INTRODUCTION
Throughout the world when life became more complex and complicated, mankind began to contemplate over the confronting issues and arrived at the conclusion that 'evil' in its multifaceted form has played a vital role thereby deteriorating as well as degenerating human values. As human values lose their meaning and significance, naturally human progress becomes highly deplorable. We need not, at this juncture, enter into a study of the origin and nature of evil, since the prevalence of evil is ponderable. Everyone unexceptionally, at one stage or the other is caught in the turmoil caused by evil. It is clear that the outcome of evil is pain leading to suffering either physical or mental. From time immemorial people were aware of the dreadful nature of the evils affecting the people through physical realms, fellowmen, animals, celestials etc.

But by very nature of constitution people were not pessimists who simply acknowledged the active role of evils and made no efforts to eradicate them. While attempting to thwart of evils an introspective study of man himself as well as a through understanding of his environment became inevitable which enable mankind to find out the ways for driving away the evils. In fact, the persistent onslaught of evils on mankind motivated to think of or lead a peaceful and perfect life, free from an iota of pain.

INDIVIDUAL PERSONALITY
In the personalistic analysis it has been decisively stated that men is endowed with three fundamental characteristics which mould the personality of an individual. They are a) animal quality, b) human quality and c) spiritual quality. These three qualities are implicitly contained in every individual, of course, proportionately and hence we can notice the individual difference. As and when the environment warrants, the dormant qualities manifest thereby determining the nature and type of man in his action constituting his behaviour patterns.

Of these three qualities, non can appreciate or promote animal qualities since they engender endangering activities such as quarrels, feuds, agitation, fighting etc. As long as an individual in under the sway of appeasing his lower qualities and gratifying the baser tendencies, seldom can he imagine of progress or development. So moral training, religious practices and spiritual experiences etc., are required for the alleviation of such belligerent attitudes among men. All efforts must be made to nullify gradually the animal characteristics.

HUMAN QUALITIES
Human qualities imply the preservation and promotion of virtues setting aside all vicious tendencies. Understanding of fellowmen, mutual help, loving one another strict adherence to righteous behaviour, truthfulness,
Saivism upholds the monistic ideals such as one God and one lineage. One has to think always good and need not follow any other path. The heart must be filled with the thought of divinity and for this endeavour the aspirant has to contemplate seriously on the golden feet of Siva and attain perfection. The word Vuytal in Tamil etymo-logically means deliverance, salvation, escape, redemption, freedom etc. But in the spiritual parlance it refers to final beatitude or total realization. So the human birth is recognized as a unique opportunity given to mankind to work out one’s salvation.

**SENSES AND MIND**

The Saivite saints have no hesitation in declaring that this birth is a noble one and we have to respect it. But why could not mankind succeed in achieving this righteous goal of salvation? Why there are so many hurdles in the onward march of the human soul towards a perfect state of existence and experience? The Saivite sages come out with the answer that man has been tantalized in the company of five external robbers (senses) and one internal thief (mind). The in-built organs, instead of leading their master in the righteous path, manoeuvre to indulge in unethical ways of living thereby driving the human person to state of disrepute. Unless and until this manoeuvring is arrested, there is no scope and human progress. Redemption will be remote possibility then.

For the enactment of the senses and mind, according to Saiva faith, is associated deeply with three basic impurities viz., agouti (anava) action (karma) and objective world (maya).
ANAVA, KARMA AND MAYA

The root evil in Saivism is **anava** with its twin function viz., assertion and possession. This is purely a subjective as well as ontological condition, which wrongly leads the soul, mind and the senses to gain pride etc. by proclaiming ‘I’ and ‘mind’ in the above senses. **Anava** is declared as a dark impurity since it does not reveal the true nature of things. The Saivites hold that darkness in general will not reveal the objects, but certainly will reveal itself. On the contrary **anava** will neither reveal itself or others. As a result of this egocentric predicament, the individual is concerned more with his individuality, narrow-mindedness, selfishness etc. than having a global perspective. This root evil will not allow one to move towards God, but rather motivated one to indulge in self-centered thought, word and deed. Due to the preponderance of the primordial impurity, the soul is caught in the whirlpool of duality and toils in the turmoil of worldly engrossment.

**Anava** not only does propel the person to develop self-centeredness, but also induces him to engage in actions to fulfill such assertive moods and enhance possessive sense. Thus emerges the second impurity **karma** which is partly subjective and partly objective. For actions cannot be performed in the absence of any motivating force or in isolation. To give a concrete shape into one’s ego-centrism, one has to engage in actions, especially to ascertain one’s pride or prejudice. Strictly speaking, actions will not be without the fruits either good or bad which the doer has to reap. Thus deeds, fruits, enjoyment, suffering etc. become a regular feature which will not spare time to the truth seeker to neutralize his actions like a balance. In fact it will be difficult for one to be action-less, but divine-oriented deed and auspicious engagement will arrest the yielding of diversified fruits.

If actions are meant for the attainment of momentary pleasures, temporary joy, etc., then it will be difficult to achieve the target viz., human development. On the contrary, if actions are dedicated to the lord whether sacred or secular, accumulation of the fruits of deeds will be annihilated and hence no suffering whatsoever.

The third impurity viz., **maya** is understood in a specific sense in Saivism as exclusively objective in nature. Truly, **maya** is the material cause of the world or the matrix out of which the components of the world which we in habit have been made. It does not cause illusion or inexplicable principle as held by the Advaitins. Due to their natural qualities, the world of objects causes pleasure, pain and indifference etc. As the human beings frequently come into contact with the phenomenal world or even vice-verse, the interaction between them is immense and inseparable. Since man develops an insatiable fascination for material comforts forced by ego, the material cause of the world becomes a bond in the case of the individuals. **The more and more a person is lured by gross matter and its manifestations, the more is his affliction.**

GOAL OF LIFE

Taking into account of all these detracting factors the Saivites still develop optimistic hope that we can live on this earth in a good manner, providing we think of the goal to be attained by becoming the recipients of Siva’s grace. St. Appar laments for the sake of the people thus: "**The days gone as a child, the days I spent as**
youth chasing after women, the
days which I experienced with
disease and old-age and walked
with a stick, I have ruined by life
without a goal."

The goal of life according to the
Saivites is to free from the clutches
of the impurities, freely enter into
the domain of Lord Siva, go near
him, attain his stature and become
one with him. All these above
attainments are possible only through
his benevolent gesture.

The Saivites saints uniformly declare
that the stars, planets etc. will not harm
a genuine devotee of Siva. Even the god
of death (Yama) will hesitate for a while
to take away his life who enjoys the
grace of Siva incessantly.

St. Sambandhar has granted to the
Saivite world the boon of getting rid of
the evils caused by the movement of
planets, dangerous animals, dreaded
diseases, enemies, natural calamities,
and triumph over opponent’s etc. in his
famous hymn known as kolaru patigam.
What the saivites devotee has to do is to
recognize the efficacy of Siva’s grace
revealed through Sakti, His consort the
very embodiment of grace. The
obligation before the devotees is to
purify heart and soul so that Lord Siva
with His consort can easily enter into
their being and annihilate the afflictions
caused by the earthly as well as celestial
things and dwell there itself.

**BLISS OF SIVA**

It is clear that human beings with
their limited individual efforts can
get rid of their woes only to a
limited extent. On the other hand, if
they resort to the technique of
invoking the bliss of Siva, certainly
they can be relieved of their pains
completely. Once life on this earth is
secured and assured of strife-free, then
positively pleasure is gained. This kind
of empirical joy can be converted as the
permanent bliss, provided the Saivites
aspirants strictly adhere to the pathway
shown by the mystic saints. Pure joy,
according to the saints lies in
praising the lord in praise-worthy
terms and pain peeps in on those
days when Lord Siva is not
worshipped. The saints are keen in
alleviating the influence of the three
impurities by resorting to a god-
centered life.

First, the aspirant has to develop
sivohambhavana or contemplative
identification with Siva-consciousness.
As long as individual consciousness
predominates, naturally the person is
possessed by the root evil, viz., and ego
resulting in restless activities and
reckless ways of thinking and feeling. To
overcome this pathetic situation, the
saints recommend that Lord Siva is to
be made to dwell in the heart-temple
and not to forget him even during the
twinkling of eyelids. Hence the need for
converting the body and mind as the
abode of Siva arises.

According to Tirumular, "The heart is
the sanctum sanctorum (Perunkovil), the body of flesh is
the outer structure (alayam). For
the great lord, the mouth is the
entrance of the gopuram. To those
who have realized this truth
accurately, the jivan or the soul is
the Sivalingam. At this stage, the
once deluding sense organs turn to
be the massive lamps in the
temple". To put it in a scientific
language, the macrocosm must be felt
and experienced in the microcosm. All
the Saiva saints acknowledge with
gratitude that they had attained the
benefit of being born as human since
Lord Siva, the great mountain has been
caught in the net of love. It is unstinted love that can unite the human with the divine.

To quote St. Manikavacakar, "You gave yourself to me and took me in exchange; Oh Sankara, Who indeed is the cleverer one of us two? Infinite bliss I gained, What did you gain from me? Of mighty Lord who occupied My mind as your shrine, Oh Sivan who abides in Tirupperun- tural. Oh my father, or Lord of the universe, My body you taken as your abode. For this I have nothing to offer in return."

**GOD-CENTERED**

When all the internal organs centered around divine favour, no selfish attitude will emanate. In the absence of self-centeredness, the whole being is set for enjoying the flora and fauna of this earth as the manifestation of Siva and they are meant for rejoicing at. To such persons the whole universal will look beautiful and ugliness will be eliminated from his pursuit. However, the saints will be blind to the objects, though their eyes are opened. This means that they can never be carried away by the luring world. Since ego-centrism loses its vitality the enforcement, the sense of pride and ownership to properties will be nullified. ‘I’ will be transformed as ‘not I’ but God in me’. The activities being executed by the aspirant in the absence of ego-consciousness will be God-centered than self-centered.

In this process a kind of channelization takes places. The various limbs of the body hitherto wandering for momentary as well as transitory pleasures are made to worship lord Siva and enjoy His perennial bliss in abundance. For instance, the worshipper’s legs walk towards the temple of Siva; the eyes look at the visible image of the lord in the sanctum; the hands unitedly raise above and pay obeisance of the beloved lord; the nose smells the sweet scent emanating in the sanctum; the ears listen to the glorious terms of Siva; the mouth praises His glory either by chanting the mystic symbols or singing. On the whole, the whole body is engaged in Siva worship without any other attachment.

In this connection it is interesting to note a verse from Tirumantiram. Surely then the senses five under your control come/surely then the senses five back to their native homes retreat. Surely then the senses five change their course. If, alone, you seek the sole felicity of our Lord’s perfect grace.

**SERVICE**

Besides the worship of Siva, the Saivites show their veneration to the ardent devotees of Siva. They have been treated as the mobile shrines, while lord Siva is the static shrine. Whatever offered to the deity will not reach the devotees, but whatever is offered to the devotees will certainly reach the deity. Further, the Saivites scriptural texts declare that the vision of the Siva temple and the sight of the Siva devotee are to be treated alike by the Saivites as the visible manifestations of Siva and both receive similar reverence. Hence the Saivites acknowledge that service to a Saiva devotee is to serve Siva Himself. An ardent devotee of Siva is expected to render service physically to the Siva temple.

In the words of St. Appar, "O mind! If you want to sustain (against several ordeals) come and listen! Daily enter in to the portals of a Siva
temple before dawn, cleanse and precincts, purify it, pluck suitable flowers, weave garlands with glowing love and shedding tears, sing and dance in praise of the lord".

Once consciousness and actions are oriented towards Siva, automatically the mind becomes sublime as a result of which the objects of the spatio-temporal world do not lure the saint of Siva any longer. Those objects which enhance their religious commitment and spiritual upliftment are regarded as sacred while others are treated as profane. As divine wisdom dawns and enlightenment is on the unveil, the divinity soaked devotee considers the objects of the world as trifle.

In the life portrayal of St. Appar it has been narrated that Lord Siva wanted to test his steadfastness in devotion, control of mind and senses. While discharging his routine service of plucking away the growth of weeds and removing the pieces of stones, the saints noticed the presence of precious stones in varieties. Without any perturbed mind, he treated them on par with the waste materials and threw them on the pond. Then the divine damsels danced before him to distract his single-minded devotion. But never did he waver in his principal and concentrated on his genuine service. This is an illustration just to show as to how the man of wisdom will behave during the time of crisis.

DEVOTION TO SIVA

The grammar of saintliness is remarkably stated in the Periya-puranam, a Saivite hagiology. The hearts of such Saivite devotees have been pure line the sacred ashes they smeared over their body. They made all quarters illuminative owing to the lustre of their radiation. Even if every event of the cosmos goes against its stipulated course, never do they withdraw from their unswerving devotion to Siva. Their persistent path of steadfast devotion engendered in term virtues and norses. As the Saivite devotees had transcended the thought of wealth, they were able to maintain balance and did not suffer from the calculation of loss or gain. As a result of this unequivocal determination, they treated gold and posted alive (as trifles). They did not even prefer to be freed from the fetters, since they wished to worship the lord with increasing devotion. Such was their heroic mould.

The devotees led a life of simplicity and never did they prefer pomposity. To serve God alone was their objective in life and their benign love towards the lord and fellow men were unfathomable. The greatness of their spiritual valor cannot be adequately explained. As their reputation surpassed any boundary, one has to be content with praising their rapturous states, ecstatic experiences, mystic intuitions etc.

Resorting to moral way of living is a pre-requisite for religious enterprise. Saivism insists that a true devotee of Siva should be virtuous at any cost. Though righteous actions are advocated in secular literature also the sacred hymns of Saivism deliberately emphasize that unethical observances are antithetical to human development, besides their being the stumbling block for the onward march of the human soul towards Siva. For, the whole being (physical, psychical and spiritual) must be pure and prefect to ensure progress. A corrupt mind with polluted thought is unfit to receive divine blessing. Furthermore,
the pursuit of joy depends on a calm mind which is free from blemishes such as sin, crime etc. Tirumular advises people to "drive away dirt, fill the mind with wisdom. Does charity when wealth is in opulence."

**CALMING THE MIND**

To neutralize the thought and equalize the ideas and calm the mind, *Siva yoga* is recommended where Siva becomes’ the focal point of meditation. Withdrawal of the senses and mind from the mundane world and seeing the lord within oneself are the factors constituting *Siva yoga*. The Saivites condemn the people is fools who always depend on their physical eyes and claim validity. The perennial joy lies in visualizing the lord through the internal eye. The *Sivayogins* in their yogic slumber have ‘seen’ Siva’s world, the true nature of Siva yoga and the auspicious nature of *siva bhoga*. Their states of experience cannot be adequately explained in words. ‘How can the mother reveals her nuptial experience to her daughter?’ ask Tirumular. They have experienced *nada* and *nadanta* within themselves; they are imperishable, unblemished; dwell in pure joy. They discriminate between *cit* and *acit* and discover in the inner light and adore Lord Siva through joy.

**PURIFICATION OF BODY AND MIND**

For the purification of the physical body Saivism expects every Saivite to apply sacred ashes on the body appropriately on the body, which serve as an external symbol. As internal symbol, the chanting of the five-lettered mantra enriches one’s inner being.

St. Sundarar highlights the significance of chanting the mantra thus. "Without any other attachment I contemplated upon your holy feet; by doing so born am I; gained the status of being not born again; O! the lord dwelling at Kodumudi where the Spiritual luminaries worship and praise thee; O! the immaculate one! Even if I forget you, chant my tongue Nama Sivaya!". Here the expression indicates the nature of the twice-born soil. The **second birth always refers to the spiritual maturity** attained by the aspirant owing to the divine instructions obtained from the preceptor.

**ROLE OF GURU**

*Saivism recognises the role of a guru whose foremost duty is to dispel the darkness of the disciple and infuse divine fervor.* The spiritual master will come in search of a qualified disciple provided the latter systematically develops worshipping the lord in the temple and revere the fellow devotees. Tirumular cautions the Saivites to be aware of the *asatgurus*, the bogus ones or the impostors in the guise of genuine masters, the blind ones who play the game of blindness, make the disciples also play the game of blindness, and ultimately both the blind people fall into the pit (sufferings).

**Lord Siva is considered as the first guru who preached the significance of Saiva Philosophy through silence as the god facing the southern direction.** Hence the Saivites who hanker after release from the thraldom are enthralled to see Lord Siva in the form of human preceptor. Hence both receive equal treatment from the devotees. The preceptor initiates the disciples in several ways in accordance to their elevation in the spiritual ladder and enables them to enjoy Siva’s benevolence. *To a true Siva devotee,*
Illumination is to see the holy form of the guru; Illumination is to chant the holy name of the guru; Illumination is to listen to the holy word from the guru; Illumination is to muse the holy being of the guru.

Ultimately when the human person merges with divine pro-poinsettias all morbid states of existence and experience vanish, resulting in the ultimate motto ‘ever joy and never sorrow’. All living beings become lovable, neither hatred nor enmity play havoc; fellowmen are treated alike; brushing aside all distinctions such as colour; caste, creed language etc. take place; service to fellow beings become upon aneous. Instantly such elevated souls endeavor to eradicate evils that confront mankind. The bliss cherished by one devotee is to be shared by all. At this stage the famous expressions ‘universal brotherhood’ etc. gain their fullest connotation.

CONCLUSION

It is obvious that human development involves not merely physical growth or mental expansion nor growing in the fields of economics or prospering due to scientific advancement and technological development rather it involves promoting universal outlook in thought, word and deed.

This kind of global perspective will emerge provided the individual concerned is trained to be altruistic in outlook. To achieve this objective, religious practices, spiritual training, mystical illumination etc. are basically essential. Saivism as a system of thought and practice provides with ample scope for inner purification, external cleanliness, spiritual upliftment and mystical communion. With this background if we approach the factors that constitute human development, certainly we can appreciate that Saivism, as a realistic and rationalistic religion is a system par excellence! For Lord Siva is not only a God of Southern Region, but He is the lord of every nation!

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