

The Saiva-Jainism of the SumeroDravidians

As we pursue the study of Sumerian texts with a background knowledge of Indic religions particularly the Dravidian, it can be seen that all the major religions are there already but perhaps not differentiating themselves into distinct religions but a complex of all religions including the Vedic with a characteristic fluidity. We can see this even in historical times - during the CaGkam period Saivism and VaishNavism did not split into different religions combating with each other as it happened during the Bakti and post bakti periods. Perhaps at an earlier time this was also the case with Saivism and Jainism, a hybrid religion combining both and which I call Saiva-Jainism. Now it appears to me that such a hybrid Saiva-Jainism existed in Sumeria around 3000 BC, as some of the lines below from Suruppak's NeRi(nari) would indicate.

The most important line in connection with this is the following:
257.

ummeda ga arhus-a-ke lugal-bi-ir nam si-im-mi-ib-tar-re (The nurse, with the milk of mercy, takes decisions for(the children's master)

Ta. ummeyda njaan arkusakkee ulukaLbiyir nam cimma iv taree (The arhats with true wisdom, like your king, gives here itself good and lofty understanding)

While it can be interpreted in several ways, some meanings are very clear especially “ummeda ga arhus-a-ke” and which I have interpreted as the “arhats of true wisdom” or more accurately “the arhats who shine with true Njaanam”. The Ga is Ngaal (> Njaan) and which exists in Tamil as Njaanam, Njaal Naal etc. In Sumerian it means pure, white and so forth and as such also a word for milk. Now “lugal-bi-ir nam simmi iv taree” can be interpreted also as “ (who) can give (taree) loftiness (simmi-nam) like that of kings or even better than the kings (lugal-bi-ir), here itself (iv)

Now ‘arhus’ in Sumerian also means ‘a kind person’ and hence combining all we can see that ‘arhus’ is not only one who enjoys absolutely clear understanding but also one who is very kind and loving, full of compassion for all. Now we also notice that among the Tamil Jains we have BEING understood as Arukan, Vaal aRivan (one of absolutely clear understanding etc). We have also ‘aarukatar’ a group of Jains. In all these they have seem to have retained a very ancient notion and the lexicon associated with it.

The ‘simmi-nam’ is the simmam, simaiyam i.e. the peak, lofty heights and certainly here a metaphor for deep metaphysical understanding that would make a person a Great One. Now this term may also be linked with “sivaayam’ ‘Sivattuvam’ and etc perhaps the same as Jain concept of Sivakati, the highest and the most desirable state of being-in-the-world. The root id ‘si’ and

which means ‘ to shine forth’

Now the link with kings is also interesting. For all the Tirtangkaras of Jainism were kings and they seem to reflect a very ancient situation of Priest-King or Sage-King something we also see in Buddhism. The Emperors of ancient India like in Sumeria combined political leadership with religious leadership, a situation that survived till a few centuries ago in India and which survives to this day in the habit of politicians seeking to become god-like. Most of the religious heads, especially the Saiva Attheenams, are like this too, they imitate the rituals of Kings.

Now it may also be possible that Siva is located (as also Muruka, His son) in lofty peaks by way of realizing within the ecological such a metaphysical understanding.

Now in the line below, I think, we have a metaphor that has survived to the present time in Tamil literature and whci is very meaningful.

253.

a.hus a gu nigin-na ga-am-me-re-en-de-en (The horrible waters, come, let us transgress all their banks)

Ta. aal ush-a aal kuuv niikkinna ngaam miiRindiye (Let us transgress the rushing and noisy flood waters)

We have KaNiyan PuuGkunRanaar(c. 200 BC) saying:

‘Kalporutu iraGkum mallaR peeryaaRRu
Niirvazippadum ppuNaip poola aaruyir
MuRaivazip padUum ‘ enaptu tiRavayoor

‘கல்’பரெது இரங்’கும் மல்’லற்’ பரே’யாற்’றா
நீர்’வழிப்’ படுஉம்’ ஸுனபைலே ஆரூயிர்’
மாறவைழிப்’ படுஉம்” என’பது திறவரே’

“The sages say: “the anma follows a way of life like a raft caught in a river of turbulent waters that knocks against boulders and breaks them”

Also note that TiruvaLLuvar says: piRavip paruGkadal niintuvar, niintaar iRaivan adi ceeraatavar - only those who reach the Divine Feet will transgress the vast ocean that’s life.

These metaphors of turbulent rivers and stormy seas and that of TRANSGRESSING them are already available in this line and way back in 3000 BC itself! This is later day Moksa or Viidu PeeRu a central notion in all Indian philosophies/

Now it is for the purpose of such a transgression and which implicitly means attaining Moksa that various kinds of social leadership including that of Arhus are to be honored supported and maintained. Such individuals are “lu-gu-la” (line 254) ones and who may be ‘lu-kura “ or the Gurus or Kuravars, the spiritual teachers; dumu in-su-ge: people of good taste and who have created many great things of immense cultural importance and the “En’ the temple heads or mighty individuals who spread their fame across the nation as a whole. En = eeN. veeN. VeeL : the divine

Thus we can see that the idea of revering, venerating and promoting the various kinds of Great Individuals - in politics culture metaphysics and so forth was emphasized and all with the idea of promoting a society of individuals who would help the ordinary people in transgressing the turbulent river of life in which they are caught and get carried away by the mighty currents like the helpless rafts.

This culture exists among the Tamils to this sometimes degenerating into a cult of meaningless praise. Another degerate form of this culture of upholding the great ones may be the criminal VarNasra Dharma where the priestly individuals were made almost divine but by birth,

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Lexical Notes to the related lines from Suruppak;s NeRi(nari) dated around 3000 BC

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a.hus . Ta. aal: water, hus Ta, oocai: sound a.hus : noisy and rushing waters.

a gu . Ta. kuuv: to cry, cal out loudly etc.

niginna Ta. niikkina : that which moves or uproots. Ta. niiku: to carry away

ga-am Ta, ngaam > naam : we

me-re-en-de-en : Ta. miiRu : to transgress, to bypass ; miiRin-iduyen ; here the ‘-in-‘ may mean “now” or always

The river with strong and noisy flood waters appears to be a metaphor for life full of problems.

254.

lu.gu.la a.dis-e ga-na-gam-me-en-de-en (The despot, with one arm, come let us kill him)

Ta. uLu.kula aar.ticeey gaa naa kammi-iduyen (Let us not subdue the Great Person who spreads his might in all directions)

lu.gu.la : Ta. uLu kula: the great ones, the great social leaders.

a dis-e : Ta. aar: to radiate out, spread. Ta, ticai: directions

gam-me-en : Ta. kammu ; to put down, make small and insignificant

255.

galam-ma na-an-ug-ge-en dumu in.su.ge tu-ud-da (Do not kill an ezalted one (?0, the child is born by.. . .)

Ta. kaLamma nAan ukkiyen tamu ini.suvee todda (Do not destroy the great things brought up as a joyous things by the sons of good taste)

galam Ta. kaLam, kaL :big, great, lofty etc

ug-ge-en : Ta. ukku: to kill, destroy etc

in.su.ge : Ta. in, ini: that which is sweet, desirable, pleasant etc. Ta. cuvai: taste

tu-ud-da : Ta. todda: that which has been created, brought out etc

256.

en-ra us-a-gim (d) nanna-ug-ge-en su na-an-du-du-en (Do not kill like a bloody do not bind his hands)

Ta. ENRa ooccuvaGin (d) Nanna uukkiyen cur nAan toduyen (Because like the kings who drives all, the God Nanna encourages all, do not touch him with your hands)

en-ra Ta. eeN, veeN > veeL: divine, veeLir: chieftains, kings, rulers etc.

us-a ; Ta. ooccu : to drive, to rule a country etc.

ug-ge-en : Ta, uukkiyan; uukku: to encourage , motivate

du-du : Ta. todu: to touch, move very close

257.

ummeda ga arhus-a-ke lugal-bi-ir nam si-im-mi-ib-tar-re (The nurse, with the milk of mercy, takes decisions for(the children's master)

Ta. ummeyda njaan arukusakkee ulukaLbiyir nam cimma iv taree (The arhats with true wisdom, like your king, gives here itself good and lofty understanding)

ummeda : Ta. unmeiyodu : with truth

ga : Ta. ngaal, ngaal: shining, radiant, bright etc

arhus :Ta. arukan : a benevolent person, the God of the Jains. Also Ta, aarukatar: a branch of Jains

si-im-mi : Ta. cimam, cimaya: the peak, the lofty, the uplifting etc. Also Ta: samayam: religion or philosophy that cultures man

tar-re Ta. taru: to give

