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RESEARCH ARTICLE

THIRUMOOLAR'S PERIOD - A STUDY

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Abstract

While the fact that Thirumoolar's age is not firmly fixed as belonging to any particular century till date one has to accept the viability that thoughts of mysticism and references to historical and mythological personalities by Thirumoolar in his works do show us the path that leads to certain justifiable conclusions regarding the time in which he lived and wrote. Not alone the religious thoughts presented by this Tamil saint but also his usage of the language pave the way to look for constrictive decisions regarding his chronology. A third ray of light in the dark path to arriving at the age of Thirumoolar a great shaivite saint who lit the torch of inner light in the minds of people are the references made by saints of yesteryears in their works. The present study is an attempt at arriving at a feasible answer to statements that whatever information available both primary and secondary cannot be considered valuable determinants of the exact age of this great saint and thinker.

Key words: Thirumoolar, Shiva, Shiva Siddanta, Vedas, Ravana, Ramayana, Agathya, Tamil, Tamil world, Aryas

Introduction

Thirumoolar's *Tirumandiram* is hailed as the beacon light to dwell deep into and understand the unfathomable knowledge of Shaivism that spoke for man. This is because Thirumoolar is a social scientist. Man matters to him more than Maya. To him, that which is done to man is that done to God [Shiva]. 'Seevanenna Sivanenna Vaerillai' [Thirumandiram 2017] also life is not man's alone but of all living

beings to him too. To arrive the dates of Thirumoolar's time one has to skip much fiction and questionable ideas said about his life through the years. This is a systematic analysis through literature and historical evidence to establish the exact data regarding his lifetime.

Review of Literature

Thudisaikilar calculates it to be between 6000 BC and 100 BC. C.V.Narayana Iyer opines that it must have been between the fourth and sixth centuries. To A. Sivalingam it was the fourth century. Vellaivaranaar states that it must have been the latter part of the fifth or early part of the sixth centuries. To Maraimalai Adigal, it is the middle of the sixth century.

Result and Discussion

Just as researchers are reading and rereading Thirumandiram to arrive at the crux of Shaivism and Vedanta they are indulging in an unending debate on the time during which he lived. A short but in negligible reference to who Thirumoolar was and what he gave to mankind is mandatory to arrive at a justifiable date of his life and time.

In Shaivism Shiva alone matters to him. This is explicit in Thirumandiram 1512 where he criticises the mingling of Shaivism with Shiva. Yet he resorts to use of myths too since myths are the most comfortable way to impart metaphysical truths to the hearers. He disapproves of the six variants of Shaivism namely, Pasupada, Maavirada, Vairava, Kayamigam, Vaaman and Kaalamugam (Thirumandiram 1532).

Thirumoolar was a siddha whose work aimed at channelising the points of view of man on leading a meaningful life. The empathy with which he discusses man's life and his need to follow Shiva makes way to believe that he himself was a simple shepherd moolan who had got enlightenment in life and put it down in the form of Tirumandira and not somebody else who entered into the body of moolan. This is because nowhere in his writing does Thirumoolar say that such an episode happened during his trip to the south to meet Agatya. That story must have been a later inclusion to modify the truth and also claim that the mystic knowledge of Tamil speaking Thirumoolar to be of some Aryan. This idea must have been adopted from the 'Bible' where the 'Gospel' is said to have only been written by some people who were told to write those verses. This goes on to prove that Thirumandiram belongs to an era before the days of the Bible.

A Tamil Siddha, he was a social reformer as other siddhas and advocate of Shaivism. He emerged as the establisher of Shaivism as the cosmic dragon that engulfed Buddhism and Jainism and put shiva Siddanta in black and white.

As an advocate of the equality of the human creed, he staunchly criticises untouchability, though he didn't speak of the four varnas. He hailed both the Vedas and the Agamas (Thirumandiram 51 and 65). Decrying untouchability he says "asoosam asoosam enbar arivilaar, asoosam am edam arum arigilar, asoosam am edam arum arintapin, asoosa maanidam asoosam aame" (Thirumandiram 2551) and he shows the path of righteous living to man thus

"Kolayee kalavugal karma poikooral
Mallavaana paataga maamavait neekith
Talayaam sivanadi saarnthu inbam saarntaarkku
Ilayaam ivaignana annantattu iruttalee. "

(Thirumandiram 2922)

The Tamil language plays a major role in the task of defining the time of Thirumoolar. The letter 'அ' is considered the symbol of all activity by seers of the past [aharanilai]. Sivavakiyar hails Goddess as 'aimbattoreatchari' meaning 51 Tamil letters. Here he describes figure as starting with 'அ' from the top centre of the head.

Tirumoolar says "ahara uhara sihara naduvaai." He writes in simple tamil yet it hides great truth inside. He was an adept at the northern languages. He was different from thinkers like Ramanuja who wrote in the northern language.

A major study has to be made of which Agatya he met since there have been a number of Agatya through the ages. The agatya whom he met must surely have been Pothigai Agathiyar given Thirumoolars love for Tamil language and also the fact that Thirumoolar was a Tamil.

Conclusion

Sir John Marshall and Rev. Eros opine that Harappa and Mohenjo Daro are of before 5000 BC and the civilisation, ornaments and the letters engraved in the buildings are Tamil. The Tamil language started as pictures, advances as lines then changes to rounded ones and finally became square.

Aryas who unfiltered into this area included Vismamitra into their fold entitling him “Brahmma Rishi” since he accepted their aryan religion. Tamil rulers who didn’t, receded to the Dakshina area. T.C.Chidambaram states that rounded Tamil letters came into being in the Dakshina area and just like the line letters here also there were 51 letters.

Tirumoolar has spoken of the 51 letters.
“Oothum ezuthodu uyir kalai moovaittu
Adi ezutthavai aimbattoo dondrenbar
Sothi ezuthin nilai iru moondrila
Natha ezuttittu nadikkol”

(Thirumandiram 942)

Thus we come to know that Thirumoolar belongs to the rounded letter period. Telugu which was a modification of Tamil also has 51 letters. Ravana is said to have created a military language which was Telugu and yet it was Tamil which had 51 letters originally and basically.

One can be sure that Thirumoolar who wrote

‘Ennai nandraaha iravaian padaittanan
Tannai nandragath tamil cheyyumaaree”

Since Aryans could not enter into and win over the non submissive Tamil kings they had to destroy Ravana who was the greatest Tamil barrier to do it. And Agatya was posted at Dakshina to contain him and establish aryan civilisation there.

Thirumoolar came to meet this Agatya who was in Tandakaranya. We can come to the conclusion that Thirumoolar belongs to the Ramayana Period since this Parvathamma has extended upto today's Kerala from Thandakaranya through Pothigai. And Thirumoolar the Poet Siddha Physician’s love for Tamil made him meet this Pothigai Agatya.

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