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Body, Self and Consciousness according to Tirumūlar's *Tirumandiram*: A comparative study with Kashmir Śaivism

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Abstract

Tirumular's *Tirumandiram* is the earliest known Tamil treatise on yoga. This text is considered to be both, a devotional work as well as a tantric text. Unlike other major Siddha compositions, *Tirumandiram* does not contain any section on medicinal preparations or alchemy. It is the only Tamil text where the sections are named *tanṭiram*. In contrast to the popular pluralistic Śaiva Siddhānta, *Tirumandiram*, one of the twelve Śaiva canons (*tirumurai*), is monistic in its philosophy. This study, while elaborating on the metaphysics of the text *Tirumandiram*, also examines the shared philosophical thoughts between the monistic Kashmir Śaivism and Tamil Siddha mystics.

Keywords: Tamil, Siddha, Tirumular, Tirumandiram, Tirumantṭiram, Consciousness, Body, Self, Kashmir Śaivism, Pratyabhijna

Introduction

The Tamil Siddha tradition, an off-shoot of the pan-Indian tantric system, uses the body and the mind as a tool to go beyond the limitations of time, space, and causation. Kamil Zvelebil's book, *Poets of Power*, gives details on Tamil Siddha tradition with its distinct characteristics (Zvelebil 1973: 76). Unlike the philosophical schools that dismiss the body as an impediment, the Tamil Siddhas place great emphasis on the role of body and mind to reach supreme states of consciousness. While both Vedānta and Āgama are considered as the basis of this school of philosophy, Āgamas are considered to be more specific and pragmatic than the Vedānta.

Tirumūlar's *Tirumandiram*, a flagship Tamil Siddha work, is unique in that it blends philosophical exposition with practical techniques such as ashtanga yoga and mantra yoga. Unlike other major Tamil Siddha compositions such as *Agatthiyar vāda saumyam*, *Bogar 7000* and *Konkanavar kāvīyam*, *Tirumandiram* does not discuss medicinal preparations or alchemy. While the date of Tirumūlar cannot be established unequivocally, as is common with the Tamil Siddhas, T.N.Ganapathy feels that Tirumūlar must have lived between the fifth and sixth century (Ganapathy 2006 :27–32).

Among the several versions of *Tirumandiram*, *Tiruppanandhāl mata's* version translated into English by Ganapathy et al.¹ contains 3047 verses classified into nine *tantiram*. The work begins with code of ethics in the first *tantiram*. In *tantiram 2*

Saiva puranic episodes and the five acts, creation, sustenance, dissolution of both the macrocosm and the microcosm concealment and bestowing of grace are described. Ashtanga yoga and special yoga such as *paryanga yoga* and *kechhari yoga* are the themes of *tantiram* 3. *Tantiram* 4 is about various chakras. The fifth *tantiram* discusses the four main themes of an Agama, the *charya*, *kriya*, *yoga* and *jnana*, supporting Tirumular's claim that his work is an Āgama. In the sixth *tantiram* the three concepts, knower, known and object of knowledge are discussed along with the behavior of a true saiva. *Tantiram* 7 elaborates on the characteristics of a saiva recluse, rituals such as his death ritual, worship, food and receiving alms. This *tantiram* contains five sections that describe five types of Aditya, a term used to indicate emergence of knowledge. Types of bodies, states of consciousness and the experiences of the soul in these states form the central theme of *tantiram* 8. In the concluding *tantiram* 9 Tirumandiram discusses the five types of *panchakshara* indicating their correspondence with the five types of bodies. Five *koothu* or dances are described here along with the ultimate state, the *mona samadhi* or state of silence. *Tirumandiram* is the only Tamil Siddha text that discusses consciousness in an elaborate fashion.

There is a conjecture that *Tirumandiram* shares its philosophical views with the monistic Kashmir Śaivism. In his study on the roots of Srividya Sakta Tantrism in South India, Douglas Renfrew Brooks points out that *Tirumandiram* has "much in common with certain strands of Tantrism- especially Trika Śaivism" (Brooks 2002: 63). Cēkkiḷār, the author of *Peria Puranam*, a biography of the sixtythree Nayanmars, mentions that Tirumūlar came to South India from the north. Sisir Kumar Das (Sisir Kumar Das 2005: 148) mentions a belief that Tirumūlar belonged to Kashmir and that he came to the South carrying with him the doctrines of *Pratyabhijna* philosophy. However, there is no proof in *Tirumandiram* for this opinion other than the expression "*kayilai vazhi vanden*" (v 91) "I came in the path of Kailaya". The path of Kailaya is interpreted as from Himalayas or North India. However, *Agatthiyar meijnana kāviyam*² mentions a *kailaya varga*, a lineage that originated with Siva, as opposed to *mula varga* originating from Tirumular and the *malai varga* or hill lineage which considers Sakti as the primary deity.

This paper aims to presents *Tirumandiram's* description of types of souls, the bodies they adorn, states of consciousness and the soul's experiences in these states.

Consciousness

Tirumandiram uses the terms *aṛivu*, *bodham*, *nandi* and *sivam* to indicate consciousness. *Tantiram* 8 section 14 discusses the nature of *aṛivu* (verses 2355–69). *aṛivu* is consciousness about one's Self (*tannai ariyum aṛivu*). The form of the soul is *aṛivu*. *Aṛivu* occurs due to Divine grace (*arul*). Such an *aṛivu* is neither created nor destroyed and has only itself as its substratum. It is not static but dynamic as it is aware of its own nature (*aṛive aṛivai aṛikinṛathu*). It does not need any external agent to facilitate its own identification. No one can see the boundary of *aṛivu* (v130). It is the expansive effulgence (*akanda oḷi*) (v2808). *Aṛivu* realizes its nature as the eternal light within.

Tirumandiram states that individual self is none other than Śiva who has forgotten his real nature (v 2017). When *jiva* cognizes "itself" as Śiva then *jiva* remains as Śiva. This is similar to Navjivan Rastogi's description of the experience of the self as not a

simple act of knowing but as a complex act of re-knowing (Rastogi 1979:48). When recognition of self occurs, the limited consciousness merges with the supreme consciousness as “there is no other place for *ciṭ* to merge other than *ciṭ*” (v 135). Tirumūlar compares this to space merging with space and light merging with light. Śiva is the grace that helps *jiva* in this effort (v 202). When this realization occurs, the soul has nothing else to know, no other state to reach except to remain with this awareness (*aṛive vadivenṟu aṛinthu irunthén*). Tirumūlar says that the eight mystical accomplishments such as *anima*, *mahima* are agents through which *aṛivu* knows itself. When the knowledge about self occurs, the Divine tells the soul that it the “big one” (*nee periyāi*) (v2360).

Tirumandiram calls the state of existence with knowledge as *nandi* (v 2361) and *meijnana jyoti*. By the grace of this awareness (*nandiyin arul*) the soul becomes all-pervasive supreme consciousness (v2363). Tirumular calls this awareness as the mantra that remains holding the body (*ūn paṛṛi ninṟa uṇṟvuru mantiram*). When this state is repeatedly contemplated upon, then realization occurs (v24).

Tirumandiram calls the *cit* or supreme awareness as *bodham*. The beginning and end-less Supreme Being distinguishes itself first into *parāparam* and *parāparai*. *Parāparai* is *bodham* (*bodhamadāga puṇarum parāparai*) (v381). *Bodham* brings to end the three distinct states, knower, known and knowledge, when the Samadhi of “self becoming Him” is achieved (*thān avan ākum samādhi*) (v2381). The supreme consciousness is also called *sivabodham* which destroys the state of limited self and the factors that cause the limitation (v2539).

Tirumandiram describes *nenju*, a concept similar to that of *hrdaya* of Kashmir Śaivism. It says that *nenju* of those who have *aṛivu* is supreme space, supreme austerity and the locus of the supreme state (v2364). *Vetta veḷi* is another Tamil Siddha term which indicates the supreme state (v2591) similar to the *hrdaya* that Muller-Ortega and Paul Eduardo (Eduardo Muller-Ortega 1989: 100) explain as “the sky of consciousness which is also the embodiment of cosmos”.

Innate impurities or *mala* bring about limitation to consciousness. *Tirumandiram* says that the impurities cover the soul like verdigris (*kalimbu*) (v2213). When the soul’s eye of grace is opened by the Lord then the verdigris is cut away (v114). When *aṛivu* is covered by innate impurities it associates with senses (*pulan*) and loses itself in mundane knowledge as if it is immersed in deep waters (v119). A guru will reveal this state and help the soul transcend the innate impurities. When the innate impurities and the influence of senses are removed then *aṛivu* regains its original status. Tirumūlar calls the process of limited soul becoming universal soul as *sivayogam* and souls that attain this state of awareness as *śivaciṭṭar*, those who remain in the light of self (v122). They remain as *aṛivu*, as *bodhan* (v2019).

The Lord, the beast and the attachment

Tirumandiram establishes itself as a Saiva Siddhanta by discussing the three entities *pasu*, *pati* and *pāsa*. It calls the *pasu* as *aṛivu*, *pati* as the *aṛivu* of *aṛivu* and *pasa* as that which limits the *aṛivu* and says that all the three are eternal. However, when the original state as *aṛivu* is realized these distinctions disappear (v 2405, 115). Transcending the innate impurities makes this possible.

According to *Tirumandiram* there are five innate impurities, *ānava* or egoity, *maya* or delusion, *kāmiya* or karma, *mayeya* or product of *maya* and *tirodāyi* or the concealing power. *Tirodāyi*, the power which conceals the true nature of soul to it, transforms into grace and confers the soul the supreme knowledge of the Self. The first three impurities are considered to be the primary causes for distinctions. Hence, *Tirumandiram* discusses only these three in the context of types of souls.

Tirumandiram goes further and says that even the popular deities are under the influence of the innate impurities (v2183). Brahma is under the influence of the five *mala*, Vishnu is under the influence of four, Hara is under the influence of three, Isa is under the influence of two and Sadāsiva is under the influence of *ānava mala*. Thus, the *mala*-free states begin only from Sakthi. Tirumūlar describes the *ānava*, *kanmam* and *maya* as the inner covering, husk and awn that encase a paddy grain. Thus, the *mala* do not change the soul but cover it like a shell (v2192). Paul Murphy (1986: 27) quotes verse 57 from Abhnivagupta's Paramartasara which uses an identical imagery of a husk, awn and chaff and says that without these coating the seed will be "freed" from growth.

The impurities impart causal attributes (*kāraṇa upādi*) and the resultant attributes (*kāriya upādi*) to souls. The causal attributes are *jiva upādi* or characteristics of a jiva and *para upādi* or attributes of *param*. These attributes define the states of existence, the *kāriya*, with specific characteristics, *upādi*. The *param* causes manifestation with *suddha maya*. It creates the *tattva* or principles that cause the jiva state and hence it becomes the *kāraṇa* for the *kāriya*, the jiva state. The *jiva upādi* ends when the soul leaves all the limitations and reaches the state of *suddha maya*. This process involves transcending the void, *maya pāzh* which is the termination of the resultant state. Transcending the *param* state is crossing the *bodha pāzh*, the void created by awareness. The soul then remains in the state of tranquility or *upasantha*. Crossing even this state, the *upasantha pāzh*, the soul reaches the ultimate state of *paramparam* (v2496). *Tirumandiram* makes a distinction about the supreme state and calls it a rare land while clarifying that it is not a void (v2498).

Types of souls

The states due to attributes or *upādi* are experienced as states of existence or *avatthai*. The *jiva upādi* causes souls to exist in three causal states, the *kevala*, *sakala* and *suddha*, based on their association with senses and consciousness (v2227).

Tannai aṛi suttan tat kevalan tānum

Pinnam uṛa ninṛa peta sakalanum

Manniya sattusatthu satasatuṇ

Tunnuvar tattam tozhirku aḷavākave

Souls initially remain in the *kevala* state. They are unconscious, immersed in *ānava*. The *suddha kevala* or those who remain in the pure *kevala* state do not have a body as they are not associated with *maya* which brings other concepts that result in a body. When they become conscious due to *maya*, karma and products of *maya* (*mayeya*) are added to them. The *mayeya* are the *vidya tattva* or principles that grant knowledge. The souls then become *sakala in suddha state who have self-awareness* (v2236). Tirumular says that the *kevala* remain associated with *asat* (lack of

consciousness), *sakala* are associated with *sat-asat* (conscious sometimes and unconscious otherwise) and the *suddha* are associated with *sat* (fully conscious).

Based on the number of innate impurities functioning in them, souls are classified into *vijnanakala*, *pralayakala* and *sakala*. The *vijnanakala* have *āṇava*, *pralayakala* have *maya* along with *āṇava* and the *sakala* have *karma* along with the other two. *Tirumandiram* differs from *sivajnana siddhiyar*, a seminal Saiva Siddhanta text which states that the *pralayakala* are under the influence of karma and not maya. The *vijnanakala* are called so because their association with maya and karma were removed by intellect. The *kevala* among the *vijnanakala* are unconscious of everything. They are the *kevala-kevala*. The *tanjñāna* are those who have the sense of self. They are the *suddha-kevala*. The *ashta vidyeswara* belong to this category. The *enjñāna* are the *mantra nāyaka* or lords of seven crore mantra. They are the *sakala-kevala*. The *meijñāna* are *vijnanakala* who are free of *āṇava* due to divine grace. They remain in the state of *śivam*.

Among the *sakala* the *apakva* are those who do not attempt to remove the *mala*, the *sādaka* are those who are attempting to remove the *mala* and the *jivan mukṭa* are those who remain with their *ciṭṭam* in tune with supreme *Ciṭ*. The *jivan mukṭa* are souls that possess both, the limited consciousness that causes worldly experiences as well as *mukṭi cit* or the consciousness of the liberated. Both these states of consciousness are in balance in them. Hence, they are not affected by the three innate impurities.

The *sakala* are classified into *kevala* in *sakala*, *sakala* in *sakala* and *suddha* in *sakala*. The *kevala* in *sakala* are those who exist in *jagrit turyathita*. The *sakala* in *sakala* exist in *jagrit-jargrit* state. The *suddha* in *sakala* are the *pralayakala*. The *āṇava* is more dominant in them while traces of maya continue to exist. As they are *suddha* by nature, they exist in the state of *tatparam* or divine grace (2251). The hundred and eight Rudras belong to this group.

The *meijnana* of the *vijnanakala* are the *suddha* souls. By divine grace they leave their attachment with the innate impurities, reach the state of *omkara* and remain as *nirmala* or *suddha* (v2233).

The *kevala*, *sakala* and *suddha* are *kāraṇa avatthai*. These causal states are experienced through the resultant states of consciousness, the *kārya avatthai*, which are the five states, wakeful (*jāgrit*), dream (*svapna*), deep sleep (*susupti*), *turiya* and the *turyā-tita*. A soul remains in one of the causal states depending on the fruits of its previous action. When it realizes the truth about its nature, the *kevala* and *sakala* states are burnt and it attains the *suddha* state (v2409). The five states of consciousness that the soul experiences are created by the number of *tattva* or principles functioning in them.

The number of *tattva* or limiting factors in Tamil Siddha philosophy

The specific state of consciousness experienced by a soul is in accordance with the fruits of its previous action. The states of consciousness have varying number of principles functioning in them. According to Tamil Siddhas there are totally 96 principles that constitute a lifeform³. Their emergence is traced from *parāparam*.

The Supreme *parāparam* distinguished itself into two entities, *parāparam* and *parāparai*. From these two emerge the *paranada* and *parabindu* or the *parai* and *param*. They are also called *parasivam* and *parasakti*. The *parabindu* and *paranada* give rise to Śiva and Śakthi through *suddha maya*. Siva and sakti states are called

apara bindu and *apara nada*. *Jnāna* emerges from *siva* and *kriya* from *sakthi*. These two lead to *iccha* that causes the appearance of the manifested world beginning with *sadasiva* or the *sadhakya* principle. Thus, the manifested world is not different from the Supreme Being who is not a silent witness but one who appears as many. Tirumular defines *param* or *parasivam* as the *unarvu* or consciousness that animates the body from within (v418).

The five *siva tattva*, *siva (apara bindu)*, *sakti (apara nada)*, *sadasiva*, *maheswara* and *suddha vidya* emerge from *suddha maya*. They give rise to the seven *vidya tattva*, *kalā, kāla, niyati, raga, avidya, purusha* and *maya*, which are the products of *asuddha maya*. The twenty four *atma tattva*- five *karmendriya* (senses of action), five *jnanendriya* (senses of knowledge), five elements (sky, air, fire, water and earth), five subtle qualities (sound, touch, form, taste and smell), four modifications of the mind (mind, intellect, *ahamkara* and *chittham*) are products of *prakriti maya*. The *atma tattva* manifest as sixty secondary principles or *sārpu tattuvam* or *pura karuvigal* (external instruments). They are listed below:

From Earth: hair, bone, skin, nerves, flesh

From Water: saliva/urine/chile, blood, semen, brain, marrow

Fire: hunger, sleep, sexual desire, fear, laziness

Air: walking, running, standing, sitting and lying

Sky: anger, greed, miserliness, malice and obstinacy

Earth: ten nadi or energy channels *idai, pingalai, sulumunai, gandhari, atthi, asvani, aalam, purusha, sootham, singuvai*

Fire and air: five primary vital breaths, *prana, apana, udhana, samana, vyana*

All the five elements: the five secondary vital breaths, *nagan, koorman, kirikaran, devadatthan, dhananjayan*

Sky: the three attachments (*etanai*) wealth, world and offspring

Vak or speech- talking, memorizing, singing, weeping and exulting

Prakriti: the three qualities- *rajas, tamas* and *satva*

Bindu: four stages of sound, *paishanthi, madhyama, vaikari, sukshma*

Among the 36 internal instruments, the *karmendriya* and *jnanendriya* are called the *pulan* or senses. The five subtle qualities and the three modifications of the mind without the *chittham* are called *puriashtakam* or eight senses.

Five States of consciousness

Tamil Siddhas call the wakeful state as *nanavu (jāgrit)*, the dream state as *kanavu (svapna)*, the deep sleep state as *cuḷinai* or *āḷurakkam (susupti)*, the turiya state as *appāl* (beyond) and the *turiyāṭīta* state or *aṭṭam* as *appālukkappāl* (beyond the beyond).

According to *Tirumandiram* among the three qualities, the *satva guna* is responsible for wakeful state, the *rajo guna* for the dream state and the *tamo guna* for deep sleep. The *turiya* is beyond the three *guna* and is hence, *nirguna* (v2296).

Tirumandiram states that most of the states of consciousness are experienced in the *sakala* state. The *kevala* in *sakala*, *sakala* in *sakala* and *suddha* in *sakala* experience five states of consciousness each. The states of consciousness experienced during yoga also occur in the *sakala* state. Thus, the total states of consciousness experienced in the

sakala state are twenty. Besides these, the true *kevala* experience five states and the *suddha* experience five states. Thus, the total number of states of consciousness is thirty.

States of consciousness of *kevala* in *sakala*

The *kevala-kevala* are unconscious until *maya* stirs them. Then they experience the descending states of consciousness or *kezhāl avatthai* and ascending states of consciousness or *melāl avatthai*. These states are called so as they descend from the brow middle to the navel and ascend back. Tirumūlar calls a soul emerging from its inactive state as a student who is woken up by the teacher with the help of a stick. The soul is unconscious, in the state of eternal sleep, immersed in *ānava*. The Lord wakes it up with the help of *maya* and makes it experience all the five states (v2162).

The descending states of consciousness are experienced in different parts of the body.

aiyaintu matthimaiyānatu sākkiram

kaikaṇṭa pannānkil kaṇṭam kanāvenpar

poikaṇṭilāta puruṭan idhayam suzhunai

meikaṇṭavan untiyākum turiyamē (verse 2142)

Among the five *śiva tattva* all of them function in the wakeful state, four in the dream state (*suddha vidya* is nonfunctional), three in deep sleep (*maheswara* is also nonfunctional), two in *turya* (*śiva* and *sakti*) and only *śivam* in the *turyātīṭa* (v2143). As the number of *siva tattva* functioning differ in the different states, the corresponding *vidya tattva* and the *atma tattva* also differ. These principles depend on the *siva tattva* to turn them on. Thus, the states of consciousness differ in the number of instruments functioning in them.

The participants of the wakeful state are ten senses, five elements, five subtle qualities, ten vital airs, four modifications of the mind and the *purusha*. It is experienced in the middle of the brow. The soul remains with objective experience of the world (v2144).

In the dream state the soul settles in the throat with the ten vital airs and four modifications of the mind. The ten senses are discarded in this state. All the experiences are due to the modifications of the mind (v2154). The experiences in the dream state are created by *maya*.

In deep sleep, the soul descends to the heart and remains with *prāna* and *ciṭṭam*. The other modifications of the mind do not work in this state. The *prāna* is operated by *ahamkara* but it does not confer the sense of “I-ness”. As intellect is not functioning, the *purusha* is unable to remember the experiences in this state. *Tirumandiram* calls this state as *avyakta* or unclear (v2155).

In the *turya* state, the soul is with *prāna* only. It remains at the navel. Tirumūlar says that it remains as the speechless one who has left the ignorance caused by the body. The soul remains with the sense of Self. *Tirumandiram* says that the *turiya* state remains within all other states and that there is no state which is free of it (v2156).

Tirumandiram describes the *turyātīṭa* state as “we do not know”(v2158).

States of consciousness of *sakala-sakala*

The *sakala-sakala* experience *madhyāl avatthai* or middle states. They are experienced at the brow middle. All the five states of consciousness are experienced in the *jagrit*

state. Hence, they are given as combinations of the *jagrit* state. The *jagrit* in these souls differ from the *jagrit* of the descending states in that all instruments are functioning here and the soul experiences the world fully. *Sakala* are souls that possess all the five innate impurities. *Tirumandiram* explains the relationship between the innate impurities and the states of consciousness. *Maya* operates in *jāgrit-turya*. *Kāmiya mala* functions in *jāgrit-susupti*. *Mayeya mala* functions in *jāgrit-svapna* and *tirōdāyi mala* functions in *jāgrit jāgrit*. This leads to the inference that the *ānava* functions in *jāgrit-turyatita*.

sākkira sākkiram tannil tirōdāyi

sākkira soppanam tannidai māyeyam

sākkiram tannil suzhutthitanil kāmiyam

sākkiram tannil turiyatthu māyaiye (v2167)

As all the instruments function in *jagrit-jagrit*, the soul experiences the world through its external and internal senses. In *jāgrit-svapna* only the modifications of the mind are functioning and so the soul does not see the world. Its experiences are as thoughts and impressions. The action of perception stops with the *jāgrit-susupti* as the karma functions only up to this state. The soul experiences happiness and sorrow only up to this state. In the *jāgrit-turya* only the *vidya tattva* function and the soul experiences only the I-sense. In the *jāgrit-turyatita* the *siva tattva* start to activate the *vidya tattva*.

Tirumūlar compares the experiences of the middle state of consciousness to the experiences of a blind man (v2169). *Turiya* is where the man remains without any sight. *Susupti* is when he feels the ground in the front of him. Dream state is when he gets a stick and with its help starts moving about. Wakeful state is when he suddenly gets his vision.

States of consciousness in the *suddha* in *sakala* state

The *suddha* in *sakala* experience *suddha avatthai*. This category includes the states experienced during yoga. The *suddha* are souls that have voluntarily forsaken their dependence on the senses. Hence, unlike the *sakala* in *sakala* who experience all the five states of consciousness as combinations of *jagrit*, the *suddha-sakala* experience other states such *jagrit* in *svapna* and *svapna* in *svapna* that do not need the senses for perception.

The *jagrit* states of the *suddha* are the subtle component of the gross states experienced in the *sakala-sakala* state. The *kevala-suddha* and *kevala-sakala* experience these states. The soul remains in the *suddha maya* and experiences these states as if they are a dream. The *jagrit-jagrit* state of *suddha* souls possesses the *vidya* and *siva tattva*. The *atma tattva* do not function. *Jagrit-svapna* is leaving the *vidya tattva* and possessing only the *siva tattva*. *The jagrit-sushupti* is leaving the *siva tattva* and remaining in *suddha maya*. The state of *purusha* created by *maya* ends in *turiya* and the souls are not associated with a body anymore (v2197–98).

The *jagrit-atīta* state is when the soul leaves the *ānava* and tastes the *para* state. However, the *para* state is not permanent (v2254). When these souls transition to the pure *suddha* state or the *meijnana* state then they experience the *param* as a permanent state. *Jāgrit* in *svapna* is seeing the dream as if it is real. *Svapna* in *svapna* is seeing the dream and forgetting it. *Susupti* in *svapna* is “not seeing” but only remembering

some ideas or scenes from the dream. *Turya* in *svapna* is lack of even the feeling of having seen something (v2202).

Tirumūlar explains *jāgrit* in *suṣupti* as that where nothing occurs. This is the state from which a person emerges into wakeful state knowing that he came from somewhere but does not know the “where”. *Svapna* in *suṣupti* is the emergence of a feeling. *Suṣupti* in *suṣupti* is objective awareness getting destroyed by awareness or being aware of subjective awareness. *Turiya* in *suṣupti* is indescribable void (v2203).

The four states of consciousness are present in the *turya* also. *Jāgrit* in *turya* is the knowledge of *idam*. *Svapna* in *turya* is the knowledge of *aham*. *Suṣupti* in *turiya* is *vyoma* and *turiya* in *turiya* is the state when the self realizes that it is *param*. The *vyoma* is the state of *sadāsiva* where the soul experiences oneness with the “Universal Transcendental Being”. *Vyoma* or space according to Tamil Siddhas is a form of the Supreme Being which emerges from its effulgence. *Param* state is the effulgence of the *parāparam* (v2205).

Tirumandiram explains *turiyātīta* states of consciousness in terms of *arivu*. The *jāgrit* in *turiyātīta* is awareness or *arivu* becoming conscious of itself. *Svapna* is *arivu* becoming unaware. *Suṣupti* is not being aware of *arivu* knowing itself. *Turya* is *arivu* becoming *arivu* (v2206).

Turiyātīta in *turiyātīta* is a state of absolute fullness of consciousness. It is the state where the soul is immersed completely in *sivananda*.

The *niramala* and *para* states of consciousness of the *meijnana*

The *meijnana* of the *vijnanakala* are the pure *suddha* who experience states of consciousness different from the *suddha* states mentioned as a combination of *sakala*. These souls experience *nirmala avatthai* and reach the state of *param* with the help of *nandi* or consciousness of the self (v2278). The *suddha maya*, instead of bringing about limitation, serves as the light. The soul goes to the state that is free of even the trace of *mala*. It reaches the *param* state in its *turiya* (v2278). This *param* state is permanent.

The *param* state also enjoys *para avatthai* to reach the supreme state. In the *para jāgrit* and *svapna* states the soul loses its association with the world and enjoys tranquility. In the *sushpti* it has the form of *omkara*. In the *para turiya* the soul reaches *sivam* state (v2283). The *sivam* state is that of supreme consciousness. The soul is freed of its causal and resultant limitations or *upādi*. It enjoys the bliss of awareness or *sivananda*. It then reaches the supreme state of *paramam* and ultimately the *paramparam* state (v2285).

Paramsivan melām paramam parattil

Paramparan melām parananavāka

Virindha kanāidar vīttim suzhunai

Uramtaru mānandi yāmunṇmai thane.

Thus, the soul gets knowledge about the five states in *sakala*, attains awareness or *nandi* in the *suddha avatthai* and with the help of *nandi* attains the state of *param*. Then it moves through the *para avatthai*, attains the state of effulgence or body of light and loses all the innate impurities (v2293).

Tirumūlar explains the reason for these *suddha* souls still undergoing transformation with the example of an iron piece that is red hot even after taking it out of the fire.

Even though these souls are devoid of *mala*, the impression of faults or *vāsana* still lingers in them (v2309). When *nandi* grants the grace, the impressions also leave the soul and they become *param* (v2310).

In *para jāgrit*, *nada*, the cause of sound occurs. In *para-svapna* the *nada* abides and becomes subtle. In *para susupti*, *bodham* occurs and in the *para turya* the *paramam* becomes visible. However, the process does not stop here. The *para turyathitha* state which is “becoming” the *paramam* has to occur. When the soul realizes its nature as *sivam*, the *para upādi* leaves it (v2314).

Tirumandiram says when the darkness and light, the soul and *parai*, are crossed the soul experiences *sivananda* (v2325). In this state all the principles will become *siva cit*, *sivam* or supreme consciousness (v2328).

Tirumandiram calls the ultimate state as Hamsa or *annam*. It is reached by when the soul merges with the Divine in such a way that there are no distinctions (*kuri ariyā vagai kūdumin*) (v2353). It is the state of “becoming” where not even the consciousness of being conscious remains. This is the *parāparam* state. It is attained by divine grace or *arul*. In this state the soul merges with the power of grace or *arul sakti* and becomes all pervading (8.13.23) Souls in the supreme state of *sivam* have the sign of *jnana* (*jnana kuri*). Such souls are the *mauni* or the silent ones. They enjoy the *jnana ananda* or bliss of realization. They perform the five acts of siva, creation, sustenance, dissolution, concealment and bestowing of grace, adorning the form of *tatparam*. The body of this state is *jnana*, its parts are *kriya* and its soul is *iccha* (v2332).

Tirumandiram sums up the role of *arivu* through the statement, when *sivam* or supreme consciousness pervades the *param*, it becomes the *paramparam* and *arivu* grants it the ensuing *sivananadam* (v2449).

Types of bodies

Tirumandiram tantiram 8 section 1 describes the body that each type of soul takes. A *meijnana* has the body of *sivam*, the body of light. A yogin takes the body of *bindu* and *nada*. A *mauni* or a supreme soul in the state of silence takes a body of *mukti* which is beyond all the three voids. The *vijnanakala*'s body is made up of *ānava*, that of *enjnana*'s is *maya* and *ajnana* or *sakala*'s body is karma. Thus, it becomes clear that by the term body, *Tirumandiram* refers to the plane in which a soul operates.

Tat tvam asi and states of consciousness

Tirumandiram assigns the *turiya* the role of being a transition state. In *jiva turya* the soul moves from *jiva* state to *para*. In *para turiya* it moves from *para* to *sivam* state. The *siva turiya* or penultimate state is the “*ariya turiyam*” or the rare *turiya* beyond which is the ultimate state of *siva turiyatita*.

The *mahavakhya* or great statement “Tat tvam asi” or “thou are that” is explained in terms of three types of *turiya*. *Tvam* is the *jiva turiya* experienced by the *meijnana*. The *para turiyatita* is *tat*. The *siva turiya* is *asi* (Mudhaliar 1972:26-29).

Nine states of consciousness

Tirumandiram names the soul in the wakeful, dream and deep sleep states of *jiva*, *para* and *siva* states of consciousness as *visvan*, *thaijasan*, *prāgnan* for *jiva*, *virāttan*,

ponkarppan (*hiranya garbha*) and *avyākirtan* for *param* and *idhayan*, *prajāpatyan* and *sānthan* for *siva* states. The soul crosses these states and reaches the *turiya* state to become *sivam*. *Tirumandiram* mentions that the *turiya* state exists in other states. Thus the total number of states where *turiya* exists are ten, four as *jiva*, four as *para* and two as *siva*. In the *siva* state only the *turiya* and *turiyatita* exist. At the end of the ten states the soul merges with the supreme state (v2469).

Iraintu avatthai isai mutturiyattuḷ

Nerantam āka neṟivazhiye senṟu

Pārantham āna parāparatthu aikkiyatu

Órantha mām iru pātiyai serntiṭe

Tirumandiram also describes three types of *mukti* or liberation. *Mukti* indicates the end of a state. The *jiva mukti* is *turiyātita*, *para mukti* is *upasantham* and *siva mukti* is *ānandam* or bliss (v2474). Crossing this state, the soul reaches the “*appāl*” or beyond, a state that is beyond verbal description.

Kashmir Saiva concept of souls and states of consciousness

The Trika system’s descriptions of states of consciousness are similar to those in *Tirumandiram*. The Trika system focuses on the soul’s self-awareness in these states. Swami Lakshman Jee says that the *jñāni* and yogins have different names for these states⁴. The yogins call wakeful state as *pindaṣṭa* as the soul is one with the objective world. The *jñāni* call this *svatobadra* or seeing Śiva as everything, everywhere. The dream state is defined by the yogins as *padaṣṭam* or being in one own state. *Jñāni* call this *vyāpṭi* or pervasion. Yogins call the deep sleep state as *rūpaṣṭa* or established in one’s own self. *Jñāni* call this state *mahavyapṭi* or great pervasion as “there is absolutely no limitation of objectivity.” The *turiya* state is *rūpāṭiṭa* as it is being in one’s self. The *jñāni* call it *pracyaya* or an undifferentiated state or state of totality. The yogins do not have a name for *turyāṭiṭa* as yoga is not possible in this state as there is “nowhere to go”. This is similar to Tirumūlar saying that he does not know this state. The *jñāni* call this state *mahapracaya* or “unlimited and unexplainable supreme totality”.

Similar to *Tirumandiram* the Trika system also explains that each of the state of consciousness includes all the four states within.

Trika system explains the wakeful states similar to Tirumandiram’s description. *Jāgrit - jāgrit* is awareness. *Jāgrit-svapna* is living in the state of impressions of objectivity. This is the state of *buddhāvastha* where there is some consciousness. *Jāgrit- suṣupti* is the state of *prabuddha* where the soul remains without experiencing the external world or internal impressions. *Jāgrit-turya* is *suprabuddha* where the soul remains with the consciousness of Self.

In Kashmir Śaivism, *jāgrit* in *svapna* is seeing something in a dream and not being conscious of seeing. This is the state of *gaṭāgaṭam*. *Svapna* in *svapna* is seeing different things but forgetting that they were seen. This is the state of *suviṣṭam*. *Suṣupti* in *svapna* is developing some awareness while seeing something and forgetting it. It is the state of *saṅgatam* or “being touched” by consciousness. *Turya* in *suṣupti* is the state of *susamāhitam*. However, this is not a permanent state. The soul dreams, realizes that it is dreaming and enters into *samadhi* but then again it goes into dreaming. Tirumūlar may be referring to this when he says *turya* is inferring.

Kashmir Saivism explains *jāgrit* in *suṣupti* as remaining in absolute void but not being aware of it, not enjoying it. This is the state of *uditam* or full of rising towards Śiva. *Svapna* in *suṣupti* is *vipulam*. *Suṣupti* in *suṣupti* is explained as being uninterruptedly aware of remaining in the world of subjective consciousness. It is the state of *sāntam*. *Turya* in *suṣupti* is being fully blissful yet not being fully aware of that bliss.

According to Kashmir Śaivism transcending the states above *vijñānakala* does not need any effort on the part of the soul as it has crossed *maya*. These are states of *pramiti*, purely subjective states without any agitation due to objectivity. The *turya* states described by Tirumūlar are similar in that they are beyond *maya* and hence free of objectivity. The *suddha vidya* state of Kashmir Śaivism is similar to the *jāgrit turya* described in *Tirumandiram* as experiencing the *bodham* or knowledge of *idam*. Kashmir Śaivism describes this state as experiencing both the reality of the self (*aham aham*) and the unreality of the universe (*idam idam*). *Tirumandiram* describes *svapna* in *turya* as the *bodham* of *aham*. This is similar to the state of *īśvara pramātri* in Kashmir Śaivism which describes it as a state with more permanent knowledge of *aham* or reality of Self. *Suṣupti* in *turya* is *vyoma* or space. This is similar to the state of *sadāsiva* where the soul experiences oneness with the “Universal Transcendental Being”. *Vyoma* or space according to Tamil Siddhas is a form of the Supreme Being which emerges from its effulgence. *Turya* in *turya* is the state of *param*, the effulgence of the Supreme Being, *parāparam*. Trika system describes only three states, up to *suṣupti* in *turya*. They are *manonmanam*, *anantham* and *sarvārtham* respectively. There is no *turya* in *turya* state.

The *turiyāṭīṭa* is the state of absolute fullness of consciousness in both the systems.

Conclusion

Tirumandiram is the earliest and probably the only Tamil Siddha text that describes the nature of the soul, its states of consciousness and the experiences in those states so elaborately. To fit with its claim to be an Agama it describes the four parts, *charya*, *kriya*, *yoga* and *jnana* and equates them to *dasa marga*, *satputra marga*, *sakhā marga* and *san marga*. The effects of going through these steps are *salokya*, *sameepya*, *sarupya* and *sayujya* respectively. It elaborates on ashtanga yoga as the path for Samadhi whose ultimate aim is to become one with *sivam*. Without prescribing a particular path for liberation it lists various rituals and chakra as paths for attaining supreme knowledge. The preliminary work on SriVidya concepts in *Tirumandiram* needs to be explored further. In this context, it will be interesting to compare Tirumular’s explanations with that of Agatthiyar in the work *Devi Chakaram* which is available as a palm leaf manuscript.

The controversy, whether *Tirumandiram* subscribes to monistic or pluralistic view needs careful exploration. *Tirumandiram*’s inclusion in the *tirumurai* that are mostly pluralistic in nature may have been a way to protect it and point it out as an important Saiva text. Verses that say Siva is not different from *jiva* and that self becomes “him” in the end indicate that *Tirumandiram* is a text which aligns with monism. Preliminary work presented in this area (Ganapathy et al. 2006) needs a thorough study.

The states of consciousness are mentioned in *Tirumandiram* as paths for *jiva* merging or attaining *samavesa* with Siva. The soul attains the supreme state by recognizing its original nature as *sivam*. *Sivam*’s form is explained as the supreme light within the

state of *turiya*. This light is perceived through *sakti*. These concepts and others such as the nature of *pati*, *pasu*, *pasa*, *vimarsa* and *vikalpa* need further exploration to see if the philosophy presented in *Tirumandiram* has similarity with other saiva schools such as the Pratyabijna school of Kashmir Saivism and the VeeraSaiva school.

Endnotes

¹English translation of *Tirumandiram* published by Babaji's Kriya Yoga order of Acharyas (ed.Ganapathy 2010), Canada. The numbering of verses in this paper is according to this book.

²Agatthiyar meijnana kāviyam (Tamil) Manuscript no. R 1852, T.T.1022, CD no. 3, p 4 Adyar oriental library, Chennai. (author's translation) verses 67, 68.

³Agatthiyar saumya sagaram (1993). Thamarai Noolagam, Chennai, (Translation not available, author's translation) verse 26–49.

⁴Swami Lakshmi Jee's book *Kashmir Shaivism The Secret Supreme* (Swami Lakshman Jee 1998) was used as the reference material.

Authors' contributions

GA conceived the project and studied the states of consciousness in *Tirumandiram* and other sources. SM supervised the project and provided suggestions on the manuscript. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.

Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

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