject matter of these two collections, was paramount in these two collections. Moreover, these two collections were regarded as equivalent to Vedas by their followers, later these anthologies turned to book of daily '*Parayanam*' (holy recitations) in temples and homes across the region.[519]

First three Alvars namely Poygai, Puttatalvar and Peyalvar in their *Mutal Tiruvantadi*, Irantam Tiruvantadi and Munram Tiruvantadi respectively, start their poems glorifying their Gods and projecting him as the savior of all beings with his mercy. Tirumalsai goes further by speaking the greatness of the devotees of devotees and stating that their devotion is greater than the devotion to God. With his intense Bhakti and

---

[518] N. Subbu Reddiar, *Religion and Philosophy of Nalayiram with special reference to Nammalvar* (Tirupati: Sri Venkateswara University, 1977), p. 198.

[519] N. Subbu Reddiar, *Religion and Philosophy of Nalayiram with special reference to Nammalvar* (Tirupati: Sri Venkateswara University, 1977), p. 195-197.

preaching of Vishnu-Bhakti in the region he was known as Bhaktisara (essence of Bhakti).[520]

Thiruppallandu of Periyalvar is first work of *Nalayira Divya Prabandham* which starts with praising God in its first hymns and vowing to be never apart from him and his devotees. Along with Thiruppallandu, Periyalvar's Thirumozhi that succeeds the former combine first 473 hymns of Divya Prabandham. In the third hymn, Periyalvar addresses worshippers as devotees and instruct them to carry flowers for festivals of God while threatening them that they will not consider as devotee if their concern is food. In fourth hymn itself, he reminds that devotee doesn't need to think Him or go searching Him if he realizes that his soul itself is God. By this statement, he undermines the necessity of knowledge (Jnana) and rituals (Karma) to understand or reach God but the realization by placing Him in the heart is enough to be with him. Since the recitation of His names continuously is method to develop Bhakti, he calls others to give up other ways and to recite his name thousand times. He repeats this call at the end of every sub-section of the work promising moksha, prosperity and rescue from troubles. In the end of section named as *Sengeeraip Parvam*, he offers closeness with God for the devotees who recite the ten hymns of Tiruppallandu and says:

"Those devotees who think that this is the auspicious time to recite this work of Visnhuchittar of Sri Villiputtur-composed with great love and devotion- wishing many, many years to the Lord of Paramapada, who weilds the bow called Charnga, will always be close to the Lord, chanting 'salutations to Lord Narayana' and will sing aloud that may Lord be blessed with many, many years (NlDvPb. 1/1/12)."[521]

The work is dedicated in glorifying Vishnu and his avatar Rama by describing his greatness and his fond of his devotee rescuing them from hazards and *Asurans* (evil devils). He is so close to devotees as devotees call him, he comes in front of them. In

---

[520] Reddiar, *Religion and Philosophy of Nalayiram with Special Reference to Nammalvar*, p. 215-221.

[521] Periyalvar, *Tiruppallandu*, ed. N.S. Iyengar, trans. M.A.N. Prasad (Bangalore: Palahalli Narayana Iyengar, 2002), p. 39.

nutshell, the work, *as whole Nalayira Prabandham*, sings the glories of God and his relation with devotees, and inspires everyone to recite these hymns in order to develop Bhakti towards him.[522]

In a sub-section of work titled as 'Devotees search God', poet instructs to those devotees who search God, to go to the people who already saw him. Thus, he points out the importance of devotees and devotion to those devotees too. In every hymn of the section, God's greatness and glory as the savior of humankind were highlighted. In the last hymn of the section, he assures that each one recites the ten hymns of the section and praise him within their hearts, he will reach the feet of highest God. Therefore, a full-hearted Bhakti to God with reciting hymns of his glories will lead to God. In another sub-section titled as 'Advising the people to worship God before the time of their death', he offers liberation to one makes his heart as temple, places his God there and sprinkles his love as flowers. The hymn is clear evidence of proposing Bhakti as a path of moksha without any need of Karma or Jnana, where a whole-hearted devotion is enough for liberation. Likewise, he also offers rescue and liberation with one mantra praising the God and with full devotion before their death. Similarly, anyone who is near to his death, thinks in his heart about God can achieve anything he wants. In the next hymn, it states that the one who is trapped with evil devils can reach heaven if he recites in his heart faultlessly 'O Madhusudana (God), you are my king and I am your slave.' It is also the case of one who thinks himself as the devotee of God and perceives God as his relative. In the end of the section, he summarizes that each one who ask refuge in God and becomes his devotee before evil devils come and take him in the end of life, can reach God and if anyone learn and recite these hymns, surely, he becomes his devotee who thinks only him, thus reciting these hymns with devotion is enough for liberation.[523]

---

[522] Srirama Bharati, trans., *The Sacred Book of Four Thousand* (Chennai: Divya Prabandha Pahshala, 2000), p. 2-3.

[523] Srirama Bharati, trans., *The Sacred Book of Four Thousand*, p. 3-5.

The bond and fond of God towards his devotees are described in a hymn that even if Lakshmi the consort of God complains about his devotees, he will answer that his devotees will not do wrong and even if they do there must be a good reason. The mutual bond and fondness are great and impressive in the path of devotion unlike others. In the next section, devotee describes how to protect his body from diseases and says his heart and body is abode of God too, therefore he calls disease to stay away from him. Devotee made God enter his mind and kept him there with love, so there is nothing in his mind other than God and his body is divine temple. Because of these reasons, he instructs disease to go away from him. In the succeeding section, as God himself entered his heart and he was released from sufferings, he requests God to not leave his heart, and says he will not allow Him to leave. Since he was freed from sufferings, he wants God stayed in his heart forever, thus he can be free from sickness of birth or Samsara and liberated forever. In the last section of second work in Divya Prabandham, poet says that God's entrance in his heart made him alive and his heart melts down and tears fill his eyes when he thinks him. And only thinking him is enough for him for his sorrows to get disappeared. As we witnessed in the first two works, attributed to Periyalvar, the path of Bhakti which is developed by reciting these God-praising hymns, was highlighted and set as path towards liberation.[524]

After two works of Periyalvar that comprised first 473 hymns, Tiruppavai of Andal with 30 hymns comes next. Dubbed as '(spiritual) song of songs', Tiruppavai is held in high esteem by Vaishnava bhaktas especially for those women who follows religious rite of *Vrata* to secure their desired husbands. While normal women observe the rite for normal human beings as husbands, Andal observed it to secure Krishna as husband, therefore she refused to be married to anyone. To express her utmost love with God and her vows to mystically unite with God, she penned down this short poem which carries deeper spiritual characters as explained by Vaishnava Acharyas.[525] She notes

[524] Srirama Bharati, trans., *The Sacred Book of Four Thousand*, p. 5-92.

[525] Srinivasa Chari, *Philosophy and Theistic Mysticism of the Āḻvārs*, p. 24-25.

down her preparations to gain Krishna as husband with seeking help from divine mother Katyayani for whom the religious rite was observed, at the end of the work.[526] By choosing a mystical union with God instead of normal marriages, Andal intends to attain moksha but with a path of love and devotion, therefore her heart and mind are fully concentrated only on Krishna. In the sixteenth hymn, she insists for absolute surrender in which one should depend and seek refuge and enjoyment in him only. This true physical, mental and spiritual surrender of virgin girls to God leads to bridal mysticism which was introduced by Andal through the hymns of Tiruppavai.[527]

Nacciyar Tirumoli of Andal again succeeds Tiruppavai, yet the content of Nacciyar Tirumoli is similiar or enlarged version of Tiruppavai with 143 hymns. Andal expresses her various stages of experience with God like love, desperation, anxiety and even anger against God in the case of no-response from Krishna, and her soul's absolute surrender to God to earn his grace.[528] Her journey from a noraml girl untill she becomes Andal, one who has attained God as her husband, through love and devotion is described in the work.[529] She says in one of the hymns in the work that she survives only by singing praising and devotional songs of God since she lost her beauty, wealth, mind and sleep due to desperation caused by no-response from God. She also assures that anyone who learns these hymns and keeps in mind will become God's devotees.[530]

After Nacciyar Thirumoli, Perumal Thirumozhi of Kulasekara with 105 hymns comes next in Divya Prabandham. Even though he was king he abdicated throne and lived a life of Vishnu bhakta as he witnessed the happiness of true devotees around him whom he describes as those people who call, sing, dance and only think the God. He also

---

[526] Srirama Bharati, trans., *The Sacred Book of Four Thousand*, p. 92-102.

[527] Varadachari, *Alvars of South India*, p.134-137.

[528] Srinivasa Chari, *Philosophy and Theistic Mysticism of the Āḻvārs*, p.25.

[529] Varadachari, *Alvars of South India*, p.139.

[530] Srirama Bharati, trans., *The Sacred Book of Four Thousand*, p. 102-128.

advocates for service to God's devotees (*Bhagavata-Kainkarya*)[531] and he adds the worshipping the dust of God's devotees' feet along with singing and thinking God. He continues that he is ready to put the dust beneath their feet on his head as he sees the tears of devotee flow thinking only God. Kulasekara thinks him as a wife, patient, father and slave of God and only submitted to him whom he seeks refuge. He states that his heart melts for God's endless grace and looks only for him. After expressing his efforts to unite and see God, he finally describes his joy when he met and united with him. As in the case of other works of Divya Prabandham, he assures, in the end of every section with ten or eleven hymns, heaven and escape from hell and troubles for anyone who recites theses ten hymns.[532] In short, Kulasekara had expressed, in the work, his mystical experience with God through devotion to him and his devotees.

Thiruchanda Virutham of Tirumalsai, which considered as one of main philosophical poem of the work, comes after Perumal Tirumozhi and deals with cosmic categories, therefore, it needs to a commentary to be understood completely.[533] In second hymn itself, he mentions three kinds of devotion; devotion for God, devotion that gives knowledge to know God and highest devotion that gives moksha. In the beginning of the work, God is praised in all ways as he is absolute power, creator, source of energy, strength and knowledge. Tirumalsai says that he hadn't forgotten him since he was born because God stands, sits and rests in his heart. He asserts in one hymn that only those people who do good meditation thinking only God and contemplates continuously about the nature of God, will go to heaven. Yet, they should control feelings, melt their bones and hearts for him, and love him along with reciting mantra of his name. He continues that no one can attain the moksha except those devotees. Another notable point in his hymn is that he seeks refuge in the God after saying that he was not born in any of Varnas and doesn't recite Vedas. He asks for his grace and to make him His devotee, so he can devote only Him forever. In the end of work, he describes his joy of Moksha as the God

---

[531] Srinivasa Chari, *Philosophy and Theistic Mysticism of the Ālvārs*, p. 27.

[532] Srirama Bharati, trans., *The Sacred Book of Four Thousand*, p. 128-151.

[533] Varadachari, *Alvars of South India*, p.47.

entered his heart and his soul was released from all pains because of his uninterrupted devotion night and day, morning and evening.[534]

Tirumalai of Tondaradippodi Alvar with 45 hymns comes next in Divya Prabandham, in which he describes character of humans towards worldly pleasure and ways to overcome these obstacles in the path of attaining God. He also explains the importance of reciting God's names to wipe out the sins and of service to God and his devotees along with his personal experiences of getting trapped in sins surrendering to emotions of his organs.[535] He starts his poem determining to not repeat sins, learn God's names of God and recite them. He recalls his story of sinner in hymns from 23 to 40 and states in one of hymns that God stays in the heart of faultless devotees.[536] He says that one sinner's praising God doesn't make sense but he can repent by offering food to his devotees, thus he become pure and eligible to praise God. Moreover, he also advocates for the service to devotees too as a part of repentance and he was first to introduce it. He continues that even high caste men who recite four Vedas and six Upanishad will become under-casted if they disgrace the devotees. Tiruppalli Yelluchi, another work of Tondaradippodi only with 10 hymns, comes next in which God is praised and his grace was asked by poet in the end.[537]

Tiruppan Alvar who was an untouchable had composed ten hymns in the awe of witnessing deity when he entered sanctum sanctorum of the temple, the composition was named as 'Amalan Aadipiran' and comes next to Tiruppalli Yelluchi.[538] In the first hymn itself, he praises God who made him, with his grace, his devotee and entered his sight. He is also very thankful to God who entered his heart, made him his dear devotee and removed bad karma and burdens of life. Another 11 verses of Madhurakavi praising

---

[534] Srirama Bharati, trans., *The Sacred Book of Four Thousand*, P. 152-175.

[535] Srinivasa Chari, *Philosophy and Theistic Mysticism of the Āḻvārs*, p. 27.

[536] Varadachari, *Alvars of South India*, p. 85.

[537] Srirama Bharati, trans., *The Sacred Book of Four Thousand*, p. 175-186.

[538] Varadachari, *Alvars of South India*, p. 105.

Nammalvar with a title of 'Kanninutchiruthambu' also included in Divya Prabdandham after 'Amalan Aadipiran'.[539]

The second part of Divya Prabandham starts with 1084 hymns-long Periya Tirumoli of Tirumangai that comprises various devotional, God-praising hymns. The composition also provides deep insight on spirituality, reasons of human sufferings and means to overcome it.[540] In the first section of the work, he accepts that he was sinner following emotions of five organs but later his life was saved because of Narayana, one of Vishnu's avatars, so he calls everyone to devote to him in order to escape from troubles and to get moksha. He says if devotees recite God's names, think him only in their minds and God's grace given to them, then God will protect them and remove karma. Hymns with same content of devotion and moksha comes frequently in the composition and in the end of every section. Tirumangai, like other poets, offers happiness and Moksha to those who learn and recite these hymns. But he enlists all the sins he had done in the lifetime in the beginning of hymn, then he claims that he realized the real God and asks to protect him from Samsara circle. In the eleventh section of the work, he addresses his heart and convince it to focus only on God and devote to him only. In twenty second section, he addresses devotees and states that they don't need to do tapas or starve, undergo various types of sacrifices with fire as in Karma Marga but recite Vedas and just keep the God in his heart.[541]

In 39th section, he acknowledges that he had plunged into the ocean of devotion only to see him but was exhausted when he couldn't see God and seemed as mad for others, the lines show us how they were very devoted to God. He also expresses his desperation since God had entered the heart of other devotees but not his heart. Addressing himself as devotee throughout the composition, he says in forty second section that God in Thirukkudalur temple had entered the heart of him a devotee. The ten

---

[539] Srirama Bharati, trans., *The Sacred Book of Four Thousand*, p. 186-193.

[540] Srinivasa Chari, *Philosophy and Theistic Mysticism of the Āḻvārs*, p. 30.

[541] Srirama Bharati, trans., *The Sacred Book of Four Thousand*, p. 193-250.

hymns of 59th section begin with instruction to his heart to go and worship holy feet of God whom he glorifies in next lines of hymns and the section ends with promise of living with Gods in the sky for everyone who learn and recite the hymns of the section. In the 79th section, he says that he had found the God through devotion in Thirukkkanappuram where Veda scholars make sacrificial fires, thus with the hymn, he projects Bhakti as a path to union with God rather than Karma Marga. 108th section of the composition he glorifies and praises Gods at different temples in the region asking their grace through devotion. Moreover, in the end of each section, he makes promises like moksha, happiness and rescue from hell and troubles for anyone who learns and recites that section. In the last section titles as 'Bhakti; born again' he expresses his concern to be born again through Samsara and requests for his grace like any other devotee.[542]

Tirukkuruntandakam of Tirumangai with only 20 hymns comes after long Periya Tirumoli of Tirumangai. Tandakam literally means supporting staff while climbing a hill and refers God who is supporter in the path to moksha and source of sustenance for the soul. While the word 'kuru' refers to a short poem, the word 'Nedu' in Tiruneduntadakm, points to a lengthier one. He states, in the first hymn itself, that he is devotee[543] and God has entered his heart since God gives moksha to his devotees. After praising the God, he instructs his heart to think the nature of God, contemplate and praise him. He continues that he had seen the God in his dreams as he worships him with words, praises him with devotion and think only him with love and care in his mind. He finishes his 20 hymns-long poem with a promise that anyone learn and recite these 20 hymns he will go to the bright sky and rule there.[544] In succeeding poem of Tirumangai, Tiruneduntadakm, he expresses his mental anguish caused by the separation from God but in the guise of both consort who lost his lover and her mother.[545]

---

[542] Srirama Bharati, trans., *The Sacred Book of Four Thousand*, p. 250-422.

[543] Srinivasa Chari, *Philosophy and Theistic Mysticism of the Āḻvārs*, p. 30.

[544] Srirama Bharati, trans., *The Sacred Book of Four Thousand*, p. 422-426.

[545] Srinivasa Chari, *Philosophy and Theistic Mysticism of the Āḻvārs*, p. 30.

Third part of Divya Prabandham starts with Tiruvantadi of Poygai which is chronologically first work among Divya Prabandham collections and 100 hymns long. When first three contemporary Alvars gathered in a narrow room, they realized the presence of fourth one the God and Poygai was first to express the feeling with his Tiruvantadi. Other two Alvars, Puttatar and Peyalvar, followed him with their Tiruvantadi with 100 hymns while Tirumangai composed Nanmuhan Tiruvantadi with almost 200 hymns.[546] Poygai elucidates his devotion God as he says that his mouth will not praise any other but him, his hands will not worship except him, his eyes will not see except him and his hears will not hear any other names except his name. He assures to devotees that if they remove all faults from their mind, meditate without blinking eyes and embrace only God in his hearts, they will reach the heave of the God. He finishes his Tiruvantadi addressing his heart and saying that if devotees meditate on God, He enters their hearts and they will understand God is in their hearts not anywhere, thus if they keep Him in his heart, they will attain moksha.[547]

Puttatar starts his Tiruvantadi depicting his love of God in good-poetry and says that he composes his Tiruvantadi in divine Tamil. Selecting Tamil instead of Sanskrit for theological compositions and divinizing it is clear evidence on Alvars' rejection of Sanskrit's supremacy. Like Poygai, Puttatar also makes same promise of seeing God if goodhearted devotees control their senses, do tapas with love and recite his names. He also breaks barriers of caste system when he says if any devotee worship God they will reach him without exception as he treats everyone equally contradicting to the mainstream belief of the period that some castes have priorities than others and some casts hadn't right to worship him in temples. He says that he will make his heart as God's temple and worship him there asking to not leave his heart. After delineating that God had entered his heart and he could see him, he says that even sages who do true tapas couldn't see him and shows his deep Bhakti thinking only him is the divine path to see God. He

[546] Balasubramanian, *The Mysticism of Poygai Alvar*, p. IX-XI.

[547] Srirama Bharati, trans., *The Sacred Book of Four Thousand*, p. 621-637.

finishes his Tiruvantadi illustrating that the God stays in his heart. Tiruvantadi of Peyalvar succeeds Tiruvantadi of Puttatar and describes the importance of praising God and devoting to him only to get moksha and not to be born again.[548]

After third Tiruvantadi, Nanmukham Tiruvantadi of Tirumalsai with 96 hymns comes next. The text was composed establishing the supremacy of God Vishnu over others after a debate with Pey Alvar. He diminishes other religions of the period like Jainism and Buddhism, and other Gods in Hinduism itself. Tirumalsai says that God Vishnu is in his heart and God had removed all his troubles, so everyone must praise and devote to him not any other. He continues that he spends all his time for God hearing about him, writing about him, understanding, praising and worshipping him. He finishes his composition praising him and assuring that he knows him and he will not worship other than him.[549]

Then comes Tiruviruttam of greatest among Alvars, Nammalvar, with 100 hymns and describing psychological and physical conditions of a consort separated from her beloved God. Here Nammalvar considers himself as consort who was separated from God and yearns for re-union with him through his grace.[550] Tiruviruttam enjoys special status in the collection as the poem presents the hymns of spiritual love (*Daiva Rasa*) and God-experience (*Brahmananubhava*) and the work is considered as equal to Rigveda by followers.[551] In the first hymn itself, Nammalvar seeks to hear the request of his devotee and grand him his grace, thus he will be free from rebirth. He continues to express his infinite love towards him but presents him as a consort who separated from his husband. Her mother describes that she had tears like a river for his lover and her beauty faded away thinking her lover. She asks swans and been around her to convey her message to avatar of God and help her. She also soothes her anxious heart to be calm and live

---

[548] Srirama Bharati, trans., *The Sacred Book of Four Thousand*, p. 637-667.

[549] Srirama Bharati, trans., *The Sacred Book of Four Thousand*, p. 667-682.

[550] Srinivasa Chari, *Philosophy and Theistic Mysticism of the Āḻvārs*, p. 20.

[551] Varadachari, *Alvars of South India*, p. 142-147.

worshipping him pointing that bond with God is forever and they will have no trouble. She reiterates that she loves the divine presence, thinks him constantly without stopping and she had lost her sleeps for many days. He finishes his composition with a hymn that offers moksha for anyone devotee who learn and recite the hundred hymns in the poem.[552]

After Tiruviruttam, Tiruvaciriyam of Nammalvar again, with 7 stanzas only, comes describing God, his glory, personality and ways of attaining him.[553] As the title indicates an observance of God with due form of worship, the work adores and glorifies God pointing that adoration is the highest form of worship not any other yajnas (rites). It teaches nature (Tattva), good (*Hita*), goal of an ideal man *(Purushartha*) and the obstacles in the path of moksha.[554] While first hymn praises God with good poetry, second hymn points to the necessity of moksha rather than any other pleasure in the world and of dependence on devotion to God for attaining moksha. In third and fourth hymn, he identifies himself as a devotee with love and devotion of heart to him, and vows for service of God and his devotees too. In next hymns, he glorifies the supreme God and asserts the necessity of worshipping him only not any others.[555]

Periya Tiruvantadi of Nammalavar, with 87 hymns, follows Tiruvaciriyam. The work is a fourth Tiruvantadi after three of *Moovar* (first three) Poets and addresses his heart conveying his ardent love for direct experience with God. This work is called *Periya* (great) Tiruvantadi as it manifests deep love and emphasizes the greatness of God. It also asserts God as sole savior and as easily accessible one with devotion and love while advocating to worship him in all possible ways.[556] In the first hymn, he invites his heart to praise the God with good words if it wants to see the God and in second hymn, he seeks God's grace to escape from bad karma. In one of the hymns in the work, he expresses his

---

[552] Srirama Bharati, trans., *The Sacred Book of Four Thousand*, p. 682-702.

[553] Srinivasa Chari, *Philosophy and Theistic Mysticism of the Āḻvārs*, p. 20.

[554] Varadachari, *Alvars of South India*, p. 161.

[555] Srirama Bharati, trans., *The Sacred Book of Four Thousand*, p. 702-704.

[556] Srinivasa Chari, *Philosophy and Theistic Mysticism of the Āḻvārs*, p. 20.

joy as he entered his heart and, therefore, karma left him. yet, he advices his heart to think only God and to not lose him as he is sole refuge. He praises and glorifies God in next hymns and tells him that he is the only one companion he has, so he never leaves him. In one of hymns in the end, he assures escape from their bad karma for low caste people too if they become devotees of the God. He finishes his composition inviting himself to constantly praise him.[557] After Periya Tiruvantadi, Tiruvelukurukkai of Tirumangai with only one hymn but with 47 lines comes next. The hymn explains the absolute surrender of soul to God, his nature and means of attaining him.[558] He starts the composition praising him, continues describing his nature and finishes with prayer to remove his bad karma and troubles.[559]

Siriya Tirumadal of Tirumangai is the next composition in Divya Prabandham after Tiruvelukurukkai. The composition is also expressing his love towards God through the consort who separated from husband. The term '*madal'* refers to custom in which lover vows to secure his or her lover by open demonstration in public. According to tradition, lover has to take a ride in public on a palmyra stem using it as a horse, here the lover is exposed to public scandal, then he or she reralizes his mistake and runs to the person whom he or she wants to secure.[560] In same manner, he portrays God as his lover and runs towards him after realizing his mistakes and understanding him as the only savior. In first hymns of the text, he portrays himself as a consort who weakened and became pale due to her love towards separated husband the God. Glorifying him in next hymns, she finishes saying that she will marry God for the custom of *Madal* and openly proclaim her love with God.

After Siriya Tirumadal (small Tirumadal), Periya Tirumadal of Tirumangai comes and starts with glorifying hymns. Then she expresses her unending love towards

---

[557] Srirama Bharati, trans., *The Sacred Book of Four Thousand*, p. 704-718.

[558] Srinivasa Chari, *Philosophy and Theistic Mysticism of the Āḻvārs*, p. 31.

[559] Srirama Bharati, trans., *The Sacred Book of Four Thousand*, p. 718-720.

[560] Srinivasa Chari, *Philosophy and Theistic Mysticism of the Āḻvārs*, p. 31.

God and says that she faints day by day because of the love she had. After a series of glorifying hymns, she finishes the work with a call for *Madal*.[561]

Periya Tirumudal is succeeded by Tiruvaymoli of Nammalvar with 1102 hymns which is also known as Bhagavad Vishaya for its glorious attributes of God (Bhagavan). The work is considered as most important work of both Nammalvar and Divya Prabandham, and also Tamil Veda (Dramida-Veda). Since the work was subjected many commentaries, commentors and Acharyas of the community held the work in high position. While Nathamuni described it as ocean of Tamil Veda (*Dravid-Vedasagar*), Vedanta Desika considers it as Tamil Upanishad and had written two Sanskrit works based on Tiruvaymoli. Manavalamuni says that Nammalvar contributed Vedas to Tamil with Tiruvaymoli.[562] The greatest Acharya of Bhakti, Ramanuja, had also had written the commentary on the work. Hymns in the work that enjoys the bliss of God-experience, have been sung in temples and by devotees for continuous meditation.[563]

Glorifying thousand hymns of Tiruvaymoli are well organized as the work is divided into ten sections and each section again to ten sub-sections. The central theme of the work is that God, as an ultimate reality, is ultimate goal of human endeavors and is also mean of attainment. Sections and sub-sections deal with subjects that supports this central theme, thus Tirvaymoli presents five important doctrines of Vishishtadvaita viz., God to be attained (*Prapya*), the aspirant seeking God (*Prapta*), means of attainment (*Praptyupaya*), the goal to be attained (*Phala*) and obstacles in the way of its attainment (*Prapti-virodhi*).[564] He starts his composition addressing his heart and praising him as he removed poet's ignorance. Glorifying God, he says that God is mighty one, has only one nature and he wants to join Him. In second sub-section of ten hymns, he invites his heart to give up all his desires to attain moksha and says in the next sub-section that he is easy

---

[561] Srirama Bharati, trans., *The Sacred Book of Four Thousand*, p. 720-741

[562] Srinivasa Chari, *Philosophy and Theistic Mysticism of the Āḻvārs*, p. 21-22.

[563] Varadachari, *Alvars of South India*, p. 177-178.

[564] Srinivasa Chari, *Philosophy and Theistic Mysticism of the Āḻvārs*, p. 21.

for devotees while hard for others. He continues that eternal God has no births, removes illusion (maya) of his devotees, grace with moksha, stays in their hearts and he is everywhere. He repeats in the end of almost hymns after glorifying him that God is in his heart.[565]

When the God entered his heart and he experienced the God, all things he sees is God whether it is ocean, fire, sky, sun and moon. He continues that God is all things and all creatures and he is in their feelings, then asserts that if anyone understands his own soul, he will join him as the God himself is the soul. He also advocates for the service of devotees of God when he said that he worships the devotees who praise God's devotees. Moreover, he says that even those who were born lower than four varnas are Gods to him if they are devotees of his devotees. The lines clearly reject Varnashrama dharma and promote lower castes to high positions even the position of God.[566]

Nammalvar expresses his deep love and devotion to God in various poetical expressions. Sometimes he portrays him as a girl who tired and gone mad because of love towards God. In the poems, her mother narrates the pitiful situation of the girl and complains but the girl says that nothing to worry except she is in love with God. Then he tries to establish Vishnu as most powerful God who can grace his moksha to other Gods too. He says that God is the one who made him compose these sweet Tamil hymns after making a devotee. He continues that he entered his tongue and God himself composed these sweet hymns for his devotees. Moreover, God had turned heart as his temples, so He stays in his heart forever. He rejects the worship without devotion as it couldn't lead to the reality. He finishes his one thousand plus hymns-long composition with a sub-section that describes his oneness with God and his existence only with after he entered his heart. It is also notable he makes, in the end of every ten verses, various offers like moksha, heaven and escape from bad-karma for anyone who learns and recites those ten hymns. In short, the composition is full of glorifying hymns and God-experiencing hymns

---

[565]Srirama Bharati, trans., *The Sacred Book of Four Thousand*, p. 437-512.

[566]Srirama Bharati, trans., *The Sacred Book of Four Thousand*, p. 512-556.

in which his bliss is expressed in many poetic ways.[567] The last 100 hymns of Nalayira Divya Prabandham is Ramanujanutrandadi which praises Ramanuja, the most important master in Bhakti movement. The poem was composed in a period later than Alvars as he mentions and praises every Alvars for their contributions. He designates the works of Pey, Triuppan, Thondaradippodi and Nammalvar as Tamil Vedas which are equal to Vedas of the religion.[568] Like in other parts of the collection, poet says that Ramanuja destroyed fame of the six religions pointing to six Astika sects. Excessive philosophical discussions, which may not bring satisfying conclusion, in six astika sects are rejected by Alvars while they present devotion/Bhakti as an alternative to reach the God.

2.3. Panniru Tirumurai

As we described earlier, *Tirumurai* is a general name for the collection of 12 books *(Panniru Tirumurai)* compiled by 27 Nayanmars.[569] Nayanmars expressed their devotion and love towards their God Siva through poems in Tamil forming a large collection of devotional songs with about eleven thousand hymns. The poems of different Nayanmars lived before eleventh century were collected but history of some Nayanmars is still obscure and dubious. While eleven Tirumurai constitute poems of different Nayanmars, last and twelfth Tirumurai *Periya Puranam* is description of 63 Nayanmars' lives, so it doesn't include any devotional poems but the historical authenticity of the text is questioned.

2.3.1. Tevaram

First 7 Tirumurais, named as Tevaram, hold special significance in the tradition and known as *Atankamurai* (Complete canon), moreover, it is considered as equal to Vedas. Among seven Tirumurais of Tevaram, first three are composed by Sambandar, the next three by Appar and last one by Sundarar. Tevaram includes 384 hymns of

---

[567] Srirama Bharati, trans., *The Sacred Book of Four Thousand*, p. 551-621.

[568] Srirama Bharati, trans., *The Sacred Book of Four Thousand*, p. 741-760.

[569] Sasivali, *Mysticism of Love in Saiva Tirumurais*, p. X.

Sambandar, 312 of Appar and 100 of Sundarar.[570] Since their lives and poems of Tevaram are very important in the tradition, they are called as '*Muvar Mutalikal* (three great lords of Saivism).'[571] Tevaram hymns are widely recited throughout Tamil region especially in religious ceremonies and even a specialist called *Otuvar* (one who chants) is designated only to sing the poems. In religious rituals in the region, hymns of Tevaram also sung simultaneously with Veda and also in the end of ritual as final and important one. When Vedas are studied orally in religious school, Tirumurai is also taught there, affirming the equality of Tirumurais with Vedas. There are also special school in the name of *'Tevaram Patasalai'* where Tevaram hymns along with Tiruvachakam and some selections from other Tirumurais are taught and memorized.[572]

Tevaram etymologically related with term '*varam*' which was used to denote the song addressed to a deity in the classical poems and hymns that are referred as *Patikam*s in the tradition. Each hymn includes ten or eleven verses and one verse is four-line stanzas with a refrain. The last verses of Sambandar and Sundarar's hymns include their names and speak about themselves, nature of their songs and benefits of singing and listening their songs. Sambandar devotes his ninth verse of each *Patikam*s to talk about Linga whereas tenth one is devoted to denunciate Jains and Buddhists. Sambandar describes in eighth verse of his hymns a myth of demon-devotee Ravana while Appar uses it in the end of his hymns.[573]

Sambandar and Appar had advocated for no distinction on the basis of caste and called high class people to worship along with common people too to attain salvation. Sambandar, like Appar, ensures in his hymns that everyone irrespective of their caste attain salvation through meditation. While Appar was staunch advocate of abolition of

---

[570] Paramasivanandan, *The Historical Study of Tevaram Hymns*, p. 7-22.

[571] Dorai Rangaswamy, *The Religion and Philosophy of Tevarm with special reference to Nampi Arurar (Sundarar)* (Madras: University of Madras, 1958), p. 1.

[572] Peterson, *The Hymns of Tamil Saints*, p. 50-60.

[573] Peterson, *The Hymns of Tamil Saints*, p. 22.

caste system, Sundarar himself had married two women from other castes. In short, all three authors of Tevaram had advocated continuously for the salvation through meditation throughout their poems while rejecting the caste-system that offers salvation only high-caste Hindus.[574] Like all Saiva saints, these three poets also stood for the equality as the fundamental principle of religion. Appar, like Sambandar, states in his Tirumurai that God would protect those who worshipped with devotion and whole heartedly without any distinction. He continues that God will be the in the hearts of true devotees and will help them in the way they want.[575] In Tevaram as well as other Shaiva Bhakti texts, a devotee is a servant, *Atiyar*; 'one who is at the feet' of God.[576]

The three poets speak about their states of mind with devotion to God connecting it with different stances and moods of bhaktas that range from ardent love with God, powerful desire for union with him to absolute faith in him as the grantor of grace and salvation. While these expressions are less in Sambandar's poems, Appar gives some powerful expressions of this emotional devotion and Sundarar champions in expressing these various moods of devotee. Another noticeable aspect is that Appar speaks in a mood of self-abasement because of his sense of being guilty over his past as a Jain monk while Sundarar, nicknamed as 'rude devotee', speaks rude as he mocks and reproaches Siva. Even though they project senses and body as obstacles to the devotion, they also confirm the necessity of these organs in expressing Bhakti through services. They extol the singing and reciting continuously God's glorified names as these are major part of devotionalism.[577]

When it come to the method of worship, there are three methods; image worship (*Uruvam*), non-image worship (*Aruvam*) and symbolical worship (*Aruvuruvam*). While fist two forms are explicit, third one denotes the worship of Siva Linga. While most of

---

[574] Paramasivanandan, *The Historical Study of Tevaram Hymns*, p. 81-83.

[575] Paramasivanandan, *The Historical Study of Tevaram Hymns*, p. 144.

[576] Peterson, *The Hymns of Tamil Saints*, p. 42-48.

[577] Peterson, *The Hymns of Tamil Saints*, p. 206-208.

Tevaram hymns deal with image worship, it also mentions other two forms; *Aruvurvam* as seen in Linga worship and *Aruvam* as Siva was portrayed above all without any shape, form or color.[578]

The importance given to the image and temple worship in Tevaram hymns was neglected by later Bhakti saints as they detached themselves from image and temple worships. The poet-saints of Tevaram dedicated almost each one of their hymns to a Siva temple forming a sacred geography including 274 shrines mostly in south India while some are in Himalaya region. Theses shrines were enlarged by later rulers like Cholas and called as *Paral Perra Talam* (a place sung by the saints).[579] Promoting each temple in those hymns and making it as center of religious and social activities had greatly influenced to popularize Saivism in the region.[580] But they emphasis on sincere devotion to the God, which is most important in all modes of worship. Yet they enlisted some devotional services such as presenting the flower to God and adorning Linga with same in early morning, sweeping the temple courtyard and removing grass in pathways with pick axe are some of them. It also includes serving the devotees of God, feeding and arranging shelter for them with great devotion. While enlisting these services in Tevaram, they also mention *Manaspuja* in which one prays to God silently with heart only and advocate for worship of God with heart. Along with this sincere devotion, they should recite and repeat the sacred mantra of *Namasivaya*. In Shaivism, painting the ashes, which is called as *Tiruniru* (sacred ash), holds a special significance, so they had also mentioned it in Tevaram.[581]

The three poets of Tevaram condemned the worship with mere outward forms and rituals without devotion and real love in the heart. While Appar advised people to

---

[578] Paramasivanandan, *The Historical Study of Tevaram Hymns*, p. 146.

[579] Peterson, *The Hymns of Tamil Saints*, p. 11-14.

[580] Rangaswamy, *The Religion and Philosophy of Tevarm with Special Reference to Nampi Arurar (Sundarar)*, p. 20.

[581] Paramasivanandan, *The Historical Study of Tevaram Hymns*, p. 146-157.

worship Siva with a pure heart, Sundarar projected God as divine light shining in the heart of virtuous people, thus, they put the goodness of heart and sincere devotion as essentials in the attainment of salvation.[582]

Sundarar glorified their own local language Tamil instead of Sanskrit and said that Tamil is ever truthful language and God would bless those who pray in Tamil language. But Sambandar reminds God can hear all the languages of devotees without any difference. Appar regarded both Tamil and Sanskrit as sacred languages and had mentioned both of them in his hymns. Yet all three poet saints focused on Tamil language to express their religious ideas giving an impetus to the development of Tamil language.[583] They promoted Tamil as sacred language like Sanskrit with expressions like *Tiruneriya* Tamil (sacred Tamil) and Tamil *Malai* (garland of Tamil verse) and the texts in Tamil as equal to Vedas.[584] To be more precise, Tevaram hymns presented a powerful new synthesis of Brahmanical Hinduism and Tamil civilization celebrating and transforming both traditions.[585]

Appar and Sambandar promoted the oneness of God by worshipping lord Siva only discouraging the worship of other minor Gods and other religions.[586] Sambandar presents a verse in each of his hymns to criticize Buddhist and Jain monks while Appar protests against Jains who tried to get him away from Saivism.[587] Convinced by strong faith in devotional life, Sambandar neglected popular beliefs of auspicious days as he started his tour to establish Saivism in an inauspicious day saying that nothing can harm the devotees of Siva and all days are auspicious to them.[588]

---

[582] Paramasivanandan, *The Historical Study of Tevaram Hymns*, p. 173-174.

[583] Paramasivanandan, *The Historical Study of Tevaram Hymns*, p. 124-126.

[584] Peterson, *The Hymns of Tamil Saints*, p. 40-41.

[585] Peterson, *The Hymns of Tamil Saints*, p. 5.

[586] Paramasivanandan, *The Historical Study of Tevaram Hymns*, p. 140.

[587] Peterson, *The Hymns of Tamil Saints*, p. 10.

[588] Paramasivanandan, *The Historical Study of Tevaram Hymns*, p. 140-141.

Saint poets of Tevaram express their personal relationship with God, praising and glorifying him. They address some hymns to Siva as well as themselves, while some others to their fellow devotes which are designed to encourage listeners to devotion of Siva with love. In Teveram, they describe Siva's appearance and his mythic deeds that glorifies him along with his iconographic depictions that could see in Siva temples. The cosmic dance of Siva in the form of Natarajan is another main subject that discussed throughout Tevaram. Yet, Tevaram reminds the need of passionate love and personal involvement, that constitute Bhakti, to perceive God by a poet, reader or listener. What makes Tevaram as well as other Bhakti saint poets close to heart of reader or listener is ability to successfully pass the personal feeling and devotional experience to them. Even though it is very little, Tevaram hymns also address Siva the God as their lover or as closest of kinship ties like father or mother.[589] While all three poets portray God sweeter than honey (*ten)* and sugar cane (*karumpu*), Appar calls him as his 'eye' (*kan*) due to their fondness towards God and these expressions turned as popular metaphors for the beloved in Tamil culture.[590]

Appar says in one of his hymns that he was an ignorant and wasn't knowing anything even pure Tamil to make poems but God bestowed him with these skills as a loving mother and father after he sought refuge to God, and he was blessed only because of his grace. Appar tries to establish here that one can be blessed by God without any other pre-requisites because of God's grace only.[591] Like Appar, Sundarar also acknowledges the importance of his grace to attain salvation and says that peerless God gave him a head, heart and thoughts that know only to serve Him. He continues that he is melting in a stream of love running to join him with services to Him and His devotees, meditating on Him with devotion and singing God-praising hymns but he is still in the

[589] Peterson, *The Hymns of Tamil Saints*, p. 24-36.

[590] Peterson, *The Hymns of Tamil Saints*, p. 204.

[591] Peterson, *The Hymns of Tamil Saints*, p. 236-237.

search of his grace to get salvation.[592] He expresses his bliss in one of hymns that God came to him as everlasting bright lighting him and he never left him since then as He was focus of all his thoughts, so he never sing for anyone other than Him.[593] Sambandar also begs his heart to think only God, eyes to always look upon the God and tongue to keep daily prayers in order to get His grace and to be blessed (2.176 Piramapuram).[594]

All three saint poets also talk about the herd of devotees who gather and sing the songs of praise and devotion together, therefore we can understand that there were groups of devotees who gather sings together. Sambandar attributes devotees who know how to weep and dance singing the hymns as worthy servants of the lord (1.35 *Vilimilai*). Appar says that God keeps account of devotees who weep and cry out of their love to God and of those who waste their days unaware of him (5.135 *Innampar*)[595] whereas Sundarar calls lovers of Siva to give up worldly life, gather together, dance, sing the hymns and become devotees (7.22 *Palamannippatikkarai*).[596] They also describes about devotees that they are blameless, their karma had been destroyed (Sambandar 2.242 *Valanculli*), they never reborn, enter highest state without losing their heart in earth and without hunger and pain (Sambandar 2.177 *Cayakkatu*).[597]

Appar rejects in one of hymns (2.213 *Pavancak Kuruntokai*) all form of the worship including pilgrimages to holy rivers like Ganga and bathing there, chanting Vedas, learning Upanishads and law-books, performing rituals according rules and sacrifices at fire altars, giving up meats, practicing penance and asceticism since all these are in vain till one understands that lord is everywhere and loves him as dearest one. He finishes the hymn saying that God, who dwells in those hearts melting in love of him, will

---

[592] Sundarar, *Panniru Tirumurai*, ed. Kantacāmi et al., 1st ed (Chennai: Institute of Asian Studies, 2011), p. 262-270.

[593] Sundarar. P. 390-395.

[594] Peterson, *The Hymns of Tamil Saints*, p. 255.

[595] Peterson, *The Hymns of Tamil Saints*, p. 257-258.

[596] Sundarar, *Panniru Tirumurai*. P. 404-405.

[597] Peterson, *The Hymns of Tamil Saints*, p. 263-264.

laugh at flowers and water offered by false men in the rituals.[598] The hymn in Tevaram is a clear proof on how these Nayanar poets reject the ritualistic practices led by Brahmins only and present devotion the Bhakti as authentic path to reach the God and attain the salvation. Appar rejects Varnashrama dharma also as he says that if outcasted people even *Pulayan* the lowest of lowest serves God are Gods to him and he will worship them (6.309 *Tanit Tiruttantakam*).[599]

The very first hymn of Sundarar expresses his joy as he was blessed with his grace, so he addresses God as embodiment of grace in the first verse itself and he will think only God without forgetting. Poet continues expressing his confidence in the God and salvation from him since God placed Himself in the mind of the saint. Before he was being bestowed by God's grace, poet acknowledges that he wandered long as a dog or ghost without thinking God in his mind, so he was fatigued (*Tiruvennainallur* 7.1).[600] As he was bestowed with his grace, he feels himself attained salvation and says that he will not reborn and if born he will not be aged. Drowned in mystic relation with God, he addresses God as his father, mother, master, beginning of everything and beautiful person, moreover he sees God in everything and sings that he is flesh, life, body, space, land, mountains, sea and the world. In another hymn (*Tiruvatikai Virattanam* 7.38), he addresses the God not only in same way but also more precious than gold, rubies and pearls and as a lover who is sweeter than sugarcane and candy. The refrain of the hymn is "*will I ever slight him for a moment*" and intends with question that he will not slight him for a moment after he realized Him and attained salvation.[601] All these expressions in his first hymn itself point on how devotional mysticism evolved in Nayanar poetries

---

[598] Peterson, *The Hymns of Tamil Saints*, p. 261-263.

[599] Peterson, *The Hymns of Tamil Saints*, p. 263-264.

[600] Sundarar, *Panniru Tirumurai*. P. 42-45.

[601] Rangaswamy, *The Religion and Philosophy of Tevarm with Special Reference to Nampi Arurar (Sundarar)*, p. 570-576.

which ignited Bhakti movement, thus we can witness these kinds of expressions in later mystics from different religions.

As Sundar experienced a mystic union with God, he sees God everywhere and in everything, so he hails God and says in one of hymns (*Tirukkalippalai* 7.23) that God he is the creation, destruction and sustenance, he is the word and meaning that people speak, he is the tongue, the ear and the eye. He repeats in other hymn (7.62) that God has become head, eyes, ears, nose, mouth and body of devotees and has removed the cruel karma of devotees.[602] These lines resemble to the mystic ideas of other religions especially Islam. He feels that God is with him always as a savior comrade (7.51, 7.84) especially he was support in the hard times (7.26), and as an envoy (7.84) who changes other's mind for the benefits of him.[603]

As Sivanjana Sittiyar text describes, there are four ways of attaining God; the path of a friend, path of a good son, path of servant and path of truth and these four equated with Yoga *Marga* (path of yoga), *Karya Marga* (path of services), *Kriya Marga* (path of actions) and Jnana *Marga* (path of knowledge) respectively. The path of servant consists sweeping temple, painting the ground with cow dung, looking after the garden of temple, setting up and lighting lamps inside temples, singing glorifying hymns and falling at the feet of Saivites. The path of good son includes performing purification of God's image with flowers, performing worship with pure love and conducting the ceremonies in the sacrificial fire. The path of friend means to control sense organs with breath management, performing eight parts of yoga contemplating on God whereas path of truth intends to study all religious knowledges till all the doubts and illusions about God fades away. Analyzing the life and poems of these saints, some historians say the

---

[602] Rangaswamy, *The Religion and Philosophy of Tevarm with Special Reference to Nampi Arurar (Sundarar)*, p. 1155-1156.

[603] Rangaswamy, *The Religion and Philosophy of Tevarm with Special Reference to Nampi Arurar (Sundarar)*, p. 1207-1208.

path of servant is represented by Appar, path of good son by Sambandar, path of friend by Sundarar and the path of truth by Manikkavachakar.[604]

Another highlighted aspect in hymns of Tevaram is their love towards God and self- surrender to Him due to their intense love. Sundarar mentions his various stages love and says "*my mind, my heart melts in love*" and "*I am yours by right*" (7.14). He acknowledges that he had surrender totally to the God as he said "*I have offered my head, tongue and mind all to his service*" (7.14). He continues that he is not pissed of nor complaining if he suffers in the path of love and devotion but will accept everything as he said "*I shall not murmur that you have made me suffer, I accept everything*" (7.15). These kind of hymns in which God is approached with love and devotion were first of its kind in Hinduism, thus these hymns ignited for a great tradition that changed the course of religion itself. In another set of hymns, he describes about God's reaction to his devotees that God is also hungering to the soul that hungers for the God (7.77) and God will run if devotee walk towards God (7.57). Poet continues that God is shining in the minds that think Him (7.61), He never leaves from the mind of loving soul (7.67) and His abode is the heart of one who taken refuge in Him (7.19).[605] These expressions of love and devotion shows great similarity to devotional or mystic expressions in other religions especially Islam. These set of similarities forces a researcher to conduct in-depth research about engagements of Bhakti with other religions especially with Islam.

2.3.2. Tiruvachakam

After Tevaram of *Muvar Mutalikal* poets, Tiruvachakam of Manikavachakar, the fourth one in *Nalvar* poets along with three Tevaram-poets, comes next as eight one in sacred collection of 12 Tirumurais. His name literally means that one whose utterances are rubies and he was named so because of his masterpiece work Tiruvachakam which

---

[604] Rangaswamy, *The Religion and Philosophy of Tevarm with Special Reference to Nampi Arurar (Sundarar)*, p. 63-64.

[605] Rangaswamy, *The Religion and Philosophy of Tevarm with Special Reference to Nampi Arurar (Sundarar)*, p. 1202-1207.

means 'divine utterances'.[606] Tiruvachakam is an excellent devotional text made up of 51 hymns that consist 659 verses, which is normally divided into 4 chapters regarding its contents. Third chapter of the text that starts from seventh hymn (Thiruvemppavai) to the twentieth hymn (Thiruppalliyelluchi) is an important chapter that portrays love of the poet to Siva the God through bridal mysticism.[607]

Tiruvachakam is an exceptional text that depict mystic experiences of the poet who wept and melted in love with God where he portrayed himself as a bride to the husband-God Siva. He recurringly sought his grace with unintermittent love and devotion towards God, to extricate from miserable birth-cycle. In return of his devotion, the poet feels that he was granted grace as He entered his mind and enshrined his body, so his thoughts and mind focused only on Him without any deviation.[608] As he felt the bliss, his triumph was expressed through his poems, so he starts with a call to hail God who not quits his heart even for a moment. He continues to attribute Him as one who soothed his soul's disturbance, destroyed his birth-cycle and stood nearby him with love. Then he explains the reason to get his old deeds wiped is his bowing to Siva's feet thinking about only Him which brought his grace.[609]

Manikavachakar acknowledges that reason of his salvation is path of devotion as he said in one hymn (51.1) that he had joined and followed the people who don't know moksha but the God taught him the path of devotion, thus his bad karma was destroyed too. The hymn is very notable in Bhakti tradition as the verse openly states devotion as a path that can save one from Karma and Samsara circle. They realize that eternal bliss is only achieved by his grace and to get his grace, they develop their reverence and love to God following the path of devotion. When they follow the path of devotion, they

---

[606] G.U Pope, *The Tiruvacakam or "Sacred Utterances"* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1900), p. XVIII.

[607] C Srinivasan, *Thiruvaachakam by Saint Maanickavaachagar*, ed. Tirumati S. Sivamani, 2 vol. (Madras: Tirumati Mohanambal Srinivasan, 1991), p. VIII.

[608] Srinivasan, *Thiruvaachakam by Saint Maanickavaachagar*, p. XIX-XX.

[609] Pope, *The Tiruvacakam or "Sacred Utterances."*, p. 1-3.

understand their services and acts don't compulsorily bring the moksha but his grace must be granted by him out of his mercy, so they repeatedly ask for his grace. We witness that same in the hymns of Manikavachakar also as he says in one of hymn "*Do graciously grant me unintermittent love unto You to take root in the core of my heart and melt it, oh my Owner*." (5.11) The core of this path lies on depending only on Him for refuge thinking only Him whether He tries to know him through other paths, thus Manikavavachakar marvels in his devotion to God as he said in one hymn that he doesn't know the method of worshipping Him, he doesn't know him at all and even the knowledge to know him, but he seeks refuge only in Him (24.9) but he seeks God to bestow him the love of devotees who are close to him have towards to him (32.8).[610]

Manikavachakar portrays his state of developing Bhakti with good rhetoric that when he considered the direction towards God, he felt untired, his river of love overflown its banks. He continues that his senses searched crying out only 'Lord, Lord', his body shivered and his hands were folded but his heart bloomed in devotion for Him, and his eyes felt the joy filling it with tears (4.78-85).[611] He says in another hymn (21.10) addressing God that he worships him chatting his name and thinking that God will surely grant him grace. He continues that his eyes filled with tears, his mouth mumbled, his mind thought only Him and melted. He finishes his hymn to have mercy on him and grant him the grace since he realized all his efforts don't endorse his grace but his mercy only[612]. The transition from a ritualistic religion that teaches proper executing of rituals as prescribed in Vedas, to a devotional religion in which God's mercy is compulsory to attain the salvation even after ardent devotion is thought provoking and inspires for deep research.

Another highlighting point of Manikavachakar's Tiruvachakam is bridal mysticism in which one surrenders one's own will, life and mind to God because of

---

[610] Srinivasan, *Thiruvaachakam by Saint Maanickavaachagar*, p. 16-18.

[611] Pope, *The Tiruvacakam or "Sacred Utterances."*, p. 35.

[612] Srinivasan, *Thiruvaachakam by Saint Maanickavaachagar*, p. 16-18.

extreme love towards God portraying himself/herself as groom/bride of God. Here poet portrays himself as mystic bride of God with overwhelming love to God expecting an inseparable mystic union with God and stays in bliss forever. This bridal mysticism of saint-poet is explained in 14 hymns from seventh to 20th hymn, starting from pre-mature love to God till her union with him. To portray the scenario, poet uses and describes the tradition of virgin girls waking up in early morning and going to temples with flowers in order to get their desired one as husband. In seventh hymn, poet expresses his first love towards God engrossed in deep meditation crying "oh my lord, lord." While next two hymns depict about local girls and their tradition, tenth hymn talks about sending dragon fly as her messenger of love to God the lover. Next 6 hymns also deal with the tradition whereas in seventh hymn, she discloses to mother about her love to God and how her heart melted for Him. While next two hymns also deal with conveying her love to God through various mediums like birds, the twentieth hymn expresses the descending of God for a mystic union with her.[613] The concept of bridal mysticism is used to express their intensity of love to God as we witness the same in the poems of Alvars too.

2.3.3. Tirukkovaiyar

Tirukkovaiyar, another poem of Manikavachakar with 400 stanzas, forms second part of Eighth Tirumurai. The theme of poem is love of soul to God in which God was portrayed as hero and poet as heroin and vice versa.[614] The poem starts with expression of lover about first sight of loved one relating to some beautiful flowers in their region. Even though he doubts about her identity in second verse, he realizes, in third verse, that she is Goddess herself and starts to desire her in the fourth verse. Poet uses anthropomorphic characteristics when God is portrayed as beautiful woman expressing his sense of love and desires for union with her in next verses (Tirukkovaiyar

[613] Srinivasan, *Thiruvaachakam by Saint Maanickavaachagar*, p. 31-36.

[614] Māṇikkavācakar, *Tirukkovaiyar*, trans. T. N Ramachandran (Thanjavur: Tamil University, 1989), p. XLV.

1.1-7).[615] Next verses in poem continues to describe the nature, his feeling of love and lust towards her. Yet he says that in one verse (2.14) that he is forever devoted to his God and He is with His devotees accompanied in joy, and he adores God in proud elation (4.3). He thinks, because of his unintermittent services and helps to devotees, that he was gifted to His true devotees to serve them, thus he lived accompanied with them (4.5) with a heart that melts and body that thrills to be with them (15.5).[616] In another verse (16.39) he says that God had put an end to his Samsara) because of praising and glorifying Him with devotion. Poet Tirumular also explicitly put forward Bhakti *Marga* as an authoritative way to salvation since he assures that God will grant the bliss to his devotees whoever they are without looking their caste (18.32).[617]

2.3.4. Tiruvicaippa and Tiruppallandu

Tenth Tirumurai was composed by nine saints namely Centanar, Karuvurttevar, Tirumalikaittever, Nampikatava Nampi, Purutottama Nampi, Tiruvaliyamutanar, Venattatikal and Cetirayar whose compositions are collected in Tiruvicaippa and Tiruppallantu. Out of 28 hymns in Tiruvicaippa, ten hymns completely deal with love of a lady towards God. Among these 9 poets, six of them had expressed their love towards God in their poems. Tirumalaikaittevar had composed four hymns dedicating one of them to express his love of God portraying himself as a heroine who is in mad love with her hero the God, and that's through the words of her mother. She recalls her daughter as one who seeks God to protect her praising and contemplating only Him. Centanar composes two hymns which also express his love of God depicting him as heroine. In one of hymns, she recurs her seek of His grace presenting her intense love with full heart and asks why he is not bestowing grace to her while he fulfils the desires of other devotees. Another hymn of Centanar also follows same pattern in expressing his love of God. Karuvurtevar, whose composition constitutes major parts of Tiruvicaippa, also speaks in same method

[615] Māṇikkavācakar, *Tirukkovaiyar*, p. 1-7.

[616] Māṇikkavācakar, *Tirukkovaiyar*, p. 36-201.

[617] Māṇikkavācakar, *Tirukkovaiyar*, p. 249.

to express his devotion to God. He expounds his feelings that God had taken full possession of his body and soul by entering his heart and his mind is completely surrendered in Him. In his other hymns, he talks about his different feelings and situations in the love of God comparing it to a girl fell in mad love with her hero. Tiruvaliyamutanar, Purutottama nampi and Cetiriyar also follow same pattern for expressing love. In short, ninth Tirumurai is full of love expressions towards God that is attributed as *Prema* Bhakti (devotion of love) or Bhakti in *Madhura Bhava* (sweet mood).[618]

2.3.5. Tirumantiram

Ninth Tirumurai is Tirumantiram of Tirumular, which includes about 3 thousand verses in nine *Tantiram*s and a prologue. While the shortest, the sixth, Tantra includes 131 verses, the longest one, the fourth, includes 535 verses. The text starts with a prologue that mentions about Siva, Saivism and its sects especially *SanMarga* Saivism that poet personally belong to, and some account on the autobiography of the poet. First Tantra begins with a section titled 'Divine instruction' that describes elaborately about the role of Siva gurus in the attainment of liberation since *SanMarga* sect is a guru (master) centered tradition. As the first step to Siddha-hood is to realize the true nature of worldly life, the Tantra notes down the requisites to be observed by a fresher.

Second Tantra establishes the supremacy of Siva with his five cosmic functions of creation, maintenance, destruction, obscuration and granting salvation, along with Siva-glorifying hymns citing various myths. While third Tantra explains about Yoga, its different kinds and techniques to perform it, the fourth Tantra is devoted to describe various mantras, mode of reciting and benefits. The fifth Tantra exposes different sects of Shaivism including *SanMarga* Shaivism but projecting the later as proper path, whereas sixth Tantra talks about asceticism. The sixth one establishes the importance and necessity of a Guru to attain the salvation and suggests the grace of Guru is worthful as God's grace. The discussion continues in seventh Tantra along with practical aspects of

[618] Sasivali, *Mysticism of Love in Saiva Tirumurais*, p. 111-127.

SanMarga Saivism. The tantra ends with portraying the true Guru, his qualities and attributes. Eighth Tantra, the second longest one, elucidates about liberation and nature of human body while its final sections stress the importance of Bhakti as a path of salvation. The last Tantra speaks about mystical vision of God and the bliss attained through liberation.[619] Thus, Tirumantiram is well-structured text dealing mostly on philosophical aspects of Shaivism and its sects, so the text may be considered as doctrine on Shaivism. While other texts of Tirumurai is personal expression of love, devotion and bliss, Tirumantiram stands out as philosophical text oof Shaivism. *SanMarga* sect of Shaivism that focus on Guru and his guidance to salvation is may compared with *Sheik* and *Mureed* system in Islamic mysticism.

In the second verse of Tirumantiram's introduction that termed as *Payiram,* poet acknowledges that he seeks and meditate to God whom he praised in first two hymns. Poet says that his love from heart's central core that God is equal to all without any difference and He seeks those who seeks Him; thus, poet rejects Varnashrama dharma that divides people on the basis of birth. By chanting His name with humble heart, God comes to the heart of devotee and He shines there, so the poet also chants His name continuously and confirms that God had entered the center of his heart. While some hymns of the poem acknowledge the greatness of Vedas, some other explains the greatness of Guru (teachers). Poet also describes his personal journey of devotion which started by bowing his head to the sacred feet of God and reciting his name in deepest core of his heart. The mystic names of Siva were flashed in his head which was lost in the devotion of the Shakti the consort of Siva. Thus, with ardent devotion, he experienced great bliss and freed from birth but his heart revolves around holy hymns chanting his glorious names (*Payiram* 2-6).[620]

---

[619] Maithili Thayanithy, *The Concept of Living Liberation in the Tirumantiram* (PhD Thesis, University of Toronto, 2010), p. 10-30.

[620] Tirumūlar, *The Tirumandiram*, ed. T. N Ganapathy, trans. T. V Venkataraman (Saint Etienne de Bolton, Quebec: Babaji's Kriya Yoga and Publications, 2013), p. 20-26.

In those fifty Siva-invocating verses of Payiram, Tirumular describes Siva's greatness, transcendence, quality of his grace that frees everyone from bondage. He portrays in those verses Siva as one with infinite compassion seated in the hearts of devotees but different from them, He is close to those who understand and keep him in their hearts, He listens the prayer of love and devotion, and His grace is enough to combat all sufferings. So, he draws himself as an example who seek His grace but all he knows is to praise the Siva, worship Him, keep Him always in his heart and seek His blessings. The next 16 verses speak the greatness of Vedas but he says that part leading to union with God is essence of Veda. In Payiram, poet Tirumular describes about the guru-tradition in which spirituality and wisdom are transmitted from masters who already attained the salvation. For Tirumular, one should start one's spiritual journey under capable guru who is well-versed with knowledge of God and guide him in right path. He continues to speak about his past and his experience under the Guru as a disciple.[621] From 111th verse of Payiram to 112th verse, poet tries to establish oneness of three Gods Brahma, Siva and Vishnu through doctrine of trinity. He states that they are one, co-equals and that one is Siva. It may not be wrong if a researcher shows the section that could be titled as 'The Trinity and the relationship'[622] as a proof of influence of Christianity in Bhakti tradition but it still needs in-depth research.

In the very first verse of Tirumantiram, Tirumular describes about the grace that was granted by God to him as He descended to his heart, melting it with love and filling it with great bliss. He continues in next verse that God has opened eyes of grace towards him, so all impurities were vanished from him (1.2-3).[623] Ten verses from 270 to 280 of first Tantra (hymn), poet describes about love to Siva and how to love Him, and says that Siva and love is one but someone feels they are two, so they should love Him till they realize them as one. He compares the body as sacrificial fire-pod and body-parts as objects to fires and calls to use his bones as fire-wood, and love God until his self-melts, only

---

[621] Tirumūlar, *The Tirumandiram*, p. 1-2.

[622] Tirumūlar, *The Tirumandiram*, p. 135-146.

[623] Tirumūlar, *The Tirumandiram*, p. 147-151.

then he can attain the God.[624] These kind of analogies in poems of Nayanar in which devotional acts are compared to Brahminic rituals, are shown as the proof of historians who suggests the Bhakti is revival of Brahmanical religion with indigenous Tamil elements intending to combat the influence of heterodox sects of Buddhists and Jains.[625] But in 85th verse of second Tantra, poet openly rejects the rituals and says that God will be only distant if one approaches him with rituals before fire while he establishes the supremacy of devotional path saying in same verse that yearning love will bring him closer and God will grant him the immortal body with bliss.[626] To be more precise on the issue, Tirumular says in 124th verse of fourth Tantra after explaining the importance of *Kriya* Yoga in which rituals and sacrifices are performed neatly, that one who is love with God doesn't need *Kriya* at all.[627]

In the section of love in first Tantra, poet continues to call fellow devotees to praise him as much as they can with pure love to God and their thoughts only wrapped in love with him, then he assures that Lord Siva also will melt in love, in return, with them because poet acknowledges that himself had experienced with it. The next 10 verses from 280 to 290, saint-poet explains about the love of Siva to devotees and the greatness of his love as it leads to liberation.[628]

Ten verses in 41th section of 8th Tantra elucidate the significance of Bhakti *Marga.* He acknowledges that he undertook the service of devotees to present the significance of devotion through the significance of devotees. He also acknowledges that God accepted him as a devotee because of devotees' grace. He continues that devotee easily find the God through devotion while he is distant for others because God also falls

---

[624] Tirumūlar, *The Tirumandiram*, p. 331-335.

[625] Judith G. Martin, *The Function of Mythic Figures in the Tirumantiram* (PhD Thesis, McMaster University), p. 84.

[626] Tirumūlar, *The Tirumandiram*, p. 512.

[627] Tirumūlar, *The Tirumandiram*, p. 1177-1178.

[628] Tirumūlar, *The Tirumandiram*, p. 335-351.

in love with devotees (8.2623-2626).[629] Poet also assures that devotees will get highest reward than any other even celestial Gods like Indra (Tirumantiram 2990).[630]

In the last Tantra in which union and merging with Siva is described, poet says if devotee unites with Siva in love, then he couldn't know the separation and continues to contemplate Siva only. He continues that if devotee thinks God, then God also thinks him but devotee has to firm his devotion only to him (Tirumantiram 2665,2667).[631] Tirumular also describes the state of devotees who are in bliss that they will fear, sob, rejoice, fall and prostrate, they will be overwhelmed in excitement and exhausted unaware of themselves and lost in rapture (Tirumantiram 2744). He continues in another verse (T. 2942) that inexhaustible bliss of devotees is beyond description and immeasurable. Tirumular expresses his state in devotion that he was melting with love weeping and bewailing, he glorified God while his bones were melting, he was moaning and raving day and night till he felt that he is eating, biting and chewing God (T. 2980).[632]

2.3.6. Eleventh Tirumurai

The eleventh Tirumurai is represented by collection of forty-one works, called as *Prabandha*s, by 12 devotional poets. In the Tirumurai also, we also witness theme of love depicted in *Nayaka-Nayaki* (hero-heroine) style as in ninth Tirumurai. Cheraman Perumal Nayanar had composed some hymns, named as Ponvannattantadi and Tiruvarur Mummanikkovai, in which his love of lord Siva is expressed through the words of heroin and her mother. The same is expressed by Kapilateva, Paranateva in their hymns named as 'Siveperuman Tiruvanatadi' in which Siva is glorified. Pattinattar also follows the same method in his poem of forty stanzas that named as Nanmanimalai, Tirukkalumalamummannkkovai and Tiruvitaimarutur Mummanikkovai. The other poets of eleventh Tirumurai who expressed their love of God are Ilamperuman and Nakkirateva

---

[629] Tirumūlar, *The Tirumandiram*, p. 2940-2943.

[630] Tirumūlar, *The Tirumandiram*, p. 3396.

[631] Tirumūlar, *The Tirumandiram*, p. 3005-3008.

[632] Tirumūlar, *The Tirumandiram*, p. 3098-3386.

Sivaperuman through their poems titled as Mummanikkovai and Tiruvalanculi Mummanikovai.[633]

The major feature of this kind of Bhakti in which their reverence and devotion is better expressed portraying as *Nayaki-Nayaka* (heroine-hero), is expressing different stages of their devotion according to the age group of women. Likewise, seven stages of a women are analogous to seven stages of soul and the transition from one stage to another stage is described beautifully. First stage of women starts from *Petai*, with age from five to seven, that resembles wish or desire of the soul to see the lord. In the stage, she is in childhood without any instinct of to be in love with someone. But her desire to see the God starts when she hears from mother that her father is a God without any beginning or end. The Second stage is *Petumpai* in which age is from seven to eleven. In the stage, the girl is aware of her beauty and starts wearing the dresses and ornaments that make her beautiful. In the stage, she comes to notice figure of God and his belongings drawn by her friends or another from close circle. Here her soul starts to constantly think God and His belongings losing her ornaments, dress and even charm. In the next stage of *Mankai*, she completely loses herself contemplating only God falling in love with him. The age of this group is twelve to thirteen but she feels him everywhere. [634]

In *Matantai*, the fourth stage representing age from fourteen to nineteen, she wants to experience the God as she is completely mad in love with him. Here poets use very emotional language often with expressions of lust. Being unable to control her passion, she wants to embrace and experience God but she gets depressed as she couldn't experience him at fullest. The age from 20 to 26 is represented by *Arivai* stage where she wants to taste him, and desire for his blessings is developed gradually. Here she sees and tastes him irregularly and enjoys every moment of their meeting. In the next stage of *Terivai*, she is in full devotion with God in which she only sees him in every object of the nature even her body. The age of *Terivai* is normally between twenty-six and thirty-two.

---

[633] Sasivali, *Mysticism of Love in Saiva Tirumurais*, p. 129-150

[634] Sasivali, *Mysticism of Love in Saiva Tirumurais*, p. 160-164

In the seventh and final stage of *Perilampen*, her highest devotion is witnessed surrendering her soul completely to God.[635] Here she experiences the union with him and lives in bliss. The real motive of this projection of love is to unleash their great contemplation and devotion of God in the best method, thus they constantly recite these poems and invite others too in order to develop Bhakti.

2.4. Bhagavat-Purana

Bhagavat-Purana is another text which is considered normally as textual support of Bhakti.[636] Purana is a kind of sacred scriptures in Hinduism in which ancient events are recorded but it contains myth more than history. Yet by the time of Chandogya Upanishad, it was considered as fifth Veda. Even Mahabharata is Purana in its kind but generally considered as *Itihasa* due to its length and influence among Hindus. There are 18 *Mahapurana*s (big puranas) with other numerous *Upapurana*s too and Bhagavat-Purana considers itself as fifth among these 18 Mahapuranas. Even though different opinions are put forward by Indologists on the writing period of the text from 1300 CE to 1200 BCE,[637] G.V. Tagare, famous researcher and translator of Bhagavata Purana places it in fourth century.[638] But it may be assumed rightly that text was compiled after tenth century because even Ramanuja (born in 1017) who is considered as first Hindu scholar and thinker to work systematically on Bhakti, didn't mention the text but by the time of Madhava (13th century) the text was much popular.[639] The composer of Bhagavat-Purana is also unknown but the possibility of one from southern India is much higher since the text refers to saints in South India only.[640] In Bhagavat purana itself, it is said that text

---

[635] Sasivali, *Mysticism of Love in Saiva Tirumurais*, p. 164-169.

[636] Cemil Kutluturk, *Hint Düşüncesinde İslam Algısı* (Istanbul: Dergah Yayınları, 2019), p. 129.

[637] Ganesh Vasudevo Tagare, *The Bhagavata-Purana* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidas Publishers, 2011), p. XVII-XXXIV.

[638] *Ganesh Vasudevo Tagare, trans., The Bhagavata-Purana,* p. XLI.

[639] Surendranath Dasgupta, *A History of Indian philosophy. Vol. 4: Indian Pluralism* (London: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2009), p. 1.

[640] Dasgupta, *A History of Indian Philosophy,* Vol. 4. p. 1.

was composed by great sage but name was not mentioned, so some scholars suggest sage Narayana is the composer while some others proposes Vyasa as the composer.[641] The text was subjected for many commentaries like *Bhagavata-tatparya* of Madhava and for summarizations too.[642]

Bhagavat Purana text starts with an invitation to meditate on supreme spirit who is omniscient but it continues towards cosmology in its first clause itself discussing *Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Thamas* the nub of Samkhya philosophy, therefore some commenters had neglected the talk on Bhakti and its visions, instead they focused around the discussions on nature and cosmology. The first chapter mainly discusses mainly about nature and its relation with soul.[643] In second chapter of first *Skandha* (part) in Purana, author mentions Bhakti as a path to peace and says:

"That is certainly the sublime religion for men, (religion) from which is created the devotion to Lord Vishnu- devotion which is without any (ulterior) motive, unobstructed (or constant) and by which the soul becomes deeply pacified. Loyal devotion (applied) to Lord Vasudeva immediately generates non-attachment which leads to causeless knowledge (BhP. 1/2/6,7)."[644]

Some commentators on the text had interpreted the word 'causeless knowledge' as unnecessary arguments intending Jnana *Marga*. But in next verses Bhagavatpurana recalls the importance of knowledge as it says:

"The sages who have faith in it (Brahman) visualize their own soul in themselves, through devotion which is combined with knowledge and non-attachment and which is developed by listening to the Vedanta. Who will not love (listen to) His narratives by whose sword-like

---

[641] *Ganesh Vasudevo Tagare, trans., The Bhagavata-Purana,* p. XLI.

[642] Dasgupta, *A History of Indian Philosophy,* Vol. 4. p. 1-2.

[643] Ganesh Vasudevo Tagare, trans., *The Bhagavata-Purana* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidas Publishers, 2011), p. 1-6.

[644] Ganesh Vasudevo Tagare, trans., *The Bhagavata-Purana,* p. 17.

meditation, the learned ones, becoming one with the Supreme Spirit cut asunder the knot-like acts producing bondage (BhP. 1/2/12,15)."[645]

It continues that evils will be destroyed by continuous services of devotees; therefore, wise men will always practice devotion to God in order to purify their hearts.[646] But in order to get Bhakti developed quickly, one must follow dharma first.[647] In many places, the text discusses meditation but not in relation with Bhakti, rather as steps to develop Yoga.[648]

Amid extensive discussions according to Samkhya philosophy, the mention about Bhakti happens only in third chapter of Bhagavat Purana. Chapter 29 in third part of Bhagavat Purana discusses about Bhakti and its types when the question 'what is Bhakti' was raised in its second Shloka (hymn). From seventh hymn, it is replied that there are different types of Bhakti but author talks here classification according to Samkhya philosophy and says:

"Oh mother, the path of Bhakti is regarded as having many branches; for the objects of men differ according to natural dispositions and attributes. He who becomes my devotee with the intention of doing injury (to others) or out of hypocrisy and jealousy of under the influence of anger or with an outlook full of differences, is called *Tamasa* type of devotee. He who, with a desire of worldly pleasures or of fame or authoritative power, worships me in my images and entertains notions of difference, is a devotee of *Rajasa* type. He who wishes to purge all (his) karmas, or desires to dedicate them to the Supreme Lord or worships the Lord with the simple

---

[645] Ganesh Vasudevo Tagare, trans., *The Bhagavata-Purana,* p. 18-19.

[646] Ganesh Vasudevo Tagare*, trans., The Bhagavata-Purana,* p. 19-20.

[647] Ganesh Vasudevo Tagare*, trans., The Bhagavata-Purana,* p. 156.

[648] Ganesh Vasudevo Tagare*, trans., The Bhagavata-Purana,* p. 386-391.

objective of worship (and expecting no return for it) but entertains the idea of difference, is called a devotee of *Sattvika* type (BhP. 3/29/7-10)."[649]

After discussing these three types of Bhakti, composer explains about *Nirguna* Bhakti and says:

"Just as waters of the Ganga continuously flow into the sea, similiarly by merely listening to (the description of) my qualities the mind incessantly flows to me who reside in the hearts of all (beings). This close and intimate devotion to the Lord (Puruşottama), without any ulterior motive, is defnitley regarded as the charachteristic of the Nirguan type of Bhakti that mere listening to the qualities of God enhances mind to flow towards God who resides in the heart of all beings, thus this pure and close devotion to God without any other motives is main quality of *Nirguna* Bhakti (BhP. 3/29/11,12)."[650]

Author continues that Even liberation, same powers and form like God, and unity with God are offered to those *Nirguna* bhaktas, they will not accept anything without devotion to God. There *Nirguna* bhakta transcends from trinity of three *Guna*s and samsara circle attaining God's state, this stage of *Nirguna* bhakta is described according to Samkhya philosophy. But in order to get his mind purified, he needs to carry out dharma and religious duties carefully with touching and worshipping his image, so it may be perceived that Bhakti mentioned here is not same *Nirguna* Bhakti that witnessed in Kabir and followers.[651]

Chapter thirty-two of third part also mentions Bhakti and some commentors understood that objective of chapter is describing the excellence of Bhakti. Twenty third hymn says that if devotion to God was practiced carefully it will generate knowledge that leads to God-realization,[652] so it may be wrong to assess the chapter describes the excellence of Bhakti but the hymn derogates Bhakti only as a medium for knowledge that

---

[649] Ganesh Vasudevo Tagare*, trans., The Bhagavata-Purana,* p. 392-393.

[650] Ganesh Vasudevo Tagare*, trans., The Bhagavata-Purana,* p. 393.

[651] Ganesh Vasudevo Tagare*, trans., The Bhagavata-Purana,* p. 391-394.

[652] Ganesh Vasudevo Tagare*, trans., The Bhagavata-Purana,* p. 409-412.

leads to God-realization. Yet author describes in thirty second hymn that objective of both Jnana and Bhakti which based on firm devotion to God are same, and in subsequent verses, he counts Bhakti too along with Karma and Jnana.[653] Nine forms of Bhakti are described in twenty third hymn of fifth chapter in seventh part as the author says:

"There are nine forms of devotion to Lord Vishnu-19to hear the names, episodes etc. of Vishnu, 2) to sing of his name and glories, 3) to remember him, 4) to render service unto him, 5) to worship him, 6) to pay obeisance to him, 7) to dedicate all one's actions to him, 8) to confide him as a friend, and 9) to offer one's body and belongings to his service and care. I regard it as the highest type of learning, if one offers himself completely to the Lord and performs this nine-fold devotion (BhP. 7/5/23,24)."[654]

When we go through last verse which states that performing this nine-fold devotion will regard as highest type of learning, we come to understand that Bhakti is regarded as a medium to knowledge here in the verse too.

Author of Bhagavata purana explains how to develop Bhakti to God in eleventh chapter of eleventh part and says that one must listen to glorious stories of God and singing them through contemplation along with observing all duties of dharma, *Artha* (making wealth) and Kama (enjoyment of pleasures). Here author points to observe the duties which is Karma, so Bhakti is also dependent here. But with dedicating these obligations to please the God and depending only on him, one can reach zenith of devotion by which saintly persons are associated with God and attain to *Vaikuntha* (state of bliss). In the next verse, author describes about the best of devotees:

"Realizing me or (if unrealized) contemplating on me as unlimited by time and space, as the Inner Soul abiding in all and essentially characterized by 'Is'-ness, (existence) knowledge

---

[653] Ganesh Vasudevo Tagare*, trans., The Bhagavata-Purana,* p. 412-414.

[654] Ganesh Vasudevo Tagare*, trans., The Bhagavata-Purana,* p. 912.

and bliss those who worship me exclusively, are definitely regarded by me as the best of devotees (BhP. 11/11/33)."[655]

In following verses, different modes of devotion are described including touching and embracing God's idols as well as his devotees too with serving them, taking pilgrimage to sacred places of God and offering flowers and foods to him. Installing his images in temples, arranging gardens and constructing temples are also regarded as expressions of Bhakti. In the last hymn of the chapter, author says:

"Generally, there is no other expedient (to God-realization) except the path of devotion generated in association with saintly people, for I am the chief support and refuge of the pious saints (BhP. 11/11/48)."[656]

With last hymn, it may understand rightly that *Bhagavata purana* considered here Bhakti as a path of salvation without any dependance on Karma or Jnana, still it requires the guideship of a saint.

Fourteenth hymn in fourteenth chapter of eleventh portion explains whoever dedicates his heart to God without hankering anything even moksha is dearer to God than his consort and even his soul. The most important verses in the text regarding Bhakti that highlight Bhakti as independent path of salvation with relegating Karma and Jnana paths and making those dependent on Bhakti, come down:

"Neither the path of Yoga nor the Samkhya or Dharma (righteous duties prescribed by Veda) or the study of the Vedas or performance of austerities or renunciation lead a person attain to me as does the intensive and well-advanced devotion. I, the very beloved soul of saints, am realized through unswerving devotion and faith. Exclusive devotion established in me purifies even outcastes like Chandalas from their low birth. Neither Dharma (righteousness even though)

---

[655] Ganesh Vasudevo Tagare*, trans., The Bhagavata-Purana,* p. 1971.

[656] Ganesh Vasudevo Tagare*, trans., The Bhagavata-Purana,* p. 1973.

coupled with truthfulness and mercy nor knowledge reinforced by austerities can thoroughly purify of sins a person who is devoid of devotion (BhP. 11/14/20-22)."[657]

Another notable point is that he offers purification for low castes too here, so it may be the sole portion where Bhakti had mentioned in its full scope of social aspect. Then author continues to describe the states of devotee to teach method of practicing devotion and says that his hairs stand out due to devotional love, heart melts down with intense devotion, tears of joy trickle down on the cheek and he overwhelms with devotional songs expressing emotions and dancing without considering the public. Listening and repeating his glories and names is also another method of meditation while keeping his mind only on God helps him to get absorbed in God. To get these methods executed perfectly, he must avoid the association with women and sit in a comfortable solitude contemplating only on God. But he again mentions path of Yoga when he explains the techniques of contemplation.[658] In nineteenth chapter of same portion, he reiterates again Bhakti as most effective path repeating aforesaid method of practicing it but he includes prostration to God and his devotees as those lead to devotion.[659]

Twentieth chapter of eleventh portion elucidates and evaluates three paths of moksha namely Karma, Jnana and Bhakti. First six hymns of the chapter talk about the authority of Vedas including its teaching of Varnashrama dharma as these are the distinguisher of good and evil and if these teachings of Vedas are ignored, it causes bewilderments. Author proposes the path of Karma who is behind desires and didn't disgust with rituals while path of Jnana is recommended for one who is disgusted with rituals. The path of devotion is recommended only for one who luckily cherished a devout faith in the stories of God and neither disgusted nor attached with Karma. Yet he must continue to perform rituals observing Varnashrama dharma until he gets fed up with it. In any conditions, everyone must follow path of Karma firstly before entering Jnana or

---

[657] Ganesh Vasudevo Tagare*, trans., The Bhagavata-Purana,* p. 1992.

[658] Ganesh Vasudevo Tagare, *trans., The Bhagavata-Purana,* p. 1993-1996.

[659] Ganesh Vasudevo Tagare*, trans., The Bhagavata-Purana,* p. 2031.

Bhakti paths. He continues that if one leads a life observing Karma path without committing sins, he naturally gains knowledge and if he is lucky, he finds devotion that is superior to knowledge. Even though author explains that neither Karma nor Jnana are general pre-conditions for one who continues devotional path after he luckily attains great faith in God's stories and names, he states that one couldn't start devotional path directly before Karma.[660]

As we witnessed in the evaluation of this long text, even though Bhakti was counted as one of three paths, it is not proposed as independent path to salvation but an optional path, if he was lucky to find it, after observing path of Karma and teachings of Vedas. Repeating the necessity of following dharma including Varnashrama dharma is clear evidence for one who rightly argues that text is not a source for origin of Bhakti but only an effort to bring Bhakti to religious fold dominated by Vedas and path of Karma. Moreover, discussing Yoga philosophy wherever Bhakti is mentioned points to text's allegiance Samkhya school of philosophy. Discussing Samkhya philosophy in relation with its three *guna*s namely Sattva, Rajas and Tamas is enough proof on the text is a philosophical text of Samkhya.

Even though some mentions on Bhakti are found in Bhagavat-Purana which is a long text with almost 11000 *Sloka*s (hymns),[661] it may be wrong to evaluate Bhakti as the key teaching of text. Sridhvara Swami (n.d.) in his work *Bhavarthabodhini* commentary on the Bhagavat-Purana states *Chathuslokibhagavata* as essence of Bhagavat-Purana. *Chathuslokibhagavata* is four hymns of Bhagavat-Purana starting from 32nd and ending in 35th hymns of 9th chapter in second *Skandha* (part) of Bhagavat-Purana. But these four verses deal only with knowledge of Bhagavan (God), qualities of Bhagavan and that Bhagavan is always accompanied with his eternal associates. Jiva Goswami

---

[660] Ganesh Vasudevo Tagare*, trans., The Bhagavata-Purana,* p. 2035-2040.

[661] Karsandas Mulji, *History of the Sect of Maharajas, Or Vallabhacharyas, in Western India* (London: Trübner and Company, 1865), p. 14.

(d.1598) also expresses the same vision in his commentary *Kramasandarbha*.[662] According to Vira Raghava (12th century), a Ramanuja follower, states in his commentary *Bhagavata Chandrika* that main discussion of the text is Dharma.[663] It is notable that G.V. Tagare didn't mention Bhakti in ten topics when he classified Skandhas (part) on the basis of subject matter.[664]

2.5. Shandilya Bhaktisutra

Another major text that completely deals with Bhakti is *Shandilya Bhaktisutra*,[665] named after *Shandilya* who was believed as a sage in ancient times. The author of 'Shandilya Bhaktisutra' is unknown and the date of text is also unknown.[666] As in traditional sources, he is believed to be lived in post-Krishna Gita period as the citations to the philosophies of many scriptures like *Srimad Bhagavat Mahapuran*, *Nrisingh puran*, *Vishnupuran* and *Mahabharata* as well as some Upanishads that existed in the period, are found in the text.[667] Since the definition of Shandilya is found in Narada Bhaktisutra, it may be right to say that Shandilya Bhaktisutra was penned down before Narada Bhaktisutra.

When compared to *Narada Bhaktisutra,* the texts differ in the approaches towards Bhakti as Narada exposes it in an emotional level linked to the heart while Shandilya describes it from philosophical and intellectual angle, yet both texts are most referred to understand Bhakti comprehensively. The difference in exposition on Bhakti

---

[662] Kiyokazu Okita, "The Bhagavata Purana in Four Verses: Jiva Gosvami's Kramsandarbha," in *Caitanya Vaiṣṇava philosophy: tradition, reason, and devotion*, ed. Ravi M. Gupta (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Pub. Company, 2014), p. 61-62.

[663] Ganesh Vasudevo Tagare*, The Bhagavata-Purana,* p. 6.

[664] Ganesh Vasudevo Tagare*, The Bhagavata-Purana,* p. XXIII.

[665] Both *Sandilya* and *Shandilya* are seen and Shandilya was preferred here.

[666] Nanda Lal Sinha, *The SandilyaSutram with the commentary of Svapneswara* (Allahabad: Sudhindhra Nath Basu, 1918), p. III.

[667] Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia, trans., *Shandilya Bhaktisutra, Aphorisms for devotion to god and The principles of the philosophy of love for Him.* (Faizabad: Pothi online publishers, 2018), p. 5-7.

ensues from their distinct attitudes in gaining Bhakti as Narada chose the way easy to be follow and practical path of pure devotion and love towards Lord while Shandilya focused firstly on understanding the logic and philosophy behind the supremacy of Bhakti path over others and then on techniques to achieve it, thus the text revolved around philosophical and intellectual issues related with Bhakti. So, *Shandilya Bhaktisutra* as a text is based on logical reasoning and citing of instances from the scriptures to demonstrate the effectiveness of Bhakti as a supreme path to gain mukti or moksha, thus, *Narada Bhaktisutra* will attract those who are driven by the emotions of heart while *Shandilya Bhaktisutra* would appeal to a person who needs intellectual basis to be convinced.[668] For Shandilya was sage pioneered in philosophies of Hinduism, well versed scholar in Upanishad and other scriptures, his narratives and efforts in demonstrating Bhakti as superior path with strong evidences from the scriptures itself has very instrumental in filling the gaps that occurred between Jnana and Bhakti *Marga*s as the later often neglects the importance of knowledge i.e. the learning of Vedic and other texts, the case that ignored by many Bhakti devotees due to its status of being prohibited to low castes.

As we examine the content of *Shandilya Bhaktisutra*, we understand that the text can be classified into four headings;

1) *Pramaan*s; the proofs related with Bhakti as a superior path,
2) *Prameya*; the object that is known through these proofs, and Supreme Lord is the ultimate object in Bhakti
3) *Sadhan*as; the practical means or ways to achieve this object and here it is attainment of God-realization.

[668] Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia, trans., *Shandilya Bhaktisutra, Aphorisms for devotion to god and The principles of the philosophy of love for Him*, p. 9.

4) *Mukti*; the final liberation where one's personal atman (soul) is merged with cosmic atman and freed from birth recycle.[669]

when coming to '*Pramaan*s', these are of three kinds

1. Proofs with one of five sense organs of perception such as eyes, ears, skin, nose and tongue
2. Proofs that are imagined by applying the mind and logic and based on inference
3. Proofs that are based on the words of scriptures. Shandilya thinks the last one is authentic in nature and the best because it always speaks about the Universal truth.[670]

The '*Prameya*' also is of three (a) God or Supreme being, also known as Brahman in the Upanishads (b) the *Jiva* or the living being and (c) the physical world, both the animate and inanimate. For Shandilya, the knowledge of Brahman is the best because it represents the cosmic consciousness that is eternal and only the spiritual truth in this creation. *Jiva* and the world, the other two are manifestations of Brahman, hence subsidiary to the Supreme being.[671] *Sadhana* are the means to attain one's objective, and here it is to attain God-realization. There are different kinds of *Sadhana*s like meditation (Yoga), contemplation (*Dhyan*), austerity (*Tapa*), religious sacrifices (*Yagya)* and so on, but the best path is Bhakti the devotion to God and Shandilya proves it in the text by citing the philosophies in the sacred texts and scriptures.[672]

---

[669] Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia, trans., *Shandilya Bhaktisutra, Aphorisms for devotion to god and The principles of the philosophy of love for Him*, p. 10.

[670] Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia, trans., *Shandilya Bhaktisutra, Aphorisms for devotion to god and The principles of the philosophy of love for Him*, p. 10.

[671] Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia, trans., *Shandilya Bhaktisutra, Aphorisms for devotion to god and The principles of the philosophy of love for Him*, p. 10.

[672] Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia, trans., *Shandilya Bhaktisutra, Aphorisms for devotion to god and The principles of the philosophy of love for Him*, p. 11.

Like Narada did in his *Bhakti Sutra*, Shandilya also categorized Bhakti into two; (a) '*Para* Bhakti' the supreme and primary form of Bhakti (b) '*Gauna* Bhakti' the secondary and subsidiary to primary Bhakti. The *Para* Bhakti is primarily connected with inner self and directly concerned with the heart and soul which are sincerely and intensely in love with God and he loses his consciousness in surroundings, whereas *Gauna* Bhakti is external form of devotion that focuses on doing deeds such as chanting the Lord's name, singing the glories of Lord, doing Yoga and other religious and social activities.[673] Even both categories lead to goal, *Para* Bhakti attain the God realization immediately but *Gauna* Bhakti takes a long time as it grows step by step.[674]

Shandilya, in the text, has also categorized Bhakti into three according its ways of correspondence: (a) *Gyan* Bhakti; in which one develops his devotion for the Supreme Being when he becomes enlighten and wise, and when understands the truth and truthful path to God realization, (b) *Yoga* Bhakti; meditative and contemplative path of developing devotion (c) *Gaun* Bhakti; obtaining devotion in a subtle manner by practicing different spiritual path. *Gaun* Bhakti is further classified into three again according to in which situation devotee starts his devotion: (a) *Artha* Bhakti; when one has suffered, he seeks refuge with God in order to overcome his difficulties, (b) *Jigyasa* Bhakti; when one has heard about the Lord and wishes to explore more about him and follows it to examine the feeling rather than pure sake of God (c) *Arthaarthi* Bhakti; when one expects material rewards through devotion. Like most of Bhakti proponents advocated, Shandilya has also advocated that all human beings have an equal right for moksha or Mukti through the path of Bhakti irrespective of his caste and creed.[675]

---

[673] Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia, trans., *Shandilya Bhaktisutra, Aphorisms for devotion to god and The principles of the philosophy of love for Him,* p. 11.

[674] Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia, trans., *Shandilya Bhaktisutra, Aphorisms for devotion to god and The principles of the philosophy of love for Him*, p. 11.

[675] Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia, trans., *Shandilya Bhaktisutra, Aphorisms for devotion to god and The principles of the philosophy of love for Him,* p. 11-12.

As Shandilya Bhaktisutra is an important text that penned to depict Bhakti only, it is unavoidable to go through the aphorisms of the text at least in a summarizing mode. The text - also called as *Shandilya Bhakti Shatak*[676] denoting the hundred- starts with a call to discuss Bhakti and Shandilya defines it as follows;

"That (Bhakti) is to have supreme, true, undiluted and untainted love and attachment (para nurakti) for the Supreme Being, the Lord God of creation (risvare) (ShBhSr. 1/1/2)."[677]

Shandilya defines this form of Bhakti as primary and pure form of Bhakti citing the reason in the next verse;

"It is because he who has established himself in 'it' (i.e., who has established his own 'self' in the supreme 'Self' known as Ishwar or Brahman, the Supreme Lord, by being one with him; he who has attained God-realization by following the path of Bhakti) is deemed to have found the eternal nectar of immortality and bliss unbound. Verily indeed, this is the universal and unequivocal declaration of the scriptures (ShBhSr. 1/1/3)."[678]

Shandilya continues that this attachment is possible only by attainment of wisdom and enlightenment about the self because the self of a devotee which is pure consciousness known as the 'Atman', is also the same consciousness known as 'Brahman' and '*Paramatma'* that operates the universal level of existence. As the aphorism raises the question whether Bhakti is same with knowledge, next aphorism answers the question;

---

[676] *Shatak* means hundred

[677] Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia, trans., *Shandilya Bhaktisutra, Aphorisms for devotion to god and The principles of the philosophy of love for Him* p. 17.

[678] Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia, trans., *Shandilya Bhaktisutra, Aphorisms for devotion to god and The principles of the philosophy of love for Him,* p. 19.

"Besides this, it is also observed that with the rise of Bhakti in a person's heart, Gyan (knowledge) is proportionately reduced (till a time comes when Bhakti is at zenith and Gyan is completely eliminated (ShBhSr. 1/1/5)."[679]

Shandilya's answer to the question continues in later aphorisms too;

"Bhakti is not dependent upon any action to fructify or become effective (nakriya) as is the case with Gyan which requires diligent efforts in order to mature and bear fruits (to yield the desired result). This is why the spiritual rewards of Bhakti are profound and infinite (ShBhSr. 1/1/7,8)."[680]

Aphorisms from 1 to 9 deals mainly with Bhakti's relation with *Gyan* (knowledge) and concludes that even a person with *Gyan* can submit himself before the God like a devotee but it doesn't mean that he has Bhakti, these aphorisms form first part of first chapter of the text.[681]

Second part of first chapter starts with stating the supremacy of Bhakti over other spiritual practices and says "*Bhakti is the fundamental and principal means and others (karma-jnana etc.) are subordinate and depending upon her. Bhakti is the substratum* (ShBhSr. 1/2/1,2)."[682] Shandilya claims that there are references in the scriptures regarding this, contrary what it perceived that scriptures endorse mostly Karma or Jnana *Marga,* then, Shandilya exposes objections against theory that ultimate reward of Bhakti is to 'see God'.[683] He shows the attainment of liberation by *Gopi*s (cowherd) with mere deep love

---

[679] Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia, trans., *Shandilya Bhaktisutra, Aphorisms for devotion to god and The principles of the philosophy of love for Him*, p. 23.

[680] Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia, trans., *Shandilya Bhaktisutra, Aphorisms for devotion to god and The principles of the philosophy of love for Him*, p. 24-25.

[681] C Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia, trans., *Shandilya Bhaktisutra, Aphorisms for devotion to god and The principles of the philosophy of love for Him*, p. 19-27.

[682] Sri Shandilya, *Sri Shandilya Bhaktisutras*, trans. Tridandi Sri Prajnan Yati, p. 27-28.

[683] Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia, trans., *Shandilya Bhaktisutra, Aphorisms for devotion to god and The principles of the philosophy of love for Him*, p. 29-32.

and affection towards Lord Krishna in spite of their non-access to knowledge of scriptures and being unable to see the Lord in physical terms as an evidence for his claims done in previous aphorisms.[684] In fifth aphorism of the chapter, Shandilya states that God-realization is corresponded with the help of Bhakti as well as it also helps to get the knowledge of God. He says that basic awareness about Bhakti and *Gyan* that both of them have one single objective which is to bring God-realization, will remove all debates and oppositions.[685] Then he continues to talk about pure form of Bhakti and that is when applied to Supreme being and all other Bhakti forms done towards sundry God, Goddess or any other deity are degraded and not true form or purpose of Bhakti.[686]

Shandilya in next aphorism states that Bhakti is important in both Jnana and Yoga and both are subservient to Bhakti as it is substratum to bring the final success.[687] Then he continues with another secondary form of Bhakti which is Samadhi a trance-like state of transcendental existence since it is natural accompaniment of success in Bhakti.[688] In the next aphorism, Shandilya rejects the argument that Bhakti is an attachment to God and attachment itself not a good virtue as it leads entanglement with the object of adoration,[689] because this is not attachment with material objects but with Supreme Soul. Thus, Shandilya openly proclaims the superiority of Bhakti and bhaktas and says:

---

[684] Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia, trans., *Shandilya Bhaktisutra, Aphorisms for devotion to god and The principles of the philosophy of love for Him*, p. 34.

[685] Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia, trans., *Shandilya Bhaktisutra, Aphorisms for devotion to god and The principles of the philosophy of love for Him*, p. 36-39.

[686] Sri Shandilya, *Sri Shandilya Bhaktisutras*, trans. Tridandi Sri Prajnan Yati, p. 42.

[687] Sri Shandilya, *Sri Shandilya Bhaktisutras*, trans. Tridandi Sri Prajnan Yati, p. 43.

[688] Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia, trans., *Shandilya Bhaktisutra, Aphorisms for devotion to god and The principles of the philosophy of love for Him*, p. 43.

[689] Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia, trans., *Shandilya Bhaktisutra, Aphorisms for devotion to god and The principles of the philosophy of love for Him*, p. 44.

"Therefore, without any contradiction Bhakti indeed is the highest of al and a Bhakta is superior to Karmi (one who seeks moksha with Karma), Jnani (one who seeks moksha with Jnana) or a Yogi (one who seeks moksha with Yoga) (ShBhSr. 1/2/12)."[690]

To establish his view of Bhakti's supremacy, Shandilya shows the conversation between Arjuna and Lord Krishna in the form of question and answers, as evidence.[691]

In the next aphorisms, Shandilya explains about '*Shradha'* and how it is related with Bhakti and says '*Shraddha*' is an excellent virtue but not considered as Bhakti in ordinary form but its glorious from leads to self-realization and God-realization.[692] '*Shraddha*' which means belief, conviction and reverence is an adamant chase of his master and it cements Bhakti when it is executed towards Supreme being. Then he proceeds again to scriptures and its role towards Bhakti and states that all 'Brahma-*Kand*'[693] are meant to foster Bhakti towards Brahman the Supreme Lord not to mere gain knowledge about Him, and if this fundament is lacked then the whole intention and purpose of scriptures goes wasted and first chapter ends here.[694]

Second chapter of the text starts with pointing the necessity of keeping one's mind and intellect focused on the means and paths to gain the correct knowledge till the emancipation is obtained, mentioning Sage Kashyap's view that seeker is able to attain moksha only when the mind and intellect are directed towards understanding of Supreme Truth. Author also mentions sage Vyasa's view also, though there is slight difference, that the mind and the intellect that is focused on the Atman is the one that leads to final

---

[690] Sri Shandilya, *Sri Shandilya Bhaktisutras*, trans. Tridandi Sri Prajnan Yati, p. 48.

[691] Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia, trans., *Shandilya Bhaktisutra, Aphorisms for devotion to god and The principles of the philosophy of love for Him*, p. 46.

[692] Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia, trans., *Shandilya Bhaktisutra, Aphorisms for devotion to god and The principles of the philosophy of love for Him*, p. 47-48.

[693] Vedas, accoridng to its contents' divided into two: *Karma kand* that deals with rituals and '*Brahma kand'* which is about the knowledge of 'Brahm' the Supreme Lord.

[694] Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia, trans., *Shandilya Bhaktisutra, Aphorisms for devotion to god and The principles of the philosophy of love for Him*, p. 49.

attainment of bliss and beatitude.[695] Shandilya reconciles the two views and states that moksha can be attained by both the paths, i.e., by focusing on the 'self' as well as on the 'Brahman' because both represent the cosmic transcendental consciousness. Shandilya continues that the notion of *Jiva* and Brahman are different is wrong because it represents the same pure consciousness that exists at two levels of creation, the *Jiva* being at microcosmic while Brahman is macrocosmic. *Jiva* is subject to worldly miseries as the real nature of its own self is not understood, and infinite glories is integral quality of Brahman as they are natural to it.[696]

The next aphorisms revolve around Atman, Maya and Brahman and its' interconnections but explanations seem hard to be digested because of its complex structure as it describes that Supreme being employs his delusion-creating powers known as Maya to create *Prakriti* (nature) and since the origin of Maya as well as Prakriti can be tracked to Brahman, there is no wrong in understanding that owe their origin ultimately to Brahman. In the end, it is concluded that both Braham and Maya play role in the creation and cause of the nature, and there is no third one other than the pure consciousness and the revelation of this consciousness since *Prakirti* and Brahman have coexisted ever since the time creation came into being.[697]

Shandilya proceeds that attainment of Bhakti's true form and perfection is revealed in visibly observable signs that are outlined in scriptures and in 44th aphorism, ten signs are counted and these are:

- *Sammana*: to have great respect and reverence for the Lord God,
- *Bahumana*: respect to anything that has any relation with God,

---

[695] Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia, trans., *Shandilya Bhaktisutra, Aphorisms for devotion to god and The principles of the philosophy of love for Him*, p. 51-54.

[696] Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia, trans., *Shandilya Bhaktisutra, Aphorisms for devotion to god and The principles of the philosophy of love for Him,* p. 54-58.

[697] Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia, trans., *Shandilya Bhaktisutra, Aphorisms for devotion to god and The principles of the philosophy of love for Him*, p. 60-64.

- *Priti*: feeling of exceptional happiness to see or meet a devotee of the Lord as much as meeting the Lord himself.
- *Viraha*: feeling of intense pain of separation from the Lord.
- *Etravichiktsa*: not to be interested in the matters that is not directly related to the Lord.
- *Mahima Khyati*: to remain engaged in glorifying Lord and his good virtues.
- *Tadarthapranasthana*: to live for the sake of God and serve him alone.
- *Tadiyata*: firm conviction to Lord neglecting all other possessions.
- *Sarvatadhbava*: to see Lord in every creature, everything and everywhere in the world.
- *Apratikulyadin*i: not to act in any way that is against the wishes of Lord.[698]

As an answer to question whether devotions towards different incarnations of the Supreme Lord are considered as pure Bhakti form or not, next aphorisms are brought to state that Bhakti directed towards the various manifestations of the Supreme Lord is also deemed as authentic form of Bhakti, and to demonstrate that many scriptures had endorsed this view but he also recognizes that is not equal to devotion to the Supreme being himself.[699] Not to serve Kings, not to engage in gambling and other deceitful activities are also requirements to be in pure form of Bhakti as they are prohibited in scriptures. Then, Shandilya rejects the argument raised from last two aphorisms that it would be wrong to worship Lord Vasudeva and devote for him, because he had manifested form of the Supreme Being with body like others and also ruled the earth. Then he describes the reason of rejection that Lord Vasudeva is same as Supreme Lord

[698] Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia, trans., *Shandilya Bhaktisutra, Aphorisms for devotion to god and The principles of the philosophy of love for Him*, p. 65-66.

[699] Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia, trans., *Shandilya Bhaktisutra, Aphorisms for devotion to god and The principles of the philosophy of love for Him*, p. 68-73.

and it is endorsed by the scriptures.[700] Shandilya says this is the case when Bhakti is applied to other incarnations of Vishnu[701] and the first part of second chapter of the text ends here.

Second part of second chapter starts with means by which Bhakti can be developed and it is *Bhajan* the act of worshipping God by remembering him and his glories, reciting and repeating his holy name and keeping his mind focused exclusively on the Lord is one of the primary means. Like *Bhajan*, *Kirtan* the act of worshipping the Lord by singing his divine glories, chanting mantras either single or in a group with enthusiasm is also another tool to practice Bhakti. Among different means to develop Bhakti, repeating and chanting the Lord's name holy name and listening with due devotion and faith is the way to achieve Bhakti easily according to Sage Jaimini.[702] The deeds that are offered selflessly to the Lord is also tool for Bhakti since it don't bring entanglements and is free from the chain of cause and effect.[703] Another important tool is *Dhyan* the deep thought, contemplation and concentration of mind focused on an object with attentive and constant remembrance of the Lord and it will help turn his mind away from this material world and concentrate only on God-realization.[704]

After counting some means to develop Bhakti, Shandilya turns his focus on *Yajna* which was interpreted often as the sacrifices in Vedas mainly fire sacrifices; the ritual neglected by most Bhakti proponents but he claims the interpretation is wrong and it actually refers the worship that offered selflessly to Supreme Being marking self-

---

[700] Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia, trans., *Shandilya Bhaktisutra, Aphorisms for devotion to god and The principles of the philosophy of love for Him*, p. 73-79.

[701] Sri Shandilya, *Sri Shandilya Bhaktisutras*, trans. Tridandi Sri Prajnan Yati, p. 101.

[702] Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia, trans., *Shandilya Bhaktisutra, Aphorisms for devotion to god and The principles of the philosophy of love for Him*, p. 80-86.

[703] Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia, trans., *Shandilya Bhaktisutra, Aphorisms for devotion to god and The principles of the philosophy of love for Him*, p. 88.

[704] Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia, trans., *Shandilya Bhaktisutra, Aphorisms for devotion to god and The principles of the philosophy of love for Him*, p. 89.

surrender of performer in order fulfill his desires.[705] Shandilya then disapproves the tradition of '*Padodak*' performed as a part of ritual, that is to wash the feet of deity being worshipped and this water is being distributed by priests among the worshippers as holy water which is said to have some sacred powers, and he demonstrates it is practically impossible since Lord's feet is not present before worshipper, therefore, any offering to holy feet of the Lord is considered as '*Padakok*' without any need of physical activities like washing with water.[706] Then he talks about errors committed during the offerings and worships unintentionally that can be neutralized with certain methods which vary according to the types of sin.[707]

In the next aphorism, Shandilya repeats what it was said in Bhagavad-Gita also that any simple offering may be leaf or flower would be accepted as a special gift if it was done with full love and devotion like the deeds that was done selfless and for the sake of others. In next aphorisms, Shandilya terms this kind of Bhakti through means like Kirtan, Bhajan, *Dyaan, Japa* as '*Gauna* Bhakti' which are also remedy for sins committed inadvertent and categorizes it into three namely *Arta* Bhakti, *Jigyasa* Bhakti and *Artharthita* Bhakti which are discussed early in our work.[708] Shandilya also ensures that these easily practicable means can normalize the negative effects of sins, instead of heavy and difficult penances that is described by Vedas and speaks:

"Even for the expiration of the gravest offences, there is absolutely no need for a devotee to observe severe penance like Chandrayana Vrata etc. because when he has taken recourse to constant chanting of Divine Name till the death does not befall upon him. For a devotee even a little act of devotion destroys gravest sin, because Bhakti has got such an extra-ordinary power.

---

[705] Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia, trans., *Shandilya Bhaktisutra, Aphorisms for devotion to god and The principles of the philosophy of love for Him*, p. 90.

[706] Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia, trans., *Shandilya Bhaktisutra, Aphorisms for devotion to god and The principles of the philosophy of love for Him*, p. 91.

[707] Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia, trans., *Shandilya Bhaktisutra, Aphorisms for devotion to god and The principles of the philosophy of love for Him*, p. 92.

[708] Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia, trans., *Shandilya Bhaktisutra, Aphorisms for devotion to god and The principles of the philosophy of love for Him*, p. 92-97.

Because steadfast devotion makes the Lord stationed at heart therefore for the expiation of sins it does not require any other assistance as Bhakti serves the self-some purpose, like the post of the threshing floor (ShBhSr. 2/2/20-22)."[709]

Like he had done earlier to bring the ideas from Bhagavat-Gita, he also outlined that everyone irrespective cast and creed has an equal right to have Bhakti, thus to attain the eternal peace, liberated from Samsara circle. He reminds the followers of Bhakti to learn its path and mature in it to attain Mukti and never give up in the half way because scriptures endorse the view that those who attained perfection in Bhakti attain *Mukti* easily and those who are not, attain it gradually.[710] Shandilya understands Bhakti as true purport of BhagavatGita, so he says:

"One who has understood the essence knows that the true purport of the Gita is exclusive or unalloyed devotion to Godhead. Exclusive unalloyed devotion to Godhead is the sine qua non of all the lessons: thus, spoke Srimad Bhagvat Gita (ShBhSr. 2/2/28,29)."[711]

In the third chapter of the text, Shandilya rejects the argument that argues Vedas are too difficult to understand and their knowledge is complicated and esoteric for ordinary *Jiva* (living being) thus it may be not created by Supreme being, because he believes that Vedas include knowledge that suits all categories of *Jiva*.[712] In the end of first part of the chapter, Shandilya talks a little about cosmology in Hindu philosophy that elements which constitute this universe follow the reverse order, thus they will merge with their primary sources.[713]

---

[709] Sri Shandilya, *Sri Shandilya Bhaktisutras*, trans. Tridandi Sri Prajnan Yati, p. 156-163.

[710] Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia, trans., *Shandilya Bhaktisutra, Aphorisms for devotion to god and The principles of the philosophy of love for Him*, p. 100-102.

[711] Sri Shandilya, *Sri Shandilya Bhaktisutras*, trans. Tridandi Sri Prajnan Yati, p. 170-171.

[712] Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia, trans., *Shandilya Bhaktisutra, Aphorisms for devotion to god and The principles of the philosophy of love for Him*, p. 115.

[713] Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia, trans., *Shandilya Bhaktisutra, Aphorisms for devotion to god and The principles of the philosophy of love for Him*, p. 116.

The very first aphorisms of second part of chapter deal with characteristics of Supreme Being who is also known as Brahman that He is One and only, eternal, constant and without parallel. Shandilya rejects the theory that since the characteristics of mortal creature and immortal one are different, therefore *Jiva* must be different from Supreme being, because he believes that these difference appears only at the superficial level where Maya has hold but if one looks bit deeper he will understand the truth that it is the same consciousness that lights both inner self and entire creation.[714] He proceeds that Supreme Being has no negatives or shortcomings that is normally seen in creations but these are originated from him as he is the cause of everything.[715] Towards the end of text, Shandilya once again demonstrates the significance of Bhakti as a path of moksha especially *Para* Bhakti and speaks:

"When one develops Para Bhakti for the lord God, one is able to overcome the distraction and confusion caused by the mind and its inherent tendency to doubt and be sceptic about everything. A self-realized and enlightened person who has attained *Para* Bhakti, i.e., who has developed the supreme form of devotion and love to the Lord God, is destined to liberation and deliverance from the cycle of birth and death in this mortal mundane world; he is destined to attain emancipation and salvation of his soul; he is destined to attain oneness with the Supreme Being as he is able to merge his atman with *Parmatma*, the Supreme Atman (ShBhSr. 3/2/4,5)."[716]

In the last aphorisms of the text, Shandilya describes about creature (*Jiva*) that it has three tools to understand the truth and these are (a) *Sabda* the wise words of the scripture that enlighten him about the truth (b) *Linga* the inference from available knowledge (c) *Pratksha* the organs of perception, and Samsara circle the circle of birth

---

[714] Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia, trans., *Shandilya Bhaktisutra, Aphorisms for devotion to god and The principles of the philosophy of love for Him*, p. 118-120.

[715] Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia, trans., *Shandilya Bhaktisutra, Aphorisms for devotion to god and The principles of the philosophy of love for Him*, p. 121.

[716] Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia, trans., *Shandilya Bhaktisutra, Aphorisms for devotion to god and The principles of the philosophy of love for Him*, p. 121-122.

and death is fallacious conception of *Jiva* who has not realized the truth.[717] In short, *Shandilya Bhaktisutra* elucidates the philosophical explanation of Bhakti especially its role between devotee and devoted.

When we inspected four texts i.e., *Bhagavat-Gita*, *Bhagavata Purana*, *Narada Bhaktisutra* and *Shandilya Bhaktisutra* which are normally attributed as foundational texts of Bhakti, we realized that none of these are not in position to be considered as foundational or original text of Bhakti movement because *Bhagavatpurana*, *Narada Bhaktisutra* and *Shandilya Bhaktisutra* were compiled in a period after the emergence of Alvars and Nayanmars in south India. Even though it is true that Bhagavat-Gita put forward Bhakti as one of three interdependent paths to salvation, we understand from history that it never ignited a movement soon after its compilation since we couldn't witness such a movement or emergence of Bhakti movement in first or second centuries next to the completion of the text. Moreover, Bhagavat-Gita is not an important text in hierarchical order of sacred texts of Hinduism but only a part of Purana which fall, with other numerous texts, under the category Smriti which is behind *Shruti* in importance and authenticity according to Hindu theology. Later, Bhagavat-Gita turned as most referred and recited texts among Hindus but we couldn't trace any evidence that proves text got fame soon after its completion. These facts lead us that Bhakti movement was emerged in *Nalayira Divya Prabandham* and *Tirumurai* which are considered as fifth Veda by Alvars and Nayanmars respectively.

2.6. Narada Bhaktisutra

Along with Bhagavat-Gita and Bhagavata Purana, *Narada* and *Shandilya Bhaktisutra*s are some of notable works that are penned down to describe Bhakti ideology. In both works, Bhakti with its definition, characteristics and other details are composed

[717] Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia, trans., *Shandilya Bhaktisutra, Aphorisms for devotion to god and The principles of the philosophy of love for Him*, p. 126-127.

in *Sutra*s (aphorisms) though these are simple and easily catchable in *Narada Bhaktisutra* whereas in *Shandilya Bhaktisutra* these are complex, more philosophical and rational.

Even though '*Narada Bhaktisutra* is attributed to Narada, a sage in ancient times according to tradition, the real author of the text is unknown and it was written around 1000 CE.[718] The text is consisted of 84 simple aphorisms that focus on definitions of Bhakti, characteristics needed to develop Bhakti, different phases of Bhakti and the specialties of successful Bhakti devotees, and it is also basic text of *Panjaratra* version of Bhakti.[719] To examine the title '*Narada Bhaktisutra'*, the term *'Sutra'* means a 'key', a 'formula', a 'code', an 'aphorism' and when it is applied to any body of knowledge it refers a basic formula or the key principle that help to grasp that body of knowledge extensively,[720] thus the title gives the meaning 'aphorisms of Narada on Bhakti'.

Narada Bhaktisutra starts with defining what Bhakti is, and in second aphorism it states that "*Bhakti is of the nature of highest love for this one* (God) (NrBhSr. 1/2)."[721] Stating "*And of the nature of immortal bliss* (NrBhSr. 1/3)"[722] in third aphorism, it demonstrates that Bhakti is a path to attain moksha which liberates from samsara circle enjoying eternal life because it clearly states the love is immortal. Narada, then, tries to depict the state of one who attained Bhakti and says;

---

[718] R. Raj Singh, *Bhakti and philosophy* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2006), p. 76

[719] Puri, *The Ecstacy of Love divine (essence of Narada Bhaktisutra* (Bangalore: Parvathamma C.P Subbaraja Setty Charitable Trust, 2009), p. 15-16.

[720] Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia, trans., *Shandilya Bhaktisutra, Aphorisms for devotion to god and The principles of the philosophy of love for Him*, p. 7.

[721] Y. Subrahmanya Sarma, *Narada's aphorisms on Bhakti* (Mysore: The Adhyatma Prakasha Karyalaya, 1938), p .1.

[722] Sarma, *Narada's Aphorisms on Bhakti*, p. 2.

"On attaining which, a man becomes perfect, immortal, satisfied forever, on gaining which one wants nothing, laments over nothing, hates nothing, delights in nothing, and is never enthusiastic over anything earthly (NrBhSr. 1/5,6)."[723]

Even though Bhagavad-Gita endorsed Bhakti as path towards moksha along with Karma and Jnana paths that prevailed in Vedic society, it hadn't rejected them as paths but *Bhaktisutra* apparently rejects Karma *Marga* the path of rituals and traditions, and it states "*such renunciation in devotional service means to give up all kinds of social customs and religious rituals governed by Vedic injunction* (NrBhSr. 1/8)"[724] While it teaches to give up all the social customs and religious rituals that put forward by Vedas technically termed as '*Nirodh*' as in previous aphorism, it also rejects Varnashrama and other divisive policies of Vedic Hindu philosophy. Even though Bhakti is open for all including upper casts and strict followers of Vedas also, the text demands to give up Vedic instructions of social customs and religious rituals also. By the statement, it exhibits Bhakti as a path that renounces Vedic teachings, contrary to what it was perceived earlier as one of three different paths. When we compare three paths in the light of this aphorism, acceptance of three paths as ways to moksha is questioned creating a confrontation between Karma and Bhakti *Marga*s. It may be perceived that the reason to denounce Karma *Marga* as path of liberation is its dependence on material objects and restriction only for upper casts whereas Bhakti is pure devotion and all embracing.

As the text is solely dedicated to Bhakti, we try to note down almost aphorisms with purport where needed, as it will help to illustrate Bhakti from all dimensions. After explaining one kind of '*Nirodh*' in eighth aphorism, it describes another kind of '*Nirodh*' in next aphorism and says "*And exclusive devotion to Him and indifference to all things that are obstacles to it* (NrBhSr. 1/9)."[725] *While it states that "exclusive dedication to the*

---

[723] Sarma, *Narada's Aphorisms on Bhakti*, p. 2.

[724] Swami Prabhupada, *Narada Bhaktisutra: The Secrets of Transcendental Love* (Los Angeles: Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, 1991), p. 23

[725] Sarma, *Narada's Aphorisms on Bhakti*, p. 3.

Lord means giving up all shelters (NrBhSr. 1/10)"[726] in tenth aphorism, it explains, in eleventh aphorism, the state of 'being indifference' mentioned in ninth aphorism and says;

"Indifference toward what stands in the way of devotional service means to accept only those activities of social custom and Vedic injunction that are favorable to devotional service (NrBhSr. 1/11)."[727]

In the last aphorism, stance towards Vedic injunctions is simplified as it advocates to accept Vedic injunctions along with social custom if it favors devotional service whereas in the previous aphorism it instructed to ignore Vedic teachings completely. Given that Narada teaches to accept Vedic instructions only when devotional services favor it, it is clear that Vedas are not the foundation or principle to develop Hindu beliefs any more but it is Bhakti the path of devotion. As an answer to a possible question 'how to deal with sacred texts?' after it demanded to take Bhakti as the foundation of Hindu theology, it clarifies in next Sutra:

"One must continue to follow scriptural injunctions even after one is fixed up in determined certainty that devotional service is the only mean for reaching the perfection of life (NrBhSr. 1/12)."[728]

As it was warned in next aphorism that "*otherwise there is every apprehension of a fall* (NrBhSr. 1/13),"[729] it is understood that scriptural injunctions are to be followed as long as it does not encounter Bhakti. Then it turns to depict the interference of a devotee in social and political issues and says he can interfere minimal in these because these are necessary to human life as eating and drinking.[730] From the first to fourteenth aphorisms of *Narada Bhaktisutra*, Bhakti's characteristics, its stance towards Vedas and its

---

[726] Sarma, *Narada's Aphorisms on Bhakti*, p. 4.

[727] Prabhupada, *Narada Bhaktisutra: The Secrets of Transcendental Love*, p. 34.

[728] Prabhupada, *Narada Bhaktisutra: The Secrets of Transcendental Love*, p. 36.

[729] Sarma, *Narada's Aphorisms on Bhakti*, p. 5.

[730] Sarma, *Narada's Aphorisms on Bhakti*, p. 5.

injunctions are described in general, then it proceeds to describe the definition of Bhakti along with definitions of prominent Hindu scholars.

Before defining Bhakti, Narada notes down the definitions of famous Bhakti scholars and explain the definition of Bhakti by Srila Vyasadeva the son of Parashra Muni, that "*Bhakti is fond attachment for worshipping the Lord in various ways* (NrBhSr. 1/16)."[731] While Garga Muni defines Bhakti as fondness for narrations about the Lord,[732] Shandilya who had also penned down aphorisms on Bhakti in the name of '*Shandilya Bhaktisutra'* says that "*Bhakti results from one's removing all obstructions to taking pleasure in the Supreme self* (NrBhSr. 1/18)."[733] After describing these definitions, he brings his own definition on Bhakti and states "*Bhakti consists of offering one's every act to the supreme Lord and feeling extreme distress in forgetting him* (NrBhSr. 1/19)."[734] Contrary to comparing each one's definitions against his definition, Narada justifies as everyone's descriptions are correct in their own viewpoints.[735] *As Narada* points a cowherd woman of *Vraja* as an ideal example of Bhakti, he tries to demonstrate a variety of points. By choosing a woman bhakta (devotee) instead of a man bhakta, he proves that Bhakti is open for all regardless of genders and a woman could be a best Bhakta whereas women were denied to enter paths of Karma and Jnana. Among the devotees, *Gopi*s who are cowherd and devoted to God Krishna in Bhagavad-Gita are considered best bhakta group according to Narada. The possibility of rising of one who deals with duties that considered low in status, to highest position of closeness with God is also tried to be proved through the exampling and when it compared with Varnashrama classification on the basis of occupation, it matters most.

---

[731] Prabhupada, *Narada Bhaktisutra: The Secrets of Transcendental Love*, p. 46.

[732] Prabhupada, *Narada Bhaktisutra: The Secrets of Transcendental Love*, p. 49.

[733] Prabhupada, *Narada Bhaktisutra: The Secrets of Transcendental Love*, p. 50.

[734] Prabhupada, *Narada Bhaktisutra: The Secrets of Transcendental Love*, p. 54.

[735] Prabhupada, *Narada Bhaktisutra: The Secrets of Transcendental Love*, p. 58.

After having described the top example among different forms of Bhakti, he turns the attention to compare Bhakti with other paths and states that pure devotional service is superior than performing of religious works and knowledge denoting Karma and Jnana paths respectively.[736] In coming aphorisms, Narada focuses on the relation of Bhakti with knowledge describing someone's opinion that knowledge is the means for developing devotion while some others think both are interdependent.[737] Then Narada expresses his view that Bhakti itself is its own fruit and illustrates his view with two examples of a royal palace and a meal. As king is not really satisfied just by seeing palace nor someone can placate his hunger just by looking at a meal, Bhakti is also not attained by knowledge itself, moreover seekers of liberation should take devotional service alone.[738] As this chapter ends with this teaching, it may conclude that those who are seeking moksha must follow Bhakti as it invalidates Jnana and Karma as paths of moksha with these examples.

Most of expounders on *Narada Bhaktisutra* had tried to classify the text according to its contents, thus from 34th aphorism a new chapter is started that focus on the means of achieving it. As Narada did in previous chapters to bring the opinions of famous proponents before expressing his opinion, same is also followed here on the means of achieving it. Some proponents say that one achieves Bhakti by giving up sense gratification and mundane association to material objection while others think that one achieves Bhakti by worshipping Lord ceaselessly.[739] After describing other's opinions, Narada expresses his thoughts and says:

---

[736] Sarma, *Narada's Aphorisms on Bhakti*, p. 8.

[737] Prabhupada, *Narada Bhaktisutra: The Secrets of Transcendental Love*, p. 76-77.

[738] Prabhupada, *Narada Bhaktisutra: The Secrets of Transcendental Love*, p. 79-81.

[739] Prabhupada, *Narada Bhaktisutra: The Secrets of Transcendental Love*, p. 87-90.

"One achieves Bhakti by hearing and chanting about the supreme Lord's special qualities, even while engaged in the ordinary activities. Primarly, however, one develops Bhakti by the mercy of great souls, or by a small drop of the Lord's mercy (NrBhSr. 1/37)."[740]

Here in the verses, counting mercy and grace of God as prime method of developing Bhakti introduces a doctrine that was unfamiliar to pre-Bhakti Hindu theology but very solid one in Bhakti. The last aphorism needs some attention as the mercy of great souls is brought together with the mercy of Lord and it denotes to the souls of devotees who already liberated; thus, their souls are combined together. Foreseeing the possibility of questions to be raised against what it was said in last aphorism, the next two aphorisms are composed in order to answer it, thus it states that the association of great souls is rarely obtained, difficult to understand and infallible, and the association of great souls can be attained only by lord's mercy. The reason for the possibility of developing Bhakti with the mercy of great souls is the indifference of Lord and his pure devotees who are liberated. Considering all these reasons, Narada calls, in next aphorism, for striving relentlessly for the association of pure devotees.[741] When the history of Bhakti saints, the call has special appealing because a lots devotees wants to be united with those liberated Bhakti saints leading to Godship of those saints too. This is the reason of hagiolatry of Alvar and Nayanmars saints in different temples in south India. Later the doctrine turned popular one as we witness many man-Gods in contemporary India. Narada continues to count other important step towards achieving Bhakti that is to give up all kinds of material association because it creates lust, confusion, anger, forgetfulness, loss of intelligence and total calamity.[742]

In Hinduism, Maya is the illusion that makes one associated with material objects and is the main obstacle in achieving moksha, so Narada explains who can cross Maya and says:

---

[740] Prabhupada, *Narada Bhaktisutra: The Secrets of Transcendental Love*, p. 92-95.

[741] Prabhupada, *Narada Bhaktisutra: The Secrets of Transcendental Love*, p. 97-102.

[742] Prabhupada, *Narada Bhaktisutra: The Secrets of Transcendental Love*, p. 103-106.

"Who can cross beyond the illusion? One who abandons material association, serves the sages, and becomes selfless, that person who stays in a secluded place, cuts off at the root his attachment to mundane society, becomes free from the influence of three modes of nature and gives up hankering for material gain and security, that person who renounces material duties, thus transcending duality, that person who renounces even the Vedas obtain exclusive and uninterrupted attraction for God (NrBhSr. 1/46-49)."[743]

Narada's description in 49th aphorism that person who renounces even the Vedas obtains exclusive and interrupted attraction for God, also consolidates its rejection of Vedas as the foundation of Hinduism, that is seen in other parts of the text also. In the context, Bhakti is being validated as a path that renounces Karma *Marga*, rather than being suggested as one of three paths. Thus, the relation of Bhakti with Vedas had become the core of the debates in the period after the emergence of Bhakti. While those devotees who accept the supremacy of Vedas interprets 'renounces even Vedas' as renouncing the injunctions that suggest Karma *Marga* as path of liberation, devotees who don't accept the supremacy understand the passage as it is. With this last aphorism, third chapter that focused on the means of achieving Bhakti ends.

In fourth chapter, the comparison of different forms of Bhakti is done as different forms of Bhakti was in existence like *Saguna* and *Nirguna*, devoting to a God with characteristics and devoting to a God without it respectively. *Nirguna* that proposes devotion to a God which has no visible existence and characteristics is considered best according to Narada. Narada states that nature of pure love of God is not explainable as a dumb's effort to explain what he tastes, though the pure love of God is revealed to those who are superbly qualified.[744] Then he justifies the superiority of the pure love devotion in next aphorism and says:

"Pure love of God manifests as the most subtle consciousness, devoid of material qualities and material desires, increasing at every moment and never interrupted. Having obtained

---

[743] Prabhupada, *Narada Bhaktisutra: The Secrets of Transcendental Love*, p. 111-117.

[744] Prabhupada, *Narada Bhaktisutra: The Secrets of Transcendental Love,* p. 116-119.

pure love of God, one looks only at the Lord, hears only about Him, speaks only of Him, and thinks only of Him (NrBhSr. 1/54,55)."[745]

Narada then openly states the validity and easiness of Bhakti as a path to moksha and success and speaks:

"Success is easier to attain by devotional service than by any other process. The reason devotional service is the easiest of all spiritual processes is that it does not depend on any other authority for its validity, being itself the standard of authority. Furthermore, Bhakti is the embodiment of peace and supreme ecstasy (NrBhSr. 1/58-60)."[746]

Then, he comes up with some instructions must be followed by a devotee to develop Bhakti and he notes down that one should not abandon one's responsibilities in this world even after one has achieved devotional service, should not find entertainment in news of women, money and atheists, should put aside false pride and hypocrisy.[747] After keeping these instructions, Narada says:

"Offering all one's activities to the Lord, one should fee desire, anger, and pride only with regard to Him. After breaking through the aforementioned covering of the three modes of nature, one should act only in pure love of God, remaining perpetually in the mood of a servant serving his master, or a lover serving her beloved (NrBhSr. 1/65-66)."[748]

After giving instructions on how to develop Bhakti Narada comes up with description on the nature and glory of greatest devotees of Bhakti and recites:

"Among the Lord's devotees, the greatest are those who are dedicated to Him solely as His intimate servants. Conversing among one another with throats choked, hair standing on end, and tears flowing, the Lord's intimate servants purify their own followers and the whole world.

---

[745] Prabhupada, *Narada Bhaktisutra: The Secrets of Transcendental Love*, p. 122.

[746] Prabhupada, *Narada Bhaktisutra: The Secrets of Transcendental Love*, p. 135-140.

[747] Sarma, *Narada's Aphorisms on Bhakti*, p. 19.

[748] Prabhupada, *Narada Bhaktisutra: The Secrets of Transcendental Love*, p. 149-151.

Their association makes holy places holy, works auspicious, and the scriptures authoritative. The intimate servants of the Supreme Lord are fully absorbed in loving Him (NrBhSr. 1/67-71)."[749]

As he glorified the greatness of Bhakti and bhaktas, Narada clearly denies the classification based on birth or any other among devotees and says:

"There are no distinctions among pure devotees in terms of social class, education, bodily beauty, family status, wealth, occupation, and so on. Pure devotees are not distinguished by externals like social class, for they belong to the Lord (NrBhSr. 1/72,73)."[750]

The teaching easily rejects the classification of the society basing on these criteria that supported often by Hindu religious texts.

Fifth chapter of text starts from 74th aphorism focusing on the matters to attain the perfection in devotion and start with a first instruction that seems invalidating Jnana Marga as he says "*One should not indulge in argumentative. Such argumentation leads to excessive entanglements and is never decisive* (NrBhSr. 1/74,75)."[751] Throughout the text, there are a lot of aphorisms that deal with approach of a devotee towards Vedas and it were a bit confusing as it rejects in some and accepts it in some others. To clear this confusion, the next aphorism gives an apparent outline and it says "*One should respect the revealed scriptures and discharge the duties they prescribe* (NrBhSr. 1/76)."[752] Narada continues with his instructions to develop Bhakti and says:

"Those who are free of doubts should constantly worship the Supreme Lord with all hearts. When He is glorified, the Lord swiftly reveals Himself to His devotees and allows them to know Him as He is. Devotional service is the most precious possession of a person who honestly uses his mind, body, and words (NrBhSr. 1/79-81)."[753]

---

[749] Prabhupada, *Narada Bhaktisutra: The Secrets of Transcendental Love*, p. 151-159.

[750] Prabhupada, *Narada Bhaktisutra: The Secrets of Transcendental Love*, p. 162-164.

[751] Prabhupada, *Narada Bhaktisutra: The Secrets of Transcendental Love*, p. 167-168.

[752] Prabhupada, *Narada Bhaktisutra: The Secrets of Transcendental Love*, p. 171.

[753] Prabhupada, *Narada Bhaktisutra: The Secrets of Transcendental Love*, p. 176-181.

In these verses, Narada explicitly describes that worshipping God with heart and glorifying him as viable means of developing Bhakti. In the next verses, Narada says that even though devotional service is one, Bhakti manifest in eleven forms of attachment and speaks:

"Although devotional service is one, it becomes manifested in eleven forms of attachment: attachment to the Lord's glorious qualities (*mahatmyasakti*), to His beauty (*rupasakti*), to worshipping Him (*Pujasakti*), to remembering Him (*Smaranasakti*), to serving Him (*dasyasakti*), to reciprocating with Him as a friend (*sakhyasakti*), to caring for Him as a parent (*vatsalyasakti*), to dealing with Him as a lover (*kantasakti*), to surrendering one's whole self to Him (*atmanivedana*), to being absorbed in thought of Him (*mayasakti*), and to experiencing separation from Him (*parama-virahasakti*). This last is the supreme attachment (NrBhSr. 1/82)."[754]

When we go through vast literature on Bhakti, we confront with may classification of Bhakti other than general one; Saguna and Nirguna, regarding various aspects of Bhakti. Afore mentioned eleven forms of attachment is also often presented as different types of Bhakti.[755] In the last aphorism of text, Narada offers endowment with Bhakti and attainment of highest beatitude if anyone in this world believes in these gracious instructions offered by Narada, pointing to him.[756]

Till now, we had discussed emergence of Bhakti and its movement in full detail both in the history and doctrines of Hinduism. We had elaborately discussed the enormous contributions of Alvar and Nayanmar poets and we had clear picture of the emergence. Now we check different theories on the emergence of Bhakti including the theory of Islamic influence in next chapter.

---

[754] Prabhupada, *Narada Bhaktisutra: The Secrets of Transcendental Love*, p. 183.

[755] Sarma, *Narada's Aphorisms on Bhakti*, p. 26.

[756] Sarma, *Narada's Aphorisms on Bhakti*, p. 26.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORIES ON EMERGENCE OF BHAKTI AND INFLUENCE OF ISLAM

Even though Bhakti as a concept was explicitly found as early as Bhagavat-Gita in Hinduism, it had only triggered mobility through Alvars and Nayanmars in south India then expanding to other parts of India and touching its zenith in northern India through various devotional poets from vivid backgrounds. By analyzing devotional contents in the writings of Alvars and Nayanmars, we realize the emergence of Bhakti movement in Hinduism but in its long history of thousand years almost, Bhakti had engaged with different religions, communities and geographies thus it pushed various historiographies on its emergence especially when each group read it relating it to their ideologies. Before concluding the emergence of Bhakti through Alvars and Nayanmars, it is necessary to understand various theories regarding the emergence of Bhakti.

3.1. Indigenous Emergence

As a response mainly against orientalists who tried to establish Christian influence on Bhakti, some set of Indologists questioned this theory and made efforts to prove Bhakti as an indigenous movement. R. G. Bhandarkar (d.1925), a great Indologist, tried to present epigraphical and literary evidences to show the nativity of Bhakti movement through antiquity of Vaishnavism and Krishna worship.[757]

R.C. Zaehner (d.1974) is another prominent historian who believe indigenous origin of Bhakti and he brings the beginning of Bhakti from Bhagavad-Gita.[758] Like the

[757] Rekha Pande, "The Bhakti Movement- A Historiographical Critique," *Journal of Historical Research*, 2000, p. 51.

[758] R. C. Zaehner, *Hindu and Muslim mysticism* (London Oxford New York New Delhi Sydney: Bloomsbury Academic, an imprint of Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2016), p. 11.

all historians of this theory, Radhakrishnan (d.1975) the great Indian philosopher and historian, also traces origin of Bhakti in the text and says that the God in Bhakti was portrayed as God of grace who inspires self-surrender, reverence, love and personal trust, and whom heart and soul need and seek. He seeks the utter prostration of the self and loves meekness from devotee.[759] Kshitimohan Sen (d.1960) traces the origin of Bhakti in incipient stage of Hinduism as he finds Bhakti in the hymns of Vedas that sang by seers praising Indra, Varuna and other deities. Moreover, he believes the local Dravidians as well as other pre-Aryan communities in India had kept abundant attitude of Bhakti. He continues that Bhakti was increased in the heart of people through worshipping of village deities and images and it further developed through Vaishnavas and Shaivas. But he accepts that Bhakti was blossomed after political access of Muslims to the region but with monotheistic appeal.[760] George A. Grierson (d.1941), who had worked on *Bhagavata*s, claims the origin of Bhakti in the religion of Bhagavatas who worships Krishna the eighth avatar of Vishnu. He defends that the attribute of love to personal god found in Bhakti was previously originated in the religion of Bhagavatas.[761]

Rekha Pande points out the emergence of Bhakti as a concept as very ancient since it was firstly seen, according to her, in Svetesvatara and Katha Upanishads. While these texts present the doctrine of self-surrender and grace, Bhagavad-Gita is first text to expound in a systematic manner and presents as a legitimate path for salvation. She even tries to bring back its origin in Vedic texts through Shraddha Bhakti, the genuine regard of God, which is sought from sacrifice while he performs the rituals. She notices synthesis of Vedic, Upanishadic and puranic influences in the emergence of Bhakti through poetries of Alvars and Nayanmars. She describes their poems as synthetic point of northern Sanskritic devotional themes with Sangam literature of the south. The sophisticated

---

[759] S. Radakrishnan, *The Bhagavadgita* (Bombay: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1971), p. 61-62.

[760] Kshithimohan Sen, *Medievel Mysticism of India*, trans. Manmohan Ghosh (London: Luzac & Co., 1935), p. 3-6.

[761] George A. Grierson, "Bhakti Marga," *Encylopedia of Religion and Ethics*, ed. James Hastings (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1964), p. 539-549

expressions of Bhakti were witnessed in their God-glorifying hymns seeking union with absolute power. She totally rejects the influence of Islam in emergence of Bhakti movement in south India as he cites the existence of practice singing emotional ecstatic hymns in vernacular languages even before the birth of Muhammed prophet.[762] Klaus Witz also relates the Bhakti movement to Upanishadic teachings because he finds that Upanishadic teachings either are basis or form an all-pervading substratum, in every literature of Alvars and Nayanmars. For him, supreme wisdom, main theme of Upanishads, appears fused with highest level of Bhakti in its ultimate devotion and realization of God.[763]

3.2. Religion's Influence on Bhakti Emergence

Apart from theory of indigenous emergence of Bhakti, theories that suggest the influence from external religions like Budhism, Christianity and Islam are also put forward by many historians. The common feature lied under these historical readings, some exceptions are available, is a deliberate attempt to connect with religion of the historian. In most cases, these readings with clear motive and prejudice are peripheral without much notice on the great contributions of Alvars and Nayanmars the core point of Bhakti's emergence. But it is also noteworthy that few historians are evaluated in its true sense and tried to present as it is. Here we examine theories regarding the influence of other religions on the emergence of Bhakti.

3.2.1 Buddhist and Jain Influence

Another theory suggests Buddhist and Jain influence in emergence of Bhakti as both concept and movement. As these religions are *Nastika* (heterodox) sects of Hinduism, these two systems already pioneered what radical changes that Bhakti tried to

---

[762] Rekha Pande, *Divine sounds from the heart: singing unfettered in their own voices: The Bhakti movement and its women saints (12th to 17th century)* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2010), p. 19-25.

[763] Klaus G. Witz, *The supreme wisdom of the Upaniṣads: an introduction*, 1st ed (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1998), p. 10.

bring. Both religions had greater appeal of mysticism focusing on meditation and presence of mind rather than mere rituals as it was in Brahminic religion. Most importantly, their strong rejection of Varnashrama Dharma advocating equality and fraternity is another great common factor with Bhakti movement. Simplicity of worships to attain salvation ignoring rigid and complex sacrifices and rituals is also core of these three systems. Karel Werner (d.2019) points out that concept of love and devotion are certainly most important in both doctrinal context and religious practices of Buddhism the system that focus on mind training and meditation. He continues that there is *bhatti*, Buddhist expression of devotion, in Pali-Buddhist scripts as there in Sanskrit-Hindu sources. Seeking refuge to a being of a higher order was also an existed practice in Buddhism during the time of Buddha itself.[764] John Cort, a Jain historian, states that *Vandan* tradition of Jainism in which Supreme being is venerated, is important source of Bhakti tradition in Hinduism.[765]

It is recognized that Alvar and Nayanar saint poets had taken over from Buddhist devotionalism, its idea of asceticism and suppression of desires, and spiritual equality of all followers while accepting ethical tone and respect for animal lives from Jains. South Indian region was strong hold of Buddhism and Jainism during the period in which these saint poets were in action. Their influence had diminished in the subsequent centuries of Alvars' and Nayanmars' emergence.[766] When we go through their poems, we had witnessed that they mention only these two religions mostly to condemn them. They make efforts to diminish these two religions and reject as a right path of salvation. Keeping these reasons in mind, it may be not wrong to suggest that Bhakti movement was assimilation of devotional and mystic ideas of Buddhists and Jains to Puranic Hindu-fold in order to attract large mass of the region to Hinduism. Even though Alvars and

---

[764] Karel Werner, ed., *Love divine: studies in Bhakti and devotional mysticism* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 1993), p. 36-42.

[765] John E. Cort, *Jains in the World, Religious Values and Ideology in India* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 64.

[766] Tara Chand, *Influence of Islam on Indian Culture* (The Indian Press Ltd., 1936), p. 85-87.

Nayanmars offer salvation to all, they don't reject Varnashrama Dharma completely, so it may perceive as an effort to keep low caste Hindus within their fold of religion blocking outflux to Buddhism or Jainism. Yet, this is so eager to reach to this conclusion, therefore it needs great in-depth comparative research scrutinizing all these theories to a larger extent.

3.2.2 Christian Influence

Along with British conquest of Indian sub-continent, European scholars had made extensive research from 18th century onwards on Indian society and its history but analyzed it through European world view neglecting indigenous historiography.[767] They tried to depict Christian influence on Bhakti referring it as a meditative piety adorning with God's grace and love often summing up it with Krishna Bhakti of Vaishnavism that portrayed as monotheistic religion.[768]

Many European Indologists like H.H. Wilson (d.1860), Monier Williams (d.1899) and George A. Grierson followed the trend. While H.H. Wilson summed up Vaishnavism in Bengal as monotheistic Bhakti religion,[769] Monier Williams stated in his book 'Brahmanism and Hinduism' that Vaishnavism is a monotheistic system with Bhakti at its core and it is only Hindu tradition worth of being called religion. He continues that it has more common grounds with Christianity rather than any other non-Christian faiths.[770] Even though George A. Grierson admits the Indigenous origin of Bhakti, he believes that it had received immense impetus from Christian beliefs. He even suggested that worship of infant Krishna is Indian adaptation of infant Christ and rituals

---

[767] Romila Thapar, *The Past and Prejudice* (New Delhi: National Book Trust of India, 2007), p. 4.

[768] A. Barth, *The Religions of India*, trans. Rev. J. Wood (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co. Ltd, 1891), p. 221.

[769] H.H. Wilson, *Sketch of the Religious Sects of the Hindus* (Culcutta: Bishop's College Press, 1846), p.100.

[770] Monier Williams, *Brahmanism and Hinduism* (New York: Macmillan and Co., 1891), p. 96.

regarding the birth of Krishna were borrowed from Christianity.[771] M. F. Lorinser, who had worked on similarity between Bhagavat-Gita and New Testament, argues that Bhakti tradition is Indian rendition of Christianity but Krishna as the personal God.[772] Brajendaranath Seal (d.1938) also closely examines a legend in Mahbaharatha about Narada's pilgrimage to Svetadvipa where he met Ekantins or monotheists. He continues that some Indian Vaishnavas travelled to the coasts of Egypt or Asia minor where Christians were living, and those Vaishnavas borrowed monotheism from them.[773]

Many orientalist scholars as well as missionaries celebrated Bhakti as Indian version of Protestant Christianity glorifying Bhagavat-Gita as Indian Bible. While they linked the religion of Bhagavat-Gita to Christianity, they also projected Bhakti as a monotheistic religion centered around Vishnu whose nature was as a 'God of love'. Considering the reformative and radical nature of Bhakti like criticizing caste system, they related it with Protestant Christianity.[774] Tara Chand (d.1973), a famous Indian historian, counts Burnell (d.1882), Weber (d.1901), Logan (d.1869), Caldwell (d.1891), Hopkins (d.1932) and Pope (d.1936) as historians who defend Christian influence on Bhakti.[775]

A. J. Appasamy (d.1975), another historian who extensively tried to draw decisive influence of Christianity in Indian culture and Hinduism, expresses his thought that Christianity is probably responsible for all Bhakti doctrines. He shows presence of Christian church in Travancore in South India as early as Christian era as his proof. He thinks that Christian ideas had largely influenced Bhakti thought from sixth century onwards because Roman Catholic missionaries were actively spreading Christian

---

[771] George A. Grierson, "Bhakti Marga," *Encylopedia of Religion and Ethics*, ed. James Hastings, p. 550.

[772] M. F. Lorinser, "Traces In The Bhagavad-Gita of Christian Writings And Ideas," *Education Society Press*, ed. Jas Burgess, The Indian Antiquary/II (1873), p. 285.

[773] Branjendranath Seal, *Comparitive studies in Vaishnavism and Christianity* (Hare Press, 1899), p. 30; S. Radakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy,* p. 499.

[774] Pechilis, *The Embodiment of Bhakti*, p. 3.

[775] Tara Chand, *Influence of Islam on Indian Culture*, p. 106-107.

doctrines. He continues that Hindus were very skillful to adapt these ideas and make it as their own even they borrowed it from Christians.[776] In his work titled as "The gospel and India's heritage", he compares gospels with Bhakti teachings which are intended by heritage of India, and tries to establish its influence on Bhakti. While he relates the importance of solitude for prayer in both gospels and Bhakti, he equates the two types of Samadhi (meditation) with two states of Jesus in relation with God and brings gospels that portray these states. He compares *Savikalpa* Samadhi in which difference between the object of worship and the devotee is recognized, to the state of Jesus being different from God. *Nirvikalpa* Samadhi in which the soul merged with God to the state of Jesus being identical with God.[777] He also finds similarities between the doctrine *Antaryamin* (God dwells in the heart) described by Ramanuja and the doctrine of indwelling God taught by gospels. Both doctrines speak about the presence of God's spirit everywhere and the author emphasizes on the fact.[778] Likewise, he brings forth the similarity of both Gospels and Bhakti texts in the teachings on sanctification, sin, vision of God and barriers, forgiveness and togetherness with God.[779]

William A. Dyrness notes in his dictionary of theology that Bhakti principles are converging Christian gospels through its conception of God as loving, bestowing his grace to his creatures and worshipped with deep love and personal devotion. In Christianity, God Jesus is personal God who is being praised and his-glorifying gospels recited with love and devotion same as in Bhakti.[780] Sabapathy Kulandran (d.1992) evaluates that both Bhakti and Christianity agree in carrying a whole-hearted trust to their Gods as well as Bhakti's nature to consider everyone equal. He continues that the similarity in intensity of both Bhakti hymns and gospels of New Testament as well as

---

[776] A. J. Appasamy, *The Gospels and Indian Heritage* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1942), p. 13.

[777] Appasamy, *The Gospels and Indian Heritage*, p. 28-36.

[778] Appasamy, *The Gospels and Indian Heritage*, p. 74-81.

[779] Appasamy, *The Gospels and Indian Heritage*, p. 86-172.

[780] William A Dyrness - Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, eds., "Indian Theology," *Global Dictionary of Theology: A Resource for the Worldwide Church* (USA: InterVarsity Press, 2008), p. 422.

both Christianity and Bhakti rise above legalism and sacerdotalism.[781] In short, the Christians influence on Bhakti was depicted by many historians as well as theologians especially in the period of British invasion of Indian sub-continent.

3.3. Islamic Influence

As we discussed in the introduction, the period and geography of Islam's entrance to Indian sub-continent are almost identical with period and geography of Bhakti's emergence as well. While Islam entered the Indian subcontinent by the beginning of seventh century and had made little settlements by eighth century, Alvars' as well as Nayanmars' period starts with beginning of eight century and finishes by the end of ninth century. As we discussed earlier, Alvars and Nayanmars were poets who wandered throughout Tamil mainland. Advent of Islam to Indian subcontinent was also through coastal areas in south India including Tamil Nadu. These close resemblances in time and geography are some of main factors that motivated to research the possible influence of Islam on the emergence of Bhakti. Apart from these resemblances in time and geography, there are also many close similarities with Islam in Bhakti's religious ideas and principles, social visions and much more. Here we proceed to learn how Islam entered to Indian subcontinent.

3.3.1 Advent of Muslims to Indian Subcontinent

The advent of Islam to Indian subcontinent was mainly through three ways; the first one is through Arab merchants and Muslim missionaries who sailed to south India. The second one is through military expeditions by Muslim rulers starting from first century of Islamic history to later periods. The third one is mass migration of Muslim communities from central Asia in the wake of Mongolian invasion.[782] Even before the

[781] Sabapathy Kulandran, "Christian Faith and Hindu Bhakti," *Indian Journal of Theology*, October-December (1957), p. 118-121.

[782] Aziz Ahmed, *Hindistan'da İslâm Kültürü Çalışmaları* (İstanbul: İnsan Yayınları, 1995), p. 110.

first military advancement of Muslims under Muhammed bin Qasim in Eighth century,[783] Islam has arrived to south India in the seventh century itself.

It is very evident in historical texts that there were active trade engagements between Arabs and people of south India especially those in adjacent areas to the ports along Arabian sea. Due to these engagements, it is said that Christianity had also arrived to Kerala, a south Indian state with coastal areas of Arabian Sea, in the first century of CE. There is a strong tradition among Kerala Christians that St. Thomas had come to Kerala, preached Christianity and died at Mylapore near Chennai, the capital of Tamil Nadu, another state in south India.[784] Since Islam advocates its followers without any exception to preach its monotheism and its principles to non-Muslims, it is much possible to reach the idea of Islam in the prophet Muhammed's period itself. But there is hot debate whether Islam has arrived during the time of Prophet Muhammed itself or later soon after the demise of prophet.

There are strong evidences that Cheraman Perumal who was a local ruler in Kerala, had accepted Islam from Prophet Muhammed and was a companion. The strong tradition continues that he witnessed the moon-split, the miracle of Prophet, and was convinced about Islam after his inquest upon the incident. So, he set out to meet Prophet Muhammed and embraced Islam receiving the name of Thajudheen (Crown of faith). During his return to Kerala, he died at Dhofar, a place in modern Oman but he had strongly instructed his companions to travel to Kerala and preach Islam there.[785] Since this tradition is supported by many evidences including non-Muslim text Keralolpathi, a

---

[783] Annemerie Schimmel, *Islam in the Indian Subcontinent* (Leiden: Brill, 1980), p. 3-30.

[784] Miller Roland Eric, *The Mappila Muslims of Southwest India- A Study in Islamic Trends* (USA: University Microfilms International, 1973), p. 25-28

[785] Miller Roland Eric, *The Mappila Muslims of Southwest India- A Study in Islamic Trends*, p. 25-28

Brahminical text, [786] However, this incident is very popular among Kerala Muslims since this history is taught in primary Madrasas[787] throughout Kerala.[788]

According to evidences that support this narration, the incident should be take place between 622 and 632 CE, the possible period after the incident of moon-split. Keralolpathi[789] and Kerala Parama,[790] two non-Muslim texts on the origin of Kerala, had backed this narration. A note found in the library of Arakkal family, and '*Tarih Firishta*'[791]wrote by Muhammed Qasim Firishtha, are also among the text that supports this narration and describes that Islam reached Kerala during the time of Prophet Muhammed itself.

Following the instruction of Cheraman Perumal, a missionary group under the leadership of Malik bin Deenar had sailed to Kerala and built first masjid in India at Kodungallur, the capital of Cheraman Perumal's reign. The first masjid in India was named after Cheraman the first Indian native Muslim. The notes in the masjid state that the masjid was built on 629 CE. Since they were delegation sent by the ruler, they were warmly welcomed and they could easily preach Islam. The group also included Malik bin Habeeb and Sharaf bin Malik and they travelled throughout coastal areas of Kerala and built masjids wherever possible. There are 12 Masjids built by Malik bin Deenar and the

---

[786] The author of text is unknown but many historians ascribe the authorship to Ezuthachan. For more information, pls refer Ezuthachan, *Kerelolpathi (The Origin of Kerala)*.

[787] Madrasa in Kerala are primary center of learning Islamic principles, values and history. Since Madrasa is working every day before and after normal schooling, each and every Muslim child attends these Madrasas. There are more than 15000 Madrasas throughout Kerala operated by various organizations in the region. For further reading please refer Unais Koduyayakkal, "Indian Madrasas, Evolution and Growth with Special Reference to Kerala Model," Academic Platform Journal of Islamic Research/V/II (2021): p. 188–217.

[788] Education Board Samasta, ed., *Kitabu Tarih* (Kerala: Samasta Kerala Education Board, 2018), p. 27.

[789] For more information, pls refer Thunjath Ezuthachan, *Kerelolpathi.*

[790] For more information, pls refer Gundert, *Kerala Parama or History of Malabar*.

[791] Muhammed Qasim Firishtha, *Tarih Firishtha*, trans. Abdulhayy Khwaja (Lahore: Al Mizan, 2008), v. 1, p. 44-45.

group including the one at Kasargod where he is buried after death according to one of different traditions. Some travelled to northern part of Kodungallur and established masjids in Ezhimala, Bhatkal, Manglore, Shreekandapuram, Chaliyam, Dharmadam and Panthalayani. It is notable that the architecture of these masjids closely resembled the Hindu temples in the region. Citing this close resemblance, some historians argue that some of these masjids were not built but converted from temple to masjids with the permission and greetings from local rulers and people. The inscription at masjid at Madayi, which is also one of these twelve masjids, shows that it was built on fifth year of Hijra. All these evidences strongly show that Islam was reached in south India at the time of Prophet Muhammed itself. It is also said that some of the group had travelled through the coastal towns of Tamil Nadu and built masjids there as well.[792]

Like in the case of coastal areas of Arabian sea in Kerala, there were trade relations between Arabs and Coromandel coast areas in Tamil Nadu even before Islam. Arabs were regularly passing through Coromandel Coast on their trade expeditions towards Ceylone the modern Sri Lanka.[793] Among these coastal areas, Kayalpattinam which lies on the shore of Bay Bengal in Thoothukudi district of Tamil Nadu,[794] was center point of Islamic settlements in early period.[795] It is popularly believed that a group of missionaries and traders especially from Mecca had arrived there in Kayalpattinam during the Khilafath of Prophet Abubakir and that was in 12 Hijri; 633 CE.[796] It is said that they had built a masjid there near sea shore and was called 'Kadal Karai' masjid, unfortunately the masjid was ruined hundred years ago but its remnants were there until

---

[792] C K Faizy, "Dars, the traditional mode of religious education (Malayalam)," *Samasta Malappuram*, 2008, p. 329-341, Education Board Samasta, ed., *Kitabu Tarih*, p. 27-29.

[793] Asadulla Khan, *History of the Arab contact with Tamilagham from the beginning to 1400 A.D.* (Chennai: The New College, 2013), p. 17.

[794] Abdul Latiff, *The Concise History of Kayalpatnam* (Kayalpattanam: Shamsudheen Appa, 2004), p. 21.

[795] Bishop Caldwell, *A History of Tinnevelly* (New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1982), p. 37.

[796] Abdul Latiff, *The Concise History of Kayalpatnam*, p. 22.

recently.[797] It is possible that there was enough settlement by Muslims in Kayalpattinam in Tamil Nadu by seventh century itself since coins of Arabs dated back Hijra 71 (693 CE) were excavated from the region.[798]

Another group under the leadership of Muhammed Khilji from Egypt had arrived to Kayalpattinam around 875 CE and were welcomed by local Pandyan King. The incident is verified as a copper plate in Tamil was discovered in which numbers of persons and slaves including their tribe names were scripted.[799] Moreover, all these Arab groups who arrived in Kerala and Tamil Nadu, had engaged with local community in full manner following local customs and trying to speak local language itself. They had also kept marital relations with local community by marrying local girls and those children who born to Arab-Indian couples were called as 'Labbai' in Tamil region, while those in Kerala are called as Mappila. In Kerala, the term later used in general for all those Muslims in the region without checking paternal relations with Arabs.[800] As a progress of these relations, adjacent areas near Kayalpattinam like Kilakkarai and Pulicat in Tamil land had turned to major centres of Muslim settlements.[801]

In short, Muslim traders and missionary groups had arrived to coastal areas of Arabian sea in Kerala and Coromandel coasts in Tamil Nadu in the first decade of Hijra itself. They were warmly welcomed by local rulers and were given adequate facilities to settle there, so they could easily propagate the Islam without much hindrances. Their commercial, political and even marital relations with local people had paved way for Muslim settlements in those coastal areas of Kerala and Tamil Nadu. By eighth century,

---

[797] Abdul Latiff, *The Concise History of Kayalpatnam*, p. 60.

[798] Bishop Caldwell, *A History of Tinnevelly*, p. 288.

[799] Asadulla Khan, *History of the Arab contact with Tamilagham from the beginning to 1400 A.D.*, p. 66.

[800] Bishop Caldwell, *A History of Tinnevelly*, p. 36.

[801] Susan Bayly, *Saints, Goddesses, and Kings-Muslims and Chrisitians in South Indian Society,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 74.

there were enough Muslim settlements around the masjids that were built in those coastal towns.

Even though the advent of Muslims to Indian subcontinent in seventh century and their settlement in the eighth century are clear in the history, their engagements with Alvars or Nayanmars were not identified after the extensive research. This may be because of these settlements were very small comparing to vast Tamil land from coastal areas to western Ghats. When two large canons of Nalayira Divya Prabandham and Panniru Tirumurai sung by different poets from different parts of Tamil land, were inspected thoroughly, there was not even one mention about Muslims or Arabs. But continuous mentioning and challenging Buddhists and Jains who were prevalent in the region, shows that they were in polemic engagements with Buddhists and Jains not Muslims or Christians.

When the military expeditions of Muslim rulers towards the Indian sub-continent are traced, it is seen that Muhammed bin Qasim had entered Indian sub-continent through the side of Indus River (Sind) in northern India and conquered two cities known as Bahmanwa and Mulasthana which were named later as *Al-Mansura* and *Al- Ma'mura.* He had marched through Kanauj, Gandhara and penetrated through the valleys in Kashmir.[802] These expeditions of Muhammed bin Qasim were between 710 and 711 (92-93 of Hijri Calendar).[803] After Muhammed bin Qasim, the next Muslim ruler to enter India was Mahmud Gazni and his first invasion was in 1000 to Lamgan, a province in north western India. After his succession to throne in 999, Mahmud Gazni had decided to go with expeditions to Indian every year in order to preach Islam and to plunder the wealthy treasures in Hindu temples. He continued his expeditions to Vayhand in 1002 and Bhatiya in 1004-1005. Because of these successful expeditions, he was given the title of 'Gazi' that means 'the warrior'. Then he started Islamizing the region by building

[802] Muhammad al- Biruni, *Kitabul Biruni fi Tahkiki malil Hind*, (Dairathu Ma'riful Osmaniyya, Hyderabd, 1958), p. 16

[803] Azmi Özcan, "Hindistan," *TDV Islam Anskilopedisi,* (İstanbul, ISAM, 1998), v. XVIII, p. 95.

Masjids and sending Islamic scholars.[804] He was keen to send Sufis as well to the region in order to pave the way for Muslims and more expeditions.[805] When he had captured Multan, he had appointed Suhpal, the converted grandson of Indian king Rajpal, as the governor. But he returned to Hinduism, the reason of Mahmud Gazni's fifth expedition in 1008. He continued his intrusions to Indian subcontinent through Punjab in 1008, Nagarkot in 1009 and Narayanpur in 1010.[806]

In subsequent years, Mahmud Gazni had many expeditions to India and this count reaches almost seventeen. He captured Nandana, Kashmir,Loharin, Agra and Kannauj in 1010, 1014, 1015 and 1018 respectively. In his expedition to Agra, the King Hordat along with ten thousand people, declared Islam and accepted the Sultanate of Mahmud Gazni. His famous expedition was to Somnath where a famous temple of Hindus was situated. In 1026, he captured the fort of Somnath and it is seen in the historical texts that he demolished the Somnath temple. He sent four parts of gigantic door in the temple to different parts of Sultanate including Mecca and Medina. It is also said that he had used the parts for Ulucami in Gazne and for his palace there. His last expedition was in 1027 to Multan to punish the local kings who tried to attack him.[807] Al Biruni feels that these expeditions had infuriated strong antagonism towards Muslims in the hearts of local Hindus.[808]

When these expeditions and possibility of Islamic influence are inspected, it is understood that all these were happened in north-western India but Bhakti movement had originated in Tamil land in southern India. Most importantly, by the end of 9th century, most of Bhakti poets including all 12 Alvar poets had already dead and there was only

---

[804] Erdoğan Merçil, "Gazneli Mahmud," *TDV Islam Anskilopedisi,* (İstanbul, ISAM, 1998), v. XXVII, p. 363.

[805] Azmi Özcan, "Hindistan,", v. XVIII, p. 95

[806] Erdoğan Merçil, "Gazneli Mahmud," v. XXVII, p. 363.

[807] Erdoğan Merçil, "Gazneli Mahmud," v. XXVII, p. 363.

[808] Muhammad al- Biruni, *Kitabul Biruni fi Tahkiki malil Hind*, trans. Edward S. Sachan (W.W. Norton & Company, New York, 1971), p. 22.

expedition till the date and that was too in North western India. Other than a possibility, any evidence of Muslim engagements with these poets were not traced. But there is a great chance of influence after 10th century because of continuous successful expeditions of Mahmud Gazni and this influence is clear it in the literatures of Basavanna and fellow Lingayats. As stated earlier, the emergence period ends with Alvars and Nayanmars and Basavanna is first major Bhakti saint in its development period.

Since Islam and Muslims were well established in the region by eighth century, Tara Chand, one of major historians who asserts the Islamic influence on Bhakti, feels that any development in Hinduism which couldn't be accounted as natural development of Hinduism, most probably, it should be ascribed as Influence of Islam.[809] To justify his theory of influence, he explains elaborately advent of Muslims in south India right from seventh century and their engagements with local community. He continues his efforts to state that Muslims had settled in large numbers as early as eighth century at the latest building masjids and propagating Islam throughout south India including Tamil Nadu. He proceeds, to counter the presence of Christians in the region, that Islam entered to the region under the patronage of a king, thus they were treated well and held good positions in the society as well as in the governance. Their formidable positions in society and governance were in stage to influence local Hindus and Hinduism, unlike Christians.[810] Even though he argues the influence of Islam, he didn't mention any example of direct relations or any other.

3.3.2. Similarities between Islam and Bhakti ideology

Starting from the salvation through reverence and love to God, there are many similarities between Islam and Bhakti ideology. Religious as well as social visions in both Islam and Bhakti have close resemblances. Salvation without much sacrifices and motivation to keep the God in heart every time are some of similar religious ideas. The

---

[809] Chand, *Influence of Islam on Indian Culture*, p. 43

[810] Chand, *Influence of Islam on Indian Culture*, p. 29-49, p. 108.

equality of God's followers without any discrimination based on birth is main social vision prevailed both in Islam and Bhakti. We had already inspected all these similarities in Bhakti poems sung by Alvars and Nayanmars as well as other scriptures, and had highlighted on those parts. But these similarities also found in Christianity, another semitic religion which had presence in the same time and the same region of Bhakti poets. Moreover, many of the radical ideas that highlighted in Bhakti poems were also advocated by Buddhists and Jains for a long time. So, asserting the influence of Islam on Bhakti emergence because of these similarities only without any clear evidence that proves exchanges and engagements of ideas between two, seems to be wrong assessment and will drive to fallacies as happened in the case of many western Indologists who asserted the Christian influence.

There are some historians who tried to portray Islamic influence of Islam on Bhakti's emergence. Tara Chand tries to establish this influence on Bhakti in the light of principles like human equality and universal brotherhood that advocated by Bhakti saints and shows that these principles had parallels in Islam and Sufism. He continues that even though the idea of emotional worship and the great adoration of pupil to the teacher (Guru-Bhakti) were found in ancient Hinduism, the increased focus and emphasis on these matters especially during the emergence of Bhakti period after ninth century onwards, should be influenced by Islam. Distancing from ritual sacrifices as well as indifference to caste system in Bhakti movement are also pointed as the influence of Islam.[811] These assessments of Tara Chand are challenged since these ideas and principles are found in Christianity and most importantly in Buddhism who were dominant both socially and politically in the region.

Tara Chand continues that the idea of self-surrender to the god is one of fundamental ideas in Islam and the word 'Islam' itself has a meaning of 'surrender', so the idea of self-surrender in the Bhakti also points to the influence. He shows this

[811] Chand, *Influence of Islam on Indian Culture*, p. 112-113

influence in the principles of Ramanuja and later Bhakti proponents like Madhava.[812] Unfortunately, the idea of self-surrender was much highlighted in the great poems of Alvars and Nayanmars and there are not enough evidences for these poets were influenced by Islam, moreover they were engaging with Buddhists as we inspected it in their poems. Tara Chand rejects the influence of Buddhism and Jainism stating that these two religions were evolved to image worship and ritualistic religion by the period.[813]

Yusuf Husain (d.1979), another historian of this kind, divides Bhakti movement into two periods; first one from the time of Bhagavad-Gita to thirteenth century and second one from thirteenth century to sixteenth century. He believes that Bhakti transformed into a cult after its contact with Islam in second period since Islamic principles of universal brotherhood and human equality, the foundations of Islamic society, exerted a considerable influence. According to him, Bhakti was only individual sentiments of some till it converted into a cult and movement from thirteenth century and that was only after its engagement with Islam. With all respect to the historian, it is noticed that he ignores great tradition of Alvars and Nayanmars even though he mentions them.[814] He thinks the contact of lower-class Hindus who were debarred from religious texts, temples and salvation, with Islam that manifests salvation for everyone through absolute surrender to God, should have impacted largely, so he states that Bhakti movement represents first firm impact of Islamic outlook and culture on Hindu society. Even though he admits the genesis of Bhakti is indigenous, he defends the notion of Islamic influence as he says that Bhakti had received a great impetus from the Muslims' presence in the region.[815]

Yusuf Husain discusses possible influence of Islamic ideas in the principles of Ramanuja who was wrongly misunderstood as the very first proponent of Bhakti

---

[812] Chand, *Influence of Islam on Indian Culture*, p. 114

[813] Chand, *Influence of Islam on Indian Culture*, p. 114

[814] Yusuf Husain, *Glimpses of Medievel Indian Culture* (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1962), p. 1-15.

[815] Husain, *Glimpses of Medievel Indian Culture*, p. 31.

tradition. During the time of Ramanuja in twelfth century, there were mass conversions of local Hindus to Islam and active proselytizing in the region. So, he feels that it should have attracted the Ramanuja's attention as well as his idea of monism.[816] Tara Chand also feels same in the case of Ramanuja due to the presence of Muslims in Coromandel coast of Tamil Nadu. Moreover, Ramanuja had presented a God with good attributes and called to worship him with devotion and faith, which are parallel to Islam.[817] Anthropologist F. Fawcett had pointed out to a possible influence of Islam on monist ideas of Hindus. But his assessment is through Sankara who was born in Kerala, and his ideas. He states that by the birth time of Sankara, the Islam was gaining the momentum in the region especially after the conversion of their own king and there was much need for revival of Brahmanism or Hinduism.[818]

August Barth, a French orientalist, feels a possibility of Islamic influence than Christianity in monotheism of some Saivite poets like Tiruvalluvar. The strict monotheism in hymns of Tiruvalluvar reminded him the monotheism taught by followers of Quran rather than modified monotheism preached by St. Thomas. Barth didn't mention any special hymns of Tiruvalluvar or narrated any exchange between poet and Muslims but the severe monotheistic ideas, which was unfamiliar to Hindus, reminded him Islam and its monotheism.[819] He continues that Muslims, representing Khaleefa, in the form of Arab merchants and missionaries had arrived in the shores of South India and established enough relations with people of these lands. He also points out to possible influence of Islam on the Hindu religious movements that sprouted in the region from ninth to twelve centuries. He sees this possibility on the movements made by Sankara, Ramanuja and

---

[816] Husain, *Glimpses of Medievel Indian Culture*, p. 11.

[817] Chand, *Influence of Islam on Indian Culture*, p. 112.

[818] Fawcett F, "Notes on Some of The People of Malabar," ed. Edgar Thurston (Chennai: Madras Museum Press, 1900), p. 73.

[819] A. Barth, *The Religions of India*, trans. Rev. J. Wood (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co. Ltd, 1891), p. 210.

Basava.[820] Like all historians who hold this view, points out to same factor but not any concrete proof was presented. Then he asserts that there is clear influence of Islamic ideas in Bhakti literature from fourteenth century and so on.[821]

Tara Chand also finds clear and concrete influence of Islam on the Hindu religious movements happened in south India from ninth to fourteenth century. He states that Lingayats along with its founder Basavanna who was a great Bhakti leader, were influenced by Islam since the region where they sprouted was center of major Muslim settlements and Islamic Sufism had gained momentum in Indian subcontinent. Basavanna had brought radical changes both in social and religious order of Hindus. Tara Chand quotes C.P. Brown that even the initiation ceremony of joining the Basva's community, was analogous to Sufi tradition where the teacher called *Murshid* and disciple as *Mureed.*[822] Tara Chand continues to count numerous radical changes in society brought by Basavanna which are very identical with Islam. Basavanna had strongly opposed caste and declared that everyone is equal and no one is inferior to Brahmin. He treated women very well stating equality of women and men while allowing widows to marry again with dignity and respect. In existing Hindu system of the period, widows were not allowed to remarry and they were forced to practice *Sati,* a ritual in which widows are instructed to jump to cremating fire of her husband. Most notably, the dead, men or women, were not cremated as Hindu culture but buried after a bath like in Muslims. He also rejected the theory of transmigration of human souls as believed by Hindus.[823] According to C.P. Brown, all these were by the Influence of Christians lived in Kerala which is very close to center of Lingayats.[824] But Tara Chand rightly rejects the statement by pointing large

---

[820] A. Barth, *The Religions of India*, trans. Rev. J. Wood, p. 211-212.

[821] A. Barth, *The Religions of India*, trans. Rev. J. Wood, p. 211.

[822] C. P. Brown, "Essay on the Creed, Customs and Literature of Jangams," *Madras Literary Society and Royal Asiatic Society* XI (June 1840), p. 150

[823] Chand, *Influence of Islam on Indian Culture*, p. 118-119

[824] C. P. Brown, "Essay on the Creed, Customs and Literature of Jangams," p. 145.

settlements of Muslims in Konkan coasts, Arabian coasts and other adjacent areas around the center of Lingayats.[825]

Tara Chand enumerates again analogous principles in both Lingayat and Islam like the oneness of God and his universality, rejection of casteism and final absorption.[826] He even suggests that connection with Islam even in 'Allama' one of the God's names called by Lingayats.[827] Harish Harsoor and Muslim Yadgir in their book 'Basava Philsophy and Islam', compare Basava's philosophy with different principles of Islam. They start with concept of God both in Islam and Basava philosophy and notes important sayings of Basava that are parallel with Islam. Since Basava not reject the idea of heaven and hell in hereafter world, they compare his sayings on hereafter life to same *Ayat* in the Quran. They find many similarities in the teachings of Prophet Muhammed with *Vachana*s (utterances) of Basava. They had found out similarities in the teachings of Basava and Islam in wide range of topics including unity of human kind and end of discrimination, moral teachings like charity modesty, sincerity and even repentance and God's mercy.[828] Since the work focus only on the comparison, it didn't go for any historical attempts regarding Bhakti and its emergence. It is right to say that Basavanna had greatly influenced by ideas of Islam and principles considering these very close similarities and historical support. But the emergence period of Bhakti ends with Ramanuja and before Basavanna's period, so it is out of scope to state that Bhakti has emerged on the influence of Islam.

Yusuf Hussain also focuses on Kabir and his religious ideas of monotheism, total eradication of caste system and challenge to the authority of Vedas and states that his religious ideas are syncretic and had incorporated basic principles of Islam. Then he

---

[825] Chand, *Influence of Islam on Indian Culture*, p. 119.

[826] Chand, *Influence of Islam on Indian Culture*, p. 116-129.

[827] Chand, *Influence of Islam on Indian Culture*, p. 120.

[828] For more readings, pls refer Harish Harsoor - Muslim Yadgir, *Basava Philosophy and Islam*, First edition (New Delhi: White Dot Publishers, 2014).

proceeds with comparing the principles preached by Kabir and later saints who followed him, with ideas of Islam and principles.[829] Like in the case of Basavanna, the period of Kabir is also very far from emergence period of Bhakti.

Meanwhile, Tara Chand diminishes the possible influence of Christians who were also present in the same region in the same period pointing the smallness and insignificance of Christian communities. He says that Christianity was prohibited in Alexandria during Antonine period and the they were meeting in privacy only. When sea trade was resumed between Indian and Egypt after it was ceased in the beginning of third century, Christians from Egypt, Persia and Syria had sailed to south India and settled there. By seventh century, Egypt, Persia and Syria were governed by Muslims after conquering these places. So, he feels that Christians couldn't exercise enough influence on others especially Hindus since they were insignificant who were under Muslims in some parts or lost their authority and prestige in other parts of the world.[830] Like Thara Chand, Yusuf Husain also rejects the possible influence of Christianity by neglecting the presence of Christian monks around the Church in Mylapore where St. Thomas is believed to be died. Even though he doesn't reject their presence in the region, he neglects them because they were insignificant enough to exert influence on Hindus and there were not enough proofs that shows the engagements between Christians and Hindus.[831] August Barth, like other historians who defend Islamic influence, also presents Christian churches of Malabar and Coromandel coast as poor and destitute against Muslims who were Arab merchants backed by Muslim world.[832]

Yusuf Husain admits that Shaivite Nayanmars and Vaishnavaiate Alvars had sung the poems of strong emotion of love and reverence presenting these as most viable means of moksha. So, they could keep away the Hindus especially low-class from the

---

[829] Husain, *Glimpses of Medievel Indian Culture*, p. 11-31

[830] Chand, *Influence of Islam on Indian Culture*, p. 44.

[831] Yusuf Husain, *Glimpses of Medievel Indian Culture*, p. 11.

[832] A. Barth, *The Religions of India*, trans. Rev. J. Wood, p. 212.

attractions of Buddhism and Jainism, thus, they had revived the Hinduism in south India.[833] Even Tara Chand admits that all the evidences he submitted are circumstantial and couldn't be validated with any direct proof of philological or direct engagements. Still, he defends the argument by stating that Hindus are great artists of incorporating foreign elements without giving any scope to be detected since they were very proud about themselves. Then he continues again to highlight the formidable positions and settlements of Muslims in the region enough to influence indirectly at least. [834]

Both Tara Chand and Yusuf Husain as well as other historians hold this view, discuss largely about medieval Bhakti saints including Basava and Kabir and their ideas on God, mysticism and devotion where they find formidable influence of Islam in Bhakti cult.[835] Most of historians who defend Islamic influence of Bhakti movement mainly focus on Bhakti developments occurred in a period that roughly starts from twelfth century and ends with eighteenth century.[836] It may be not wrong to say that the flourishing period of Bhakti movement had coincided with advent of political Islam especially with advancement of Muslim rulers to northern parts of Indian sub-continent.

---

[833] Husain, *Glimpses of Medievel Indian Culture*, p. 11.

[834] Chand, *Influence of Islam on Indian Culture*, p. 107-108

[835] Chand, *Influence of Islam on Indian Culture*, p. 143-16, Husain, *Glimpses of Medievel Indian Culture*, p. 15-18.

[836] As an example, Haider, "Relations of the Bhakti Saints With Muslim Sufis (16th and 17th Centuries)."

CONCLUSION

Even though Bhakti, that offers moksha through devotion and love to God in Hinduism, was scarcley mentioned in Vedas and auxilary texts, had influenced a great portion of Sanadhana Dharma followers. Till the compilation of Bhagavat-Gita, one of most reffered Hindu sacred texts though its position is very low in hieararchial position under the catogary of Purana, paths of moksha to end Samsara cycle were limited to Karma; following duties and sacrifices as prescribed in Vedas and Jnana; realizing God through knowledge. Meanwhile, Bhakti offers salvation through love and ardent devotion to the god. While Karma Marga is clear since it is to execute the prescribed rituals in Vedas, Jnana Marga paved way to different philosophical schools to realize God, soul and nature. Among different schools, six schools of Nyaya-Vaisheshika, Samkhya-Yoga and Mimamsa-Vedanta, were considered as Astika (orthodox) while other as Nasthika (heterodox). But with Bhagavat-Gita, it proposed Bhakti as third path of salvation.. Even though it is right that it was first authentic text to propose Bhakti, Bhagavat-Gita proposes all three paths. Later, Bhakti turned as most important doctrine in Hinduism as it infuriated a movement starting with saint poets of Alvars and Nayanmars and ending with advancement of British army in 18th century. But when Bhakti is discussed, it normally mentions the developments occured in central and northern India neglecting enormous contributions done by Alvars and Nayanmars through their canonical text known as Nalayira Divya-Prabandham and Tirumurai containing more than fifteen thousand hymns. Morever, the genesis of Bhakti movement often misunderstandingly referred to Ramanuja but he may be the first one to systematically present Bhakti. These scanario leads to rightly explore the emergence of Bhakti movement especially the contributions of Alvars and Nayanmars.

Bhakti movement emerges through Alvars and Nayanmars who were saint poets wandering temple to temple in South India worshipping Vishnu and Siva respectively. In their hymns, they expressed their love and ardent devotion to their Gods through their attractive hymns that sung throughout their pilgrimage. They also invited fellow Vaishnavas and Saivites to recite those God-glorifying poems in order to get salvation

even for low castes, out-castes and women without entering Karma or Jnana paths. Their hymns in local language Tamil instead of Sanskrit, attracted large mass in the region, pushing the phenomenon to turn as a popular movement. Nalayira Divya Prabandham and Tirumurai, the canonized collection of hymns of Alvars and Nayanmars respectively, were considered as fifth Veda by its followers.

Alvars are 12 saint poets who glorifies God Vishnu or his incarnations in their four thousand hymns collected in *Nalayira Divya Prabandham*. First three of these poets; Poygai, Puttatar and Pey, are known as *Mudal Alvargal* had composed 100 hymns each in '*Antadi*' style of poetry which are known as '*Mutal Tiruvantadi, Irandam Tiruvantadi and Munram Tiruvanatdi*.' Tirumalisai, who is known as 'Bhaktisara' for his great devotion, had also penned *'Antadi'*-styled poetry comprising 96 verses known as *'Nanmukan Tiruvantadi.' 'Tiruchandaviruttam'* is another poem of Tirumalsai comprising 120 hymns. Tondaradippodi, who is famous for his devotional services to devotees, penned two poems; Tirumalai and Tiruppalliyelucci comprising 45 and 10 hymns respectively. Seventh Alvar is Kulasekara who sang 105 hymns known as Perumal Tirumoli. Periyalvar, one of famous Alvar, sang 12 verses known as Tirupallandu which is first poem in canonized Nalayira Divya Prabandham. He also penned down another long poem, named as Tirumoli, with 461 hymns.

Since Alvars proposed salvation for all irrespective of caste and gender, they include low-castes and a woman; Andal. Andal, who loved and devoted to God as husband, sang two poems; Tiruppavai with 30 hymns and Nacciyar Tirumoli with 140 hymns. Tirumangai, who is mentioned as most educated of Alvars, had composed 1361 verses in 6 poems. His poems include Periya Tirumoli with 1084 hymns, Tirunedutadakam with 30 verses, *Tirukkuruntadakam* with 20 verses, *Siriya Tirumadal* of 155 verses, *Tiruvelukurrirukal* with 47 verses and *Periya Tirumudal* with 97 verses. Another Alvar, Tiruppan, was a low-caste and was forbidden to enter the temple-premises. Because of his immense devotion to God, he was also considered as Alvar with his only one hymn titled as Amalanadipiran. Nammalvar, the most famous of Alvars, had composed a master-piece Tiruvaymoli with 1102 hymns which was commented by many

Vaishnava Acharyas. Other poems of Nammalvar include Tiruvasiriyam with 7 hymns, Tiruviruttam with 100 hymns and Periya Tiruvantadi with 87 verses. The last Alvar is Madhurakavi who sang Kanninum Siruttambu with 11 hymns only. But his inclusion in Alvars since his devotion was directed towards his guru, is debated among followers. These Alvars made pilgrimage shrines to shrines mostly in south India counted as 106, singing the hymns that glorify dieties there, thus it turned to popular culture to sing their hymns in the region that continue even todays. Ramanuja, well influenced by Alvar's hymns, systematically presented Bhakti discussing its philosophy and doctrine of salvation with help of other texts.

Nayanmars, another group of saint-poets with devotion and love, had also sang more than fifteen thousand hymns glorifying their God Siva. Even though 63 saints are counted as Nayanmars, devotional poems are attributed to 27 or 28 of them. While Sundarar, one of prominent Nayanmar, names all these 63 saints in his poem of Tiru Tondar Togai Pathikam, Sekkizhar describes their history in Periya Purana. These eleven thousand devotional hymns of Alvars are collected in Shaiva Tirumuarai or Panniru Tirumurai. In Tirumurai, as popularly called, there are twelve holy books or Tirumurais. First seven books are collectively called as Tevaram and known as Atankamurai (complete canon). In Tevaram, 3 poems of each Samabandhar and Appar, and Tiukkadaikaappu of Sundarar are included. Eighth Tirumurai is consisted of Tiruvachakam and Tirukkovaiyar of Manikavacakar while ninth one contains two peoms; Tiruppallantu and Tiruvicaippa. These two poems were composed by 9 Nayanmars namely Chendhanar, Tirumaligaithevar, Punturutti Kadanambi, Karuvurthevar, Venattadikal, Kandaradittar, Purudottama Nambi, Tiruvaliyamudanar and Chedhirayar. Tenth Tirumurai is Tirumantiram of Tirumualar. Eleventh Tiumurai is collection of 41 poems sang by twelve poets; Karaikkal Ammaiyar a woman, Tiru Alvayudaiyar, Cheraman Perumal, Aivadikal Kadavarkon, Kalladar, Nakkirar, Paranar, Kapilar, Adiravadikal, Ilamperuman Adikal, Nambi Andar Nambi and Pattinattup Pillaiyar. The last Tirumurai is Periya Puranam that mainly discusses history of these 63 Nayanmars. Like Alvars, these Nayanmars also wandered the region with their devotional hymns

attracting from Hinduism and out of Hinduism also, thus with contributions of these two-saint group a popular movement of Bhakti is said to be emerged.

Emerging through wandering saints of Alvars and Nayanmars who lived roughly between seventh and eleventh century in south India, Bhakti movement developed to central, Northern and North-east India through popular figures of Bhakti like Basavanna and Akkmahadevi in Karnataka, Ramanand, Kabir, Guru Nanak, Vallabha, Chaitanya, Mira bai, Surdas, Tulsidas and Tukaram. With the influence of radical ideologies of Basavanna and Akkamahadevi, a new religion within religion was evolved due to Bhakti. Even they are ardent devotees of Siva, followers of Basavanna identify themselves as Lingayats underlining that they are not Hindus. The engagement of Bhakti with Islam also paved way to evolution of another new religion in the name of Sikhism the followers of Guru Nanak who was well-influenced by Kabir.

Among sacred texts of Hinduism, Bhagavat-Gita, is most prominent and first text to authorize Bhakti as a path of salvation. While there are many arguements about prime teaching of the text, it may rightly said Bhagavat-Gita proposes all three paths since its first six chapters discuss Karma, next six Bhakti and last six Jnana. But many theoogians, mainly Bhakti propenents, argue Bhakti as the core teaching of Bhagavat-Gita as it concludes with a verse that promote Bhakti as the path of devotion. However, Bhagavat-Gita is the first text to authorize Bhakti as path of moksha if not the sole path. It also offers moksha even for low-castes and out-caste as well as women who were not favourable for salvation; an important doctrine of both Bhagavat-Gita and Bhakti to gain the popularity. But, most importantly, it hadn't ignite a movement soon after the emergence of the text but it had continued as a part of great Purana.

As we cited in history earlier, we come across a popular movement with the emergence of Nalayira Divya Prabandham and Shaiva Tirumurai. Nalayira Divya Prabndham starts with Tiruppallandu of Periyalavar who calls devotees and fellow humans to chant his hymns with reverence and devotion to attain moksha and closness with God. Throughout the text, love and devotion from the bottom of heart to God, seeking refuge in Him, only thinking and dedicating to Him, and loving Him as God and

lover are recurred. Poets often describes their situation of devotion, love and even bliss in very good rhetoric. It is notable that some poets repeatedly attack Buddhism and Jainism throughout their poems and reject its principles. Even though they strongly advocate Bhakti for salvation, they not explicitly reject Varnashrama dharma as they respect upper castes in some portions.

Bhagavat purana, a large text with eleven thousand hymns, is another major text to discuss Bhakti, yet it doesn't propse Bhakti as a sole path of salvation but as an optional path after observing Karma and Jnana paths. Even though it proposes Bhakti as an effective path of salvation in some hymns, it may not right to assess it as core teaching of Bhakti. Main theme of discussion revolves around Samkhya and Yoga, therefore it can be considered as a philosophical text.

Narada Bhaktisutra and Shandilya Bhaktisutra are main two text that completely dedicated to discuss Bhakti. Narada bhatkisuta is consisted of easy memorable 84 aphorisms that simply defines Bhakti, characteristics needed to develop Bhakti, different phases of Bhakti and attributes of a successful devotee. Narada define Bhakti that it consists of offering one's every act to the supreme Lord and feeling extreme distress in forgetting him. He also encourages to ignore Vedic injuctions as well as Varnashrama dharma if it condradicts devotional service and to practice Bhakti if anyone want to attain Moksha.

Contrary to Narada Bhaktisutra, Shandilya elucidates Bhakti through philosophical and intellectual angle. He tries to demonstrate philosophically, with help of other texts, the efficancy of Bhakti as a path of salvation. He brings sensual, scriptual and logical proofs to prove Bhakti as superior path. He catogarizes Bhakti as Para Bhakti which is supreme form of Bhakti that directly connected with heart, and Gauna Bhakti which is secondary that engages with external deeds like chanting. These collection of six large texts are main texts that composed before or soon after the emergence of Bhakti movement.

Because of one thousand-long history of Bhakti movement and its engagements with various religions, communities and geographies, had pushed to various theories of influence on the emergence of Bhakti movement. Many orientalist historians and theologian argue that there is Christian influence on Bhakti since both advocates love and devotion to personal Gods neglecting religious duties to be practised. They also points to the presence of Christian missionaries in south India region as early as Christian era. Another set of historians argue influence of Islam on Bhakti movement citing the similiarity in the principles of human equality and universal brotherhood. They mainly focus on developments occured in medivel period and figures like Kabir and Basavanna. They also cites the advance of Muslims to south Indian cost in corresponding centuries of Alvars and Nayanmars while they diminish the possibility of Christian influence pointing their insignificance as a community in the time.

Some Indian historians and theologians argue the indegenous genesis of Bhakti but they make deliberate attempts to link Bhakti and extract from Vedas and Upanishads. They try to project Shraddha and Upasana as Vedic and Upanishadic forms of Bhakti and its influence in hymns of Alvars and Nayanmars but the radical ideology of Bhakti that neglects Vedic injuctions especially Varnshrama Dharma is a point of concern. Some historians suggest influence of Buddhists and Jains on the emergence of Bhakti movement. Similiarity in principles and dominance of these two heterodox sects in the region during the emergence of Alvars and Nayanmars, are shown as the proof. When large canon of Alvars' and Nayanmars' texts are traced, it contain many mentions of these two sects while nothing is found about Christians and Muslims. It is noted that some poets dedicate recurring hymns in their poems to attack Buddhism and Jainism, as well as to reject these religions. Moreover, these religions lose influence in the centuries Alvars and Nayanmars were emerged and these moved to other south Asian countries. Regarding these reasons, it may be not wrong to suggest that Bhakti movement was assimilation of devotional, mystic and humanitarian ideas of Buddhists and Jains to Puranic Hindu-fold in order to attract large mass of the region to Hinduism. But it is eager to come to a conclusion, therefore it calls for an in-depth comparitive research scrutinizing all these theories.

In nutshell, we answered all the questions in our introduction and the answers are here

A. Tha main teaching of Bhakti is offering of Moksha through love and devotion to the God. It also rejects *Varnashramadharma*, so each and everyone is capable of attaining Moksha irrespective of caste and gender. Bhakti highlights the importance of love and devotion towards the God rather than rituals and extensive religious philosophy.
B. Bhakti was scarcley mentioned in four Veda scriptures. Bhagavat-Gita is the first text to discuss Bhakti. '*Nalayira Divya Prabandham*' and '*Panniru Tirumurai*', which are considered as sacred as Veda by its followers, are main texts that highlights Bhakti everywhere. While there are some mentions about Bhakti in Bhagavata-Pura, Shandilya Bhaktisutra and Narada Bhaktisutra are dedicated to discuss Bhakti only. Gitabhashya of Ramanuja is also one of the texts that were compiled in the emergence period including twelfth century.
C. Even though mentions of Bhakti were found in Bhagavat-Gita, it's hard to say Bhakti emerged in Bhagavat-Gita since it didn't infuriate a movement soon after the emergence of the text. Moreover, Bhagavat-Gita was a very small part of great legend 'Mahabharatha.' In the reality, Bhakti was the core and essence in the poems of great canons of '*Nalayira Divya Prabandham*' that sung by Alvars and '*Panniru Tirumurai*' which sung by Nayanmars. Bhakti and its teachings were repeatedly highlighted in these peoms and these poems could bring the radical changes in both Hindu belief and history. So it is not wrong to assert that Bhakti was emerged in the poems of Alvars and Nayanmars.
D. Alvars and Nayanmars were wandering throughout Tamil region and adjacent areas in South India singing their peoms, so Bhakti teachings were also spread throughout the region bringing changes in Hindu religion and culture. Considering their valiant efforts, Alvars and

Nayanmars were front runners of Bhakti and its movement and their role in Bhakti tradition is inevitable.

E. Since *Nalayira Divya Prabandham* and *Panniru Tirumurai* are the collection devotional peoms sung by 12 Alvars and 63 Nayanmars respectively, these poems attracted the large mass in south India to Bhakti ideology, thus these ideas infuriated for the emergence of great Bhakti movement. Singing these songs in vernacular language of Tamil instead of Sanskrit the language of Vedas and other sacred texts is clear indicator of a radical change. The inclusion women's peom in the canon also challenged the existing hegemony of men in Hindu religious affairs.

F. From our extensive research, it's easliy understood that Ramanuja was not the first one to introduce Bhakti, so it may be wrong to attribute the emergence of Bhakti to Ramanuja. But he was the first one systematically present Bhakti and to write a commentary on Bhagavat-Gita showing Bhakti as its main theme and teaching.

G. Regarding the time span and geography, there was a great possibility of Islam's influence on Bhakti, but our objective research clearly shows that there were not any notable influences of Islam in the emergence of Bhakti. Moreover, a deliberate linking of Bhakti to Islam will be a repeat of fallacy of western scholars who argued the same influence based on same hypothesis but without enough proofs and evidences.

H. Many theories are there on indigenous emergence and external influence from Christianity, Islam, Jain and Budhism. From our research, it is not wrong to understand that Budhism had influenced in the emergence of Bhakti. The poems of *Nalayira Divya Prabandham* and *Panniru Tirumurai,* often mention Budhism and its ideas and even attack them recurringly. The dominance of Budhism in the region before Bhakti and its vanishing with the emergence of Bhakti movement is another reason for the influence and polemics with Budhism. But it's too early to make a judgement, so it requires an extensive research examining the existence

of each religions and its engagements with Hinduism to answer this question properly.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Ahmed, Aziz. ***Hindistan'da İslâm Kültürü Çalışmaları*.** İstanbul: İnsan Yayınları, 1995.

Aiyengar, Srinivasa. ***The Life and Teachings of Sri Ramanujacharya.*** Madras: R. Venkateshwar Rao, 1908.

Appasamy, A. J. ***The Gospels and Indian Heritage*.** New York: The Macmillan Company, 1942.

Ayyar, C.V. Narayanan. ***Origin and Early History of Saivism in South India*.** Madras: University of Madras, 1974.

Bailey, Greg. "Hinduism and Buddhism, Ancient Period." In ***Brill's Encyclopedia of Hinduism*,** edited by Knut A. Jacobsen and Johannes Bronkhorst. Vol. 4. Leiden: Brill, 2012.

Bal, Sarjit Singh. ***Life of Guru Nanak*.** Chandigarh: Publishing Bureau of Punjab University, 1984.

Balasubramanian, R. ***The Mysticism of Poygai Alvar*.** Madras: Vedanta Publications, 1976.

Barth, A. ***The Religions of India*.** Translated by Rev. J. Wood. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co. Ltd, 1891.

Bartley, Christopher. "Vedanta, Advaita Vedanta and the Schools of Vedanta." In ***Brill's Encyclopedia of Hinduism*,** edited by Knut A. Jacobsen and Johannes Bronkhorst. Leiden: Brill, 2011.

Basawanal, S.S., and K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar. ***Musings of Basava*.** Manglore: Basel Mission Press, 1940.

Basu, Ananth Nath. ***Mirabai Saint And Singer of India*.** London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1934.

Bayly, Susan. ***Saints, Goddesses, and Kings-Muslims and Chrisitians in South Indian Society.*** Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.

Behari, Bankey. ***The Story of Mira Bai*.** Gorakhpur: Gita Press, 2009.

Bhandarkar, R.G. ***Vaisnavism, Saivism and Other Minor Religious Systems*.** Varanasi: Indological Book House, 1965.

Bharadwaj, Krishna Datta. ***The Philosophy of Ramanuja*.** New Delhi: Shri Shankar Lal Charitable Trust Society, 1958.

Bharati, Srirama, trans. ***The Sacred Book of Four Thousand.*** Chennai: Divya Prabandha Pahshala, 2000.

Bhaskarananda. ***The Essentials of Hinduism: A Comprehensive Overview of the World's Oldest Religion.*** Mylapore, Chennai: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1998.

Bhatt, G.H. ***Sri Vallabhacharya and His Doctrines.*** Baroda: Sri Vallabha Publications, 1984.

al-Biruni, Muhammed. ***Kitabul Biruni fi Tahkiki malil Hind***. Hyderabad, Dairathu Ma'riful Osmaniyya, 1958.

al-Biruni, Muhammed. ***Kitabul Biruni fi Tahkiki malil Hind***. Translated by Edward S. Sachan. New York, W.W. Noroton & Company, 1971.

Bon, B.H. ***Sree Chaitanya.*** Bombay: The Popular Book Depot, 1940.

Brown, C. P. "Essay on the Creed, Customs and Literature of Jangams." ***Madras Literary Society and Royal Asiatic Society.*** XI (June 1840).

Caldwell, Bishop. ***A History of Tinnevelly.*** New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1982.

Chand, Tara. ***Influence of Islam on Indian Culture.*** The Indian Press Ltd., 1936.

Chandra Sen, Dinesh. ***Chaitanya and His Age.*** Culcutta: University of Culcutta, 1922.

Chattopadhyaya, Sudhakara. ***Evolution of Hindu Sects up to the Time of Shankaracharya.*** New Delhi: Munshi Ram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd, 2000.

Chaudhari, Nirad C. ***Hinduism; a Religion to Live By.*** New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003.

Chhawchharia, Ajai Kumar, trans. ***Shandilya Bhakti Sutra, Aphorisms for Devotion to God and The Principles of the Philosophy of Love for Him.*** Faizabad: Pothi online publishers, 2018.

Coomaraswamy, Ananda K. ***Budha and Gospel of Buddhism.*** USA: Kessinger Publications, n.d.

Cort, John E. ***Jains in the World, Religious Values and Ideology in India.*** New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.

Craddock, Elaine. ***Women Lives, Women Rituals in The Hindu Tradition.*** Edited by Tracy Pintchman. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Dasgupta, S.N. ***Hindu Mysticism.*** New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1959.

Dasgupta, Surendranath. ***A History of Indian Philosophy. Vol. 4: Indian Pluralism*.** London: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2009.

Dyrness, William A, and Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, eds. "Indian Theology." In *Global Dictionary of Theology: A Resource for the Worldwide Church*. USA: Inter Varsity Press, 2008. http://www.credoreference.com/book/ivpacat.

Ezuthachan, Thunjath. ***Kerelolpathi (The Origin of Kerala)*.** Manglore: Pfleiderer and Riehm, 1868.

F, Fawcett. "Notes on Some of The People of Malabar." edited by Edgar Thurston. Chennai: Madras Museum Press, 1900.

Faizy, C K. "Dars, the Traditional Mode of Religious Education (Malayalam)." *Samasta Malappuram*, 2008.

Firishtha, Muhammed Qasim. ***Tarih Firishtha*.** Translated by Abdulhayy Khwaja. Lahore: Al Mizan, 2008.

Flood, Gavin. ***An Introduction to Hinduism*.** Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

Forsthoefel, Thomas. "Sankara." In ***Brill's Encyclopedia of Hinduism*,** edited by Knut A. Jacobsen and Johannes Bronkhorst. Vol. 4. Leiden: Brill, 2012.

Fraser, Nelson, and J.F Edwards. ***The Life and Teaching of Tukaram*.** London: Probsthain, 1922.

Frazier, Jessica, ed. ***The Bloomsburry Companion of Hindu Studies*.** London: Bloomsbury, 2014.

Griffith, Ralph T.H, trans. ***Rig Veda*.** Benares: E.J Lazarus and Co., 1889.

Griffith, Ralph T.H, trans. ***Rigveda*.** Benares: E.J Lazarus and Co., 1896.

Griffith, Ralph T.H. ***Rigveda*.** Benares: E.J Lazarus and Co., 1920.

Guenon, Rene. ***Introduction to the Study of Hindu Doctrines*.** Translated by Marco Pallis. Hillsdale New York: Sophia Perennis, 2004.

Gundert, Hermann. ***Kerala Parama or History of Malabar*.** Manglore: Stolz and Reuther, 1868.

Güngören, Ömer Cemal, trans. ***Bhagavatgita; Tanrının Şarkısı*.** Istanbul: Yol yayınları, 2001.

Haider, Syed Raza. "Relations of the Bhakti Saints With Muslim Sufis (16th and 17th Centuries)." Mphil Thesis, Aligarh Muslim University, 1984.

Harsoor, Harish, and Muslim Yadgir. ***Basava Philosophy and Islam*.** First edition. New Delhi: White Dot Publishers, 2014.

Hawley, John Stratton. *Three Bhakti Voices; Mirabai, Surdas and Kabir in Thier Time and Ours*. Oxford; New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2006.

"Hinduism." Pluralism Project. Harvard: Divinity School, Harvard University, 2015.

Hooper, J.S.M. ***Hymns of Alvars*.** Culcutta: Association Press, 1929.

Hopkins, Thomas J. ***The Hindu Religious Tradition*.** California: Wadswoth Publishing Company, 1971.

Hunashal, S.M. ***The Lingayat Movement; a Social Revolution in Karnataka*.** Karnataka Sahitya Mandir Dharwar: Dharwar, 1947.

Husain, Yusuf. ***Glimpses of Medievel Indian Culture*.** Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1962.

Jacobsen, Knut A. "The Bloomsburry Companion to Hindu Studies." edited by Jessica Frazier. London: Bloomsbury, 2014.

Jaiswal, Suvira. ***The Origin and Development of Vaisnavism*.** Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Oriental Publishers and Booksellers, 1967.

Johnson, W. J. ***A Dictionary of Hinduism*.** 1st ed. Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.

K, Damodaran. ***Bharatiya Chinda*.** Calicut: Current Books, 2011.

K Paramesvara Pillai, Saduseelan. ***Hindu Dharma Parichayam*.** Thrissur: Sri Ramakrishna Madam, 2001.

Kaya, Korhan, trans. ***Bhagavatgita; Hinduların Kutsal Kitabı*.** Ankara: Dost Kitabevi yayınları, 2001.

Khan, Asadulla. ***History of the Arab Contact with Tamilagham from the Beginning to 1400 A.D.*** Chennai: The New College, 2013.

King, Richard. ***Indian Philosophy and Introduction to Hindu and Buddhist Thoughts*.** Edinburgh: Edinburgh Universtiy Press, 1999.

Kingsbury, F., and G.E Philips. ***Hymns of Tamil Saivite Saints*.** Culcutta: Association Press, 1921.

Klostermaier, Klaus K. ***Hinduism; A Short History*.** Oxford: One world, 2000.

Koduyayakkal, Unais. “Indian Madrasas, Evolution and Growth with Special Reference to Kerala Model,” Academic Platform Journal of Islamic Research, V, no. II (2021): 188–217.

Kohli, Surinder Singh. ***Philosophy of Guru Nanak*.** Chandigarh: Publishing Bureau of Punjab University, 1980.

Kulandran, Sabapathy. “Christian Faith and Hindu Bhakti.” ***Indian Journal of Theology*,** no. October-December (1957): 118–21.

Kumaraswamiji. ***The Veerashaiva Philosophy and Mysticism*.** Dharwar: V.R. Koppal, 1949.

Kutluturk, Cemil. ***Hint Düşüncesinde İslam Algısı***. Istanbul: Dergah Yayınları, 2019.

Larson, Gerald James, and Ram Shankar Bhattacharya, eds. ***The Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies, Samkhya: A Dualist Tradition In Indian Philosophy*.** 1st ed. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1970.

Larson, Gerald James, and Karl H. Potter, eds. ***Yoga: India’s Philosophy of Meditation*.** 1. ed. Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies, general ed.: Karl H. Potter; Vol. 12. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2008.

Latiff, Abdul. ***The Concise History of Kayalpatnam*.** Kayalpattanam: Shamsudheen Appa, 2004.

Lorinser, M. F. “Traces In The Bhagavad-Gita of Christian Writings And Ideas.” Edited by Jas Burgess. *Education Society Press*, The Indian Antiquary, II (1873).

Lott, Eric J. “Sri Ramanuja’s Sarira-Sariri-Bhava: A Conceptual Analysis.” Madras: Sri Ramanuja Vedanta Center, 1980.

Lutgendorf, Philp. ***According to Tradition; Hagiographical Writing in India*.** Edited by M. Callewart and Rupert Snell. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1994.

M.A, Hiriyanna. ***Outlines of Indian Philosophy***. London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1932.

Machwe, Prabhakar. ***Kabir*.** New Delhi: Sahitya Academy, 1968.

———. “Tukaram.” In ***Devotional Poets and Mystics***. Vol. II. New Delhi: Publication Division; Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1921.

Mahalingam, N. ***Edited and Condensed English Version of Periya Puranam by Sekkizhar*.** Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, n.d.

Malinar, Angelika. “Bhagavatgita.” In ***Brill’s Encylopedia of Hinduism***. Vol. 22/2. Leiden ; Boston: BRILL, 2010.

Malkovsky, Bradely J. ***The Role of Divine Grace in the Soteriology of Samkraracharya*****.** Leiden: BRILL, 2001.

Manavalan, K.A. “The Influence of Divya Prabandha on Ramanuja.” Madras: Sri Ramanuja Vedanta Center, 1980.

Māṇikkavācakar. ***Tirukkovaiyar***. Translated by T. N Ramachandran. Thanjavur: Tamil University, 1989.

Martin, Judith G. “The Function of Mythic Figures in the Tirumantiram.” PhD thesis, McMaster University, n.d.

Mascaro, Juan, trans. ***The Bhagavad Gita*****.** London: Rider and Company, 1970.

Mehta, S.S. ***A Monograph on Mirabai The Saint of Mewad***. Bombay, n.d.

Melville T, Kennedy. ***The Chaithanya Movement; a Study of The Vaishnavism of Bengal*****.** Culcutta: Association Press, 1925.

Mena, Carlos Neya. “The Hermeneutics of The Tirumantiram.” University of California, n.d.

Merçil, Erdoğan. “Gazneli.” In ***TDV Islam Ansiklopedisi***. Vol. 27. İstanbul: ISAM, 2003.

M’gregor, W.L. ***The History of Sikhs***. London: James Madden, 1846.

Michaels, Axel. ***Hinduism Past and Present*****.** Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2004.

Mishra, Krishna. ***Prabodha Chandrodaya*****.** Translated by J. Taylor. Bombay: Vinayakarao Gopalarao Ghosalkar, 1872.

Mudaliar, Chandra Y. “Religious Experiences of Hindu Women: A Study of Akka Mahadevi.” ***Mystics Quarterly*** 17, no. 3 (1991): 137–46.

Muhammed, T. ***Bharateeya Samskaarathinte Adiyozhukkukal*****.** Kozhikode: Islamic Publishing House, 2011.

Mukhyananda, Swami. ***Sri Shankaracharya Life and Philosophy*****.** Kolkata: Advaita Ashrama, 2015.

Mulji, karsandas. ***History of the Sect of Maharajas, Or Vallabhacharyas, in Western India*****.** London: Trübner and Company, 1865.

Narayanan, Vasudha. “Bhakti.” In ***Brill’s Encylopedia of Hinduism*****.** Vol. 22/2. Leiden: BRILL, 2010.

———. “Buddhism.” In ***Eastern Religions: Origins, Beliefs, Practices, Holy Texts, Sacred Places*****,** edited by Micheal David Coogan. Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005.

———. ***Krishna: A Source Book*****.** Edited by Edwin F. Brayant. New York: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Natesan, G.A. ***Ramanad to Ram Tirth; Lives of The Saints of Northern India Including Sikh Gurus***. Madras, n.d.

Nehru, Jawaharlal. ***Discovery of India***. London: Asia Publishing House, 1947.

Nesbitt, Eleanor. ***A Guide to Sikhism*****.** Oxford: University of Leeds, 2007.

Okita, Kiyokazu. “The Bhagavata Purana in Four Verses: Jiva Gosvami’s Kramsandarbha.” In ***Caitanya Vaiṣṇava Philosophy: Tradition, Reason, and Devotion***, edited by Ravi M. Gupta. Burlington, VT: Ashgate Pub. Company, 2014.

Özcan, Azmi. “Hindistan.” In ***TDV Islam Ansiklopedisi***. Vol. 18. İstanbul; ISAM, 1998.

Padhi, Bibhu, and Minakshi Padhi. ***Indian Philosophy and Religion; a Reader’s Guide*****.** New Delhi: D.K. Printworld, 2005.

Pande, Rekha. ***Divine Sounds from the Heart: Singing Unfettered in Their Own Voices: The Bhakti Movement and Its Women Saints (12th to 17th Century)*****.** Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2010.

———. “The Bhakti Movement- A Historiographical Critique.” ***Journal of Historical Research*****,** 2000.

Paramasivanandan, A.M. ***The Historical Study of Tevaram Hymns*****.** Madras: Tamilkalai Publishing House, 1982.

Parthasarathi, J. “The Prappatti-Marga.” Madras: Sri Ramanuja Vedanta Center, 1980.

Patanjali. ***The Yoga Aphorisms of Patanjali*****.** Translated by William Q. Judge. New York: The Path, 1890.

———. ***The Yoga Darsana; The Sutras of Patanjali with the Bashya of Vyasa*****.** Translated by Ganganatha Jha. Bombay: Bombay Theosophical Publication, 1907.

———. ***The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali.*** Translated by Charles Johnston. New York: Charles Johnston, 1912.

———. ***The Yoga-System of Patanjali.*** Translated by James Haughton Woods. Cambrdige, Massachusetts: The Harvard University Press, 1914.

Payyappilly, Joseph. ***The Concept of Man in The Advaita Vedanta of Sankara; an Inquiry to Theological Persepectives.*** New York: Peter Lang, 2004.

Pechilis, Karen. ***The Embodiment of Bhakti.*** New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.

Periyalvar. ***Tiruppallandu.*** Edited by N.S. Iyengar. Translated by M.A.N. Prasad. Bangalore: Palahalli Narayana Iyengar, 2002.

Peterson, Indira Viswanathan. ***The Hymns of Tamil Saints.*** New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidas Publishers, 2007.

Pope, G.U. ***The Tiruvacakam or "Sacred Utterances."*** Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1900.

Potter, Karl H., ed. ***Advaita Vedānta up to Śaṃkara and His Pupils.*** Reprint. Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies, Karl H. Potter ; Vol. 3. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2008.

———, ed. ***The Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies, Indian Metaphysics and Epistemology: The Tradition of Nyaya-Vaisesika up to Gangesa.*** 1st ed. Vol. 2. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1970.

———, ed. ***The Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies, Philosophy of Purva Mimamsa.*** 1st ed. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1970.

Prabhupada, Swami, trans. ***Bhagavad-gita as it is: complete edition: with original Sanskrit text, Roman transliteration and elaborate purports.*** ; New York : Collier Books, 1973.

Prabhupada, Swami. ***Narada Bhakti Sutra: The Secrets of Transcendental Love.*** Los Angeles: Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, 1991.

Prabhupada, Swami, trans. ***Srimad Bhagavad-Gita Güzel Tanrı'nın gizli hazinesi = The Hidden treasure of the sweet absolute.***; Batı Bengal : Saraswata Yayınları, 2005. http://ktp2.isam.org.tr/detayzt.php?navdil=tr&idno=260473&tarama=gizli+hazinesi.

Prajnan Yati, Tridandi Sri, trans. ***Sri Shandilya Bhakti Sutras.*** Madras: Sree Gaudiya Math, 1991.

Preisendanz, Karın. "Vaisesika." In ***Brill's Encyclopedia of Hinduism,*** edited by Knut A. Jacobsen and Johannes Bronkhorst. Leiden: Brill, 2011.

Puligandala, Ramakrishna. ***Fundamentals of Indian Philosophy*.** New Delhi: D.K. Printworld, 2008.

Puri. ***The Ecstacy of Love Divine (Essence of Narada Bhakti Sutra*.** Bangalore: Parvathamma C.P Subbaraja Setty Charitable Trust, 2009.

Radakrishnan, S. ***Indian Philosophy***. Vol. 1. 2 vols. New York: Macmillan Company, 1929.

———. ***The Bhagavadgita*.** Bombay: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1971.

Ramakrishnananda, Swami. ***Life of Sri Ramanuja*.** Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1959.

Rāmānuja. ***Śrī Rāmānuja Gītā Bhāṣya*.** Translated by Adi Adidevananda. Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 2009.

Rangachari, R. "Veda Vyasa." In ***Valmiki and Vyasa*.** New Delhi: Publication Division; Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 2012.

Rangaswamy, Dorai. ***The Religion and Philosophy of Tevarm with Special Reference to Nampi Arurar (Sundarar)*.** Vol. 1. Madras: University of Madras, 1958.

Raval, Anantrai. "Mira." In ***Devotional Poets and Mystics*,** Vol. 2. New Delhi: Publication Division; Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1991.

Reddiar, N. Subbu. ***Religion and Philosophy of Nalayiram with Special Reference to Nammalvar*.** Tirupati: Sri Venkateswara University, 1977.

Rhys Davids., C.A.F. "Moksha." In ***Encylopedia of Religion and Ethics*,** edited by James Hastings. Vol. VIII. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1964.

Ripepi, Di Tiziana. ***The Feet of Jangam; Identity and Ritual Issues Among the Virasaivas of Karnataka*.** N.6-Luglio: Kervan-Rivista Internationle di Studi Afroasiatici, 2007.

Robinson, Richard H., and Willard L. Johnson. ***The Buddhist Religion; a Historical Introduction*.** Massachusetts: Duxbury Press, 1977.

Roland Eric, Miller. ***The Mappila Muslims of Southwest India- A Study in Islamic Trends*.** USA: University Microfilms International, 1973.

Sakhare, M.R. ***History and Philosophy of Lingayat Religion*.** Belgaum: Mahavir, 1942.

Samasta, Education Board, ed. ***Kitabu Tarih*.** Kerala: Samasta Kerala Education Board, 2018.

Santsevi Ji Maharaj, Maharishi. ***Harmony of All Religions*.** Translated by Veena Rani Howard. New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidas Publishers, 2006.

Sarma, Y. Subrahmanya. ***Narada's Aphorisms on Bhakti*.** Mysore: The Adhyatma Prakasha Karyalaya, 1938.

Sasivali, V.C. ***Mysticism of Love in Saiva Tirumurais*.** Madras: International Institute of Tamil Studies, 1995.

Schimmel, Annemerie. ***Islam in the Indian Subcontinent*.** Leiden: Brill, 1980.

Seal, Branjendranath. ***Comparitive Studies in Vaishnavism and Christianity*.** Hare Press, 1899.

Seeger, Elizebeth. ***Eastern Religions*.** New York: Y. Crowell Company, 1973.

Sen, K.M. ***Hinduism*.** New York: Penguin Books, 1976.

Sen, Kshithimohan. ***Medievel Mysticism of India*.** Translated by Manmohan Ghosh. London: Luzac & Co., 1935.

Sharma, Arvind. ***A Sourcebook of Classical Hindu Thought*.** New Delhi: D.K. Printworld, 2012.

Sharma, I.C. ***Ethical Philosophies of India*.** Edited by Stanley M. Daugert. New York and Evanston: Harper Torchbooks, 1970.

Sharma, Krishna. ***Bhakti and The Bhakti Movement: A New Perspective*.** New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1987.

———. "Early Indian Bhakti With Special Referance to Kabir; a Historical Analysis and Re-Interpretation." PhD thesis, University of London, 1964.

Shastri, Bhagwat Kumar Goswami. ***The Bhakti Cult in Ancient India*.** Delhi: Oriental Publishers and Distributors, 1924.

Shastri, J. L., and G. V. Tagare, trans. ***The Bhagavata Purana*.** New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidas Publishers, 1999.

Singh, Dewan. "Mysticism of Guru Nanak." Punjab University, 1973.

Singh, Gopal. ***History of the Sikh People*.** New Delhi: World Book Center, 1939.

Singh, R. Raj. ***Bhakti and Philosophy*.** Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2006.

Sinha, Nanda Lal. ***The SandilyaSutram with the Commentary of Svapneswara*.** Allahabad: Sudhindhra Nath Basu, 1918.

Sita Ram, Lala. ***Selections from Hindi Literature Book II; Krishna Cult of Vraja*.** Vol. II. Allahabad: University of Culcutta, 1921.

———. ***Selections from Hindi Literature Book III Tulsidas*.** Vol. III. Allahabad: University of Culcutta, 1921.

———. ***Selections From Hindi Literature; Book IV Saints*.** Allahabad: University of Culcutta, 1921.

Sivananda, Sri Swami. ***Sixty Three Nayanar Saints*.** Uttar Pradesh: Divine Life Society Publications, 1999.

Sreenivas, B. "Sanskrit Words in Tevaram." Unpublished PhD thesis, Bharatidasan University, 2013.

Srinivasa Chari, S. M. ***Philosophy and Theistic Mysticism of the Āḻvārs*.** 1st ed. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1997.

Srinivasan, C. ***Thiruvaachakam by Saint Maanickavaachagar*.** Edited by Tirumati S. Sivamani. Vol. 1. 2 vols. Madras: Tirumati Mohanambal Srinivasan, 1991.

Sundarar. *Paṉṉiru Tirumuṟai*. Edited by Kantacāmi, G. John Samuel, and T. B. Siddalingaiah. 1st ed. Vol. 14. Silver Jubilee Celebration Series. Chennai: Institute of Asain Studies, 2011.

Sydnor, Jaun Paul. "Jaimini, Shankara and the Alvars; Ramanuja's Enduring Synthesis" 22, no. 2 (2014).

Tagare, Ganesh Vasudevo, trans. ***The Bhagavata-Purana*.** Delhi: Motilal Banarsidas Publishers, 2011.

Tapsasyananda, Swami. ***Bhakti Schools of Vedanta*.** Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 2010.

Thallam, Sarada. "Cekkilar's Periya Puranam and The Story of Karaikkal Ammayi," Journal of South Asian Studies, 2013.

Thapar, Romila. ***The Past and Prejudice*.** New Delhi: National Book Trust of India, 2007.

Tharu, Susie J., and Ke Lalita, eds. ***Women Writing in India: 600 B.C. to the Present*.** New York: Feminist Press at the City University of New York : Distributed by Talman Co, 1991.

Thayanithy, Maithili. "The Concept of Living Liberation in the Tirumantiram." PhD thesis, University of Toronto, 2010.

Tirumūlar. ***The Tirumandiram*.** Edited by T. N Ganapathy. Translated by T. V Venkataraman. Saint Etienne de Bolton, Quebec: Babaji's Kriya Yoga and Publications, 2013.

Tyagisananda, Swami, trans. ***Svetasvataropanishad*.** Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1949.

Varadachari, K.C. ***Alvars of South India*.** Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1966.

Verma, J.R. "Surdas." In ***Devotional Poets and Mystics*,** Vol. 2. New Delhi: Publication Division; Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1991.

Vivekananda, Swami. ***Karma Yoga and Bhakti Yoga*.** New York: Ramakrishna-Vivekananda, 1939.

———. ***The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*.** Vol. III. Culcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1958.

———. ***The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*.** Culcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1962.

Werner, Karel, ed. ***Love Divine: Studies in Bhakti and Devotional Mysticism*.** Durham Indological Series, no. 3. Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 1993.

Wetcott, G.H. ***Kabir and The Kabir Panth*.** Varanasi: Bharatiya Publishing House, 1907.

Williams, Monier. ***Brahmanism and Hinduism*.** New York: Macmillan and Co., 1891.

Wilson, H.H. ***Sketch of the Religious Sects of the Hindus***. Culcutta: Bishop's College Press, 1846.

Witz, Klaus G. ***The Supreme Wisdom of the Upaniṣads: An Introduction*.** 1st ed. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1998.

Woodroffe, Sir John. ***Shakti and Shakta*.** Celephias Press, 2009.

Yıtık, Ali İhsan. ***Doğu Dinleri*.** Istanbul: ISAM yayınları, 2014.

Zaehner, R. C. ***Hindu and Muslim Mysticism*.** Religious Studies Religions of the World. London Oxford New York New Delhi Sydney: Bloomsbury Academic, an imprint of Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2016.

Zvelebil, Kamil Veith. ***Tamil Literature; a History of Indian Literature*.** Edited by Jan Gonda. Germany: Otto Harrassowitz, 1974.