

THE HOLY PANCHAKSHARA
AND OTHER DIVINE ARTICLES
MATERIALISED BY
AASAAN SADGURU
SRI-LA-SRI PANDRIMALAI SWAMIGHAL

—◆—
PART I

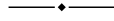


Sri-La-Sri Pandrimalai Swamighal

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PREFACE
2016 EDITION

Indian spiritual wisdom says that man's only purpose in life is to seek God in this birth. Millennia of experience has honed this to practical methods whereby human beings move in graded doses from Dharma, Artha and Kama to Moksha. Moksha is the ultimate stage where the soul, as *Jivatma* merges with the Oversoul or *Paramatma* in Divine Bliss. Though we always think that only the soul is in search of the Divine, the reverse also is true i.e, the Divine also pines for union with the *Jivatma* and hence uses several stratagems towards this end.

One of the ways by which God tries to woo humans is to manifest Himself as a human and elevate the ordinary to the extraordinary. He manifests Himself in various forms, as Avatars, Rishis, Mahans and Siddha Pursuhas. His Holiness Bhagawan Sri-La-Sri Pandrimalai Swamighal was one of them and the unique way by which He spread the message of truth was to Divinely materialise typed articles on various topics encompassing the essence of the four Vedas.

To reassure the world that the physical body is only a temporary and ephemeral abode of the immortal soul, Sri-La-Sri Pandrimalai Swamighal continues His Divine Mission as Sri-La-Sri Sakthevadivel Swamighal. The Divinely materialised articles, a first in the spiritual history of the world, initially, when they were first vouchsafed to Sri-La-Sri Pandrimalai Swamighal were typed either in English or

Tamil. *Tiruvacagam* says that the Divine is older than the oldest and newer than the newest. We can understand the truth in this statement, as the articles materialised by Sri-La-Sri Sakthevadivel Swamighal are straight from the laser printer! Hinduism is always in the vanguard of progress and this is but one small example of that fact.

In the series of books published under the generic title Holy Panchakshara, we are happy to bring out not only the earlier volumes which had contained the articles materialised by Sri-La-Sri Pandrimalai Swamighal but also the current ones vouchsafed to Sri-La-Sri Sakthevadivel Swamighal.

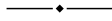
Needless to say, we are grateful to Mrs. Veena Muthanna who has made a contribution for the republication of this book and also to the band of volunteers whose deep devotion to the Guru is denoted by the painstaking proofreading of the typescripts, and redesigning of these books. These individuals, like the foundation pillars of a superb building have remained invisible. Our grateful thanks to them also.

May we all benefit intellectually and spiritually by reading these precious gems and assimilate the eternal truths embedded in them. May the Grace of the two Gurus always abide by all of us.

Om Tat Sat.

V. D. Ramanathan
27 January 2016

PUBLISHER'S NOTE



The excellent reception to the publication “The Holy Panchakshara” - Part I, has encouraged us to bring out the present third edition (reprint), to meet the needs of the large number of devotees of Aasaan Sadguru Sri-La-Sri Pandrimalai Swamigal.

Sadguru Swamigal is a living God – a realised Soul. A unique feature about him is that he is a grihasthasrami and he has demonstrated to the world the saying that a householder’s life is not an impediment to those seeking Self-realisation. Sat-Purushas of the highest order, who are incarnations or *Amsas* of God, have at their very birth identifiable divine marks on their body signifying the Holiness in them. Such is the case with our beloved Aasaan, who has on his palms and feet the divine marks of Conch, Chakra, Shatkonam and Banner of Lord Muruga, symbols of the divinity in him.

Sri Swamigal, a Siddha purusha of the highest order performs miracles to prove that there is the Lord Almighty who guides the destinies of man and to create faith in Him in the minds of men.

The quintessence of Swamigal’s teachings is that it is the duty of man, with the special faculty of discrimination bestowed on him, to realise God-head to experience ever lasting bliss. For this, undivided devotion to the Guru and unflinching control of the senses are only the sure means. Swamigal declares as do the scriptures, that every soul is potentially divine and immortality is the birthright of everyone.

Swamigal extols the virtue of Siva Raja Yoga with the Holy Pranava Panchakshari Mantra OM NA MA SI VA YA as the holy path for God-realisation. Learnt from a realised Guru and practised with calmness this path leads to the realisation of the Supreme Light (Jyoti) within. This path of Sivaraja Yoga to be learnt at the feet of the Sadguru, has been put forward by His Holiness Swamigal in a simple, lucid manner in his article “Holy Panchakshara” for all the aspirants endowed with faith and devotion.

Aasaan Sadguru Swamigals’ teachings have been appearing from time to time in the form of articles in the renowned “Bhavan’s Journal”. For the benefit of the innumerable and far-flung devotees of Swamigal and seekers of truth, the articles included in the “Holy Panchakshara” - Part I, have been reprinted now. We are grateful to the “Bhavan’s Journal” and also Shri A. V. Ramachandran of Bombay, a devoted disciple of His Holiness who initially published the “first and second editions” for bringing out the current third edition.

Instant materialisation by Swamigal, of typewritten articles in English on all spiritual matters of great significance and importance to gratify the request of his devotees, is very well-known. These divine articles are vouchsafed to Aasaan Sadguru Sri-La-Sri Pandrimalai Swamigal by Lord Muruga. The “Holy Panchakshara” Part - I, contains such materialised articles, the first one being “*The Efficacy of Sri Rama Nama*” with other materialised articles succeeding it. The earlier articles on “The Holy Panchakshara” and a few others have been written by His Holiness Swamigal.

May the Grace of Aasaan Sadguru Swamigal who exudes

divinity with child-like simplicity and charm with solicitude for the welfare of people-irrespective of caste, creed, status and religion-descend on all of us and may his teachings ennoble us in every way!

Publisher

Pandrimalai Swamighal Ashram

“Om Namasivaya”

New No. 9 (Old No. 5) Village Road,
Nungambakkam, Chennai 600034

1
THE SAGE OF PANDRIMALAI (I)

—◆—
A Short Biography

Birth of His Holiness Pandrimalai Swamighal

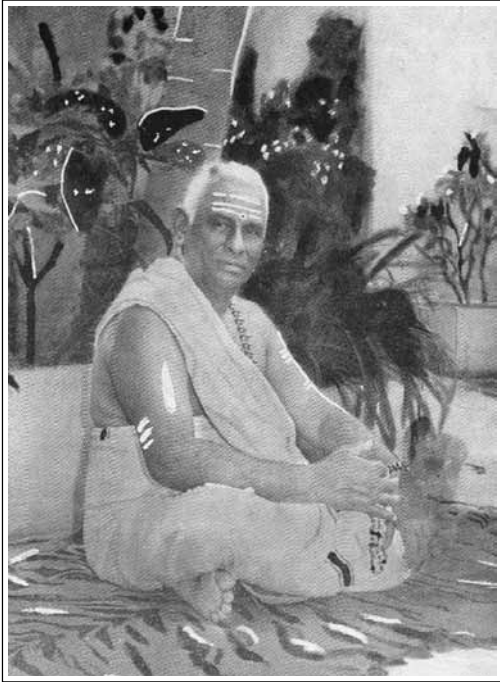
Pandrimalai village situated on the slopes of a hill in Kodaikanal Range in Madurai District of Tamil Nadu, has been mentioned in Tiruvilaiyadal Puranam as the holy place where Lord Siva out of mercy appeared as a nursing mother to motherless piglings and raised them This beautiful village has also been indicated as the Sacred abode of Rishis and Siddhas who have attained Self-Realisation. Most of the people of this village, cradling amidst peaceful, serene and green grandeur of nature with a salubrious climate, are tillers of the soil.

In this sylvan village stands the hospitable and affluent house of Thiru Arumugam Pillai. He was an ardent Saivite and a devotee of Lord Sri Dhandayuthapani (Lord Sri Muruga) of Palani. He was also a Siddha Doctor and a Master of mystical powers.

He and his life partner Thirumathi Angammal were the embodiments of the virtues described in the Scriptures for Grahastaramam or family life.

The pregnant mother Angammal was taken to her parent home at Balasamudram in the close proximity of the Palani Hill - the Sacred abode of Lord Sri Muruga.

One day Angammal’s mother informed her daughter that



a pious Sadhu Kasilingam saw her. He told her that her daughter was indeed very fortunate as a child like Sri Rama would be born to her in the month of “Chitra” under the auspicious star “Bharani” with all divine attributes. He would reign over the hearts of men. So saying, the Sadhu applied Vibhuti on Angammal’s forehead and went away.

Soon after this incident, Angammal’s mother came, and seeing her daughter, asked her who applied Vibhuti on her forehead. The daughter was perplexed. She told her mother that it was she who came to her a little earlier and mentioned about Saint Kasilingam’s blessings. It was the turn of Angammal’s mother to look surprised. She said that she did not come and apply Vibhuti nor did she speak about Saint Kasilingam.

Both of them immediately realised that it was a divine Leela and only God could have come in the guise of Angammal’s mother and made the prediction about the birth of a divine child.

God’s Grace descended. Angammal gave birth to a resplendent child.

The child, full of Grace and Divinity, had the colour of nimbus like Lord Sri Rama. His lotus eyes were luminous.

The child was named Ramaswamy.

Swamigal in His Infancy

Ramaswamy grew up and the parents and others could realise in many ways divinity manifest in him.

True to the prediction, the child bore various divine symbols on its feet, palms and body.

Seen on the sole of the left foot were the divine marks of Sudarsana Chakra (the wheel of Lord Vishnu) and the Shakti Vel (Spear of Lord Muruga) and on the sole of the right foot, the Chakra and the Conch of Lord Vishnu. The left palm bore the marks of Conch, Chakra, the Cock emblem of Lord Muruga and Shakti Vel. On the right palm were the Conch, Chakra, the Flag of Lord Muruga, Shadkonam and an inner Shakti Vel within a Vel. On his body, the birth marks of Chakra on the right shoulder and the Conch on the left shoulder proclaimed Lord Vishnu's Amsa. On his back, the Flag and the Cock emblem of Lord Muruga were found imprinted.

These divine birth marks remain even now without any change for anyone to see and revere.

The parents also noticed a tiny dot in the middle of the child's forehead, between the eye-brows, representing the "third eye" of Lord Siva. Later as he grew older and due to his tapas and spiritual sadhana, this mark has grown much bigger and deeper, signifying omniscience.

The divine amsas or aspects of Shiva, Shakti, Vishnu and Muruga are all seen together.

The actions of the child revealed his divine attributes. Fragrance of different kinds used to emanate from his cradle. His forehead used to be mysteriously adorned with Vibhuti (Sacred Ash of Siva), Kumkum (Shakti's mark) and Namam (Vishnu's symbol) at different times, signifying that to him, all creeds are one. Once the child simply vanished from the cradle and after a while reappeared, much to the relief of the parents.

Boy Hood

Upon reaching the school going age, Ramasamy was brought to Balasamudram. He was a diligent and model student.

He developed a great devotion to Lord Muruga of Palani Hill. This Sacred Shrine intensely attracted him and made him visit it every Monday.

Ramasamy learnt his three R's in Tamil, from his revered teacher, Ganapathy.

Being a student did not deter Ramasamy from using his divine powers for curing the sick, driving out evil spirits and giving success to all those who came for his aid with devotion.

Ramasamy's devotion to Lord Dhandayuthapani also continued to grow.

Ramasamy's Spiritual Quest and his Gurus

The divinity manifest in the school-going boy was recognised by Salli Samiar, an ascetic of a high order, who was dwelling in the Aiyampulli Vinayakar temple at Balasamudram. Daily the Samiar used to go to Palani temple, collect 'Sallis' (copper paise) from pilgrims and distribute them to the children at Aiyampulli Vinayakar temple. The temple priest noted that Samiar was not giving any 'Salli' to Ramasamy. He asked for the reason behind this. Salli Samiar said "Ramasamy is Periasamy (Great Saint). How can I give him a 'Salli'.

Ramasamy had the full force of Salli Samiar's grace which added momentum to his spiritual progress.

At the age of eight while playing in the tank of the Vinayaka's temple "Chemattu Parai Kulam" near

Balasamudram village, Ramaswamy was hailed by a effulgent Sage to whom he was attracted like a magnet. The Sage put some vibhuti in Ramasamy's mouth and wrote something on his tongue with a small vel. The Holy Man then went inside the temple.

When Ramasamy's relations and others, who gathered together in the meanwhile searched for the Sage in the temple, he was not to be seen. God's grace permeated Ramasamy and from that moment on he exhibited unlimited psychic powers. Stones turned to sugar candy and sand became sugar. He played with snakes as though they were his ornaments. He could cure diseases. He could drive away evil spirits and cure poisonous bites. Whatever he said became true. They were miracles from his Inner Delphi.

Ramasamy became more and more focused on God. He worshipped the deities in various temples and was in search of Saints, Sages and God-realised souls who would help him in his future sadhana and mission.

Chatti Samiar was a great Siddha Purusha in Palani, full of divine grace and spiritual powers. Ramasami paid homage to this holy Saint. The Sage imparted to his disciple a Sacred Mantra and instructed him to perform puja in the morning and evening for 108 days. One day during the puja he saw a brilliant light, from which emanated lotus leaves which multiplied thousandfold. In the midst of it appeared the radiant, smiling, and entrancingly beautiful Goddess Shakti, full of love, making Ramasamy speechless with wonder. Adi Parashakti then disappeared and in her place was revealed the resplendent, indescribably beautiful and smiling Bala Muruga, exuding divine fragrance. Ramasamy saw God face

to face. From that moment on Parasakti and Lord Muruga appeared before Ramasamy whenever he thought of them.

People thronged to Ramasamy, despite him still being a boy, with various requests. With all his divine and mystic powers, he was simple and serene and humility personified. But his mind was not at rest. He wanted to know the root cause of the mysterious powers he had and the ultimate truth of life.

In pursuit of this goal, he met the Paradesi of Achanda hill. Ramasamy, then thirteen, left with the Paradesi on a pilgrimage of sacred shrines. Achanda Malai Paradesi was a learned scholar with practical knowledge of the Agama sastras and Tantric sadhanas, Raja Yoga, the science of Chakras (Yantras) and other esoteric vidyas. Ramasamy was a true disciple of his Guru. Accompanying his Guru in visiting temples and holy places, Ramasamy absorbed all that his Master taught him. He learnt the secrets of the most powerful Pranava Panchakshari Mantra, and by hard sadhana attained Plenum Bliss (Sachidananda). When the master found that his disciple had learnt all that he could teach, him he brought Ramasamy, now a young adult, back to Balasamudram and went away.

Back at Pandrimalai, Ramasamy was blessed with the grace of "Pullu Pidungi Samiar" (Grass-plucking Samiar) and others.

Ramasamy's Marriage

Ramasamy's parents decided to get him married. When he agreed, but "surreptitiously" made sure that his bride to be —Thirumathi Pappatti Ammal—would be a fitting partner for his spiritual life and mission. The wedded life was an ideal householder's life, a righteous life of loving and giving.



Srimathy Pappathi Ammal was a devoted and dedicated wife and her chastity, magnetic attraction, love and compassion elevated and ennobled the harmony of family life. At same time, she was a tower of strength to Ramasami's spiritual life and was a brilliant jewel radiating love at home.

The conjugal life lasted only for a few years, and later, after spiritual initiation by her husband, she became a disciple of her master.

They had a daughter, a gem of a girl and love personified, who attained the Lotus Feet of the Lord at the prime of her life. Their son attained the Lord's feet after a few years of married life, leaving behind two sons and a daughter.

Hailed as Sri-La-Sri Pandrimalai Swamighal

At Pandrimalai, devotees started coming from various places, to pay obeisance to Ramasami and get his blessings. Recognising his divine nature and spiritual powers, they began endearingly calling him as "Swamigal" with reverence.

From then on Ramasami was hailed and revered as Sri-La-Sri Pandrimalai Swamighal.

Later on, to suit the convenience of the growing devotees and disciples and at their behest, Swamigal settled down at Dindigul Town in Madurai District.

Along with his holy consort, Swamigal toured all over India several times, visiting sacred shrines, holy places and blessing devotees. They toured Malaysia and Ceylon, making way for spiritual regeneration in these places.

Swamigal's holy consort, by her devoted service and sheer faith in her life-partner who became later her

Guru, developed supernatural powers. She could perform miracles even as her illustrious husband could do, by mere prayers to her husband whom she looked upon as none other than God.

To satisfy his devotees and disciples now encompassing not only India, but several foreign countries as well, Swamigal settled at Madras and is now at “OM NAMASIVAYAM” Ashramam, No. 5, Village Road, Nungambakkam, Madras-34.

As stated earlier, the life of His Holiness Swamigal is one of ceaseless service to humanity. Apart from his Puja in the morning and in the evening, Swamigal is of service to those who come and see him. He is a, friend, guide and philosopher, using his divine powers whenever needed in accordance with the Lord’s sankalpa.

Swamigal’s Divine Siddhis

In these days of scientific inquiry and rationalism God has to be proved. “Except ye see signs and wonders ye will not believe” said St. John. This is what Swamigal and other Siddha Purushas occasionally do. Through their supernatural acts or mystical powers, they inspire the sceptics and scoffers with faith in God.

A past-master of “Mani, Mantra, Aushada” for effecting cures, Swamigal knows the medicinal properties of various herbs and at times does not hesitate to obtain these herbs by mere volition if so required.

Instant Materialisation of Divine Articles

In the history of Divine Miracles, the immediate and instant materialisation of typewritten articles in English on various topics of religious and spiritual import to gratify the

desires of devotees, has been unheard of. At the request of his devotees, Swamigal makes a soul-stirring supplication of Lord Shri Muruga to vouchsafe an article. Instantly the article in typewritten sheets flies into the hands of Swamigal or anyone of the devotees. The first such type script in English captioned “The Efficacy by Sri Rama Nama” was materialised by Swamigal on March 19, 1970 at Bombay when Shri S. Ramakrishnan, Editor of the Bhavan’s Jour requested Swamigal to bless the Journal with a special article for the Rama Navami Number. It is to be noted that Swamigal does not know English. There is no doubt that such Divine Articles materialised by Swamigal by prayer to Lord Muruga, by their very divine nature and background, would leave their indelible imprints on the sands of Time. These Articles would also form a powerful substratum for educating and guiding the entire mankind for leading a more purposeful and fuller life here and now, established in Service, Truth, Love and Everlasting Bliss.

Swamigal - Love personified

Swamigal does not equate himself with God. He says with humility - “I am a devotee of Lord Muruga. I am his humble servant. I am not God. My spiritual sadhana is for the Divine Grace to flow for the good of humanity and all of God’s creation”. Swamigal’s statement is indicative of utter humility and annihilation of ego, the two pointers to his being a God-realised soul.

Swamigal is the embodiment of Love. His childlike simplicity, charm and concern for the welfare of people are only to be seen to be believed. His intense desire is to elevate aspirants on their God-ward march for leading a perfect life

and enjoy the Bliss that he himself is experiencing.

Swamigal is able with just a glance, to identify to the innate mental state and spiritual maturity of any devotee. His guidance and teaching, therefore varied from person to person. His philosophy reveals harmony between science and religion, between life and divinity. He himself is an example of what he says to others.

Swamigal accosts everyone he comes across, be they young or old, high or low, rich or poor, as “Vaango Sami” in Tamil, which means “Please come, Swami”. Caste, creed, colour and status pale into insignificance before Swamigal. This spontaneous attitude is what “Love” depicts or stands for in all its meaning and purpose. Scriptures declare “God is Love and Love is God”. This can be seen in thought and action in Swamigal. As a God-realised person, he sees the immanent God in everyone and reacts to this realisation. This is what powerfully attracts all devotees and disciples to Swamigal like a magnet. Like a touchstone, he can also convert the devotees who come into contact with him by infusing them with love to the Master, love towards each other, and love towards all other living beings.

Swamigal and Temple Worship

Swamigal places great store in Temple Worship. According to him, the temple culture is an essential mainstream of Hindu Culture, since a place of worship is held sacred and symbolizes the very concept of Godhead. A temple that is built, consecrated and worshipped in accordance with the Agamic Sastras, with the Yantra, Tantra and Mantra Puja that go with them, are storehouses of spiritual power or energy, which the devotees with faith can easily discern for

their own well-being and also the well-being of society.

Swamigal by his yogic and spiritual powers, is able to invoke the several Deities in the temples he visits, thus proving the divinity and potency of these Deities, which are only different names and forms of one Absolute God, beyond doubt. Swamigal himself has consecrated many temples in India, by the installation of various Yantras which release and radiate spiritual forces for the worshippers to derive benefit from.

In recent years, temples have also been built and consecrated under the guidance and directions of Swamigal in foreign countries as well.

During 1976, Swamigal toured South Africa. At Natal, he installed Lord Nataraja’s idol with the yantras and consecrated the temple.

The Hindu Temple Society of North America had the unique opportunity of approaching Swamigal for the construction of Lord Ganesha’s temple at New York and Lord Venkateshwara’s temple at Pittsburgh. Swamigal’s advice and guidance were taken by the Society from the very inception of the project, which was inaugurated by Swamigal himself at Hyderabad in 1974. After three years of Puja for forty-two Yantras divinely procured for these two temples, Swamigal was taken to the United States during 1977. Swamigal installed the Yantras and performed the consecration of the New York Temple on 4-7-1977 and the Pittsburgh Temple on 6-7-1977. During his stay in the United States, Swamigal performed the ground-breaking ceremony for a Balaji’s Temple at Veppinger’s Falls, a Shakti’s temple at Houston

and another Shakti's temple at Florida.

On his return journey to India, Swamigal did the consecration ceremony of Lord Muruga's temple in London, on 31-8-1977.

There is no doubt that these temples will become powerful centres of divine forces that will generate moral and spiritual upliftment of mankind.

Conclusion

Swamigal declares that there is only the one God and only one community, even though different names and forms are attributed to Him. He affirms that man is immortal and this state requires to be attained by intense sadhana through the help of a Self-realised Guru. His belief is that all religions are true, all being pathways to God. His tenet is that the entire world is but one family of God. His philosophy is the gospel of Love. His actions are the welfare of all beings. His testament is the restoration of the sanctity of marriage and family life, a life to be lived full of service, love and at the same time Godcentric. His mission is to establish the glory of God on earth.

OM TAT SAT

R. N. Sankaran

2

THE SAGE OF PANDRIMALAI (II)

Shri Kavi Yogi Maharshi Shuddhananda Bharati

*Originally published under the "LIVING GREAT"
series in the issue of The Bhavan's Journal dated 4-10-1970.*

I have seen many Siddhas in my life, including Jnana Siddha of the Agastya Kundam, Purna Siddha, Sai Baba of Shridi, Siddharuda of Hubli, Ramana Maharshi and Sri Aurobindo. Our Siddhas by a simple Siva Mantra or Rama Mantra released the cosmic force from the soul and taught people how to walk gracefully on this planet.

I had the good fortune of meeting such a Siddha in Panrimalai Swamigal. He hails from the sacred hill of Panrimalai in the Palni range of hills and is hence known by that name. The Panrimalai hill is a highly venerated place, where Lord Siva Himself is reputed to have taken the shape of a pig and fed the young ones which had lost their mother. I call Panrimalai Swamigal as Namassivaya Siddha, for *Om Namassivaya* is his powerful mantra. This mantra has released the perfect force of Divinity in him and all his acts are controlled by that divine force.

Swamiji's father, Sri Arumugam Pillai, was an ardent Saivite and a devout worshipper of Lord Muruga. His mother, Smt. Angammal, was a very pious soul.

Swamiji was born in the sacred month of Chaitra under the auspicious star of *Bharani*. When his mother was pregnant

with a child, a seer predicted that she would give birth to a son like Sri Rama in the month of Chaitra, one with divine attributes who would reign over the hearts of men. A Tamil saying goes that a child aspected by *Bharani* would rule *dbarani* (the earth). Hence he was named Ramaswami.

I was struck by his extraordinary simplicity. He is simple and unostentatious. But he is a great soul who achieved limitless Divine Grace. His affection for humanity is unbounded. His divine acts have stunned the world. But they are not any legerdemain, jugglery, or ghost medium thaumaturgy. They are very convincing facts of divinity. They are solely meant to draw people towards God.

Swamiji calls us all 'Swami' and all the womenfolk 'Amma' (mother). He moves with us sometimes like a child, sometimes like a friend, sometimes like a healer of our afflictions and sometimes like a serious guide or adviser against impending mishaps. But all his words and acts are always meant to kindle in us divine fervour and spiritual aspiration.

This indeed is Panrimalai Siddhar, the simple man with ample divine potentialities. I see a divine light in his eyes and a divine grace in his smiling face. There is a simmering charm of divinity in his body. He never demands anything but true bhakti from his devotees and by divine grace continues to give and give all that they want.

I had heard about this Siddha Purusha long ago while I was touring Malaya. At that time he was also on a visit to that country. He was staying with the Hon. Min Sri Sambandham who had been without a child for a long time and had been blessed with a sweet child by Swamijs Divine Grace.

A sceptic asked whether he could bring into being a living thing. From nowhere, Swamiji brought into being within the folded palms of a person, a small cooing bird.

He looks just an ordinary man like us. He does not wear ochre robes nor sport matted locks and beard. He lives the noble life of a Grahastha.

When I went to receive his blessings, he just held my hands and pressed a flower into them. As I opened my hands, I found them to be full with red KumKum of my favourite deity, Goddess Meenakshi of Madurai.

Another day, he held my hands and lo! They were full of sacred ashes with a divine fragrance. I preserve the ashes even today and their divine fragrance still lingers.

He took me to Tirupathi one day along with his devotees. We all went to the temple and stood in the sanctum sanctorum of Padmavati Devi at Tiruchanoor. Swamiji just touched the ground with his hands and placed them on my palms. I was surprised to see a good quantity of rice and dhal in my hands.

Later we went up the Tirumalai Hills and offered worship before Lord Venkateswara. After darshan, Swamiji invoked the blessings of the Lord. Swamiji just held out his hands and filled the hands of Andhra's Chief Minister with the sacred *prasadam* consisting of cashewnut, raisin, sugar-candy, almond and *mantra aksbtha* along with wet sandal paste and *Sripadam*.

Many a time, Swamiji poured into my hands and mouth sugar-candy, grapes and sweet nuts from nowhere. When he

wills, his mere touch is enough to diffuse fragrance and his very word is enough to realise anything.

Once I sought Jnana Upadesa from Swamiji. He took a devotee's upper cloth and threw it down and a full coconut fell from it. Swamiji then asked me to hold a piece of paper in one of my hands and a pen in the other. A little later he asked me to unfold the paper and lo! A precious and powerful Ganesa Mantra was found written on it. Later, when I was chanting the Mantra and offering flowers to Lord Nataraja, a beautiful copper image of Vigneswara was found among the flowers. I keep it in my pooja even today. I have also had the vision of Vigneswara and vibhuthi came into my hands from nowhere.

Swamiji had given to Sri K. K. Varma of Travancore, a beautiful crystal idol of Lord Vigneswara which was found to be breathing when held firmly in hand.

His divine wonders are devoid of "I" and "Mine" egoism; they turn our mind inward and give our heart a "Godward élan". He talks less and acts more. His is mellow; his gait is slow; but his Divine will is a fast flow of mercy to save devotees.

I was once speaking to him about Lord Muruga and the Vel (spear) that I worship. It is a big and beautiful Vel made of silver with psychic planes distinctly marked on it. Swamiji said, "Your Vel will come flying here, behold". He came out of his room. A huge gathering of devotees watched him. Swamiji prayed "Muruga kindly bring that Vel...Muruga...Muruga..." Lo! my silver Vel came flying into his hands adorned with chandanam; (sandal paste) and kumkum. He handed it to me with his blessings and I take it

with me wherever I go and feel fully protected.

All the divine acts of Swamiji are by the grace of Lord Muruga. I once pleaded with Swamiji to grant the darshan of the holy foot-prints of Lord Bala Muruga. He came out of the room where he was sitting and sat in the hall. There was no one in the room. He asked us to place an ordinary sheet of white paper and a plate of turmeric paste in the room. Standing outside the room, Swamiji offered prayers to Lord Muruga and began to sing a soul-thrilling song on Him. After completing prayers, Swamiji fervently called out to Lord Muruga to show his foot-prints. Many heard strange sounds in the room like the tinkling of silver anklets. A few devotees also saw the vision of a peacock in the room. Wonder of wonders, in a few seconds the sheet of paper kept in the room came forth flying into the hands of Swamiji. The paper was wet with the paste of turmeric and on it the holy foot-prints of Lord Bala Muruga were seen. When the wet paper dried, the holy foot prints with all their divine beauty were clearly visible.

On another occasion, in answer to Swamiji's prayers, the holy footprints (with divine marks) of Bala Muruga were received on a piece of paper and also the fingerprints of Goddess Shakthi.

In the palms of Swamiji are seen line formations revealing the shapes of *Sangu* (Conch), *Chakram* (Wheel) *Shadkonam*, *Janda* (Flag), *Vel* (spear), *Sakthi Vel* and Sevarkodi of Lord Muruga and Trisul of Lord Siva. In the inner palms of his feet are seen *Vel*, *Sangu* and *Chakram*. On both his shoulders are seen the marks of *Sangu* and *Chakram*. Besides these, there are also rare marks of divinity on the *person of Swamiji*.

He silently holds the *Chinmudra* of Lord *Dakshinamurthi*, denoting the unity of the Pure Soul with the Pure Divine, when the three stains of egoism, lust and illusion are removed from the mind. Om Namassivaya is the formula of his mystic power.

The very life of Swamiji with his consort was an embodiment of all the truths enunciated in the ‘Thirukkural’.

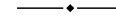
Like Valluvar’s Vasuki the consort of Swamiji lived a life of perfect womanhood and closely assisted him not only in family life but also in spiritual life. She by then had attained many *Siddhis*. In August, 1965, when she was called to the Lotus Feet of the Lord, her bones and ashes were carried by the devotees for immersion in the various sacred rivers of the country. During the time of immersion of the remains in the holy river near Nasik, devotees found to their surprise that the remains had turned into kumkum (saffron). Similarly devotees, while immersing the remains in the holy waters of river Krishna, found them to be turned into kumkum and turmeric.

This is the Sage of Panrimalai, who leads humanity to realize Divinity. It is the lack of knowledge of the existence of such great Siddhas that has been responsible for the retarded progress of spiritual development in our country.

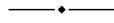
A Guru like him who never expects anything from his disciples and devotees but tirelessly gives and gives, day and night, all that is prayed for, has never been heard of before. The many accounts of his having cured by *mantras* and *vibhuthi*, incurable diseases other than those due to *karma*, will fill many pages. He has indeed granted eyesight to people who were born blind, power of speech to those

who were born dumb, and power of hearing to those who were born deaf.

It is my earnest prayer that atheists, doubting Thomases and afflicted people should come in contact with this Great Sage of Panrimalai and benefit by his teachings, guidance and grace.



HYMN ON SWAMIJI



by his disciple

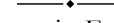
Sbri Kaviyogi Maharshi Shuddhananda Bharati

He is everybody,
He is beyond body,
In heart firmly sit
And you will be fit,
To know His play
In the human clay!

He is far above
The passing time anow!
He descends like a dove
To embrace psychic love—
To draw the loving heart
From worldliness apart.
He plays miracles
Inspiring my canticles!



MARCHONS



(Hymn in French)

Marchons vers la Nouvelle Ere
Soldats du doux Seigneur
Comme un flot étoile
Comme un Printemps aile
Marchons enfants de lumiere'

Sennons les clairons d'or; hissons le grand drapeau
Jetons le cris de gloire au celeste Flambeau

Notre avenir est beau
Par son amour heureux

Notre but est assure
Car son Pouvoir azure
A perfume notre haleine
Notre all gresse est prochaine

Soyons les defenceurs du royaume divin
Un Ceil de verite guide notre destin
Ne coraignons pas l'universe
Ni ses visages divers
Trouvons l'ete dans l'hiver
Et L'Eternel dans la chaire

Le ciel est ici bas; notre terre est en fête
Marchons fils immortels de conquête en conquête

Consacrons notre énergie
À l'amour et l'unité
Et faisons la volonté
Du grand Seigneur de l'harmonie

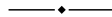
Sa Grâce nous conduit Sa Flamme nous protège
Bon courage, O soldats, Marchons en nu courtoise
Le joie est dans le travail
La paix est dans la Soumission
Donnons nous-même en détail
À l'universelle mission

Luttons contre le mal couvrons nous de lauriers
La victoire est en nous; en avant chevaliers!

Sacrifions notre amour
Pour l'amour divin ce jour
Sa force est dans notre âme
Et portons son Oriflamme
L'avenir est dans nos mains
Bravo titans surhumains!

Luttons contre l'orage et gagnons la victoire Et vivons
l'ami tous dans la nouvelle Histoire

—*Shri Kavi Yogi Shuddhananda Bharati*

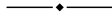


असतोमा सदगमय
तमसोमा ज्यातिर गमय
मृत्योर्मा मृतं गमय

From the unreal lead me to the Real.
From darkness lead me to Light.
From death lead me to immortality.

—♦—
—BRIHADARANYAKOPANISHAD

THE HOLY PANCHAKSHARA



In the beginning, it was a void, a limitless vacancy unfilled by anything material. As the Upanishad says 'non-existence alone was in the beginning' (*asadeva idamagra aaseet*). The Supreme Reality remained undifferentiated in name and form. Yet it was all-pervading. The material vacuum was yet a spiritual plenum of infinitesimally atomic entities. By their inherent power, they were whirling around at terrific speed held together in cosmic unity. In the process, when, they rubbed against each another, sound (*naada*) was produced at first. Following this sound, light (*bindu*) was emitted. This *naada* and *bindu* constitute Shiva and Shakti. (The Bible too says: In the beginning was the Word; the Word was with God; and the Word was God.)

From this primordial sound and light arose the first sounds *a u m*. These sounds were mystic syllables of meditation (*mantras*). Together they made up *Om*, the *Pranava-mantra*. From *Om* in turn arose the five letters sacred to Shiva, the *panchakshara-na maha si va ya*, which when uttered together produced the sound *namassivaaya*.

Each of these letters is endowed with a potency of its own. From the subtle power of that *mantra*, arose the five gross material powers embodied in earth, water, fire, air and ether. The entire universe with its myriad beings moving and unmoving, the numberless stars of the spangled heavens, the planetary bodies that revolve around

our sun and around other suns. In fact, everything in the vast cosmos, from the most minute to the inconceivably great, arose from the combination of these gross powers in various modes.

The five-lettered mantra (the panchakshara) held in itself the power to preside over and control all these emanations which it manifested in the five-fold forms of creation, preservation, destruction, concealment and dowering with beneficent grace (*Srishti, sthithi, sambara, virochana anugraha*). In the process, the five letters blossomed into fifty-one sacred sounds. They created among themselves the two powers of attraction and repulsion, the forces of 'aye' and 'nay' leading to their ramification into ninety six principles from which numberless forces were born. Half of these were made for attraction and the other half for repulsion and they permeated the entire cosmos, all that was static and dynamic in it. The universe continues to be a non-stop dance of these primordial and eternal atoms this is the 'great secret' which lies behind the popular saying 'Save by Him naught moves in the world.'

It is these dual powers of attraction and repulsion that are responsible for the infinite dualities that appear and function all around us, namely, good and evil, appearance and disappearance, birth and death, day and night, the waxing and waning moon, the darkness before the emergence of the New Moon and the golden orb of the Full Moon, the eclipse of the Sun and of the Moon, cold and heat, thunder and lightning, shadow and sunshine, the breeze and the blizzard, rain and drought, land and water, the life giving oxygen and the death-dealing carbon dioxide, hill and dale the potable

water and the saline, spring and volcano orchard and the desert, the moon and the sun, *pingala and idagala, poorakam and rechakam*, the male and the female, the ambrosia and the poison, health and disease, fragrance and stink, joy and sorrow, kindness and arrogance, laughter and tears, desire and aversion, youth and old age, wakefulness and sleep, physical sight and dream, noise and silence, righteousness and its opposite, knowledge and nescience.

We shall illustrate this truth that sound and light arose from a central basic power and that all else in the universe are emanations of their cooperation and conflict to be traced to the forces of attraction and repulsion.

We use flint stones to produce fire. One flint is held in the right hand and another in the left hand and the former is forcibly brought down from above to come into violent contact with the other raised from below to meet it. When they collide, a sound is produced. That is *naadam*. When the process is repeated a number of times, a spark of light arises. That is the *bindu*. On the same analogy, when clouds collide in the sky, first we have the sound of thunder and next the lightning is seen.

Let us think, for a moment, about electricity which is one of the fundamental cosmic agencies. When a carrier of positive electricity (the force of attraction) and one of negative electricity (the force of repulsion) are brought close together, we hear a crackling sound accompanied by a spark which we are able to see. If they are integrated into a medium in which minute fibres of wire which carry them are twisted together, as in the case of an electric bulb, we have the glow of a brilliant light. By

controlling and pressing these forces into service, many mighty things are accomplished.

It is a well-established truth that the Power which is behind all things of the world, the conscious and the unconscious, is a central Principle which mediates between the opposites and holds them in balance. It is common to the moving and the unmoving alike. Unseen outside, it constitutes the very core of every object and of every change. It is present in the innermost being of every being in an immeasurable degree. We too are living beings impregnated with that power. A realisation of this will open up a vista of revealing truth. For truly, the microcosm is an expression of the macrocosm. The cosmic force expanded in the latter lies imprisoned in the former. The macrocosm is this universe; the microcosm is the body.

In the body too, there is a power like electricity that runs through its various parts in the twin aspects of attraction and repulsion in the forms of our breath, pulse, nerves and muscles, blood and brain. The forces of repulsion and disintegration should be brought under control by the affirmative power of the *atman*; the forces of attraction and integration should be enriched and strengthened. Reason should hold a central place and then one will behold the radiance of the soul. That vision is true spiritual wisdom.

'Self-knowledge alone is true knowledge'; 'He who does not know the self can know nothing else.' To obtain this, one should approach a qualified teacher with suitable humility, be initiated by him into the moola mantra, mutter the *panchakshara* in proper style and meditate on its import observing the means prescribed in the method of Yoga.

That is the only way to obtain a soul sight of the Supreme Gracious Effulgence (Arulperum Jothi) that permeates everything and everywhere constituting an unbroken Plenum of the Spirit.

6

PANCHAKSHARA: IT'S FIVE LIMBS

The Shakti of the Atman permeates every human being born in this world. It is the inmost power, the vital *amrta* springing in the heart and core of human life. Those that have cultivated that power and possess it in abundant measure are the *mabatmas*, the yogis, the *siddha purushas* who have become famous in the world. There is nothing that they cannot accomplish.

Man is the architect of his life. It is given to him to make or mar himself. The ebb and flow of human fortunes are sometimes attributed to past *karma*. Yet destiny can be overcome by man's reason and will. This is possible only for those who gaining control over the disintegrating forces inside their self and outside in the world, negate their influence, affirm the forces of integration in their thought and will, establish themselves in a state of equipoise and are set on the path of realising the Divine.

By nature, man is a magnet with life and feeling. The magnetic iron has neither life nor feeling. It can only attract iron which is placed near it. But the human magnet does not stop with this. If the soul-force which is its power of attraction is developed, it can penetrate the objects not only of this world, but of infinite worlds beyond and apprehend all things in them. One can translate one's will into action and attain the fruition of accomplishment by that force. No

limit can be set to the possibilities of its fulfilment.

The seeds of this soul-force lie dormant in the heart of everyone. It must be awakened and developed to execute the purposes of this world and of the worlds beyond.

The physical body is the temple of God. The heart is the sacred sanctum. The lips that utter the sacred Panchakshara are the entrance tower. The atman of him who has realized this truth is the idol of Siva worshipped in the shrine. The sense organs are the five lamps that are set in that shrine.

The six yogic centres beginning with the "Mooladhara" are based on the truth of the Panchakshara in its different aspects. It is their power that moves the world and fills us with wonder and awe. The esoteric truths of this sacred mantra are to be learnt in the privacy of devout discipleship, with due humility and fervour.

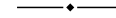
The five letters making up the Panchakshara are the names of the primordial Power that is Parama Siva. As that macrocosmic power resides in the microcosm of each one of us, it is possible to get the realization "I am He" and "He is I", and understand the importance of this identification.

In the sacred name *Na-Ma-Si-Va-Ya*, *Na* stands for the two feet, *Ma* for the stomach, *Si* for the two shoulders, *Va* for the mouth and *Ya* for the two eyes. The Siddha saints of old have sung, identifying the letters with limbs of the body. The human frame is the embodiment of that *mantra*.

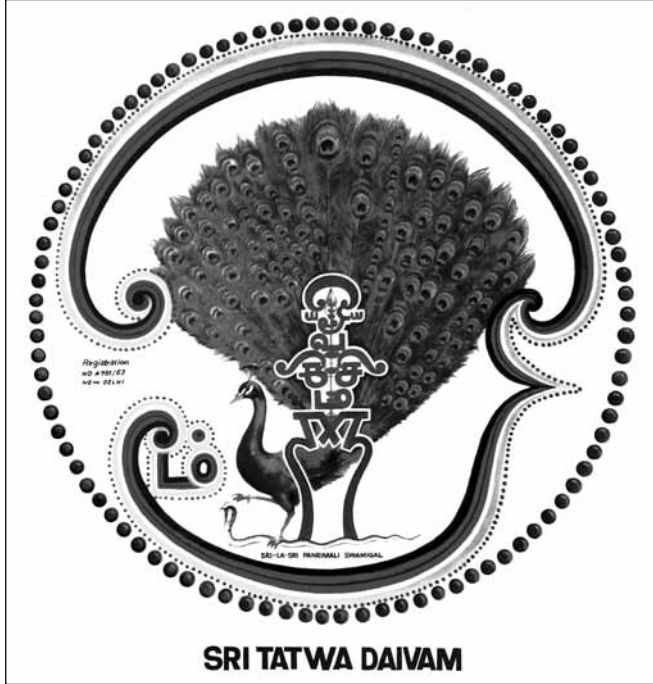
If you wish to know God, first know thyself, knowledge of the Self and adoration of it are the ways of Jnana. Hence the command 'know thyself', which must be borne in mind and reflected upon.

The God whom we worship is, in the last resort, the atman in us. Though it is true that God dwells in every creature, yet the human body is a superior temple of a distinct kind. "If I cannot worship in the temple of my heart, no outside temple will ever avail me" said Swami Vivekananda in effect.

This truth will be clear to those whose darkness of ignorance is dispelled by the lamp of their discrimination and wisdom. But, it is not possible to express the ecstasy of those who have realised this truth.



SRI TATWA DAIVAM



The five letters making up the Panchakshara NA-MA-SI-VA-YA are the names of the Primordial Power that is SADASIYA. They are also identified with the limbs of the human body, for that macrocosmic power resides in the microcosm of each of us.

The illustration drawn by Sri-la-Sri Panrimalai Swamigal, depicts:

நா i.e. NA — representing the 2 legs

ம i.e. MA — representing the stomach

சி i.e. SI — representing the 2 shoulders

வ i.e. VA — representing the mouth

ய i.e. YA — representing the 2 eyes encircled by the Pranava Tatwa, AUM.

The sacred letters also represent the five elements that constitute the world, viz. Earth, Water, Fire, Wind and Ether, which, if mastered, culminate in the Pranava Tatwa, AUM.

THE SUPREME POWER

The Pranava Mantra OM is the source of the five-lettered Panchakshara NA, MA, SI, VA, YA. From these arose in the order of the letters, the *mababhutas*, *prithvi* (earth), *ap* (water), *tejas* (fire), *Vayu* (air) and *akasa* (space). Each letter is the foundational power activating the element which originally sprang from it. Thus, the primordial source of the universe, which, not being limited to anywhere, is all pervasive; the Supreme Being referred to by the mantra NA MA SI VA YA is both the source and the sustenance of the entire physical universe.

The entire cosmos in its myriad manifestations is the result of the collocation of these five elements and their inherent forces. There is no object which is outside the orbit of these elements. Everywhere, everything is compacted with them. The entire gamut of casual phenomena can be traced to their activity.

Each of these five elements contains in itself, in different proportions the basis of the sensations of hearing, touch, sight, taste and smell. In NA MA SI VA YA:

Na signifies and enfolds in itself the *Prithvi* element which includes *sabda*, *sparsa*, *rupa*, *rasa* and *gandha*.

Ma relates to the *Ap* element which includes *sabda*, *sparsa*, *rupa* and *rasa*.

Si relates to the *Tejas* element which is connected with *sabda*,

sparsa and *rupa*.

Va stands for the *Vayu* element characterised by *sabda* and *sparsa*; and

Ya signifies the *Akasa* element which has *sabda* only

Further, each element is involved as a constituent of every other element, thus making $5 \times 5 = 25$ subsidiary centres of activity according to what is called *Sthula panchikarana* and *Sukshma panchikarana*, each accounting for 25 forms of combinations. These fifty powers constitute the dynamics of the entire universe. All the forms of good and evil, of concord and discord that are seen in the world, are to be traced to the activities of these main and subsidiary forces in differing proportions and diverse ways.

It is the single original force that first became two and then many and infinitely manifold. This untold variety is seen, for example the physical features of the countless human beings born in the world. No two men have the same appearance, colour, height, girth, weight, qualities, voice, gait, dress, attitude, marks and lines. The same is the case with all living beings in the world.

Compare any two moving or non-moving objects. Nothing is like any other. Even among things fashioned out of the same dye, there are minute differences in weight, colour and other marks. Even pictures printed off from the newest machines exhibit such minute variations. Photographs from the same negative film or plate are not all identical or the same.

The scientific instruments like gramophone plates, tape records, telephones, etc. get frayed by repeated use and by

fluctuations of the weather as a result of which there is a decline in their efficiency. The same applies to the radio, the television and the cinematographic films.

Think for a while about our eyes, imbedded in us by God and functioning by His power. One eye does certainly differ from the other in its nature, power and lightness, ever so small as the difference may be.

Thus it is clear that no two things in the universe are identical in form or feature or quality anywhere or at any time.

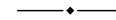
All these may be apparent to ordinary examination. But all this research points to the fact that as the foundation of all these powers, there is a Supreme Power activating them all. The belief in such a Power is irresistible.

By careful reasoning and patient research, it is possible to know the Supreme Being, neither equalled nor excelled by anything else. But it lies hidden underneath and concealed from our view by the five elements of earth, water, air, fire and space. To get behind them, they must be overcome and their power of concealment destroyed by the dagger of the five-lettered *mantra*. The means to do so should be learnt from a qualified Teacher who is competent to instruct people about it.

All the objects of the world which we see are subject to birth and death. What we take to be true and lasting turns out to be false and impermanent. Hence the world is spoken of as *maya*.

But what is that which always remains One without difference? What is that which is not subject to birth or death, but is eternal?

It is that which is beyond the products of *maya*, the One Supreme, without beginning or end, which is not subject to decay or death. That is God. He is the residual power which remains unaffected when everything else dies away.



THE EFFICACY OF PANCHAKSHARA MANTRA

—•—

This is a dynamic universe in which positive and negative energies co-operate to set its myriad activities in motion. The forces emanating in diverse ways from the five primordial elements are the ultimate sources of this dynamism. To bring them under control, to utilise the forces of good and to annihilate those of evil, one has to resort to the Supreme Energy of the five-lettered mystic *mantra*.

To be effective for the transformation of the universe for the good of mankind, this *mantra* has to be received in due process of initiation by an earnest and devout seeker from a competent guru. Reading it by oneself and practising its meditation without proper guidance will be futile of any benefit, and worse, would produce great harm. Any knowledge acquired apart from a guru will give not light, but darkness.

The seeker must have faith in God and abiding devotion to Him. The Satguru would himself come in search of him and give him the *upadesa* suited to his capacities. Utterance and meditation of it in the proper manner will bring extraordinary powers and enable the fulfilment of purposes beyond ordinary mortals.

Different orders in the five-lettered mantra have different kinds of efficacies. The order *Na-Ma-Si-Va-Ya* helps

to achieve the objectives of this world, while the order *Si-Va-Ya-Na-Ma* endowes one with the desire of the world beyond. These successions of the mystic letters, along with the forms *Si-Va-Ya-Si-Va* and *Si-Va-Si-Va*, enlarged or contracted, if uttered with piety and diligence and in the prescribed manner will beget the grace of God and by it, all supernatural powers. So declares the sacred book known as the *Tirumantiram*.

The sacred texts in Tamil identify the five letters of the Panchakshara with different factors of the super-sensible and the sensible world. *Na-Ma-Si-Va-Ya*; these five letters signify, respectively, *Stambhana*, *Mohana*, *Maarana*, *Ucchaatana* and *Vasya*. In another group, they stand for *Mala*, *Maya*, *Siva*, *Arul* and *Atma* and again for *Waking*, *Dream*, *Sleep*, *Deep Sleep* and *Laya* of *Life Processes*.

The letter Si is central to the Panchakshara mantra. Na Ma and Va, Ya stands for the inhaled and exhaled breath. If the breath in its three-fold aspects of rechaka, pooraka and kumbhaka is controlled, channelized and centralised preceded by the mystic syllable OM, and if the mantra is uttered even once with concentrated devotion, it is declared that the floodgates of God Siva's grace will be opened wide for the earnest seeker.

The Sivasakti packed into the Panchakshara mantra permeates this entire universe and is immanent in every particle of it and exhibits itself in the five-fold activities which it engages in by its own grace. These are Creation, Protection, Destruction, Concealment and Beneficence. Five divinities are associated with these five activities, namely Brahma, Vishnu, Rudra, Maheswara and Sadasiva. In the

mantra, Na stands for Brahma, Ma for Vishnu, Si for Rudra,
Va for Maheswara and Ya for Sadasiva.

—♦—

10
THE FIVE ELEMENTS
AND THEIR COLOURS
—♦—

These divinities again are looked upon as presiding over the five primordial elements of Earth (*Prithvi*), Water (*Ap*), Fire (*Tejas*), Wind (*Vayu*) and Ether (*Akasa*). These five elements are, in turn, associated with five colours. They are, in the order of the elements, Golden Yellow, White, Red, Green and Black.

Adopting the methods of Raja Yoga, if one concentrates on the midpoint between his eyebrows withdrawing his senses from external objects, one's internal eye will see effulgence. On deeper concentration, the five colours will be seen in arresting brilliance. A more intense practice of this process will reveal these colours even in the waking state to the sensuous eye. But one must be wide awake without closing the eyelids even once. That is the height of *yogic sadhana*. These five colours will be seen in every object of the universe.

As you dig deeper into the earth, the colours will be visible in the clay, in the stones and in the minerals. In the vegetable kingdom they may be seen in every tree, plant, creeper; in the leaf, flower, fruit and seed. In insects like snakes, worms, fish, frogs, crabs, oysters; in birds like the peacock, the parrot, the cock, the eagle, sparrow, silk worm, crow and crane; in animals like the deer, the tiger, horse, sheep and cow, and also in men, these five colours can be seen separately or

in combination. The sky shows these colours at sunrise, at sunset and in the rainbow. In short, there is nothing in this vast world which does not exhibit these five colours.

The five colours are symbolic of the powers of the five primordial elements. It is for this reason that the ancient Tamils adorned themselves with jewels set with five-coloured gems strung on five-coloured threads. They also used to wear five coloured garments. The belief was that separately they could acquire the powers of the respective elements warding off evil and obtaining whatever is auspicious and good.

Another time-honoured practice based on this belief was to cook rice, make it into five balls of different colours, scoop each ball into a hollow and light a wick in it. These five lamps will be waved clockwise and counter-clockwise, each done three times before, persons suspected of affliction by evil spirits and then the lights are thrown out at a junction where three roads meet.

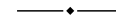
The '*harathi*' to ward off the evil eye is made of five ingredients. They are (1) Turmeric powder standing for the yellow *prihvitattva*, (2) Calcium (Chunam) for the *white aptattva*, (3) Chillies for the red *te jotattva*, (4) Betel- leaf for the green *Vayutattva*, and (5) Charcoal symbolising the dark *akasatattva*. The liquid with these thrown into it is waved thrice clockwise and counter-clockwise, the index finger of the person waving it is dipped into it and a *tilak* of that liquid is impressed on the forehead of the person who is the subject of this proceeding. Then the whole thing is emptied out into the street in front of the house.

The yellow associated with *Na* in the *mantra* has predominance over the other colours. Hence lime fruit

is used in worship of God. The lime-fruit is also used by *maantrikas* in their practices. When one goes to see superior persons like the guru, the king, the saint or any other big person, one takes a lime-fruit and respectfully offers it to him and it is accepted with pleasure.

The turmeric root has an excellence all of its own. It is a bounty conferred on man by God. As a preventive measure against all kinds of ailments and evil eyes, our women generally smear their faces, hands and feet with turmeric paste during their daily bath.

Yellow is the colour signifying auspiciousness. The *mangala sutra* in a wedding is yellow in colour. The *kankana* tied round the wrist at every holy function is also of yellow thread. These are traditions established by our ancient people for our prosperity.



11
THE FIVE ELEMENTS
AND THEIR GEOMETRICAL FORMS
—•—

NA-MA-SI-VA-YA make up the five-lettered *Panchakshara*. These letters stand for the five elements that constitute the world, the Earth, the Water, the Fire, the Wind and the Sky. A particular colour is associated with each of them—yellow for the Earth, white for Water, red for Fire, green for Wind and black for the Sky.



The five elements were invested with five geometrical forms by the Supreme Creatrix, the Parasakti. They are as follows:

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Prithvi or Earth is represented by a square | □ |
| 2. Ap or Water is represented by a crescent | ☾ |
| 3. Tejas or Fire is represented by a triangle | △ |
| 4. Vayu or Wind is represented by a double triangle | ☆ |
| 5. Akasa or Sky is represented by a sphere | ○ |

It may be pointed out that the Earth which is a sphere

cannot be represented by a square. It is true that the Earth is round. But the globe which is the Earth includes the oceans and the land. The watery expanse comes under the *Ap* element. Taking away that part from the globe, the rest of it has to be considered here. It is only while standing on the land that we can point to the four directions. The lines pointing to these directions make up the four sides of a square.

Moreover, Brahma who is the creator has four faces. He is called the *Chaturmukha Brahma*. Each *mukha* faces one of the directions - East, South, West and North. So prithvi, which is the source of all creation and growth stands for the truth which signifies the four directions. *Ap* or water is symbolised by a crescent. This is got by confining attention to the watery portion of the globe excluding the land portion.

Tejas or Fire is represented by a triangle. When fire is ablaze, the base is broader than the apex which tapers to a point.

Vayu or Wind is represented by a double triangle. When wind blows, fire glows as triangle in the form of a △. But when the wind blows down from the top, the figure is reversed and is of the form an ▽. When the two triangular forms are placed one above the other, we get the diagram of a ☆ signifying that the wind blows in all six directions. The upper triangle is looked upon as standing for the *Siva-tattva* and the lower one for *Sakti-tattva*. The two together make up the life breath and energise all life.

Akasa is represented by a circle. Dust rises from the earth. Steam issues from water. Smoke emanates from fire. These combine and go in the ten directions. They rise into the sky,

mix with the powers of the five elements, whirl around (in a circle) and are in a constant circular motion.

In this universe, everything from the atom to the spheres is round. Everything turns around itself and around every other thing. These motions are controlled in the infinite space by the Parasakti Herself by Her innate power. That Sakti is symbolised by the circle. All things in the cosmos produced by the action of the atoms are in essence circular.

For example, cut card-boards to the pattern of the figures symbolising the *pancha-bhutas*, the five elements. Make a hole in the centre of each and send a thick wire into each hole. Make them turn round after the manner of paper kites. It will be seen that the square, semi-circle, the triangle, the double triangle and the circle will all turn round in a circular form. Everything will appear circular.

Take a look at the sunlight falling on the ground through the interstices of a pandal made of the matting of coconut leaves. The holes may be of any shape or form; square, rectangle, circle or any other irregular figure. But the sunlight falling on the ground through them is circular in all cases. So everything is essentially circular. Everything enveloped by the grand circle which is the universe.

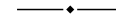
Those who engage in such research, will obtain true scientific knowledge. Knowledge of ultimate Reality will dawn on them.

Moreover, like the custom of wearing a necklace of stones of five colours associated with the *panchabhutas*, it was the practice among our ancients to fashion the five diagrammatic forms in stones of five colours, thread them together and

wear them as an ornament around the neck, Those who practise magic and other *siddhis* are also known have adorned themselves in a similar manner.

If one goes through the discipline of Raja Yoga for a number of years by the method of pranayama instructed by a *Guru* with self-confidence, in addition to seeing the five colours of the elements with his physical eyes, he can also perceive the five geometrical forms which symbolise them. Each figure can be seen in the five colours.

Such achievements are the features of the way of tattvajnana. In course of time, such siddhis will achieve liberation by the grace of the Guru.



12
15 VOWELS
AND 36 CONSONANTS
—•—

Tamil Nadu in the South is the most ancient and bountiful part of the country. With fertile lands, plentiful water, immense manpower, resourceful language, divine qualities and the highest traditions of Guru-disciple relationship, Tamil Nadu was, is and will be contributing the maximum good and serve as a beacon to the whole world. It is again in Tamil Nadu that we witness the rare phenomenon of 'Senthamil' i.e., the ancient Tamil language and the Holy Saivism inextricably uniting with each other as body and soul and subsisting with wonderful capacity. The ancient scholars who had carried out extensive research of the Tamil words carved out on stones, are of the opinion that originally the Tamil letters were in the form of figures and as time passed, the form changed into curves, then into circles and still later into squares.

The research scholars have come to the conclusion that during the ancient times the curve and circle forms of representation were in vogue. there were 15 vowels and 36 consonants, making a total of 51 letters in the Tamil language. Later, after the era of the great epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, the square form of representation came into existence, comprising of the twelve vowels अ, आ, ई etc., the eighteen consonants क, ड, च, ज्ञ etc. and the Ayudha' letter

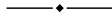
ॐ making a total of 31 letters. These 31 letters were named 'Senthamil' and are in use even to this day. We therefore belong to the age of square letters.

'Tirumantiram' which is the most ancient and the greatest of spiritual writings in Tamil containing a wealth of knowledge and truths emanated from the Siddha of Siddhas, Tirumoola Munivar, seven to eight thousand years ago, according to the research scholars. Since those were the days of round letters, the 51 letters comprising of 16 vowels and 35 consonants then prevalent were used in writing the magnum opus 'Tirumantiram' in 3,000 stanzas. The 'Tirumantiram' is the first and foremost authoritative Tamil scripture dealing with the *Vedas* and the *Vedagamas*. Closely observing the similar and dissimilar nature of the sounds originally emanating from the primeval supreme force manifesting as an infinitesimal particle of an atom and imbibing their power, the *Tatva Jnanis* or sages of wisdom, have evolved the 51 letters capable of producing cause and effect by their utterances. The Tamil Siddhas have therefore been pronouncing these 51 letters as sound producing *mantras*, dividing these letters into 16 vowels and 35 consonants according to their differential qualities.

Out of the 35 Tamil consonants five letters are very powerful and strong. They are NA-MA-SI-VA-YA, the Panchakshara. It is this Panchakshara which is the moola mantra for all the mantra letters. It is like the mother of all *mantras*. Among the 16 vowels the most prominent letters are the five letters अ, इ, उ, ए, औ (a, e, u, i, o), which when merged with the consonants constitute their life force. That

the powers of these 51 letters coupled with the powers of the Panchabhutas permeate the macrocosm and the microcosm is an established truth.

According to Sri Tirumoolar, the author of the immortal 'Tirumantiram' the most sacred mantra OM with 15 vowels and 35 consonants constitute the 51 letters. The letter Si representing the Light—Jyoti—with its six facets constitutes the six Adharas in our body viz. Muladhara, Swadhisthana, Manipura, Anahata, Visuddha and Ajna. The six inward stages of the Jyoti are to be realised by awakening the Pranava Nada—OM— through the initiation of the Guru.



51 LETTERS: 5 KINDS OF NUMBERS



Out of the 51 Tamil letters, five letters are very great and powerful. They are NA-MA-SI-VA-YA-, the Panchakshara. They are the moola mantra letters. According to the doctrines of the ancient Siddhas, the five letters NA-MA-SI-VA-YA represent the Holy name and the visual embodiment of Parama Siva. The powers of the 51 letters, the powers of the 96 Tatwas and the powers of the Panchabhutas spring from the powers of the Panchakshara and permeate the microcosm and the macrocosm. Therefore the Panchakshara NA-MA-SI-VA-YA is the common basic mantra for Vedanta, Siddhanta, knowledge of the Tatwas, True knowledge and the like.

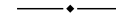
It is an open secret that many *itihisas*, puranas, *kavyas*, art drawings, sculptures etc. created by the intellectuals contain the essence of the principles and greatness of the Panchakshara Sakti. "The blind habit of praising as reality the works of art created by imagination must find its grave"— says Sri Ramalinga Swamigal. The ignorant see with their physical eyes the various forms of stone images created by the artists based on the episodes depicted in the *itihisas*, puranas and the *kavyas*, do obeisance to them, glorify them and consider that to be the divine state. They should not rest content with this. They should go beyond these created forms and by means of research, understand the esoteric

meaning thereof and through gyana yoga sadhana realise the one eternal Supreme Jyoti with the eyes of knowledge. The knowledge so gained by research into the Holy Panchakshara serves as a beacon light to the right path.

Of what use is book knowledge? Apart from the study of books, the seeker should gain practical experience by learning the truth at the feet of the Satguru through his teachings. The first duty is therefore to prepare oneself to become a fit disciple of the guru. A good ripe disciple will have the good fortune of automatically getting the right guru. This is the guru-disciple tradition. The Holy *Tirumantiram* states that the name of Nandi is Namassivaya. Nandi is Siva. The Omkara Pranava Panchakshara is the embodiment in principle of Parama Siva. For this reason all the boundless powers permeating the microcosm and the macrocosm could be found in the Holy Panchakshara. There is no other mantra equal to the Holy Panchakshara. The ancient Tamil Siddhas made use of the letters of the Panchakshara by lengthening or shortening the metres (matras), transposing them, subtracting or adding to that and pronouncing them with varying degrees of emphasis to achieve the desired effect. For example, Namassivaya is pronounced as Namassivaaya and Sivayanama as Sivaa-yanama and such practice has been in vogue for a long time. The effect of the pronunciation in either way is both in principle and content the same. For the worship or aradhana of Siva the twin paths of right conduct and right speech are indicated in the holy text *Tirumantiram*. The best archana to Siva is to change the Panchakshara into (1) Namassivaya (2) Sivayanama (3) Sivayasiva and (4) Sivasiva and to pronounce them in these four different ways and memorizing and saying them with reverence.

This is called the process of converting copper into gold. That is, the dross of desire and attachment to the physical body (copper) is removed through the efficacy of the most potent *moola mantra* the Panchakshara and the body becomes the colour of gold (Jyoti). In other words the Jiva becomes Siva. This is the doctrine of the ancient siddhas borne by their experience.

The 51 numbers representing the five lettered Panchakshara is divided by the intellectuals into five groups covered by the numbers 9, 11, 4, 15 and 12. These five divisions representing the 35 consonants and 16 vowels control all the saktis or forces and bound by the Panchakshara permeate the microcosm and macrocosm, thus bringing into being the eternal existence.



It is the powers of the Panchabhutas that reflect as the basic helpful support for the harmonious working of the manifold forces represented by the Holy Panchakshara NA-MA-SI-VA-YA, being the most powerful of the 35 consonants; अ, इ, उ, ए, औ (a, e, u, i, o), the five prominent life giving letters of the 16 vowels in Tamil language; the Omkara Pranava mantra and the 96 Tatvas.

The Seeker should get himself initiated by a Satguru into Siva Raja Yoga which contains within itself:

1. The Panchabhutas or five elements, namely—

Prithvi or Earth represented by a square	□
Ap or Water represented by a crescent	☾
Tejas or Fire represented by a triangle	△
Vayu or Wind represented by a double triangle	⚊⚋
Akasa or Sky represented by a sphere	○
2. The colours associated with each of the Panchabhutas or five elements, namely, yellow, white, red, green and black respectively;
3. The 51 letter mantras;
4. Omkara Pranava Panchakshara mantras, and
5. Their central abodes, namely, the six adharas (Yogic centres).

After initiation, he should practise the yoga in the manner prescribed and attain perfection. If the above mentioned letters charged with mantrasakthi are chanted the requisite number of times with single minded deep meditation, without mistake and in the proper order, the fruition of the mantra will yield wonderful benefits leading to success in this life and beyond.

The Panchabhutas which are the basis for the potency of all mantra letters are represented by the mantra sakthi letters लं, वं, रं, यं, अं (Lam-Vam-Ram-Yam-Am) or

ल, व, र, य, अ (La-Va-Ra-Ya-A). These mantra sakthi letters are called the *Bija mantras*. *Bija means* seed.

The Holy Panchakshara NA-MA-SI-VA-YA is the moola mantra. Moola means root. As the central basis for all mantra sakthis like the taproot, it is capable of enabling one to attain the Eternal State.

What is the *Sarvasakthi Chakra*? It is a chakra in which:

1. The five letters NA MA SI VA YA representing the moola mantra Panchakshara;
2. The five letters of the Vowels- अ, इ, उ, ए, औ (a, e, i, o, u) which give life to the Panchakshara;
3. The five forms representing the Panchabhuta Tatvas namely, the square, crescent, triangle, double triangle and sphere;
4. The mantra letters representing the Panchabhuta Sakthis लं, वं, रं, यं, अं (Lam-Vam-Ram-Yam-Am) and
5. The five Tamil numerals 9, 11, 4, 15 and 12 representing

the five divisions of the 51 powerful letters; are all computed, arranged and written at the appropriate places within the (5 x 5) 25 squares divided by the ancient Siddhas and Munis in accordance with the injunctions laid down in *Sastras* and all of which are compressed within a single circle.

The Sarvasakthi Chakra, when inscribed on gold, silver or copper sheet without any error in the order, can be said to be a *Yantra* or *Raksha*. It is a well-established doctrine that by worshipping this Chakra in the prescribed manner, evils will be warded off and all beneficent results will flow.

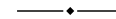
The significance of the doctrines contained in the Tatvas embodied in the Chakras and their great boundless powers should be learnt by the disciple through the Upadesa of the Guru. Thereafter, placing the Chakra before him, he should chant with devotion and perseverance the Panchakshara mantras without any mistake in their order as many times as possible every day. The extent to which he increases the number of times of their recital, to that extent he will achieve abundant strength and powers, capable of producing the desired beneficial results.

The worship of any Chakras not drawn in the proper order and given by a person who has not been properly initiated into the correct methods of their structure by the Satguru will not only not yield any beneficial result but will bring unexpected evil results. This fact should be carefully noted and remembered by all. Such a wrong step would be tantamount to walking on the head instead of the legs.

All born as human beings, who are endowed with the power of discrimination, owe it to their duty to praise and

worship all the forces which are permeating the macrocosm and the microcosm. The macrocosm is the Universe and the microcosm is our physical body. "That which is in the Universe is also contained in the body"—is the sublime Truth. The realisation that all these forces also exist in our body and permeating it is Tatvagyana.

The *Tatva Gyani* who has thus realised himself, experiencing all the forces of the Tatvas in his own body without a shadow of doubt, can form these forces into Chakras and mentally proceed with the worship of himself, constantly repeating the Panchakshara mantras in the prescribed manner. By this process, he achieves all siddhis for his own self in accordance with both Vedanta and Siddhanta and reaches the supreme ripe state.



15
THE FIVE ELEMENTS
AND 96 TATWAS
—•—

In the beginning the Paramatman existed indivisibly in the all-pervading Eternal Void from the molecular atoms to the highest. These countless numbers of atoms were whirling around at a terrific speed in cosmic unity. In this process of revolution, clashes took place between the atoms, and sound (naada) was first produced. The process still continued, resulting in light (bindu) being emitted.

From this primordial sound and light (naada and bindu), the three original sounds A-U-M emerged as AUM and became the cause of the Omkara Pranava *mantra*. Again from this Omkara Pranava *mantra* emerged the root words NA-MA-SI-VA-YA, the Panchakshara, which again blossomed into 51 sacred letters. From the subtle power of OM NAMASIVAYA came forth the many forces that are the 96 Tatwas, including the five elements which created and sustained the macrocosm and the microcosm by their grace.

The ultimate revelation of the Siddhas is the knowledge "that which is in the macrocosm is in the microcosm". The macrocosm is the universe and the microcosm is the body.

Thus the primordial Paramatman with the basis of the *panchabbutas* and the 96 Tatwas, has become the moving force of the universe as well as the body. So long as these 96 Tatwas are embedded in the body, man is capable of

enjoying happiness or undergoing suffering. When these 96 Tatwas (forces) cease to exist in the body, the man dies and returns to dust. "Death in the physical is birth in the astral" is the truth left behind by our ancient people and is well worth pondering over.

"Leaving aside the God within who controls the five elements and 96 Tatwas in your body, you have gone a wandering around the world; casting aside untrue physical attachments and looking up to the true being, realising the Centre where the five senses merge, enjoy the bliss within."

Thus the Tamil Siddhas have sung and brought home the truth for everyone to realise.

One should therefore abandon material desires, receive proper initiation from a Sat Guru, concentrate the mind, intellect and the life-force through the medium of Siva Yoga, on the spiritual centre between the eyebrows and meditate. If this is done, he will experience the quintessence of the Tatwas of the Panchakshara, see the effulgent light through the spiritual eye and realise God as the Supreme Bliss and indwelling Glory.

The 96 Tatwas are:

5 Bhutas (Primordial Elements): Earth, Water, Fire, Wind and Ether.

5 Jnana Indriyas (Organs of knowledge or perception): Skin, Tongue, Eyes, Nose and Ears.

5 Qualities: Deva (Divinity), Dana (Charity), Visarga (Renunciation), Ananda (Bliss) and Bhaya (Fear).

5 Koshas (Sheaths): Annamaya (Physical), Pranamaya

(Vital), Manomaya (Mental), Vigyanamaya (Supramental) and Anandamaya (Spiritual).

5 Asayas (Receptacles of the body): Amara (Mouth), Pakva (Stomach), Mala (Intestines), Jala (Kidneys) and Sukla (Seminal Vesicles).

5 Pulan (Functions): Sabda (Hearing), Sparsa (Touch), Rupa (Sight), Rasa (Taste) and Gandha (Smell).

4 Karanas (intellectual Faculties): Manas (Mind), Buddhi (Intellect), Chitta (Subconscious Mind) and Ahamkara (Ego).

3 Trigunas (Qualities): Sattwa (Purity), Rajas (Activity) and Tamas (Inertia).

3 Malas (Vital deterrents): Anavam (Pride), Maya (Illusion) and Kamyam (Selfish desire).

5 Karmendriyas (Organs of action): Vak (Speech), Pani (Hands), Pada (Legs), Payu (Anus) and Upastha (Genitals).

8 Ragas (Attachments): Kama (Desire), Krodha (Anger), Lobha (Covetousness), Moha (Infatuation), Mada (Arrogance), Matsarya (Jealousy), Idumbai (Fear) and Vegam (Haste).

10 Nadis (Astral) Nerves: Ida, Pingala, Sushumna, Sankhini, Pusha, Gandhari, Agni, Alambhusa, Singuva and Guna.

6 Adharas (Yogic Centres): Muladhara, Swadishtana, Manipura, Anahata, Visuddha and Ajna.

3 Mandalas (Worlds): Agni, Aditya and Chandra.

5 States (Avasthas): Jagriti (Waking), Swapna (Dream),

Sushupti (Sleep), Turiya (Deep Sleep) and Athi Turiya (Laya of Life Process).

3 Doshas (Humours of the Body): Vata (Wind), Piththa (Bile) and Sleshma (phlegm).

3 Eshanas (Desires): Artha (Wealth), Putra (Son) and Loka (Wife).

10 Vayus (Nerve currents or Pranas): Prana, Apana, Vyana, Udana, Samana, Naga, Kurma, Krikara, Devadatta and Dhananjaya.

2 Vinai (Actions): Nal Vinai (Good Deeds) and Thee Vinai (Bad Deeds).

1 Knowledge.

96 In Total

"To the realised He is sweet sugar-candy; to others He is a lump of hard stone"—understanding this, one should realise the truth.

"Know Thyself" is the quintessence of the teaching of our Vedantic seers.

One who, guided by a Sat Guru, understands the above 96 Tatwas and the rest of it embedded in the body realises God as the Eternal Truth and becomes a *Tatva Gyani*. The *Tatva Gyani* is thus one who has understood these secret forces at work, based on the Truth "I am He" and "He is I".

"Where there is Tatwa, there the Leader is; Where the Tatwa is not, there the Leader is not".

This is the ultimate philosophy left behind by the great Tamil Siddhas of the past and the realisation comes that "Truth is God".

"Realisation of the True God is Sada Siva;

All other states are Illusory."



16

THE 51 SACRED LETTERS AND 6 ADHARAS



If one has to realise the divine qualities of the primordial force, he should, through the Pranayama Yoga Sadhana as initiated by the Guru, wake up the *Kundalini* force (serpentine power) lying dormant in the Muladhara, with the aid of Ida, Pingala and Sushumna *nadis* and make the force shoot upward through all the six Adharas, and concentrating at the space between the two eye-brows visualising through the spiritual eye. He will then realise the true divine qualities.

The *Kundalini* Shakti is a great and marvellous subtle power residing in the Muladhara in the centre of the body in the form of a coiled serpent, always in slumber.

There are 72,000 *nadis* (astral nerves) in the human body. Of these 24 are important. They are situated in the Muladhara —10 *nadis* upwards, 10 *nadis* downwards, and two *nadis* each on either side. These *nadis* with manifold powers are separated and unified in the Muladhara and are utilised by the *Kundalini* force according to its needs as the main force. Of the above 24 *nadis*, 10 are most important and out of these 10 *nadis* three are fundamental, viz Ida, Pingala and Sushumna. Ida is the breath which flows (incoming and outgoing) through the left nostril, Pingala through the right nostril and Sushumna through both the nostrils. Ida is also called as Chandra Nadi. Pingala as Surya Nadi

and Sushumna as Agni.

The six Adharas are (1) Muladhara (2) Swadhishtana (3) Manipura (4) Anahata (5) Visuddha and (6) Ajna.

Muladhara: This Adhara is located in the centre of the body, at the base of the spinal column, four fingers in length and four fingers in width. This is the base where the Kundalini force is in slumber like a three coiled serpent. It looks like a lotus with four petals, that is, a place where four different forces of the *nadis* are separated and unified as determined by the Yogis. The sacred mantra OM of the Omkara Pranava Panchakshara OM NAMASIVAYA has its origin here. Ganapati is the Devata with four *mantraaksharas* (sacred letters).

Swadhishtana: This Adhara is located below the navel. It looks like a lotus with six petals, that is, a place where six different forces of the *nadis* are separated and unified, as determined by the Yogis. This is located above the Muladhara and is known as Kanda. The Prithvi (Earth) Tatwa prevails. Colour is golden yellow. The Geometrical form is a square \square . Bija Mantra (significant potential equivalent) is LAM. It is the centre of the Panchakshara mantra letter NA. Presiding deity is Brahma with six *mantraaksharas*. Duty is Creation.

Manipura: The Adhara is located in the Nabhisthana (region of navel). It looks like a lotus with ten petals, that is, a place where ten different forces of the *nadis* are separated and unified as determined by the Yogis. The AP (Water) Tatwa prevails. Colour is white. The Geometrical form is a Crescent moon \smile . Bija mantra is VAM. It is the centre of the Panchakshara mantra letter MA. Presiding deity is

Vishnu with ten *mantraaksharas*. Duty is Protection.

Anahata: This Adhara is located in the heart centre. It looks like a lotus with twelve petals, that is, a place where twelve different forces of the *nadis* are separated and unified, as determined by the Yogis. The Tejas (Fire) Tatwa prevails. Colour is red. The Geometrical form is a triangle \triangle .

Bija mantra RAM. It is the centre of the Panchakshara mantra letter SI. Presiding deity is Rudra with 12 *mantraaksharas*. Duty is Destruction.

Visuddha: This Adhara is located in the throat. It looks like a lotus with sixteen petals, that is, a place where sixteen different forces of the *nadis* are separated and unified, as determined by the Yogis. The Vayu (Wind) Tatwa prevails, colour is green. The Geometrical form is a double triangle $\triangle\triangle$. Bija mantra is YAM. It is the centre of the Panchakshara mantra letter VA. Presiding deity is Maheshwara with sixteen *mantraaksharas*. Duty is Concealment.

Ajna: This Adhara is located at the space between the two eyebrows. It looks like a lotus with two petals, that is, a place where two different forces of the *nadis* are separated and unified as determined by the Yogis. The Akasa (Ether) Tatwa prevails. Colour is black. The Geometrical form is a Sphere \circ . Bija mantra is UM. It is the centre of the Panchakshara mantra letter YA. Presiding deity is Sadasiva with two *mantraaksharas*. Duty is Beneficence.

According to Sri Tirumoolar, the author of the immortal 'Tirumantiram', the most sacred mantra OM with 16 vowels and 35 consonants constitute the 51 letters*.

The six inward stages of the Light—Jyoti—are to be sought with the help of the Pranava Nada—OM.

**In Sri Tiru moolar's time the ancients had 15 Vowels in the Tamil language.*



17

SIVA RAJA YOGA: GURU-DISCIPLE RELATIONSHIP



What is Siva Raja Yoga? It is the path which leads, through Pranayama practised with dispassion and perseverance, to the realisation of the Jyoti (Supreme Light) which is the quintessence of the Holy Panchakshara NA-MA-SI-VA-YA.

It is an established principle that a disciple, having the highest devotion to his Guru being a realised saint with all the Grace—can attain Siddhi (attainment) through the Guru's Upadesa (initiation) with many years of systematic and persistent Yoga Sadhana (Yogic practice).

The great Tamil ancients have said that "There cannot be any ideal State which is not that of a householder." Hence the householders are the best among those qualified for Siva Raja Yoga. The man and the woman are both equal in this respect.

THE GURU: Qualities he should possess:

The Guru (Master) who initiates one into the Path of Siva Raja Yoga should be a perfect self-realised soul, capable of conveying his ideas not only by means of words, but also by signs and action, transcending all emotions and centred in peace. He should have mastered and brought under his control the innumerable forces emanating from the Holy Panchakshara Mantra and his Yoga Sadhana, and must have also reached the highest pinnacle of the Path.

He must be in a position to select fit and proper disciples and instruct them on the Onward Path in clear and easily understandable terms; each according to his individual stage of evolution. These are the qualifications laid down in the ancient Tamil texts.

THE DISCIPLE: Qualities he should possess:

The disciple should be pure. He should have no deformities in his body. He should be full of Satwic qualities. He should have conquered anger. He must have faith in his own conscience and must excel in devotion to his Guru. He must be capable of understanding and following the Guru's veiled instructions, enjoying the confidence of the Guru, obeying and serving his parents and leading a chaste, monogamous householder's life. The disciple endowed with the above qualities laid down for a true disciple, is alone fit enough according to ancient Tamil texts, to be initiated into Siva Raja Yoga.

Such a worthy disciple should be in search of a Guru possessing all the divine qualities, and after finding one, he should surrender his all—body, possessions and soul—at the lotus feet of the Guru, please him in all ways, justify the Guru's faith in him, imbibe the forces emanating from the Guru's teaching of the Omkara Pranava Panchakshara OM NA-MA-SI-VA-YA and adhere to the practice of Yoga with full faith and perseverance in his efforts. When doubts arise, he should get them cleared from the Guru by repeated requests and evolve himself with the benign thoughts of the Guru all the time.

Songs of Tamil Siddhas conveying the above ideas are not wanting in the ancient Tamil texts.

According to the legacy left behind by the Tamil Ancients:

"The Master and God are one and inseparable; the One who imparts the Sacred Letters is God; the Guru who blesses the disciple with the upadesa of Omkara Pranava Panchakshara and the 51 Sacred Letters etc. becomes equal to God."

There is a wonderful and excellent old Tamil saying:

"No Mantra is greater than the word of the Father'. (Here "Father" means the Great Siva who has created us all and "the word" means NA-MA-SI-VA-YA. This is not only the name of the Lord but the principle behind His Form signifying the Omkara Pranava Panchakshara.

THE SUPREMACY OF THE MANTRA:

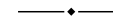
The Omkara Pranava Panchakshara Mantra OM NA-MA-SI-VA-YA is superior to all Mantras. It possesses unparalleled powers. No Mantra can equal or surpass this Mantra. This is the Truth.

The great saintly authority, Sri Tirumoolar says thus:

"There is a beautiful fruit to the world; it is a good one and its name is NA-MA-SI-VA-YA; when chewed it is soft but when eaten it is sweetness itself."

LONG LIVE NA-MA-SI-VA-YA!

LONG LIVE THE LOTUS FEET OF THE LORD!



THE WAY TO GOD

God is sweet sugar-candy to those who have faith in Him; but a lump of hard stone to those who do not have that faith.

Among God's creations, only an infinitesimal portion of human beings pine to see Him face to face. The rest are immersed in the miasma of material comforts. They are in hot, meaningless pursuit of sensuous, transient pleasures, they seldom stop to dwell on the All-Merciful, All-Pervading God—He who is devoted to the devotees; he who slaves for His slaves. Man's history is studded with shining instances of God descending on earth in the service of his devotees.

The Puranas tell us how Mother Earth, unable to bear the burden of the growing number of selfish and sinful mortals, appealed to God to destroy the erring ones.

Human birth is a precious, priceless blessing of the Lord. We are born after passing through endless births and deaths as a result of good conduct and unswerving devotion to the Lord. It, therefore, ill-becomes human genius to waste this glorious opportunity on earth: the duty before mankind is clear—to realise the purpose of life by devotion to God. This is the quintessence of the teachings of all the Minstrels, Acharyas and Sages whom God sends to earth from time to time.

Saint Sivagnana Siddhi compares human birth to the crossing of an ocean with one's own hands. Man can cross

the ocean of life too by devotion to God. It is an oft-proven truth.

Love and attachment limited to one's kith and kin and identification with one's body are all alike, the offsprings of ignorance. Ignorance is the root cause of fear, strife and misery. Such ignorance hardly distinguishes the human from the lower species. It is only the knowledge of the Divine that will stave off this dangerous and self-devouring ignorance and elevate man from the animal to the spiritual status.

Immortality is the birthright of all. Divine Consciousness is the most precious heritage of mankind. Every soul is potentially Divine. Indeed God dwells in the hearts of each one of us. Unfortunately, blinded by fleeting passions, the minds of most men do not rest on Him.

What, then is the way to God ?

Man develops his mind in proportion to his love of God and God's grace descends on him in the same proportion—the greater the measure of his "in-dwelling" in God, the greater will be the grace of God which will ultimately release man from the shackles of birth.

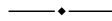
To earn God's grace, Suddha Bhakti (unalloyed devotion) is necessary. With Suddha Bhakti comes Atma Suddhi (purity of the soul). When the soul becomes pure, one gets Viveka (discretion) and Vairagya (non-desire), its other gifts being -sat Sanga (sacred company of the righteous), Sadhu Seva (service of the saintly), Nama Samkirtan (singing the Lord's praises) and Satya (truthfulness)—all of which result in overflowing Bhakti or boundless devotion to God, which in its turn will lead to Siddhi or attainment which in turn will

lead to Mukti or liberation. Man in the liberated state realises Atman which will lead to the knowledge of God—Prakriti or Paramatman. Love will then radiate in all its effulgence from the inside and outside. Truly such a person becomes a God-man, shedding all human limitations and transcending good and evil. He becomes the instrument of God and sees Him in all and all in Him.

One important fact to remember in this connection is that the supreme grace of the Siddhas and Yogis will ease and quicken the pace of man's evolution towards God-realisation and help him attain it with lesser effort. But even though God and the Guru may be too willing to open the floodgates of God-Knowledge, if man has no urge to attain Bhakti or see the Lord, nothing can help him. Humility and self-surrender are its prime prerequisites.

Man is God's creature. He has his own right to make ceaseless efforts to know things. What he does not know he must learn from others who know. He must seek and learn from an enlightened Guru.

I repeat what I said in the beginning. God is sweet sugar-candy to those who have faith in Him; but a lump of hard stone to those who do not have that faith. This is my experience. Let everyone make it his mission to propagate devotion to God to the best of his ability. May humanity strive for the nectar of Bhakti and through it attain and enjoy Shanti and Shreyas (peace and prosperity).



19
THE ULTIMATE TRUTH



Life in the universe is an ageless, unending, multi-faceted interplay of the Lord's *leelas*. Numerous are the places the world over which have seen the divine manifestation in one form or the other. India—Bharat Varsha—has been singularly fortunate in having many such places. One of them is Panrimalai —Panri Hills—situated in the Dindigal taluk, near Madurai, the abode of Goddess Meenakshi, in Tamil Nadu. The legend associated with Panrimalai is that the Lord took the form of a sow (female pig) and wandered about feeding its offspring. I prostrate, in all humility and reverence, before the Supreme for the great good fortune he has bestowed on me, to be born in this sacred place.

In the world of today, very few indeed are those who yearn for a direct vision of God. By far the majority of the countless men and women in the world get lost in the sensuous earthly pleasures. God is the Supreme Being, plenal perfection. Transcending everything, he is yet inherent in all things. Full of grace, He graciously descends to give assistance to every living creature and assumes the role of those who have dedicated themselves to selfless service. We must steadfastly strive to be worthy to receive His grace.

Minstrels of God, the great Acharyas, the Mahatmas, who are endowed with rare wisdom all have the same purpose namely, the upliftment of their fellow men. If we are intensely devoted to God, with a yearning, guileless, pure

heart, if we sing His praises with full-throated fervour, we shall then deserve His grace and we shall be moulded into good men of virtue.

Save by devotion to God, pure Bhakti, by no other means can one hope to cross this ocean of life. The Tamil seer Tiruvalluvar spoke to the same effect when he said in his immortal Kural: "Those who seek refuge in God's Feet, only they can swim across the waters of life. The others cannot do so." Again, the seer Tirumoolar said very much the same in his Tirumantiram: "Great indeed is the loss of those who, born in this world, do not worship the Supreme Being of superlative excellence."

It is necessary that each one of us should reform ourselves. A persistent awareness of dharma, a sense of tranquility and a zest devoid of difference will alone serve to effect this change in our character. Meditation of the Supreme, governed by a unitary consciousness, is the sure means for an enduring benefit.

Man perfects himself to the extent that he loses himself in the contemplation of God. He makes himself eligible for God's Grace and acquires the numerous powers of God himself. Streaming from His Grace, wonderous miracles can easily be wrought. The Tamil word for God signifies the Being who "Ultimately is," when everything else has perished. If we meditate on that word, we can have a soul-sight of the God signified by it. He is the transcendent One who fills the mind which has realised the significance of the five mystic syllables (the Panchakshara NA-MA-SI-VA-YA) which help to concentrate on Him.

Blessed are the pure-hearted; God reveals himself to

them. To get His Grace one should give Him devotion. Strength of mind begets peace of mind, which in turn gives discrimination, detachment, control of the senses, service to the needy, good company, uttering the name of the Lord and adhering to the path of Truth. Devotion is sustained by these virtues. Intense devotion endows one with several spiritual powers. They lead a man to the realisation of his true Atman. To realise the Atman is to feel God in every part of one's being, nay, in all animate and inanimate beings.

God resides in the heart of everyone. He is omnipresent and omnipotent. Not a blade of grass moves without His will. He alone is. He is one without a second. When once one is blessed with the soul-sight of God, one will realise His immanence in everything. Freed from avarice and anger, in that transparently pure condition, one can also see the innumerable *leelas* of the Lord.

Milk and water mix freely. But butter churned from milk when put in water, does not dissolve in it but floats in it. Similarly if a man has once become one with God, even if he mixes with and lives amidst those of a lower spiritual evolution, he does not get lost in them.

He who has realised the unity of Prakriti and the Atman with Brahman will neither entangle others nor himself get entangled in the meshes of transient Good and Evil.

Even today, there live amidst us Souls who can convert a desert into a smiling, delightful garden. We must be on the lookout for them. To see material objects with our eyes we need the sun by day and other light by night. Even so, unless, god-men show us the path and guide us, we cannot reach Him. We should try our utmost with unsagging zeal to reach

divine heights. For that we need the grace of God and the blessings of the Guru.

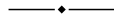
To conquer death in life and to negate birth after death, to attain the Eternal—that must be the sole objective of human endeavour, for

"God is the ultimate Truth, my dear.

And He is the Ever Auspicious,

All other gods are but phantoms, my dear".

"All men are one family and one only is their God."



God is the eternal Bridegroom to whom all mortals are drawn as His brides. That alone is true love which suffuses the heart of the devotee. It is love at its best, the highest and the most sublime. It is divine love; for it is love of the Divine. The word is abused in its material connotation. Bodily lust is miscalled love.

The Nayanmars were full of such divine love. It is different from mere devotion as generally understood. To them their devotion to God was more valuable than even their life. Mere intellect which scans the material world cannot comprehend it. Like the Brahman of the Upanishads which is declared 'to be known by those who do not know and not known by those who know', mere reason cannot sound its depths. To the sophisticated, it may look like a state of hysteria. To those for whom this material work is all that is, it may appear to be a folly. To the valiant, it may seem a piece of chicken - heartedness. Those who swear by *ahimsa* will be aghast at the *himsa* practised by some of the devotees. Each one judging it may see in it the antithesis of their own point of view.

We must go to the root of the matter and try to understand the truth. Our Nayanmars are dedicated souls who offered their bodies, their very life and soul as a sacrifice at the foot-stool of God. They do not hesitate to chastise those who are the enemies of God's devotees. The body is

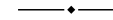
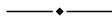
punished to save the undwelling soul. The significance of this will not be apparent to a superficial mind.

Even today we witness the occurrence of certain miracles. Instead of making fruitless researches into their fact or possibility, one should concede that nothing is impossible in a universe governed by an omnipotent Providence.

God resides in the heart of those who receive His grace and conveys secret intimations to them. The world even now abounds in such select souls. Such walking divinities live and move amidst us like ordinary men. These are the true jnanis, the true devotees and lovers of God. If we attach ourselves to them they will draw us to themselves as a magnet does the bits of iron, and, even as the iron gets magnetised in the process, we shall be divinised by them. They will bathe us in the waters of their love and purify our entire being.

But a rust-laden iron will resist the attraction by the magnet. Even so, if our minds are soiled by the rust of lust, anger and greed, we shall be impervious to this divine attraction.

He who would be wise should subject himself to certain disciplines. An undivided devotion to the *guru* and an unflinching control of the senses are necessary. These two are the sure means to attain the ultimate objective of life. That is the lesson which our great good men have taught us.



The universe and its inhabitants live and exist by the grace of the Omnipresent and Omnipotent Divinity which not only vibrates the universe but is itself vibrant. To the extent to which man's mind is attuned towards Divinity he becomes refined. To the extent to which a man's mind leans towards and merges with God, he gets the Divine Grace which enables him to overcome the cycle of births and deaths. It is only by Divine Grace that man attains the stage of perfection and gets endowed with the glorious innumerable powers of God.

Bhakti or devotion takes a man to His Grace. To cognise devotion one needs inner purity. This inner purity begets inner strength. Once this inner strength is attained, discrimination, dispassion, compassion, service to the noble, divine association, divine society, singing of God's name, truth etc. follow. With the attainment of these attributes one experiences devotional ecstasies. A spontaneous and effortless devotion is the natural result then. Such devotion leads to the attainment of all Siddhis. The next stage is liberation (*mukti*). In the liberated stage one attains self-realisation. This self-realisation leads to God-Realisation.

God resides in the hearts of all; only the minds of some are not with Him. When one realises the Almighty, compassion fills him internally and overflows outwards and he sees Him as the Omnipresent. The bhakta who is blessed

with the vision of God sees Him at all places, in all things and at all times and all in Him. But then, the higher aspects of God could be seen in man too. Still better aspects are visible in those pure and good-natured *bhaktas* who do not have even a tinge of lust or desire for wealth. Those who have attained God-vision see Him in His manifold *leelas*.

Milk and water mix freely but butter taken from milk does not mix with water. It floats. Similarly the soul which has attained Realisation will not be affected by association with ill-natured and imperfect beings.

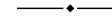
One who has attained the knowledge that Nature (*Prakriti*) and Self (*Atman*) are unified with *Brahman* (Cosmic Consciousness), will not lay himself to be bound by virtue and vice.

When Yogis mindfully bestow mercy, the doors of Yogic stages are automatically flung open without one's own effort. This is a truth worth knowing. Even if the grace of God and the Guru are available, unless a man yearns for liberation or vision of God, he cannot achieve any benefit. However much a man may strive, without God's Grace he cannot gain anything in this life. Therefore man should strive and work hard in his lifetime to attain God-head. One should seek and learn what one does not know from others who know.

Even at present there are amongst us *mahatmas* (god-men) who are capable of converting dreary deserts into lands of plenty. One should search, seek and find such a realised guru. There is an old saying that it is easier find a thousand gurus but difficult to get a true disciple. The real meaning of this saying is that there are many great souls who could impart powerful initiations but the number of those who

could strictly follow the same and realise the truth is infinitesimally small.

To realise that eternal, basic and permanent state which is beyond birth and death and therefore deathless and birthless, should be the high, exalted and ultimate goal of human life. May one and all strive to achieve this goal by the grace of the Almighty!



DIVINE GRACE- MAN'S BIRTHRIGHT

—•—

To lead a good life in this world, devotion to God is very essential. All beings strive towards achieving this objective. Many a great soul has taken birth in this world from time to time and led mankind towards the path of righteousness. "Rare is the human birth in the midst of countless living creatures"—the great souls have taught us.

The difference between animals and men is that animals possess only five senses whereas man possesses a sixth sense as well. With the special quality of discrimination bestowed on us, it is our duty to tread the righteous path shown to us by the great ones, and reach the blessed feet of the Lord, there to experience everlasting bliss.

We are steeped in utter darkness which is nothing but ignorance. This ignorance may even be termed as egoism. Egoism, ignorance, vanity, pride—all these indicate the same meaning. The darkness of ignorance can only be dispelled by the light of Inner Vision.

To meditate on God, devoid of egoism, becomes impossible. For, to even keep away from egoism, His grace is absolutely necessary. To illustrate: Suppose there is darkness in a place. To get rid of this darkness the light of a lamp is necessary. To dispel this darkness first and then install the light becomes impossible without the aid of the light first.

God's grace is necessary to drive away the egoism in the mind. This egoism grows and gains ground in one's self in the form of pride, "I" and "mine". The seed of the thought giving rise to the ego is one's claim that "I have done all these, I am the Master of all these" etc. This type of egoism is natural to all beings. However it is only because the human being has the capacity to either develop or annihilate this egoism that human birth is considered to be the highest creation. One who has learning, wealth, family and character considers oneself great. Even he who does not possess these qualities also says he is great. This egoism has taken deep root and has assumed huge proportions in each and every human being. To destroy this deep-rooted egoism one has to realise the Divine Fraternity: "One family—One God".

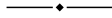
There is a higher Principle above us all. One should realise his own insignificance before this higher Principle. This thought should sink deep into our minds. It is only when we concentrate on this thought again and again that our vanity starts diminishing and is ultimately extinguished altogether. *God's grace belongs to one and all.* To think that "I am alone entitled to this Grace" is ignorance. The thought of doing good for others to the best of one's ability through Divine Grace should be assiduously cultivated. If progress is achieved in this way, it would work out to the welfare of the world and nothing else. Even the feeling that one is a servant of God would be adequate enough to root out egoism.

It is worth pondering over what Saint Tiruvalluvar has said about these truths:

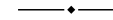
'He who destroys the concept of "I" and "mine" enters into a World higher than the Gods!'

'Be bound to the Detached so that your attachments may cease.'

Let us, who are born in this world, endowed with the sixth sense, devote at least five minutes a day to meditate on the Omnipresent and the All-Transcendent God and ennoble ourselves by learning from the wise what we ourselves do not know.



THE GURU AND THE DISCIPLE



Guru is Brahma, Guru is Vishnu, Guru is Maheswara, Guru is Para Brahma. There is no equal to Guru. One who has a Guru is blessed. The meaning of the scriptures is revealed to the one who looks upon his Guru as the Supreme Being. The word 'Guru' means 'One who dispels darkness.' Teachers of real spiritual enlightenment are very rare. They are also not easily accessible until the aspirant cultivates absolute detachment and uninterrupted loving service and sings and hears the glory of the Lord. When one has sincerely and successfully done all these things, the Guru will be accessible to him. The contact with the Guru becomes unfailing in its results. The Guru can lift the devotees from the slough of despondency and hopeless attachment to the insipid things of the world and connect him, directly to the Lord so that he may receive His descending Grace, that is, *Sakti Nipata*. The direct contact of a disciple with his Guru will bring about the enjoyment of permanent bliss and emancipation from the cycle of births and deaths.

There are three things which are difficult to acquire in this world; namely, human birth, intense desire to know God and refuge at the lotus feet of the Satguru. When all these three things are accomplished, liberation to the disciple is assured.

The boat of the human body has been purchased at a very high price—the cumulative effect of meritorious deeds in past lives. The physical body is a suitable medium for crossing

the ocean of life as it is equipped with an instrument called Buddhi or intelligence. The Buddhi is to be made use of in Yoga in its various aspects.

The disciple has to be disciplined for Yoga. He must approach the Guru with humility and faith. Obedience to the Guru is the first step which a disciple has to assiduously practise for being trained in the path of Yoga. To be in company with one's Guru is itself Yoga. Various types of Yoga are mentioned in the Gita, to be followed according to the mental aptitude of the disciple. Each disciple has to begin from where he stands. The Karma Yoga, the Jnana Yoga and the Bhakti Yoga are indicated to the devotees who have aptitude for work, knowledge and devotion respectively. The Soul is potentially divine in nature and the goal is to manifest this divinity within by controlling forces of nature both internally and externally by work or worship, philosophy or psychic control and thus become free.

Why should such importance be attached to the Guru? Because, the higher knowledge which comes from *chit* does not come in the form of ideas or thoughts, but as power or *Sakti*. This power or *Sakti* has to be transmitted directly by the Guru to the disciple — either by touch, look or mere thought. Unless transmission of chaitanya takes place, there can be no progress. The Guru must himself possess the power to transmute this *Sakti* to the disciple.

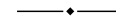
The distinction between a devotee and a disciple has to be understood. The devotee's approach to the Guru is like "*Markata Kisora Nyaya*." The young one of the monkey clings to its mother with its own strength, with the result that there is the risk of a fall. The disciple's approach to

the Guru is like '*Marjala Kisora Nyaya*.' The young kitten is lifted by the mother cat when in distress, and relies upon the strength of the mother for its protection. The disciple having surrendered himself completely to the Guru there is no risk of such a fall. The Guru takes care of the disciple.

There are three stages of evolution. In the beginning the disciple says "I belong to the Guru." This is achieved by the path of selfless service to the Guru.

The disciple next says "Guru belongs to me.". This is achieved by the path of devotion to the Guru.

Finally, the disciple says "I am Guru.". This is achieved by the path of Jnana or knowledge with the very grace of the Guru.



THE ONE REALITY

There is one Reality in this world which is described in different ways. The scriptures also tell us *Esa Devo Visvakarma Mahatma*—that one Supreme Lord dwells in the hearts of all living beings. He is present in every one of us. There is a difference between the presence of God and consciousness of His being present in us. We are religious only when we are able to have that consciousness of God.

By following the various methods indicated in the scriptures one may attain salvation some time in due course. But a Sadguru or a saint purifies you on sight. They are not people who infer God by philosophical arguments but they are people who have seen the Divine. The Sadgurus have felt the reality in their own beings. They live in the consciousness of the presence of God.

The great saints are the messengers sent by the Supreme for the purpose of satisfying the aspirations of the human individual. Every saint embodies a little of the light of the Supreme and when that light spreads over his whole nature and makes of it an eternal flame, a transparent spirit, then the saint becomes a God-man on earth.

Our faith is shallow on account of our pride. It is said in the *Ramayana* that a crow named Bhushandi did not at first accept Rama as an incarnation of God. Once it incurred Rama's displeasure. It flew through the different worlds to escape Rama's wrath. But it could not. Then it surrendered

itself to Him and took refuge at His feet. Rama took the crow in his hand and swallowed it. Thereafter, the crow found that it was seated in its own nest, in a tree. After the pride had been crushed the bird came to realise that though Rama looked like any other man, He contained in his stomach the entire Universe. It is very difficult to understand that God can be a finite human being and at the same time be the all-pervading Soul of the Universe.

God is the best object of study. He who seeks God intellectually is certainly better than the one who is completely ignorant of His existence. The feeling of God is better than intellectual study and experiencing God is the highest goal of life. Still it is better to become God than to experience Him.

The God-realised person knows himself to be God as an ordinary man knows himself to be a man. All that is noble, beautiful and lovable, all that is great and good and inspiring in this Universe is just an infinitesimal fraction of the unfading and unspeakable glory of God-realisation. The limited individual must disappear entirely if there is to be an admission into the state of Godhood. We must have faith in the God-man and surrender to him.

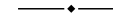
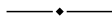
If a devotee or a disciple accepts without reserve from the bounty which the God-man offers, he creates a link which stands by him and he attains salvation. Further if the person serving the Sadguru offers all his life and possessions in his service, he creates a link which will reinforce his spiritual progress by inviting upon himself the grace and help of the Sadguru.

To be born a human being is fortunate enough. The

man's body is precious. It has the highest evolutionary value because of the unique brain and the spinal centres. It is indeed a calamity not to care for one's own good and not to strive for the attainment of God here and now.

The *Vasanta* Season is the cause of fragrant flowers and sweet fruits. But the *Vasanta Kala* or season does not enjoy the fruits; man enjoys them. So too are the Sadgurus. They shine forth as the treasure-house of wisdom, right knowledge and good nature. They spend their lives in doing good for others. They have transcended the mortal life which is full of woes. They help their devotees to cross the ocean of *samsar* without expecting anything in return for the help they render. The blessings of the Guru and the sages are the best means to attain self-realisation.

Therefore, one should trust in the words of holy men and great souls who have realised God. Two things are required for victory. They are the contemplative wisdom of the Guru and the practical Sadhana of the devotees. The *Mahabharata* war was won by the combination of the *Yoga* of Sri Krishna with *Dhanur* of Arjuna, his disciple. Therefore, Krishna is called *Yogeswara* and Arjuna the *Dhanurdhara*. Both are one. The *Nara-Narayana* is to be found in each one of us. There is the battle going on in us in the battle-field of *Samsar*. May we all be victorious by the Blessings of *Yogeswara!*



State of Jeevan Mukti: Some people live in the world even after attaining jnana. They see both what is inside and what is outside the room. The light of God illuminates the world. Therefore, with that light, they can discriminate between good and bad, permanent and impermanent. The ignorant who lead a worldly life without knowing God are like people living in a house with mud walls. With the help of a dim light they can see the inside of the house, but nothing more. Those that live in the world after attaining knowledge and realisation of God are like people living in glass houses. They see the inside of the room and also all that is outside. The light from the sun of knowledge enters strongly into the room. They perceive everything inside the room very clearly. They know what is good and what is bad; God alone is the doer and we are all his instruments. Therefore it is impossible for a jnani to be egoistic.

The work of Jeevan Mukta: Just as a lion rushes out of the cage, the Jeevanmukta breaks through the fetters of attachment and rushes out of the prison house of the world. The Jeevanmukta by his life and actions demonstrates the reality of Brahman and fantasy of names and forms. Having himself crossed the ocean of births and deaths, he helps others to the shore of immortality. Though he possesses the body, he does not identify himself with the body and is therefore free from desires, work and fears. He is aware of

the spirit and is convinced that the "Gunas" engage his body in various works. He feels through all heads, walks with all feet, eats through all mouths and thinks through all minds. Physical death and birth have no meaning for him; a change of body to him is like a change of garment or a change of residence. A Jeevanmukta transcends the scriptures and social conventions and yet never takes a false step. As a piece of wood is borne by a current to high or low ground, so is the body of a Jeevanmukhta carried by the momentum of past actions to the varied experiences of their fruits as they present themselves in due course. He is not concerned with bondage or liberation, for the spirit is ever free. The bondage and liberation are the character of the mind which is falsely superimposed on the spirit. It is therefore said: "He who sees nothing in the waking state even as in deep sleep, who though beholding duality does not in reality behold it, since he beholds only the Absolute, who though engaged in work is really inactive, he and no other is the knower of Self. This is the truth." The Upanishads declare that the Jeevanmukta comes out of the body purer and brighter like a snake from its slough. His soul does not reincarnate again, but is absorbed in the spirit, leaving behind no trace of separate existence. As milk is poured into water, as oil is poured into oil, so the Jeevanmukta is absorbed in Brahman, in glory, peace, knowledge and reality.

Jeevanmukti and Videhamukti: It is the nature of man's mind to enslave him through its tendency to cause suffering owing to the pleasures and pains. This is due to the belief that he is the author of his actions and the harvester of their results. Jeevanmukti or liberation, while still in the body, is the cessation of mental qualities. This is

followed by Videhamukti or liberation without the body on the exhaustion of "Prarabdha Karma." This is like space inside a jar becoming one with the space outside it, when the jar breaks.

The human goal is the attainment of the everlasting bliss through the elimination of the thought that one is the author of one's actions. This, the Guru says, can be achieved by human effort. Right understanding alone helps liberation like wealth which is earned by commerce. Right understanding is dependent on human effort. It is to be achieved by the abolition of all vasanas or tendencies, by serving the Guru.

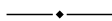
"The rise of mind is the man's fall and the fall of the mind is the man's rise. The fall of the mind brings the state of complete peace and benevolence. That is the state of Jeevanmukti, which is free from all possibility of rebirth. 'Sarupa' is the mindlessness of Jeevanmukta. The 'Arupa' kind arises after the body falls away."

The mind is the root of the world tree with its thousands of buds, branches, fruits and leaves. Intentions (Sankalpa) constitute the mind and the mind constitutes the intentions and is the root of the world tree.

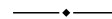
It is therefore necessary to wither the mind quickly in order that the world tree may also wither away.

The mind is to be stilled by performing activities without attachment, by not ascribing reality to the worldly affairs, by appreciating the perishability of the body. This prevents vasanas from arising and prevention of vasanas annuls the mind. It is better to turn one's energy to search for the light within. It is the vasanas that provoke the movements

of the life breath and these in turn provoke the vasanas. Thus the seed in the mind is produced and again produces, as in plants. The mind has two seeds, breathing and vasanas. When one of them ceases, so does the other. Just as the eye falls without attachment on things that come involuntarily within its range, so does a valiant person behold things and do actions.



26
UPADESA



Every individual is bound by his Karma in the Universe of names and forms. By his deeds in his past lives, he is sometimes happy and sometimes unhappy.

We are slaves to our senses, slaves of our wives and children, slaves of praise and slaves of this and slaves of that. This wretched slavery will never end. The disease of illusion has caught hold of the Jiva from time immemorial. The disease of Moha (illusion) can only be destroyed (Kshaya) by the application of the dust of the two lotus feet of the Sat-Guru and by accepting the Upadesa given by the Sat-Guru. Even the Doctor needs the confidence and the faith of the patients before he can cure them and restore them to health. The disease of diseases is the illness in us, and will not the Doctor of Doctors, the Sat-Guru, expect from us our faith and confidence in His Upadesa, if we expect Him to cure us and lead us to Moksha?

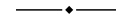
The God-realised person knows himself to be God as an ordinary man knows himself to be a man. His spiritual certainty based upon continuous self-knowledge is incapable of being challenged by any one or by anything. The Sat-Guru is the one who has passed through the network of the creator and creation, in knowing Himself as the Almighty. He is in a perfect wakeful state. All that is noble, beautiful and lovely, all that is great and good and inspiring in the universe, is just a small fraction of the unfading and unspeakable glory of

the God-man. The Sat-Gurus take an active interest in the souls which are in bondage and they use their own bodies consciously for working in the creation in order to help their disciples in their Godward march.

If a disciple accepts without reservations from the bounty which the God-man shows, he creates a link which will stand by him and he attains salvation. Further, if an individual serves such a Sat-Guru, offering his life and possessions in His service, he creates a link which will reinforce his spiritual progress by inviting upon himself the grace and help of the Guru. Upadesa is a special word which has no exact English translation. It means guidance or instruction which a God-man gives to his disciple. The instruction depends upon the temperament and spiritual maturity of the individual. There can be no mass instruction. The Sat-Guru initiates and instructs the disciple into the path which He Himself has realised. God, Guru and Self are the same. To be a Guru is to give initiation and Upadesa. Diksha means initiation and Upadesa means instruction and the two are inseparable. There can be no Upadesa without the initial act of initiation and no point in initiation unless it is to be followed up with Upadesa. There are three kinds of initiation i.e. by touch, by look and by thought. The three modes of initiation are well-known, being typified by the bird which has to sit on the eggs in order to hatch them; by fish which needs only to look at them and the tortoise which needs only to think of them.

He who has won the Grace of the Guru shall undoubtedly be saved and never forsaken, just as the prey that has fallen into the tiger's jaws will never be allowed to escape. Association with saints and God-men works a subtle alchemy

even though its effects might only become visible years later. In this spiritually dark age, when many seek, but a Guru is rare to find, Bhagavan Himself takes a human body on earth as the Sat-Guru, the Divine guide of all who turn to Him.



PANCHAKSHARI VIDYA

The previous article on Upadesa contains a brief description of the work of Sat Guru with reference to the modes of initiation and instruction to the disciple. The Upadesa containing the whole Mantra and the instruction of the Guru to meditate on the meaning of the Mantra forms a Vidya usually named after the Mantra.

The Panchakshari Vidya consisting of a garland of five letters strung on the endless string of OM is one of the most powerful Mantras for self-realisation. The Mantra

"OM NA-MA-SI-VA-YA

OM SI-VA-YA-NA-MA

OM SI-VA-YA-SI-VA

OM SI-VA-SI-VA."

is full of mystic experience and is therefore a symbolic entity containing great wisdom and spiritual truth. The truth is broadly indicated but the technique to achieve and arrive at it is always left to be taught by the tradition of Guru and disciple. The Panchakshari Vidya is therefore a secret technique of meditation on the five great elements, namely Earth-Water-Fire-Air-Ether and is represented by the five letters making up the Panchakshara. The five elements which are found in the Universe are also found in the body of the disciple. NA stands for the two feet, MA stands for

the stomach, SI stands for the two shoulders, VA stands for the mouth and YA stands for the two eyes. The disciple in meditation has to identify the letters with the five limbs of the body thus realizing that he himself is the embodiment of the Mantra.

The letters of the second line of the Mantra SI-VA-YA NA-MA respectively stand for the five centres of the senses of smell, taste, form, sound and touch. The disciple has to practise equanimity at all times when sense organs come in contact with the sense objects during meditation.

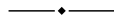
The Mind, Intellect and the Ego together with the five elements constitute what is termed as "Eightfold Prakriti" that has come to be superimposed on the Truth through ignorance. The subtle body of the disciple is made up of the Mind, Intellect and Ego corresponding to the third line of the Mantra "SI-VA-YA-SI-VA" and its vehicles of expression are the five sense organs. The five sense objects consisting of smell, taste, form, sound and touch push their impulses within through the gateways of sense organs and their impulses get focussed on the mind. The impulses received in the mind are rationally classified into knowledge by the intellect. In all the states of perception, attention and intellection, the disciple has a continuous sense of "I-ness", which is called the Ego.

The spiritual factor OM is the pure consciousness with whose contact the mind (Anthakarana) of the disciple functions and without it the disciple becomes dull and insentient. This principle is the higher nature of the disciple and is indicated in the fourth line of the Mantra "OM-SIVA-SIVA". The higher nature or Sivatatva is unfolded in the

bosom of the disciple by the Panchakshari Vidya.

The essential condition for the Panchakshari Vidya is that the disciple should possess unwavering devotion and faith in the Guru. In modern times, we are all asked to think before we leap, but the traditional relation between the Guru and disciple admits no such preference. Here the Guru is the sole director and the supreme arbitrator. But, one need not be discouraged by one's inability to repose the faith in the Guru. The mystical experiences in the Vidya will make the disciple reassured and the faith in the Guru is not shaken as one proceeds in the Vidya.

The fruit of the Vidya is Self-knowledge, by knowing which everything else is known. Blessed indeed are those who have supreme faith in the Guru for their's is the kingdom of Sat-Chit-Ananda, the abode of Siva.



THE EFFICACY OF SRI RAMA NAMA



The power of Rama Nama is immense and indescribable. Its sweetness is unparalleled. Once a person gets to taste the elixir of Rama Nama, he will not let go of it. He becomes attuned to heavenly life. The grace of the Almighty is absolutely necessary for one to even utter it with faith and devotion. Valmiki, the author of the *Ramayana*, is an example to the point. He led a highly evil life before he became the sage *par excellence*. Though born in a high caste, he married a low caste woman and took to hunting and robbing to maintain his family. He was steeped in heinous crime.

The time came for his redemption. The grace of the Lord fell on him. It took the combined spiritual strength of the holy Saptharishis to free him from his sinful life of rampage and robbery. They came headed by Narada. They were attacked by Valmiki, who demanded that they should give over all their possessions to him. Narada asked him for whom he was committing such atrocious crimes. The man said that he was doing so for the sake of his wife and children. Then the rishi asked him whether his wife and children would bear any share of the sins committed by him for their sake. Valmiki said that he was sure that they would do so.

Narada directed him to find out whether it was so. Imagine the horror that struck Valmiki when he found out that they refused to subscribe to the dictum that they should bear

their share of the sins done by him. He was shocked beyond description. He raced back to the Saptharishis, freed them from the bonds with which he had tied them securely and fell at their feet. He prayed for their mercy and for the way out from the boiling cauldron of evil into which he had fallen. Narada then tried to make him utter the divine name Rama. Valmiki tried to do so. But no! All his efforts in that direction were in vain. The two potent letters would not combine in the proper way. Then the great teacher that he was, the Sage Narada tried a unique method. He asked Valmiki to say 'MA' first and then 'RA'. In this manner, he was directed to say 'Ma' and 'Ra' one after another and then in quick succession. Ultimately he could utter the divine name perfectly. The Saptharishis then went their way.

The urge to cut himself away from the miserable bonds of Samsara gave a keen edge to his devotion and Valmiki went on repeating Rama Nama at a place. He was oblivious of what happened around him. He knew not about the outside world. An ant-hill grew over him. His meditation ultimately made him divine, so divine that he later became the renowned author of *Ramayana*, the sacred story of the incarnation of Rama.

Ramanama is *Haribaraathmaka*. It destroys the sins of a person and will not allow him to think of sinning. The person who utters it cannot swerve from the path of virtue. It is called the *Taraka Mantra*. It pilots one safely over the ocean of Samsara leading him on to self-realisation. That it is Hariharaathmaka is the divine truth. The great singer-saint, Sri Thyagaraja, sings: "Oh Blessed king of men! How to divine who you are? How to do worship to you? Are you

Siva, Vishnu, Brahma or Parabrahma? 'MA' is the vital life-giving seed-letter to Siva Mantra. 'RA' is the vital force of the Vishnu Mantra. I make my salutations to those eminent people that have this true knowledge."

Without the letter 'MA', 'Namasivaaya' becomes 'Nasi-vaaya' which denies 'Siva'. Without the letter 'RA', 'Namo Naraayanaaya' becomes 'Namo Naayanaaya' denying any place for the existence of the Lord Narayana. The combination of these two letters i.e. Rama, destroys evil like Rudra and protects like Vishnu. The very same truth is put forward when the Tamilian says: *Harium Sivanum onnethan, Ariyaadavan vayil manne thaan*—'Hari and Hara are one and the same divinity. One who does not comprehend this is as one whose 'mouth is filled with dust.' He has no prospects. The Upanishad *Vaakya: Ekam Sath; Vipra Babudha Vadanthi* postulated the identical fact. God is one but the sages call Him by different names.

Rama mantra is *Sathrucchedaika mantram*. It is the unique mantra that has the power to annihilate all enemies—not merely external enemies but the internal ones too, namely, the Arishadvargas of *Kama, Krodha, Lobha, Moha, Mada* and *Maatsarya*. The lives of the saints like Kabir, Tulsidas, Thyagaraja and others illustrate how the evil-doers planning to make trouble and mischief for them are dealt with by Lord Rama.

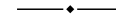
Once, certain evil-doers wanted to embarrass Kabir and put him to shame by issuing invitations under his name to Bhagavathas of various places to come over and partake of his hospitality. Accordingly, many Sadhus came there. Kabir was in ecstasy seeing Rama among them. He danced away

in delight. The Lord came to his help. He appeared as so many Kabirs to each of the devotees, satisfied them and disappeared without anyone being the wiser about it. The evil men who engineered the situation were converted as a result and, being awed by Kabir's divine power, surrendered unto him and became his disciples.

Again, at one time, two thieves desired to enter the math of Tulsidas in the night and take away the golden vessels that were in use there. As they neared the gates, they found two divine heroes, bright and lustrous, guarding the precincts and intimidating them. They tried to turn about and get away but could not. They were in that unenviable position all through the night. When the day broke, Tulsidas came out. They prostrated before him on the ground in supplication. They recounted to the saint as to what had happened. The saint congratulated them on their Punya. They were indeed blessed, for the two armed heroes were none other than Sri Rama and his devoted brother, Lakshmana. The very sight of these divinities had burnt away their sins. Thereupon, the thieves became reformed and attended to Tulsidas.

The divine name of Rama Nama when uttered with supreme devotion gives life even to a dead person, even to an inanimate body. Sri Thyagaraja, while on his return from Tirupati after a pilgrimage in search of his pooja idols, came to a place called *Madhyaarjunam*. There, in the darkness, a couple was walking and the husband fell into a well and died. The wife was weeping bitterly. Thyagaraja's heart melted. He sang the song "Sri Rama Padama! Na chittaniki Rave!" in the Raga "Amrithavahini". At once, the dead man woke up as if from sleep and with the permission of the saint, went to Tirupati with his wife.

These are not fables but actual facts. The power of God can be demonstrated. It is demonstrated in the lives of all saints that have gone before. It is being even now demonstrated by God-men. The only thing is that people refuse to see. Even if they see, they are unaffected. What wonder can there be other than this!



LORD SRI KRISHNA



The Avatar of Sri Krishna is a Sampoornaavatar. He had declared His divinity off and on and was recognised as such by the discerning. He was not like Sri Rama, who had to be reminded of his divinity. He said, *Atmanam Manusham Manye!*—I have regarded myself as an ordinary mortal—when he was asked by Brahma and others why He kept quiet as Mother Seetha entered the flames for Her fiery ordeal to prove Her chastity, and it required Brahma, the Creator to remind Him as to who He was. Not so with Lord Sri Krishna. He said:

*Parithraanaaya sadhoanam, vinaasaayacha dushkeruthaam,
Dharma samsthaapanaarthaaya, sambhavaami yuge yuge!*

—For the protection of the innocent and for the destruction of the vicious as also for the establishment of Dharma, I take birth in every yuga.

Lord Krishna did not hide the fact of His being an incarnation of Lord Vishnu at any time. Ever since His birth, He had given proofs of His being the Lord of the Universe, the *Sath* that is called by many by devious names.

When He was born in the prison cell, where His father Vasudeva and His mother Devaki were confined by the cruel Kamsa, He appeared to them as the brilliant Vishnu with all His ensigns. He told Devaki, "In Swayambhuva Manvantra, this Vasudeva, your husband, was a Prajapati

called Suthapa. You were of the name Prisni. You were both directed by the Creator Brahma to begin procreation. Being averse to sensuality and the material pleasures, you did penance to me for twelve divine years with unswerving devotion and concentration. When I appeared before you, in your desire for progeny, you requested for the grant of a son three times. You wanted me equal as a son. So I took birth as Prasnigarbha. I had to take two more births with you as my parents. In the second janma, you were Aditi and Vasudeva was Kasyapa. I was born as Vamana. This is your third birth and I am fulfilling your boons. There will be no more births for you. I have told you these things so that you can remember your previous births and be guided in your future actions. It is to facilitate your identification of me that I have appeared before you in the form initially seen by you. This Avatar not only fulfils your desires but also carries out Deva karya (the work of the Devas). So Vasudeva! You have to take me to Gokula, place me by the side of Yasoda, who is just delivering a girl who is my Yogamaya and get that baby here. The doors of this prison will not hinder you. They will open of their own accord. The Jamuna will give you way. Do not be afraid." On seeing the blissful vision of the Lord, both Devaki and Vasudeva were transported to heavenly bliss and they prayed to Him after which he assumed the form of an ordinary baby.

Again, He showed His being the Lord of the Universe to Yasoda, His foster-mother, when she upbraided Him for having eaten the dust from the earth. He showed her the worlds within Him. In that momentary glimpse, she perceived the supernatural and became dazed. She questioned herself as to whether she was awake or dreaming;

whether she was really Yasoda or some other body or it was a Vaishnavite illusion. The Lord withdrew His vision and brought her back to the normal plane. She thought He was an unusual phenomenon and forgetting the vision went on as usual. The Lord's intention was that she should enjoy the Vaatsalya bhava to the full, as in her previous birth as Dhara, the wife of Drona, one of the Ashta Vasus, she had a boon from Brahma that they should regard Bhagavan with full Vaatsalya Bhava.

The Krishnaavatara was a Mahimaavatara. The Lord performed many miracles. They had become absolutely necessary at the juncture to provide confidence in Virtue and abhorrence of Vice. It was the time when Kamsa, full of Asuric nature, dethroned his father and occupied the throne of Madhura. He ruled with an iron hand encouraging Vice aided by Jarasandha, his father-in-law, who was very vile and powerful. There was Kalayavana, the Mleccha king, who was vice personified. There was Narakasura. There were still others like Sisupala of Chedi, Salva, Dantravakra, Vidhuradha and the other chieftains of evil fame harassing the people. The people were in mortal fear of them. To dispel this, the Lord had to come in full Amsa.

He performed many miracles. He drank away the life of Pootana, the giantess, killed Sakatasura, ended Trinaavarta and gave back human shape to Nalakoobara and Manigreeva who were trees. He made short work of Vatsaasura, Bakaasura and Aghasura. His miraculous acts made Kamsa afraid. Still he would not give up his attempts to put down Krishna, being under an illusion. It was not surprising. For, even Brahma, the Creator, was deluded into testing the divinity of the Lord. He kidnapped and hid all the cows and cowherd boys thinking

that Krishna would be discomfited. The Lord simply smiled at his folly. He himself took the shape of all the cattle and the cowherd boys without making anyone the wiser about it. This went on for a year. Brahma came down to see how his deed affected Krishna. He was confounded when he found the cows and the cowherd boys in the Brindaavan in the usual place and also in the place where he had hidden them. He could not divine which were the true cows and who were the real cowherds among them. As he stood perplexed and stunned, he found Lord Krishna in His true shape in the pseudo cows and cowherds. Before every Krishna, there was a Brahma and other divinities offering their obeisance, attended upon by all divine powers—the siddhis like Anima, the Mahat etc., the person of the Time spirit and so on. On seeing this ecstatic vision, Brahma lost his senses. He stood transfixed like a statue. All his knowledge of the Vedas was blotted out. All his powers appeared non-existent. His eyes became blurred. His faculties failed to function. Then Lord Krishna, out of infinite compassion, withdrew the vision and appeared before him. Brahma got back his powers, regained his spirits and prayed to Him for His mercy praising His *Vibhuti*. He said, "O Lord I thought my power was supreme. I prided myself upon it. I am taught my position. Kindly forgive me in the largeness of Your heart and bless me." The Lord did so.

That Krishna was Narayana incarnate was also known to Nanda Gopa, His foster-father. The Gopas were overawed by the deeds of Krishna, who had conquered the poisonous Kaleeya, drunk the all-consuming forest fire, held the Govardhan Hill on His little finger to protect them from torrential rains and bewitched them by His beauty and manners. They were bewildered as to whether He

was human or whether He was a mesmerist and magician. Nanda Gopa told them: "It is natural for you to have such a feeling. I will reveal to you what the sage Garga had told me when he came to name the child. He said that Krishna was born in every yuga assuming distinctive colour appropriate to the yuga. He was Narayana. He is Bhagavan born to protect Gokula and the world." The gopas became extremely satisfied and went their way.

Krishna showed His powers only when required. Even though He did so, people like Duryodhana, nay, Arjuna, fell into Sammoha and regarded Him lightly. Duryodhana went to the extent of even attempting to imprison Him when He came as ambassador to his court on behalf of the Pandavas. Then He showed His Vishwaroopa and even granted the wish of Dritharashtra, the father of Duryodhana, giving the necessary sight to witness it. Dritharashtra wished to be blind again as he did not wish to see the mundane things with those eyes spoiling that blissful scene.

Arjuna, who was always by the side of the Lord Himself, failed to perceive His divinity and fell into mental stupor in the battle field. Then the Lord vouchsafed to him the darsan of His Cosmic Form after bestowing upon him, in infinite mercy towards him, the occult eye. Arjuna got rid of his weakness. He fell into great fear and awe. He prayed to the Lord saying: "You are the Creator of the whole Universe and all the divinities. You are the one responsible for everything existent and there is nothing outside of you. I pay my full obeisance to you. Shower Your grace, O Lord! upon me. O Eswara ! I had called you Hai Krishna! Hai Yadava! Hai Sakha! and had even poked fun at you. All this had been done in my ignorance. Please forgive me as a parent forgives his

child, as a friend his friend and as a lover his beloved. I have seen Your Viswaroopa, never witnessed by others before. I am overcome by terror. Please appear to me in benign form. I cannot bear this magnificent sight any longer." The Lord was pleased with him and said, "Being pleased with you, I have shown you by My yogic power my effulgent shape without beginning and without end, which had never been seen by any one. This is a unique vision for you and none else had been able to see it before. Do not be afraid. I am assuming My usual shape."

The Viswaroopa darsana shown to Arjuna was by far superior to that given unto Duryodhana and Yasoda. Yasoda was much too attracted by filial affection and dotage, regarding Him as an ordinary child. To dispel it, He had shown His Cosmic Form in a short glimpse, and then covered her with Maaya. Duryodhana was steeped in Ego and became very proud and headstrong. To curb it, Krishna gave him a glimpse of what He was. But in the case of Arjuna, it was different. Arjuna became perplexed. He did not know his dharma. He was undecided as to what to do. It became the bounden duty of the Lord to put him in the right path by wiping out his ignorance and his egotistic feelings. He prepared Partha first by telling him about the different yogas, about His *vibhuti*, gave him the occult eye to perceive the Cosmic Form to the full, asked him to see it carefully, convinced him, and then on his request withdrew the vision. While the revelation of His divine form to Yasoda and Duryodhana was accidental and on the spur of the moment, the revelation to Arjuna was intentional and made with the firm purpose of convincing him about his duty and finally doing as bidden by the Lord. Besides these, the Lord was

known in His true form to Bhishma, who made Yudhishtira worship Him at the Rajasuya sacrifice.

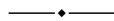
It is evident, therefore, that Lord Krishna was recognised as an incarnation of Parabrahma during His life time and those that opposed Him were suitably dealt with. Narakasura was killed by Him. Kalayavana was turned to ashes through the yogic fire of Muchikunda, who was made the instrument for that purpose by the Lord. Jarasandha was killed by Bhima of the Pandavas. The Kauravas were put an end to with their circle of vile rulers and chieftains through the agency of Arjuna, to whom the Lord told: *Nimitthamaathram Bhava Savyasaachin!*—You are only a tool. These are already killed by the Time spirit. Follow the Kshaatra dharma and do you duty.

By using Arjuna as a medium for the edification of the world, the Lord gave out the *Bhaganadgeetha*, the song celestial which describes His Majesty and gives out the philosophy and way of life in all its perspective, with the recipes for getting over this ocean of Samsara. The Lord said, "Be of My mind; be My devotee; worship Me; salute Me; concentrate on Me." He also said:

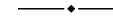
*Ananyaaschintayanlomaam ye janah paryupaasathe,
teshaam nityaabhivyutaanaam yogakshemam vabaamyaham.*

—I will look after all those who worship Me and think of Me with undivided attention.

What more do you want? Let us pray to Lord Krishna who said, "I will appear to all in the way and shape they think of Me."



30
KRIYA YOGA



There are two factors for gaining Self Knowledge. The first one is the *Sadhanaavastha*, as described by Sri Krishna, the Divine Teacher, to his disciple, Arjuna, in the *Gita* of the *Mahabharata* written by Vyasa. The second aspect is the *Siddhaavastha*, as described by Vasista to the divine prince, Sri Rama, in *Yoga Vaasishta* of the *Maharamayana* compiled by Valmiki.

The *Mahabharata* and the *Maharamayana* are the two great epics because they contain the theory and practice of the Vidya for achieving Self Knowledge. Both the epics are significant in the sense that a Guru is inevitable for the disciple, to realise the truth. Both Nara (Man) and Narayana (God) have become the Guru and disciple in turns, which indicates the unique relationship between the Guru and the disciple.

The Sadhana of living an active life of achievement, as described in the **Gita** and simultaneously living a passive life of renunciation and retirement, as described in *Yoga Vaasishta* is called *Kriya Yoga*. "Kri" means work and "Ya" means no work. In other words, the Yoga of seeing work in no work, and no work in work is called *Kriya Yoga*.

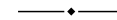
The true meaning of work becomes difficult to understand unless we distinguish it from no work and miswork. By work, we mean a life full of duties consistent with one's status in society and of active achievement. A man is said

to do no work when he leads a life of renunciation and retirement. The word miswork represents that kind of work which is wrongly chosen and performed. Miswork has to be avoided at all costs, as it does not contribute to the evolution of the soul. Therefore, to prevent work from becoming miswork, one has to firstly choose his duties appropriately and secondly do those duties with ability and cleverness. In other words, work means that kind of activity which is rightly chosen and well carried out. Work carried out in this way binds the man to the *Samsara*, but to attain freedom from the bondage, we have to learn to distinguish work from no work also. No work does not mean absence of work or the very opposite of work. The *Yoga Vaasista* describes that under certain given conditions, it is possible to experience work as equivalent to no work and no work equivalent to work. Thus, work and no work are compatible with each other. That truly ethical work which possesses the characteristic of no work and that no work which possesses the characteristic of work, is called *Kriya*, which leads to self realisation and God attainment.

Hence arose the need for the practice of *Kriya Yoga* by combining work and no work in daily life. Indeed, it looks like a riddle when a householder is called upon to see work in no work and no work in work and it naturally requires intelligence to solve the riddle. A *Kriya Yogi* is one who possesses intelligence and is therefore an appropriate doer of all "Work". It is only such a person that can live a life of duty. In *Kriya Yoga*, we find a harmony of work and wisdom, of achievement and renunciation. Work can be converted into no work by abandoning all selfish motives with respect to that work. But the resultant no work is not passive and inert

because it has really active work performed under certain conditions for its equivalent. That condition is the worker's freedom from selfish motives and deserves fruits of those actions and therefore the person is perfectly satisfied. The contentment and freedom do not interfere in his work and achievement. In fact, work will not cling to such a Yogi but help him as a means of liberating the soul from bondage of work leading to salvation.

Kriya Yoga exhorts the man to be a great actor, to be a great renouncer and be a great enjoyer. All said and done, the mind of the disciple has to dwell on the lotus feet of the Guru and has to abide in the spoken word of the Guru for earning the wisdom, to live a life of duty. Otherwise, *Kriya* will bind the aspirant to delusion (*Moha*) again, instead of freeing him from Karma and *Moha* + *Ksbaya* (*Moksha*) will not be experienced by the disciple.



31
OM MURUGA
INVOCATION
—♦—

(Place Invocation here - pg 100 of original)

This is an invocation in Tamil Verse to Sri-La-Sri Pandrimalai Swamigal by Nochchur Swamiji Sri Siva Yogi Siddhananda of Vada Chennimalai, Tamil Nadu (South India).

Sri Siddhanandaji describes Sri-La-Sri Panrimalai Swamigal as possessing a blissful effulgent divine countenance, giving nectarine upadesas, eyes full of compassion, dark complexion, hands like the 'Kalpa' performing Siddhis galore which are the envy of the Gods and lotus feet delineating the divine attributes of conch and chakra—the Great Preceptor enshrined in full form in the hearts of his disciples and devotees who ceaselessly chant the Pranava Panchakshara OM NAMASIVAYA in full-throated praise of the Lord—the remover of the darkness of their ignorance and the bestower of his blessings on them—verily the beloved of Lord Guha (Lord Subramanya)!

—♦—



There is nothing in the world to compare the Guru. The nearest similitude to the Guru may be said to be the touchstone which converts into gold all pieces of iron coming in contact with it. Even the touchstone cannot convert the iron into touchstone and does not impart its own power to the iron piece. The Guru however makes the disciple who has surrendered himself to Him his equal in all respects and sees that the disciple in turn gets the capacity to impart to his own disciples the state of illumination he got from his Guru.

The Guru and Disciple

The oriental concept of "The Guru" and the relationship he has with his chosen disciple is very interesting for observation and analysis. It is not the relationship that exists between the teacher and the student as in western countries. According to the accidental ideas, the master serves as a medium for imparting knowledge of truth which is the final goal. But in India, Truth and Guru are completely identified. There is no truth apart from the Guru, and to know and serve the Guru with whole-hearted devotion is also to serve the cause of truth.

Guru and God

The Vedas and the Puranas say that the Teacher is greater than the Lord; the works of the world are incomplete without the Teacher and the Lord shall never be known and

never be met without first meeting the Teacher. The sages are aware that salvation lies in the house of the Lord and that the Lord resides in the house of the Guru. He who regards God as superior to the Guru is a fool. The Guru is immortal. Godhood is evanescent. Before the greatness of the Guru, the greatness of the Lord is nothing. He must be a bad disciple who regards his Guru and God as of equal count. The power of God is the power of illusion; the power of the Guru carries everything before it.

Guru Bhakthi

The Guru has become the accepted axiom of spiritual progress and as such the relationship he bears with those whom he guides is unique. The road to heaven cannot be seen until the guru's grace paves the way for others to follow. A firm and unfaltering faith in the Guru is the highest *sadhana*. Human relationship is always based on the instinct of possession or appropriation. But the disciple's attitude should be one of voluntarily giving of himself unspoiled by any demands and unrestrained by any spirit of barter. In return the Guru's grace is just as spontaneous and unstinted, in that the Guru takes up the entire burden of the disciple to prepare him in the way He thinks best for a life of perfection.

Submission to the Guru

"The way to perfection is rugged" the Master says, "There are tigers and bears in the route but if one has a guide with him, there is no difficulty. Then, the tigers and bears move aside." If there is no Guru, there is the danger of falling into a deep yawning pit. It is therefore necessary to make the Guru the sole object of one's thoughts and aims to attain Paramatman. Close contact with the Guru ensures

a protection which seems to envelop the disciple like an aura helping and guiding him. Submission to the Guru is necessary. The instances of persons who have, before our times, surrendered to the Guru and who have profited thereby move us to secure the blessings of the Guru. It is said that if the Guru is pleased, all miraculous powers come of their own accord. The stories of Padmapadacharya and Ekalayva who had surrendered to their Guru amply illustrate the necessity of devotion and submission to the Guru.

The Guru Comes

The main test of a teacher in the realm of spirituality is a simple one. He has seen God and can show Him to you. Only Him should we call a Guru who is able to show God directly to our sight. To Him, we should hand over all wealth, mind and body and take from Him the Atma for which we aspire. The real teacher is a rarity but he is not extinct. When the disciple yearns for one, he does come. Such a Guru has the indications that can make him recognizable.

And the Unique Opportunity

Ungratefulness is a sin. One ought not to forget the ordinary help one gets from others in daily life. If such is the case, what shall we say of the one who forgets his Guru who imparts to him the knowledge leading to Moksha? There is no other sin that is equal to the one who forgets the Guru. In all ages, there were persons who deserved the grace of the Lord. In Krita, Treta, Dwapara Yugas, there were many persons who engaged themselves in penances and sacrificial rites and so on and thereby earned the pleasure of the Lord to a very large extent. In the Kali Age, the persons seeking the Grace of the Lord are few and if the Lord were to insist

upon very high standards of qualification for the aspirants, nobody would come or care to know. Even when such a low standard of qualification, viz. submission to the Guru, has been prescribed, what will be His sorrow if nobody seeks Him, the fountain of mercy? It is better to bow to the two feet of the Guru and take the dust of those feet that forms the Holy Ashes which bring about the quietening of the evil spirit of false perception than to remain ignorant and lose the unique opportunity of gaining the grace of the Lord in this very birth.

—♦—

33
THE BASIC TENETS
OF INDIAN CULTURE
—♦—

Indian culture is supreme and gorgeous, pure and pristine like the Himalayas, with its brilliant array of beautiful concepts lighting its path.

It rests securely on the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Gita and the great Epics, the Ramayana, the Mahabharata and the Mahabhagavata.

It is a way of life that is inextricably woven with Godhead animating its very texture.

It is a philosophy that makes it possible for humans to become divine and merge with the Universal Spirit.

It is the path that leads one to the state when he says *Tat Tvam Asi* (That art Thou) and *Aham Brahmaasmi* (I am Brahman).

The summit that one can attain is beautifully summed up in Hanuman's reply to Sri Rama.

Sri Rama asked Hanuman, "Who are you?"

Hanuman reverentially replied:

*Dehabuddhyaatu daasosmi
Jeevabuddhya tu vadamsakab
Aatmabuddhya tu vamevaaba
mitime nischita matib.*

"Viewing from the point of view of the body, I am Your servant; as Jeeva I am part of You; as Atma I am You Yourself—that is my considered opinion."

The basic purpose of life is Self-realisation by permeating oneself with the idea that one's existence in this world is to be of God, for God, through God and by God.

This highest concept of Indian culture has been realised by the great seers of old by strict adherence to its basic tenets which are enunciated in the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Gita and the other sacred texts.

Indian culture rests on the idea that God reigns in man when he prays for the well being of all from the amoeba to the highest animate being. The *Mantra* says:

*Tacchamyo ravrineemabe, gaatum yagnaaya gaatum Yagnapataye;
daiveeswastirastunab, oordhvam jigaatu bbeshajam;
sanno astu dvipade, sam chatushpade! Om Santissantissanthi.*

Prayer is offered for the protection, peace and welfare of all. Prayer is made for the preservation of the *yagna*. the Lord of the *yagna* the Devaas, the humans the bipeds and the quadrupeds.

Indian culture is built on the *yagna* or sacrifice. It is not merely the ritualistic sacrifice but the sacrifice of one's self for the sake of the basic principles that lead to the prosperity and peace of fellow-beings.

It posits the welfare of the Lord of the *yagna* and the Devas. There can be universal peace when people look upon fellow-beings as themselves—nay, even the lowest creatures in the scale of life are to be similarly treated.

The basic tenets of Indian culture are clearly and concisely put forward in Lesson 9 of Chapter 1 of the *Taittiriyaopanisad*. It sings:—

*Ritamcha Svaadhyaaya pravachanecha!
Satyamcha Svaadhyaaya pravachanecha!
Tapascha Svaadhyaaya pravachanecha!
Damascha Svaadhyaaya pravachanecha!
Samascha Svaadhyaaya pravachanecha!
Agnischa Svaadhyaaya pravachanecha!
Agnibotramcha Svaadhyaaya pravachanecha!
Atithayascha Svaadhyaaya pravachanecha!
Maanushamcha Svaadhyaaya pravachanecha!
Prajaaacha Svaadhyaaya pravachanecha!
Prajanascha Svaadhyaaya pravachanecha!
Prajaaatishcha Svaadhyaaya pravachanecha!
Sathyamiti Sathyavachanam Raatitaraha!
Tapa iti Taponityah Paurusishtih!
Svaadhyaaya pravachana Eveti Naaka Maudgalyah!
Taddhi Tapastaddhi tapah!*

The *Anuvaaka* states that the practice of *Rita* or what is right and proper as prescribed by the scriptures and one's own consideration, learning and imparting of the Vedas, *Satya* or truthfulness and sincerity in action, *tapa* or penance meaning religious observances that involve self-denial, self-restraint, being devoid of passions, peace of mind, tending of consecrated fires, offering oblations to the fires daily, morning and evening, sacred fires, offering oblations to bring about human welfare, bringing up a family, procreating at the ordained period of time, performing the marriage of a son leading to the birth of a grandson—all these have

to be first done by one to be eligible to attain self-realisation by means of the power of introspection with a keen desire for liberation.

The sage Rathitara, who never strayed from the path of truth, held out that truthfulness alone is sufficient to lead man to the divine goal. Paururishi, the sage who was constant in performing *tapas* said that devout austerity alone was enough while Naaka of the *vamsa* of Mudgala stressed upon the study of the Vedas and imparting them to others saying that assuredly is *Tapas* and indeed that is *tapas*.

The foregoing gives us a comprehensive picture of the basic tenets of our culture. Even there, there is scope for one to adopt one or the other method for self-realisation.

Indian culture lays the utmost stress on *dharmā*. Everyone should follow his *dharmā*, which begins with his duty to himself, his family and society.

The family is to be reared by him with paternal affection, filial love, fraternal care and marital caressing. Duties are expected of him with respect to the preservation of his family as a unique unit.

As a householder, a person has duties to perform to please the pitrus or his ancestors and the deities. He perpetuates them and feels one with them. He has to go by the *mantra* which says. *Maatru devobhava! Pitru-devobhava! Aachaarya devobhava! Atithi devobhava!*

The mother is to be regarded on par with God as she gives birth to the person and rears him up. The father has to be worshipped as God as he gives the physical body and maintains him. The Acharya or the preceptor is to be

regarded as God as he gives spiritual birth to him leading him to the path of the knowledge of the divine and making him attain godhead. The *atithi* or the guest is Naaraayana Himself and he is to be catered to.

The attributes to be developed in one are very finely described by *Dharmaraja*, the eldest of the Paandavas, in the following words:

*Sathyam maataa pitaa Gnanam
Dharmam bhraata Dayaa sakhaa
Saantih patnee Kshmaa putraa
shadete mama baandhavaah!*

"Truth is my mother, knowledge or Gnana is my father, Dayaa or kindness is my friend, peace is my wife and mercy is my son. These six qualities are my relatives."

That is, these six qualities are the *sine qua non* of Indian culture, of which Dharmaraja is a true manifestation.

Apart from this, the code of conduct to be followed by every individual is reflected in how Nakula, the brother of Dharmaraja, felt. He observes:

*Maatruvat paradaaraanscha
Paradravyaani loshtavat
Aatmanatsarvabhootani
Yahpasyati Sapasyati.*

"One who regards the wives of others as his mother, who looks upon money belonging to others as balls of earth and who treats all other beings as he treats his own self is indeed the real seer. He becomes the knower of Brahman."

Indian culture lays the greatest emphasis on the sacredness

of the marriage tie. The wife is the *Sabadharmachaarini*. She is the co-partner in all the rites and actions performed by her husband. Their tie is eternal and unbreakable. Chastity is a *must* in the life of a woman. Our culture is embedded in that idea. Sita, Savitri, Anasuya and other peerless ladies of virtue typify our glorious culture. *Kula* and *gotra* have to be kept pure. *Streeshu dushtaasu Vaashneya Jaayate Varnasamkaraha!* If the women are fallen, the Varna becomes adulterated and hybrids result, leading to the destruction of the essential purity of family life.

The *Upanishads* give the necessary rituals for looking after the soul from conception to conception dealing with the life before, during and after.

The *Ramayana* holds forth the ideal man and the ideal woman, the ideal mother, the ideal brother, the ideal friend and the ideal follower that invigorate Indian culture. It invigorates the truth:

*Yaanti Nyaayapravrittasya
Tiryamchopi Sahaayataam
Apanthananthu gacchantaam
Sodaropi vimunchati*

"Even animals help one who follows the path of Dharma while even the brother leaves one who pursues the unrighteous path."

The *Bhagavata* puts forward the most potent aspect of Indian culture where the devotee of the Lord is extolled, where unflinching faith and devotion to the Lord is shown to be the path for self-realisation. The Bhakta may be of whatever caste, of whatever lineage and of whatever

literary level. His wholehearted concentration on the Lord redeems him and fulfils his obligations to the Devas, the *pitris* and the *rishis*.

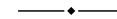
*Narada Bhakti Sutras say:
Modanti pitarau, Nrityanti Devataaha,
Sanaathacheyam Bhoorbhavati! (71st Sutra).*

The Pitaras are elated when they find their descendant to be an ardent devotee of the Lord; for him the Devas dance with joy and by his being on earth. Mother earth becomes safe.

There is no need for further amplification of this sutra as the lives of our seers and great men illustrate it.

To sum up, *Satyam Vada, Dharmam Chara* (Speak the Truth; follow Dharma) form the two glistening eyes of our radiant culture forming the all-embracing tenets of our lives.

Unfortunately at the present juncture, *Satyam Vadha, Adharmam chara* (Kill the Truth; follow Adharma) has become the motto of the present day world and hence all the misery and travail!



34
ATMA VIDYA
(SELF-KNOWLEDGE)
—•—

Vidya or knowledge, as it is generally understood, is the knowledge arising from the world experience. It is based on the knowledge of objects gained through the senses and is called "sense knowledge" or relative knowledge. There is knowledge which is eternal or absolute and is called another "self-knowledge" or knowledge of the Atman. Therefore, it is necessary to inquire into the nature of *jiva*, *jagat* and goal of *life* as below:—

- 1) Who is Jiva or individual soul ?
- 2) How does the Jiva come into existence? And
- 3) What is the ultimate destination or what is it that the Jiva has to realise in life?

In the *Gita*, the Divine Teacher Sri Krishna says, "the individual soul is but a part of Me". It is meant that He, the individual soul, has been in existence from time immemorial. The *Upanishads* describe the individual lives coming out from the Supreme Self, like sparks from a fire. Coming as they do from the great fire, the sparks (individual souls) bear the heat and lustre (*chaitanya* or the capacity to know). As the sparks move farther and farther away from the parent fire they lose their heat and lustre. Similarly, the individual souls lose their godliness as they move away from the *Paramatman*. Here then lies the cause for the unhappiness arising out of the turning

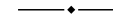
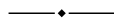
away from God, which in other words is called Samsara. The spark when it goes farther away from the fire ultimately ends up as a piece of dark charcoal. The penance of joy of the individual souls becomes shrouded in ignorance by their turning away from God. Again, just as the spark from the fire which, when it travels back to fire regains its lustre and heat, so also the individual soul when it abides in the Atman or self, regains omniscience.

Man desires to possess that which he likes most. But the mundane things are liable to be disliked when they become unpleasant. Even the food that is liked most turns out to be harmful due to one's ill-health. The only thing that is lovable at all times is the *Atman* in us. The *Atman* is not an external phenomenon or thing. It is lovable for its own sake as it is without association and is therefore called "*Priyatman*". It is also called "*Pratyak*", that which is inside. By this statement, it does not mean that *Atman* is within us as in the sense the milk is in a vessel. The *Atman* is a separate entity and is a living and driving force standing apart from the body. Yet, it can be known by the mind. The inner consciousness is one and one only. But, at times it is known by its four functions such as mind, intellect, consciousness and conceit. These are like the vehicles of transport that carry us. They may be either owned by us or hired. Similarly, the instruments that help us attain knowledge of the self are either acquired by us in the previous birth or they may be acquired in this birth by performing virtuous actions and leading our lives in accordance with the ways and means prescribed to us either by scriptures or by a Guru. The *Atman* is lovable by one and all. We must try to know the *Self Atman* because it is the highest object of love. The *Atman* has neither birth nor

death, which are the qualities of the body. The root cause of all sorrows is our ignorance of *Atman*— the pure substance.

To acquire self-knowledge, the advice and guidance of a Sat-Guru is essential. The advice and the grace of the Teacher make the sun of true knowledge and dispel the darkness of ignorance in us. But people do not believe in this great truth in spite of their daily experience. Though the sun is of enormous size, we see it as a small object and consider it so, in spite of our scientific knowledge that it is a very big one. In the same way, masked by ignorance, the true nature of *self* is not realised in spite of our being endowed with intelligence and subtle thought, the deluding potency of *Maya* which makes the impossible possible makes us identify the *Atman* with the body and mind. This is because we have not realised the *Atman* in actual practice. The blessings of the Guru and the sages are the best means to realise the *Atman*. We must be blessed with their Grace.

OM— TAT—SAT



In the last article on "ATMA VIDYA", the need to realise the *Atman* was stressed and the *Atman* was described as the eternal knowledge by knowing which man attains everlasting peace in this very birth. The knower of *Atman* becomes the *Jivan Mukta*. The knowledge of *Atman* leading to bliss consciousness is dealt with in the present article which covers an enquiry into the five Koshas or sheaths in which the *Atman* appears to be encased in the body.

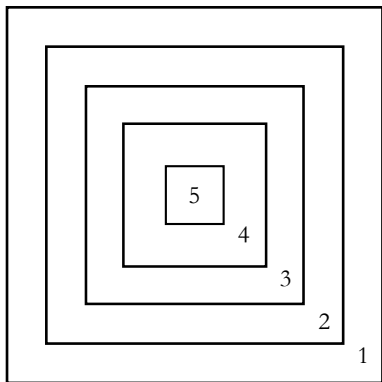
The life period of a man may be broadly divided into five stages.

- 1) *Childhood*: (1 to 10 years): The period is prominent in physical growth. There is a great desire for food.
- 2) *Boyhood*: (10 to 20 years): The period covers Physical activity and exercise that demands attention.
- 3) *Youth*: (20 to 40 years): The period is covered with full play of mental activity and the mind desires to entertain likes and dislikes.
- 4) *Middle Age*: (40 to 60 years): Yoga or desire to know God comes generally at this age. The intellect desires to know the truth during middle age.
- 5) *Old Age*: (60 to 80 years): The old age is said to begin when the body, mind and intellect seek rest and peace.

The five different periods of life indicate the five predo-

minant characteristics of the period viz., food, prana, desire, knowledge and peace. However the five characteristics do exist in all the five stages of life, though each one finds its accentuated expression in a particular stage. Thus the human personality can be considered as being clothed in five coatings of these individual predominant characteristics which are present in every human being. These coatings are known as *Koshas* or sheaths or attributes (see figure).

The five sheaths are experienced by one and all. The five sheaths are in full play during the waking state. The sheaths from *Pranamaya* to *Anandamaya* are active in the dream state and the *Anandamaya* sheath alone is active in dreamless sleep. The *Annamaya* Kosha is less subtle than the *Pranamaya* and the *Anandamaya* Kosha is the most subtle of all koshas and the intermediate koshas are located in the order of subtlety. They are:-



- 1) *Annamaya* or the Food Sheath.
- 2) *Pranamaya* or the Vital Sheath.
- 3) *Manomaya* or the Mental Sheath.
- 4) *Vignanamaya* or the Knowledge Sheath.
- 5) *Anandamaya* or Bliss Sheath.

There is a spring of perennial joy in the heart of every living being and it is called *self* or *Atman*. The joy seeks expression in two ways. The expression of joy that is expressed or manifested through the five koshas is called the *relative good* and the expression of joy transcending the five sheaths is called the *Absolute good*. The *relative good* experienced in the *Annamaya* sheath is known as health, in the *Vital* sheath as strength, in the *Manomaya* sheath as comfort, in the *Vignanamaya* sheath as knowledge and in *Anandamaya* kosha as peace. The joy experienced in *Samadhi* is beyond all understanding and is the joy of the *Atman* which is the *Absolute good*. The joy of *Brahman* gets various names in world experience due to the various attributes just as the atmospheric air becomes breeze, wind, whirlpool, storm, tornado etc. by virtue of limiting boundaries and particular movements which define them for the time being.

It is therefore seen that each one of the limited joys admits to an infinite variety of joy and that each variety of joy admits to an infinite grade and intensity of that joy. Those who seek the *relative good* have to perform *Karma* or desired activities. The *Vedas* are full of such activities for all types of people seeking *relative good*. But the *Vedanta* deals with the *Absolute good* for the attainment of unlimited joy.

Man has to return to his Master, *the Absolute*, from whom he has come and with whom he can find life everlasting. The realisation of the *Absolute good* can be accomplished only with perfected attributes or sheaths and that the perfection of the sheaths is feasible only on this earth, for which repeated births are quite essential. The five attributes beginning from *Annamaya Kosha* upto *Anandamaya Kosha* are to be purified by practising *Shama, Dama, Uparati, Titiksha* and *Shraddha* respectively.

The result of the *Sadhana* leads to *samadhana* and *Samadhi*. The word *Samadhi* is used here for the separation of the soul from the five sheaths that leads to the identification of the soul with *Brahman*.

36
DIWALI AND
ITS SIGNIFICANCE

The festival of Diwali or Deepavali (row of lights) is of great spiritual significance. It signifies the emergence of the Soul from out of the Darkness of Avidya to the Light of Vidya or Awakening. It underlines the exhortation: *Tamasoma Jyotirgamaya: Asatoma Satgamaya: Mrityorma Amritamgamaya*— Emerge into the Light of Awakening or Vidya from the Darkness of Ignorance or Avidya; emerge into Being from Non-Being; come out from Death into Deathlessness.

It marks the annihilation of the arrogant Ego which becomes punctuated with lust for power and becomes tricked into denying God and the Godly.

Narakasura

Naraka was an Asura or giant who regarded himself as being all-powerful. He conquered the Devas, put their women in prison, took away the luminous earrings of Aditi, the Mother of Gods, appropriated Varunacchatra for himself and proclaimed himself as the overlord of all the worlds. He ordered that whatever was unique, noteworthy and beautiful should be delivered unto him. According to his instructions, his minions brought sixteen thousand Princesses of ravishing beauty, the pretty bewitching Yaksha ladies and those of the Kinnaras and the Vidyadharas. They were all kept in prison. He posted at the borders his sentinels, four in number, namely, the Asura with five heads,

Mura, Hayagriva, Nisumbha and Panchajana, all giants of huge stature and invincible valour and strength, to arrest the entry of any interloper.

He witnessed a Yajna being performed by the saints and hermits resident in Badari Vana. The thought went into his mind that they should perform all sacrifices in his name, invoking him as the All-Giver.

He thought that he should be the Yajnapati. The Rishis were amused when he asked them to do the sacrifices in his name as the Yajneswara. They ignored him and when he persisted, they ridiculed him. He took umbrage at it, spoiled their sacrifices and announced by decree that all Yajnas should be thereafter in his honour as he was the Yajneswara. He ordered that all the oblations in sacrifices should only be intended for him. This act paved the way for his destruction.

The celebrated Rishis came over to Lord Sri Krishna and poured out their tale of woe. So also did Indra, the Lord of Heaven. This made Sri Krishna vow to kill the giant and establish the Rule of Dharma. He was accompanied by His wife, Sathyabhama, who wanted to witness the military prowess of the Lord.

He reached Pragjyotisha and broke the citadels round the city. He blew his Conch, the Panchajanya, that struck terror into the hearts of his enemies. The giant Mura's five heads were cut off by the Lord's whirling Disc. All the sentinels of Naraka were killed. This terrified Naraka who had no other option but to face the Lord. He did so. On seeing Him, Sathyabhama wanted to give respite to the Lord and herself do battle with Naraka. The giant was thunderstruck at the heroic stand of the Consort of the Lord and he was at

the end of his tether. Then Lord Krishna took the field and killed the giant.

Having been afraid of Narakasura, the people did not even illuminate their abodes while he lived. Now that they were freed from this fear which held them as in a vice, they lit their lamps and brightened their households with brilliant lights.

Mother's Boon

Naraka at the time of death perceived Sathyabhama to be the incarnation of Mother Earth and he prayed to her for her forgiveness and requested her to give him the boon that his life should be an abject reminder to the vicious to beware, and he should be perpetuated for all time to come in this connection. The Mother granted his request and so is it that Naraka's debacle is celebrated as the Festival of Deepavali or Emergence into Light.

The earrings of Aditi, the Varunacchatra and all the treasures were restored to the rightful owners.

Mother Earth pleaded for mercy to be shown to Bhagadatta, son of Naraka, who was thereupon made the ruler of Pragjyotisha. The Lord was garlanded with the Vaijayanthimala. He released all the ladies and Princesses to be sent to their homes. As the sixteen thousand princesses would not leave him, the Lord sent them to Dwaraka.

Significance

This episode signifies the victory of Virtue over Vice, through intense devotion to the Lord. The Ego becomes clouded and tarnished with the four qualities of *Kama*, *Krodha*, *Lobha* and *Moha* and loses its pristine purity. The four are represented by the four Asuras who were kept as sentinels

against virtue by Naraka. The Tamas or darkness is caused by the five senses or the Panchendriyas, which formed the five heads of Mura. When given free play the Panchendriyas ruin our wisdom and perception of Godliness and make us prey to Mura, leading to bondage under Asuric nature. The transient nature of things (the *Asath*) is forgotten and the Truth or *Sath* that is Brahman is not comprehended and realised. The ultimate result is the cycle of deaths without *Amritatva* or Eternal Life. To get over this, a supreme effort has to be made, through abject surrender to the Lord. This awakening is signified in the life of Naraka where the Lord and his Sahadharmacharini combined to kill him to stop his ravages. A person should, therefore, along with his wife follow the injunctions laid in the Shastras. They should lead chaste lives and get illuminated by the Divine Light which will enter into them as a consequence.

Vratas

The Festival of Diwali as the Festival of Awakening is also significant as the culmination of a *Vrata* performed by the Divine Mother Gowri from Ashtami (eighth day) of the bright part of the month of Bhadrapada to Amavasya (fifteenth day) of the dark part of the succeeding month to attain her abode in the Lord, which she had forfeited due to conceit on account of Avidya clouding her perception. Even Divine nature is apt to be polluted at the height of its divinity if there is no humility and consciousness of nothingness before the Lord, who is the only Omniscient, Omnipotent and Omnipresent Power. *The Vrata* is called *Kedareswara Vrata*.

The circumstances under which it was performed would reveal to one the mischief that is wrought by Avidya or

darkness. Once there was a divine conclave on Mount Kailas, the abode of Lord Maheswara who held court. Mother Gowri was beside Him. Rambha, the celestial damsel, executed a unique and out of the world dance movement to the greatest delight of all present. Then, one Bhrunguriti, an ardent devotee of the Lord, exhibited an equally exquisite dance movement contributing to the highest exhilaration and hilarity of all, leading to the Lord admiring his perfection in the dance. This pleased the bhaktha. He performed *pradakshina* by going round the Lord, excluding the Divine Mother. The Devi asked Maheswara to tell her why Bhrunguriti excluded her in his *pradakshina*. The Lord told her that Yogins and Seekers after the Ultimate Truth do not feel the impelling necessity to propitiate her and seek her help. This roused the ire of Gowri, who withdrew from the Lord's body whose half portion was her auspicious abode. As a consequence, she became afflicted and could not shine as before. She felt desolate and inconsolable. The Devas tried to console her. She left Kailas and went to the ashram of Gautama. She wanted to perform tapas or meditation to regain her former position in the Lord, which she had lost by her Avidya. Rishi Gautama felt her divine presence and asked her as to why she had graced his ashram. She fell at his feet, recounted her tale of woe and prayed to be vouchsafed a course which would regain for her the Lord's Grace and her original power. She wanted to get back her lost position in the Lord's body and her pre-eminence as the Lord's Counterpart. Rishi Gautama instructed her to perform the *Vrata* from Sukla Ashtami of Bhadrapada till Amavasya of the succeeding month and appease the Lord Maheswara, who would surely grant her request. He acquainted her with the

modus operandi of the *Vrata*. The Devi did so and on Diwali the Lord appeared before her, dispelled her gloom, gave her enlightenment, made her realise the *Sath* and restored her to her original and eternal ambrosial residence in Him.

The festival is thus significant to one and all. One should realise the futility of vice and of denying Godhood and the danger lying in becoming slaves to senses. One should get enlightenment by absolute surrender to the Lord and realise one's nothingness before the Supreme and attain oneness with the Lord by seeking the help of Satgurus, even as Mother Gowri had done with Rishi Gautama's succour. Let everyone therefore pray on this day of the Festival of Lights for the Divine Light being ever present in his or her consciousness giving Eternal Bliss.

The article on *Panchakosha Viveka* described in brief the five-*Koshas* or the attributes of the *Jiva* or the soul. The human body is made up of the causal body consisting of the *Anandamaya Kosha* which is experienced in deep sleep. The subtle body consisting of the *Vignanamaya* (Manasic), *Manomaya* (Astral) and the *Pranamaya* (Etheric *kosha*) is invisible and is experienced in dream state. The physical body consisting of the food sheath is the gross body of man and is experienced in waking state. All the five sheaths are active in the waking state, the causal and the subtle bodies are active in dream state and the causal body alone exists in the deep sleep state.

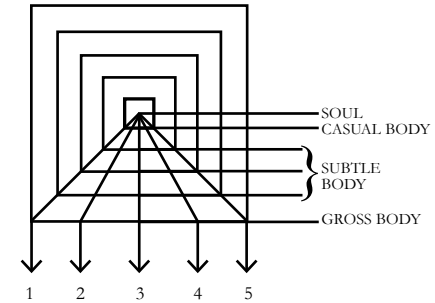
The spirit is immanent and is transcendental. The spirit which is immanent in the body is called the soul and the universal spirit which is transcendental is the oversoul or God. The spirit sheathed in the invisible *Anandamaya kosha* is the soul of man and becomes individualised due to *Avidya* or ignorance. The individual soul takes further sheaths ending with gross physical body. The soul has to take a silent probation with its exercising body consisting of various attributes or *Koshas* till all the attributes are perfected and the soul gets merged in the universal from where it started its career.

The soul and the spirit are both permanent. The faculties of consciousness will abide in the soul in spite of the fact

that the faculties are operated through the agency of the vehicles or bodies as could be proved by our experience of the three states of existence (viz. waking, dream and sleep states). Further, the three bodies consisting of the five *koshas* are similar to the nervous organisation of the physical body which receives the sense impressions from the visible worlds. The sense impressions are carried to the brain through the nervous system. The brain automatically registers all the impressions but does not reflect back into physical consciousness all the impressions. There is therefore the discriminating faculty, called "will" that controls the brain. The "will" of man is in his soul to which the will belongs.

There is thus a constant process of action and reaction through the mechanism of the invisible bodies of man since the soul has to send back its instructions to the physical brain through its channels consisting of the invisible bodies. This is similar to the physical perception of external objects in which the brain and the nervous system work and other physical organs of man are interconnected in the external perception. The sense impression has to travel through the invisible bodies and return back to the brain by the soul which is encased in them. The soul does this work by exercising its will. The gross body contains the nervous channels and the invisible bodies are the corresponding channels working for the world experience.

The invisible bodies constitute the mind, which in the ultimate analysis is only consciousness residing in the soul. The consciousness has to work through the brain to be aware of any sense perception received from the visible and invisible worlds. (See *figure*).



The result is *Paroksha Gnana* or knowledge arising out of the world experience. There is the other *Gnana* called *Aparoksha Gnana* where the spiritual perception is made possible and allowed to descend into the physical brain without distortion to physical consciousness as in the case of God-realised persons. This is possible for every individual by virtue of the possession of the precious equipment viz. the human body and the various faculties connected with it.



SRI VENKATESHWARA VAIBHAVA

Sri Venkateswara, or Sri Baalaaji as He is referred to in the North, is the Lord of lords, powerfully manifest in the holy hill of Tirumalai near Tirupati. The hill is also known as Sri Venkataachala.

*Sarva Devaatmako Vishnub Venkataachala Naayakah
Kalousa eva samsevyah Sripatib Purusbottamah.*

In this Age of Kali, it is only Vishnu, Lord of Venkata Hill, who is all-embracing of all the divinities that are to be worshipped, He being the Lord of Lakshmi and the Supreme Being.

On the banks of the Jaahnavi, a sacrifice was to be performed. The *rishis* were debating as to whom the offerings should be made to, as the Lord of Yajna. They should decide on *that* deity among the Trimoortis who could give *moksha* or salvation.

They did not, however, have the guts to test the three Gods, Vishnu, Brahma and Maheswara.

But the sage Bhrigu, however, volunteered to do so. He was full of ego, gifted as he was with an occult eye in the leg!

He went at first to Satyaloka, the abode of Brahma. He sat down before Brahma did, and was chided for that. This made him say to Brahma, "You are full of *rajoguna* and as such, you shall not have any worship offered to you hereafter."

He then went at break-neck speed to Mount Kailaas, where the Lord Maheswara was in private communion with the Goddess Paarvathi. Maheswara became angry with him for having come in without announcement. The sage was annoyed at that and he said "You are full of *tamas*. You shall not be worshipped in this form!"

After this, puffed up with pride at having had a walkover on the two deities. Bhrigu sped to Vaikunta, the abode of Lord Maha Vishnu. The Lord was at that time spending time with His spouse Lakshmi. The sage, at the height of *Abankaar*, struck with his feet at the chest of the Lord which is the auspicious abode of Sri Maha Lakshmi! Vishnu, the Lord of Maaya, clouded the vision of the sage, and appearing to catch hold of his legs in obeisance, destroyed the occult eye in his leg, while offering words of courteous welcome to him!

The sage, bereft of his occult power, realised his limitations now and prayed to Maha Vishnu for compassion. The Lord forgave him.

Sage Bhrigu returned to the concourse of *rishis* on the bank of the Jaahnavi. He declared Lord Vishnu to be the Devottama to whom all worship should be offered to secure salvation.

At Vaikunta, Goddess Maha Lakshmi became irate with Her husband for letting the sage go unpunished for defiling Her seat on the chest of the Lord. Of course, she did not comprehend the significance of the diplomatic act of the Lord. She left Him in a huff.

The Lord thereon became afflicted by Her departure and thinking Sri Venkataachala to be the proper place for staging the denouement of this tiff of love came over at

the beginning of Kali to Venkataachala, where He had His abode in an ant hill, west of Sami Pushkarini.

After being incessantly bathed in milk by Aakaasa Raaja, He finally emerged in the present, most attractive and auspicious form of the blissful Archaarooma. The Lord is a *Swayambhoo* (Self-manifested).

Sri Venkateswara is *Trimoorthyaatmaka*. He is the embodiment of the three aspects of *Srishti*, *Sthiti* and *Laya*.

The word "Venkata" has a spiritual significance of the greatest import. It is a combination of the powerful *beejaaksharaas* or seed-words "VA", "EEM", "KA" and "TA". "VA" is Vishnubeeja. "EE Kaara" is significant of Maha Maaya or Lakshmi. So "VEM" is the compounded *beejakshara* standing for the inseparable Lord Vishnu and Maha Lakshmi or Purusha and Prakriti. "KA" is the seedletter symbolising Brahma while "TA" is the *beejaaksharaas* signifying Maheswara. Thus, "Venkata" is the combination of the powers of the Trimoortis! Its Lord, Maha Vishnu, is therefore *Sarvadevaatmaka*.

Venkata is the Paramabindu, resident in *Sahasraara-Chakra*, so that Lord Venkateswara is the Supreme above, the Paramabindu!

The seven holy hills of Sri Venkataachala represent the seven *Lokas*, viz: Bhur, Bhuvah, Suvah, Maha, Jana and Satya. They represent the Devas, viz: Brahma, Vishnu, Rudra Maheswara, Sadaasiva and Paraasakti and the Chakras, Mulaadhaara, Manipoora, Swaadhishtaana, Anaahata, Visuddhi, Aajnaa and Sahasraara. The summit where the Lord stays is Sree Peetha!

The Vedas say: "*Araayia Kaanevicate girim gaccha Sadaanve. Siribitasya satvabhivi tebhishvaachaatayaamas!*" (*Rigveda* VIII

Adhyaya, 8th Anuvaaka, Vachana 13, Mandal 10, sooktha 155). It means: "O poverty stricken fellow! Maimed of the body having association with the enemies of *Purusbaarthaas!* Go to Venkatagiri Sree Peetha, mix with the devotees therein and get rid of your ailment."

It is therefore evident, that Venkatagiri or Sri Venkataachala, the seat of Lord Venkateswara, has Sree-Peetha, whose ruling deity is Baalaa-Tripurasundari, thus giving rise to the name Sri Baalaaaji to Him!

Sri Venkateswara is thus Vishnu having the Rudra aspect with Panchabhootha-tattwa from Moolaadhaara to Visuddha, with Paarvati in Aajnaa-chakra and Hamsa-roopa Naaraayana who is in Pranavaakaara in the Paramabindu represented by *Akaara*, *Ukaara* and *Makaara* in *Sahasraara-chakra*.

Sri Venkateswara represents Shanmukha also. The *Nakshatra* of Lord Venkateswara is *Sravana*. Subrahmanya if Saravanabhava or *Sravana* born. The *Sreevatsa* on the chest of Lord Venkateswara is akin to the sign made on the chest of Lord Subrahmanya when Indra hurled his *Vajraayudha* at him which merged with him, causing that sign. Sri Venkateswara is also *Subramanyaatmaka-Vishnu*.

The idol has all the markings pertaining to Rudra, Baalaa-Tripurasundari, Subrahmanya and Vishnu. He is *Ekam Sat*, the Upanishadic Brahman, with the Sthiti aspect most powerfully established in Him. The various saints sang of Him continuously. Saivite saints sang of Him as Hara and Harihara. So also did the early Alwaars. The Lord's names contain the names of Siva, Sakti and Kumaara also. He is called "*Kaartikeya Vapurudharaaya Namah.*"

Lord Venkateswara is also called Sreenivasa Peruman, being the Lord of Sree and the Sree Peetha of Venkatagiri. The hill is called Sreesaila also. That is why it is attracting all the teeming millions of the country who offer their all to Him.

The Lord married the daughter of Aakaasa Raja of Narayanavana, the goddess Padmaavati, who was the Amsa avataara of Goddess Lakshmi. But He wanted to regain Maha Lakshmi. He came to Kolhapur, where He found Her *archamurthi*, established by the sage Agasthya. He waited for ten years to propitiate Her.

The divine voice from the sky directed Him to go to the Swarnamukhi river, dig a tank on its northern bank, get golden lotuses, put them in it, rear them and contemplate on the Goddess Mahalakshmi pondering over the *Ekaakshara Mantra or Sahasraakshara Mantra* using those lotuses in worship. Vishnu did likewise after founding the *Archaamurthi* of the Sun god Surya, to aid Him in the rearing of the golden lotuses.

After twelve years, in the month of *Kaartik*, in *Sukla Paksha*, on *Panchami*, Friday, ruled by the asterism *Uttaraashaada*, in Maitra *Muburtha*, Goddess Lakshmi came out in all Her brilliance amidst the thousand petals of the golden lotus and took over Her position in the Lord as of yore. It is this tank that is called Padmasarovar and found in Tiruchaanur or Tiru Sukanur where the sage Suka had *darshan* of Lord Srinivasa!

Sri Venkateswara Vaibhava is indescribable. He is the highest of the highest deities. He is Kali-Yuga-Prathyak-sha-Daiva, gratifying the desires of the devout. That is why it is said:

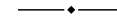
*“Venkataadri samam Sthaanam Brahmaande naasthi kinchana
Venkatesa samo devo na bbooto na bhavishyati.”*

There is no place in this wide Universe which is the peer of Sri Venkataachala and there is no god to equal Venkateswara either in the past or in the future. Venkataadri abounds in the most sacred *teerthas*. It has all sorts of flora and fauna. It is called Chintaamani giri, as it grants all the desires of the seekers. It is Jnaanaadri, as it gives enlightenment. It is Adishesha who took that form of Mountain at the command of the Lord who is, therefore, called Sshaachalapathi.

*Naaraayanaamsa sambhatah Seshgiri roopa dbruth
Tasyopari prabboota ye thruna gulma latadayah
Tehi Sthavara roopena vasantho yogi poorushah
Brahma Rudraadi devebhyo yoginaanita tejasah.*

Great yogins, saints and gods like Brahma and Rudra are resident in Sri Venkatadri even as trees and shrubs. As such, the abode of Lord Venkateswara is the most sacred place on Mother Earth and its sanctity must be kept at all costs protecting it from modern pollutions.

Venkateswara Vaibhava will be eternally glistening if the archana to the deity is carried on scrupulously, strictly and if the Bhaktas that come for pilgrimage are well cared for; for, *Teerthee Kurvanti teerthani*— it is the holy pilgrims that sanctify the teertha and their service is the Lord's service!



39
ALAYA VIJNANA
(SELF-REALISATION)
—•—

The mind is a definite form of all-powerful absolute consciousness assumed by it through its own will power. It is the evolution and involution of the world. The purity or impurity of it is our freedom or bondage. The essence of the mind is its imagination. The mind is somehow to be distinguished from the self as ornaments of gold are distinguished from gold. The *Brahman* is consciousness without any object present in it, whereas Brahman in definite form is the mind.

The mind is in essence pure and the influence of *Avidya* or ignorance makes it defiled. In spite of *Avidya*, the mind itself is eternal, clear, pure and not subject to transformation. The two aspects of *Avidya* are ignorance and knowledge. Knowledge destroys ignorance. The one aspect of *Avidya* destroys the other aspect. It is like the washing act of a washerman who washes impurities of clothes with other kinds of impurities like soap. The Self realises itself, when the two opposite aspects of *Avidya* are negated.

Three Manifestations

The mind assumes different names and forms while engaged in various activities as an actor assumes several forms on the stage. There are three grades in the manifestation of the mind from the point of view of grossness, viz. (1) *Jiva*, (2) *Abankara* and (3) *Deba*, which are the three

manifestations. The *Jiva* is very subtle in character and may be considered as Absolute Self, sheathed in the spiritual encasement. The *Abankara* is the grosser aspect of *Jiva*, due to the latter's tendency towards objectivity just as a spark of fire grows in volume on account of increase of fuel. The *Abankara* further assumes the physical body by the power of desire to enjoy the objects of desire. The *Jiva* stands clothed in the eight-fold subtle body consisting of the mind, the intellect, the ego and the five subtle elements. The subtle body is gradually experienced as the physical body by the *Jiva*. The physical is therefore self-created by the latter and enters into it like a silkworm in its cocoon.

Intense desire for objects is, therefore, the cause for bondage. He experiences bondage who experiences pleasures and pains. The realm of bondage spreads to all aspects of our being, viz., ignorance on intellectual side and limited interest and purpose on the volitional side, forgetting that we are the Absolute Self.

The experience of liberation is nothing mysterious. It is only coming to the consciousness of a fact that is always true. We live, move and have our being in the ocean of *Brahman*. The wise have easily crossed over the ocean of samsara with the help of the boat of knowledge alone. The world experience comes to an end only through the reality of one's own mind, not by any other way. The human body is the temple of God—*Alayavijnana*—probably better than any other ever built by man. It is through knowledge alone that the God residing within the heart can be found out and identified. The *Atman* is to be worshipped with one thing alone, which is always easily obtainable everywhere, viz. knowledge. The worship itself is the best *dhyana*

(meditation) and is the highest kind of worship and the greatest of all yogas.

Supreme Self

The Supreme Self (*Atman*) dwells in our own inner being. The *Atman* has to be seen by one's own purified intellect turned inwards—TIRUPATHI—*Tiru* means turn and see and *pathi* means Lord. The Lord is easily seen in a pure intellect as space is seen reflected in a clean mirror. The mind is the dim reflection of the radiant Heart where the Lord resides; and the human body is the projection of the mind for the residence of the Lord—*Dehvo Devalaya*. The body being the temple of God is the truth, which has to be realised only in this birth. The human body is precious because of the unique brain and the spinal centres and is like the pearl oyster that contains the precious pearl. The precious pearl is the *Atman*. The *Atman* has to be realised by purification of the mind which is effected through association with wise men, cultivating noble virtues and through the grace of Sat-Guru.

PRAPANCHA: THE UNIVERSE

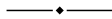
That which is lit up by the five senses is called *Prapancha* or the Universe in which all of us live and have our being. There are the three factors (1) spirit (2) matter and (3) the Unifier of the two, viz., spirit and matter. The self is the spirit and it has no connection with anything. It is actionless, associationless and causationless. It is only witness. All other things including the mind are proved to be matter. Matter does not know its own existence.

The Unifier is the five senses and the mind. The five senses are those of sight, sound, touch, smell and taste and have their source in the mind. The self sees the universe through the five senses and the mind by uniting with matter (the five senses and the mind).

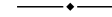
The result of the union of matter and spirit is the universe of knowledge, perception and sensation. These are called the phenomena. So, the universe is nothing but a collection of infinite phenomena. *Prapancha* is therefore not a simple and self-existing entity. It is a compound. The moment it is split up into its factors, spirit and matter, it vanishes. The universe rests between spirit and matter. If one were to separate oneself from the two factors, there is no universe for him. The universe is only an illusory attribute to the self like a snake in a rope.

Truth is not comfortable, unless one reaches its climax. Human nature is very conservative. It does something and having done that finds it hard to get out of it. The mind will not receive new thoughts because they bring discomfort. If the mind is the connecting medium of spirit and matter the whole universe is in the mind and it is pervaded by the spirit and inseparably connected with it. It is an undeniable fact that we are so constituted that it does not seem possible for us to be away with the universe. We are born with the idea that it is a reality and we seem to depend upon it for our happiness and our very existence.

The perfect and all-knowing sages have pointed out that the so-called material cravings are the source of our misery. They bring innumerable births and deaths and accompanying troubles. It is, therefore, necessary to get rid of the very idea of the universe. Universe being a compound of spirit and matter, the moment it is split up into its factors, it dissolves. This condition is called *Moksha* and is possible through the help of a *Satguru*.



41
SAMPRASADA VIDYA



The state of *Samprasada* of the *Jiva* is attained through the technique of *vichara* or reasoning and is called *Samprasada Vidya*. The *Vidya* is based on the experience of the soul that goes into deep sleep, completely serene all around. But this experience is not tantamount to *jnana*. *Samprasada Vidya* describes the method of attaining *Moksha* through reasoning based on one's own *anubhava*.

The *Sruti* says that *Maya* reflecting *Brahman* creates both *Jiva* and *Easwara*. *Jiva* and *Easwara*, in their turn, create the whole of the rest of the universe. The *Jiva* is said to be in *Mohanidra* from the waking state to ultimate release. Its creation is the cause of all pleasure and pain experienced in *Samsara*. The *Easwara* is said to be in *Yoga-nidra* and His creation extends from His determination to create, down to His entrance into the created objects. The one Reality is the substratum of both *Jiva* and *Jagat*.

The Reality, which is the self of all beings, can be distinguished to exist in seven stages in its embodied state. The great awakening into self-realisation is called *Samprasada*, which is the goal of human birth. The seven stages are (1) *Ajnana* (ignorance); (2) *Avarana* (veiling); (3) *Vikshepa* (projection); (4) *Paroksha jnana* (indirect knowledge); (5) *Aparokshajnana* (direct knowledge); (6) *Shoka Nirvriti* (cessation of grief) and (7) *Samprasada* (rise of perfect satisfaction). The self is said to be affected by the seven

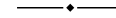
stages which are the cause of its bondage and also of release. The first three stages bind the *Jiva* to *Samsara* and the last four stages lead the *Jiva* to *Samprasada*.

The stages of *Ajnana* and *Avarana* constitute the causal body of the *jiva* which, as a result of the firm habit of many births, repeatedly thinks that the body is the self and that the world is real, whereas the truth is that the self is different from the body and the world is unreal. The erroneous conviction is destroyed by reasoning based on experience. *Jnana* is the result of *vichara* based on *Anubhava*.

The fourth stage of the *sadhana* is to get *paroksha jnana*, or indirect knowledge. Our experience of the waking state indicates the essential feature of duality in our consciousness, which implies that the experienced must be different from any other than the person experiencing in order to be experienced. The experience is extended to the cognition of the body, mind and intellect which are not the real 'I' or the experience. Therefore, the indirect knowledge that "the real experiencer exists" is *paroksha jnana*. The *anubhava* or the existence or the Real 'I' was there, but we were ignorant of the truth. The implications of the ordinary experience are to be made explicit by reasoning in terms of thought. The same technique can be applied for obtaining *aparoksha jnana* or direct knowledge.

Of the many experiences, we have the experience of dreamless sleep, which is of special significance. The seers of *Upanishads* considered the experience of deep sleep as a treasure of gold over which we pass up and down everyday. The reality of the non-dual *Brahman* is grounded on the experience of *shushupti* which confers *Brahmanubhava* to

the *jivas*. When the implications of *Brahmanubhava* are made explicit in terms of thought, we get *Brahma Jnana*. This is the stage of direct knowledge and is possible only in the waking state when the mind is available for reflection. The dream state is not considered here as the dream state comes under the category of the past waking state. The result of the *Brahma Jnana* puts a stop to the sorrows of *Samsara* and the aspirant becomes a *Jivanmukta*. The last stage is *Samprasada* when the *Jnani* attains *Siddhis* and becomes the self of all. The three kinds of afflictions of the body corresponding to the three bodies, viz. causal, subtle and gross are no longer experienced and the *jnani* attains the state of the *Sat-Guru*.



WHAT IS BHARATIYA VIDYA?

Bharatiya Vidya lofty as the Himalayas is like the mighty course of the Ganga. It is perennial, rich and holy. It is not a fixed dogma or an isolated strain of thought but a set of revelations fed by a confluence of insights. The insights that dawned on the great seers in their silent and solitary meditations constitute the bedrock of this ancient vidya. It supplies at once the view and way of life. It is thus both philosophy and religion—Brahma Vidya and Yoga Shastra.

In India, religion is the consummation of philosophy. Truths are intended for incorporation into the actual conduct of life. And conversely the conduct of life is oriented in every detail towards realising in one's self the ultimate Truth. It is because life in India was organised as a preparation for the art of self-realisation, that the tradition of this Bharatiya Vidya is alive and dynamic till today, enshrined as it is in the *Upanishads*, *Gita* and the *Puranas* and epics of *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* which are the gifts of the great Seers and Siddha Purushas—the teachers who knew the secret of the Self and who had the *Atma-Sakshatkara*.

The art of self-realisation is not unknown to other countries in the world. But in Bharat, due to the excellence of *Bhakti* the ardour of the disciple to learn from the teacher and the fact of the living presence amidst us even today of the divine souls in human form who have seen the Truth as clearly as daylight, Bharatiya Vidya glitters like the pole

star in the spiritual firmament. It is to be noticed that India is like the eyes of this great Vidya as it is only here that the Truth has been worked out thoroughly and its significance concretely demonstrated. The one great truth that the Seers discovered was that reality is one. "Truth is one. Sages name it differently" declares the sage in the *Rig Veda*. Great saints of India pronounced in no uncertain terms the same discovery. This intuition into the nature of Truth as one, has made Bharatiya Vidya the most catholic and universal of spiritual traditions in its scope, aim and outlook. All religions are more or less faltering glimpses and no religion is totally false. Even the worship of the Totem is not completely without its value. The faiths of the world are looked upon as members of a spiritual fellowship and federation. The unity of Truth is reflected in the unity of man.

If religions of the world are only various approaches to Truth with their own dignity, there are various paths to reach Truth even in one and the same religion. The methods are determined by the competence of the seeker. What is food for one may be poison for another. Mental, moral and spiritual fitness qualifies the religious man for any specific discipline. The methods of knowledge, of action, of devotion, of meditation and of service are prescribed according to the eligibility of the spiritual trainee. As a consequence of this, no man, according to Bharatiya Vidya, is so mean as to be debarred from spiritual efforts.

Again, Bharatiya Vidya assures us that the individual souls are none other than Reality. One universal consciousness breaks up as if it were on its own accord into different centres of individual consciousness. "That thou art" (*Tattvam-asi*) is the great text of the *Upanishads*, declaring the

oneness of living beings with that supreme consciousness. This pronouncement has a profound implication and far-reaching consequence. All living beings are essentially equal in their fundamental worth. A spiritual democracy follows as a logical corollary of this position. Not only human unity, but the unity of the entire creation is brought home to us as a living truth. Love and charity are the possessions of man as naturally as the light and heat are of the Sun, and the gravitation is of Nature. Love is the law of life.

Bharatiya Vidya places before every one the goal of getting release (*Moksha*) from the cycle of transmigration. To realise in oneself the truth of his own divine nature on the ground of the fact that Truth is all, is the royal road to release. How can there be a limitation of the unlimited? To realise and remember that one is deathlessly divine is to refuse to be drawn by the senses and the mind into a sense of selfish individuality. When the vision is narrowed and identity forgotten, one is helplessly gravitated into the whirlpool of birth and death. "Know Thyself" is the central call of Bharatiya Vidya. The *Kathopanishad* gives us an imagery which is well worth noticing.

आत्मानं रथिनं विद्धि शरीरं रथमेव तु ।

बद्धि तु सारथिं विद्धि मनः प्रग्रहमेव च ।

इन्द्रियाणि हयान्याहुः विषयांस्तेषु गोचरान् ॥

"Know the body to be the chariot; the intellect to be the charioteer; the mind to be the reins; the senses to be the horses; and the sense-objects to be the highway. But know the self to be the master of the chariot."

Life is a pilgrimage. The bodies are the mid-way houses to

be lived in for some time and forsaken when the time comes. While alive, the chariot of the body, mind and the intellect is to be employed to progress. The horses must be controlled to high purpose and with courage.

The doctrine of Karma and rebirth which is the distinguishing feature of Bharatiya Vidya signifies the moral worth of man and treats lives as opportunities for spiritual growth. Man is responsible for what he does. If he forgets Truth wilfully and acts as though he is independent he lets himself fall into the blind necessity of Karma. He has to reap what he has sown. The force of this action recoils upon him with the inevitability of a physical law because he is acting in obedience to the dictates of ignorance or forgetfulness of Truth.

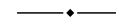
On the contrary, when he acts in accordance with Truth he is no longer bound by the acts that he does. When he has realised himself as one with Brahman because his own being is Brahman, he is at once free from the claims of Karma.

The body is not only the chariot of the soul, it is the temple of Truth. The Siddhas of India insist on transforming one's being by realising truth within oneself. Bharatiya Vidya disregards none of the elements of the world and asks us to see truth everywhere and in everyone.

The souls exalted by the supreme vision of unity are rare but live among us rather unnoticed by the maddening crowd lost in the busy commerce of life along its noisy thoroughfares.

In short, Bharatiya Vidya is a treasure-house containing priceless gems of wisdom.

Om Tat Sat



The two aspects of one Existence are matter and spirit. We can roughly say that *Purusha* or spirit is the soul and *Prakriti* or nature is matter. *Prakriti* has the three qualities of *Satma*, *Raja* and *Tamas*, corresponding to unactivity, activity and inactivity as its essential characteristics. These qualities are really responsible for all the activities of evolution and involution which appear to go on in nature.

Every person is an embodied soul and in his or her composition we find both *Prakriti and Purusha* and that when he or she works, it is really the embodiment that does the work. If the power of doing work is due to *Prakriti*, it follows that the soul itself can never be the agent of the work which the *Prakriti* of the body and its qualities do. Generally, people do not understand the distinction between nature and soul and even when understood they are not always able to bear it in mind. Therefore, they mistake the body for the soul and hold the soul to be the agent of the work which the body does in reality. The practice of differentiation of matter from spirit and to be in fellowship with the spirit which is above the limitation of space and time is called *Vibhaga yoga* or *Yoga* of differentiation.

The *Yoga* consists of four parts viz., *Viveka*, *Vairagya*, *Samadhi-Shatka*, *Mumukshata*. The identification of the soul with the body and mind, is really a misequation. We have to understand that the soul is immaterial, immutable and

immortal whereas the body and mind are material, mutable and mortal. The soul and the body should be disequated to get rid of the misequation. The intellectual disequation is called *Viveka* (Discrimination) and the mental disequation is called *Vairagya* (Dispassion). *Samadhi-Shatka* consists of (1) *Sama* (2) *Dama* (3) *Uparati* (4) *Titiksha* (5) *Shraddha* and (6) *Samadhana*, and is a practical process of overcoming the pain.

The resting of the mind steadfastly on its goal (*viz.*, *Brahman*) after having detached itself from the manifold sense objects by continually observing their defects is called *Sama*. Turning both organs of knowledge and those of action away from sense objects and placing them in their respective centres is called *Dama*. *Uparati* consists of the mind function ceasing to be affected by external objects. The bearing of all afflictions without caring to redress them is called *Titiksha* or forbearance. *Shraddha* is the acceptance by firm judgement as true, of what the *Guru* instructs. The constant concentration of the intellect of the ever pure *Brahman* is called *Samadhana* or self-settledness.

Mumukshata is the ardent desire to escape from the bondage created by the misequation. The aspirant is then qualified for a higher course which involves efforts to overcome the ignorance of non-equation of the soul with the *Brahman*. Even when the aspirant has succeeded in overcoming the misequation of the soul with the body and mind, it does not mean that he can immediately learn to equate the soul with *Brahman*. It is not possible to give up all of a sudden that attitude and take up the reverse attitude of equating the soul with *Brahman*. The very idea of equating the soul with *Brahman* has to be put inside the mind of the aspirant and

yelled into his ears till the aspirant becomes familiar with the subtle idea implied in the *Maha-Vakhya*: "That, Thou Art".

The Guru who has abiding faith in the truth of equating soul with *Brahman* and who has realised it in himself is capable of imparting to his chosen disciples the subtle meaning of the *Mahavakya*, "*Tat Tvam Asi*". The hearing of the meaning of *Mahavakya* by the disciple is called *Sravana*. The reconciliation of the Truth in the mind of the disciple is called *Manana* or cogitation. Further practice of the Truth by mental repetition without strain is called *Dhyana* or meditation. The sustained realisation of the equation concept is known as *Samadhi* in which the disciple identifies himself with *Brahman*. Indeed, the knower of *Brahman*, becomes *Brahman*.

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VINAYAKA
THE SUPREME LORD
—♦—

Vinayaka is the Supreme Spirit invoked at the beginning of every event for removal of impediments. *Vinayati Sikshayati Dushtaan Vighnaamscheti Vinayakha*: He is called Vinayaka because he punishes the evil men and annihilates all obstacles. Again: *Neengh praapane: Vighatho Naayakaha Prabhuryasya Svatantratvaat*: He is independent and under no control. He holds total sway over all without opposition. He has no leader over him and he is all in all. Every one has to bow to him and worship him before launching upon any work if there were to be no obstacles bogging its success.

*Sa jayati Sindburavadano devo
yatpaadapankaja Smaranam
Vaasaramaniriva tamasaam
raaseennasayati Vighnaanaam.*

All praise and victory to the elephant-faced Lord Gajaanana meditation of whose lotus feet has the power of destroying all obstacles like the sun destroying darkness.

He is Vighna Vinayaka and Vighneswara. He is at once the creator of *vighnaas* and their destroyer too.

*Sarva Vighnakaramdevam Sarva Vighnavivarjitam
Sarvasiddhi pradaataaram Vandeham Gananaayakam*

He causes vighnas and is bereft of them. He gratifies and

fulfils all desires and fruits of works undertaken as well as the *Ashtasiddhis*. That is why he is first worshipped and his blessings are sought. That was a boon bestowed on him by the Lord Parameswara and the goddess Parvathi, his parents, and also by all the gods and goddesses at the time of his birth. His origin denotes how he had combined in himself all the qualities rendering him one with the Supreme Brahman.

Mother Parvathi was pining for a son of her own. Lord Parameswara wanted to grant her desire. He looked at her meaningfully and from out of earth, created a child's shape. He gave it to her. She thought her Lord was joking with her and set down the child on the ground when it became animated and began to cry. She then held the child to her breasts when they became filled with milk so that she could give milk to the child. Then she gave the child fondly to her husband. The Lord said on taking the child that he would become shortlived. As he pressed the child to him, it fell down dead with head and trunk falling asunder. The mother was inconsolable. The Lord tried every method to attach the head to the trunk and bring the boy to life.

All his efforts were in vain when he heard the Divine Voice from the sky saying: "O Lord! There is no use of trying to revive the child with that head. The parts will again fall on account of Sani seeing the child. If another head is attached to the body, the child will live. As the child had fallen with its head to the North, get the head of any person or animal lying with the head to the North and attach it to the body then the child will come to life."

Hearing these words the Lord ordered Nandi, his loyal attendant, to go all over the world and get a head as desired.

Then Nandi went on his errand. Finally after a hard search he found that only the elephant Airavata was lying with its head to the North at that time. So after a tight battle with Indra he beheaded it and took it to the Lord Parameswara. The head was duly attached when lo! the boy came to life. Just then Brahma, Vishnu, Indra, the other deities, the sages, *rishis*, *siddhas* and *saadyaas* came there.

The beauty of the child was unique and charming with the head of the elephant. All praised his glory.

Brahma, the creator, said that the child should be called Vinayaka and should be worshipped first before anyone or at the beginning of any event or work. He gave Vinayaka a rosary and blessed him with immortality. Brihaspati, the preceptor of the Devas, bestowed him with the sacred thread. The goddess Saraswathi made him knowledge incarnate by giving all branches of learning and the vidyas. She gifted him with a bell. Lord Vishnu gave him the vessel of Ambrosia. Mother Earth gave him a mouse for his mount. Lord Siva gave him the tiger skin while Goddess Parvati gave him longevity. Goddess Mahalaxmi bestowed the eightfold riches while Varuna gave him the Paasa or noose. Vayu, the windgod, gave a garland of *Mandaara* flowers while Indra, the Lord of gods, gave the goad or *Amkusa*.

As he was born adversely affected at first with a *vighna* or obstacle, he was called Vighneswara. He was made the leader of the *Pramathaganaas* forming the retinue of Iswara and so, was called Ganaadhipati. As he was born on Chaturthi, the fourth day of the bright part of the month Bhaadrapada, Lord Parameswara and Mother Parvati ordained that all should worship him specially on that day invariably. All the

deities present accordingly declared that every one who worshipped Vinayaka that day should be successful in their work, should have all their desires satisfied and should be protected by Vinayaka against all evil.

*Mooshaka vaahana Modakabasta,
chaamarakarna vilambita sootra,
Vaamanaroopa Maheswara putra,
Vighna Vinayaka paada namaste!*

The prayer is therefore for the Lord of Vighnaas, the son of Maheswara, of short stature with ears like fans and long sacred thread, seated on the vehicle of the mouse and having a pudding of flour (*modaka*) in his hand. He shall ward off all evil and protect all against the hurdles of life when they invoke his aid at the beginning of all endeavours. He is *Chaturthi poojana preeto chaturthi tithi sambhavaha*. That is, he is pleased when worshipped on Chaturthi day being born on a Chaturthi day.

*Mahaaganapatirbuddipriyo kshipraprasaadanaha
Rudrapriyo Ganaadhyaksho Umaaputro goanaasanaha*

He is called Mahaganaadhipati. God Rudra is fond of him so that he made him the presiding force over the Ganaas. He is the destroyer of sins. The vedic hymn says:

*Ganaanaam tvaa Ganapatigumhavaamabe
Kavimkaveenamupamasravastamam,
Jyeshtharaajam Brahmanaam
Brahmanaspatha aanassrunvannootibhisseedaa saadanam.*

He is the Lord of the *Ganaas*, the poet of poets, the Jyeshtharaaja or the pre-eminent Lord among the gods, the Brahma and the Brihaspati.

Vinayaka is the *Gakaaraaksbara Devata*. The letter "Ga" stands for wisdom. He is knowledge itself. The letter "Na" stands for *Moksha* or salvation. The term *Gana* therefore signifies the combination of wisdom and salvation which are given by Vinayaka who is the Lord of Ganga.

*Ganeseti tryarnaatmakamapi varam naama sukhadam
Sakrutproacchairucchaaritamiti Nrubbibi paavanakaram
Ganesayaiksya pratijapakarasyaasya sukurutam
Savignaatoa naamnaha Sakala Mabimaakeedrusa vidhaha*

The utterance of the word "Ganesa", the most illustrious holy name of Vinayaka, is fruitful of the greatest prosperity to mortals sanctifying them and providing them with all marvellous powers.

*Ganesetyabhvam yahpravadati mubustasya purataba
Prapasyamstadvaktram Swayamapiganastishtati tadaa
Swaroopasyagnaanam tyamuka iti naamnaasyabhavati
Prabodhabsuptasya tvakbilamiba saamathyamamunaa.*

One who utters this holy name will find that *Ganas*, that is the words forming the basis of the *Sabdabrahman*, settle themselves in his mouth and make him realise the Lord who is *Sabdabrahman* himself. He will realise *Aatma-jnaana*, know the Reality, become free from illusion, get awakening and attain godhead. So powerful is the utterance with intense devotion of the holy name of *Mahaaganadhipati*. For Vinayaka is knowledge itself. He is the giver of all *vidyaas* par excellence and the redoubtable giver of salvation to those who worship him with single minded devotion.

Lord Ganesa is called *Ekadanta*—of single tusk. By that he shows that "Eka" that is Maaya or illusion

should be rooted out by "danta" or actual knowledge of reality *Kaartikeyoatpaatitaika dantatwaa dekoadantaa yasya ss Ekadanthaba*. He became Ekadanta as one of his tusks was pulled out by Kaartikeya or Murugan. It was on account of a tussle between them when Vinayaka obstructed Kumara in his task of prescribing Streepurusha Lakshanas or the attributes of the male and the female without propitiating him at first as ordained by the gods. The tiff was patched up by Parameswara and Lord Narayana. Narayana told Kumara that he should give back that *danta* to Vinayaka who should be worshipped at first at all events when something is desired. Kaartikeya agreed to it but said that the *Vishaana* or horn given by him must be kept by Vinayaka as an attribute failing which he would burn. Thus it happened that Ganesa became one-tusked and is holding one *danta* in his hand. It was acknowledged that he is the Lord of obstacles and their eliminator and Kumara agreed to it. In this course of tussle, Maheswara who went as a mediator became *Kapaali* or holder of the skull in hand.

Lord Vinayaka is called *Sumukha*, of the auspicious and charming face. He is hailed by 16 names viz: *Sumukha, Kapila, Gajakarnika, Lambodara, Vikata, Vighnaraaja, Ganadhya, Dhoomaketu, Ganaadhyaksha, Phalachandra, Gajaanana, Vakratunda, Soorpakarna, Heramba and Skandapoorvaja*, as well as *Ekadanta*, the second name.

If these 16 names are read or uttered at the beginning of the learning process, marriage, entrance to a place or departure from it, war and all sorts of work, no impediments will occur and Lord Ganesa blesses the person doing so with complete success protecting him from all dangers and evil.

The Lord's shape is indicative of the fact that for one to become one with Brahman there is no bar. However deformed or in any way defaced or uncouth or with any form of disability, one can attain the Highest. No one should look down upon another of any unshapeliness. He punished the Moongod for his ridiculing him on that account.

He is called *Heramba*. *He Rudra sameeperambate tishtatesti Herambaba*. He is always alongside of Rudra, the Lord Parameswara and hence *Heramba*. Again *Rugathau, Herate Vardbayat—Bhaktaanitvaa*. He is *Heramba* because he makes his devotee prosper and makes him advance to the Highest state of eternal bliss. Further "He" indicates the absolute state of despair and helplessness on account of lack of succour and *Ramba* signifies protection or safety from all dangers and obstacles. So *Heramba* or Vinayaka is the refuge of the despaired and weak.

He is *Soorpakarna* for he lets in all noble thoughts sorting out the gross ones and filling the devotees with the real ideas devoid of delusion and mundaneness. The *paasa* or the noose in his hand suggests the worldly ties, complexities and dangers that smother the mortal and as its wielder he clears his devotee from all that mire.

The goad or *Amkusa* given to him by Indra symbolises his control over the universe whose affairs he directs with it.

He is *Vakratunda* or one having the winding trunk. The winding trunk denotes the hurdlesome and illusive *Samsara* which by overcoming alone one can attain salvation. He is *Pranavasvaroopa vakratundam*. The trunk is of the form of Aumkara which is the sovereign means for ending the cycle

of births and deaths.

Vighneswara is worshipped in 32 forms according to the type of *siddhi* or attainment desired. The Vighneswara who is meditated upon by the Yogins has the trunk drawn inwards towards the chest.

*Ekadantam chaturbham paasamamkusadhaarinaam
Radamcha varadam Hastairbibhraanam Mooshakadvajam
Aavirbhootamcha Srushtyaadou Prakrutbeh Purushaatparam
Evam dhyayati yoa nityam sa yogee yoginaam varaha.*

The Vighneswara who is contemplated upon by those who want to become the high-ranking yogins is of one tusk with four arms, holding the noose and the goad in two, having a tusk and bestowing boons with the other two hands while sporting the flag with the emblems of the mouse. He has come out at the beginning of creation and is beyond *Prakriti* and *Purusha*. He is *yogiraaja sevitam* and *yoga-saalibhavitam*, that is, worshipped and served by the yogins of supreme position and meditated upon by them.

When the trunk is drawn sideward, that aspect of Vinayaka bestows material and spiritual riches while preserving the devotee of that form in the path of virtue while making him prosper in every way. Of these forms of Lord Vinayaka, the Ganesa who is represented as *Vallabhanayaka* is supreme in every respect. He is of red colour in this form. He is in the *Padmasana* pose in this shape holding the pitcher of Ambrosia bedecked with jewels and gems with the trunk drawn side ward, with his *Maayaasakti* in feminine form seated on the left. He is *Phalachandra*, that is, having the moon on his head indicative of immortality. In this aspect

Ganeswara is the Supreme Lord. It behoves everyone who desires prosperity and plenty in this world and the other to meditate upon Vallabha Ganapati who is the Ultimate.

*Vaamaandake Sakti yutaa Ganesam
Siddhistu Naanaa vida Siddhibhistam
Atyanta bhavena Susevitetu Maayaa
Swaroopaa Paramaartha bhootaa*

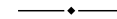
Hence it is that *Vallabheswara* is worshipped by all who want *siddhis* or fruits of various types.

Vinayaka is seated in the *Moolaadhara Chakra*. He can be invoked successfully by control of breathing, *Praanaayaama*, accompanied by contemplation of the Ganapati mantra to which the worshipful Satguru should initiate the aspirant.

So for one to become free from this *Bhava Saagara* or the Ocean of births and deaths the only way is to pray to Lord Vinayaka for he is *Bhaktapriya* or lover of his devotees Let us all offer our supplications to him.

*Ambikaa hrudayaanandam Maathrubhish pariveshtitam
Bhaktapriyam Madonmattam Vandeham Gananaayakam.*

Salutations to the giver of bliss to the mother Ambika by his pleasing activities in her company! Salutations to the lover of devotees! Salutations to the roused with the Madal! Salutations to the Lord of the *Ganaas!* Om Tat Sat!



45
SIGNIFICANCE
OF SRI RAMAVATARA
—♦—

*Vaamey Bboomisutaa purascha Hanumaan
paschaat Sumitraasutaba*

*Satrughno Bharatascha paarsvadalayor
Vaayyaadi koneshbhucha!*

*Sugreevascha Vibheeshanascha Yuvaraat
Taaraasuto Jaambavaan*

*Madhney Neelasaroja komalaruchim
Raamam Bhajey Syaamalam.*

"Salutations to the Lord Sri Rama, shining in the middle with the delicate lustre of the blue lotus and surrounded by Sita, the daughter of Mother Earth on the left; Hanuman in the front; Lakshmana, the son of Sumitra, at the back; Bharata and Satrughna on the sides and Sugreeva, Vibheeshana, Angada and Jaambavaan in the corner directions beginning with the Northwest."

This glorious vision of the Lord Sri Rama sums up the significance of Sri Ramavatara.

The *avatara* of Sri Rama is Dharmavatara. The Supreme Brahman had come down to this mundane earth taking the shape of Sri Rama to establish Dharma on a solid and radiant pedestal. He had brought into being along with him the ideal and perfect characters of Sita the chaste

wife; Hanumaan the truest devotee; Lakshmana the perfect brother; Bharata and Satrughna the very personifications of faithful self abnegation, and Sugreeva, Vibheeshana, Angada and Jaambavaan the manifestations of absolute surrender or *saranagati* to the Lord. They are the ideal personages whose footsteps we have to follow in order to uphold Dharma.

Sri Rama had a specific purpose before him. Parasurama, the earlier Amsavatar of the Supreme, had wiped out the arrogant and selfish tyrants of the Kshatriya race like Kaarthaveeryaarjuna and became a spent-up force having renounced the use of weapons by oath before Indra, the Lord of Heaven. A new menace to the world had sprung up in the shape of Ravana, the giant king of Lanka. He had terrorised the gods and men and though well versed in the Vedas, became a slave to his senses and thereby vicious. So the Supreme had to come down in human form to annihilate him and establish the rule of Dharma.

Ramavatara preaches that one has to live a full and perfect life in the world following the path of virtue with a spirit of renunciation.

While speaking to Kaikeyi, Sri Rama said:

*"Naahamartha karo Devi! Lokamaavastumsabey
Viddhimaamrishiibhistulyam kevalam Dharmamaasthitam"*

"I am like the Rishis. I follow only Dharma. Note that I do not care for anything else."

He said to Lakshmana:

*"Dharmobi karamo lokey Dharmey Satyam Pratishtitam
Dharmasamsritamey taccha piturvachanamuttamam."*

"Of the *purushaarthaas* or the ends of life enunciated for perfect life in the world, Dharma is the best. It is the offshoot of Truth. Implicit obedience to the father's word generates great Dharma. It must be followed."

He further amplified the theme in the following words:

*"Dharmaartha Kaamaah khalu Taata! Lokey/
sameekshitaa Dharmaphalodayeshu// Teyatra
sarveysyurarasamsayammy/ Bhaaryeva
vasyaabhimataa tuptura/ Yasmimstu
sarveysyurasannivishataa// Dharmo yatassyaata
dupakramey ta/ Dveyshyo Bhavatyartha parohi Lokey/
Kaamaatmataa khalvapi naprasataa/ Guruscha Raajaacha
pitaacha vruddbaha/ Krodhaatprabarshaadyadi vaapi
Kaamaat// Yadvyaadisevytikaarya maveykyshya Dharmam/
Kastanna-kuryaadanrusamsa Vrittibi."/*

It is said that for one who follows Dharma the other *purushaarthaas* come of their own accord. I have no doubt about it. By following Dharma alone everything can be achieved. In just the same way as a wife by being subservient to her husband follows Dharma, by being his beloved attains kaamaand by begetting an offspring achieves Artha, so also one Dharma alone brings in its wake the attainment of all the other *purushaarthaas*. One should not do any act by which none of The *purushaarthaas* is achieved. He should, however, perform that act which is sure to bring in the fulfilment of three *purushaarthaas*. Again, one should only do that act, which brings in Dharma even without satisfying the other two, Kaama and Artha. Also one should not do any act that satisfies Kaama alone or Artha alone. For, then the world would abhor him. When the Guru, the

king, the father and the old command whether in anger, joy, or in Kaama, only a sinner would disobey. The follower of Dharma would not do so."

Lord Rama laid great store by implicit obedience to the father's word as the basis of Dharma. He showed the world the inexorable law of destiny. Man proposes, God disposes. He himself had to obey and bow to divine dispensation. Dharma ordained it for him. He had to carry out the words of Sanaka and Sanandana who had cursed Jaya and Vijaya his attendants for preventing them from having his darsan and also suffer for having killed the Bhrigupatni who had given shelter for the Asuraas. He fully explained to Lakshmana how Divine Will was invincible. No one could oppose it. No one could fathom it. It was sheer impossibility to be forearmed against divine dispensation. No one could know about it until it transpired. Nothing could stand before inexorable destiny. One could find that certain very carefully planned things fail while certain others succeed without any effort on his part. For all these Divine Will is the mainspring. We do not know the real causatives for happiness, sorrow, fear, anger, gain, loss, birth and death. All these could not be comprehended by our mind. Rama said to Lakshmana that all the things that one could not know by his discrimination were the work of God. That was why he was not affected when his coronation was stopped.

So we find that Lord Sri Rama had shown to all that for salvation one should follow Dharma with a sense of detachment. He had by his personal example proved it and benefited all those around him.

Mother Sita followed him with all her heart and carried

out her Dharma as a true woman and wife. She was in him, of him, by him and through him. Her very being was permeated by the Lord. In following his Dharma, Rama had cast her aside. But she was not affected by it. She bore everything calmly and lovingly. So did Lakshmana who had by his unstinted and wholehearted service to the Lord won his admiration so much so that the Lord declared that he would even sacrifice Mother Sita for his life. Bharata and Satrughna would not be outdone. They renounced all their pleasures and waited for Rama, the rightful heir, to come. The sandals of Rama were worshipped by them. Hanuman, the peerless Bhakta, recognized the Supreme Brahman in Rama and merged with him. The Lord resided in his heart always. Sugreeva, Vibheeshana, Angada and Jaambavaan by their *prapatti* and *saranagati* attained the lotus feet of the Lord. They had left their kith and kin to follow Dharma and dedicated themselves to the service of the Lord without any reservation. The Lord established a haven of peace, plenty and prosperity in the world and showed how an ideal king should rule. Dharma was his sheet-anchor and every other thing paled into insignificance before it.

Rama thus is the outstanding polestar guiding us as to how we should make a wise and healthy combination of the *pravritti maarga* with the *Nivritti* spirit. He is our saviour.

"Yascha Raamam na pasyettu yamcha Raamo'na pasyati / Ninditassavaselloke svaatmaapyenam vigarbate."

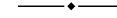
"That person who does not perceive Rama and upon whom Rama's looks do not light would live blamed and condemned by all in the world and even his soul would be looking down upon him." Dasaratha told Lakshmana after

Mother Sita went through the ordeal of fire:

*"Dharmam praapyasi Dharmajna yasascha vipulam bhuvi/
Raame prasanne Swargamcha Mahimaanam tathavacha".*

He said: "You have attained Dharma and its fruits by following Rama. If Rama is pleased, Dharma, fame, heaven and all miraculous powers follow in their train."

Let us therefore surrender to Sri Rama and attain bliss even as Sita, Hanumaan, Lakshmana, Bharata, Satrughna, Sugreeva, Vibheeshana, Angada and Jaambavaan had done.



MAHASIVARATRI:
THE DAY OF DELIVERANCE

*"Yah Ksheeraambudhi manthanodbhava Mahaa Haalaahalam
bheekaram Drushtvaa tatra palaayitaansuraganaan
Naaraayanaadeen tadaa Sampeetvaa paripaalayajagadidam
Visvaadbikam Sankaram Seyyonaakalaapadaam parbaran
Kailaasavaasee Vibbuhu."*

Lord Sankara, the ruler of Kailas, is the one to be worshipped in order to ward off all dangers and evils assailing all. It was given only to him to save the universe with his tremendous act of self-abnegation in drinking the dreadful poison Haalaahala that rose out of the Milky Ocean when it was being churned for getting the Celestial Ambrosia and drove all the Devas including the Lord Narayana and all the Rakshasas. This supreme act of sacrifice on the part of Lord Sankara took place exactly at midnight on the day preceding the New Moon in the month of Maagha. That day came therefore to be known as *Mahasivaratri* and it became auspicious and dear to Lord Siva. It all happened like this.

In order to restore prosperity and wealth and get Amrita lost on account of the folly of Indra, the Devas and the Rakshasas joined together on the advice of the Creator Brahma and the Preserver Vishnu and began churning the Milky Ocean making use of Vaasuki, the Serpent Lord, as the churning rope. As they pulled hard, a frightful poison

of the severest intensity issued out of Vaasuki's mouth and fell into the Ocean. As the process went on harder still, fire issued from out of it. Vishnu could make the fire subside. But the poisonous fumes continued unabated and many fell down unconscious. Others ran away from the place to their abodes. But the effects of the fumes were felt even there and there was total fear of annihilation. Then Brahma and Vishnu took all the Devas with them to Kailas to make their supplication to Lord Sankara.

Lord Sankara heard the sound of their prayer. He told Ganapati who was by his side: "O Heramba! Listen. This whole universe is actuated by the Ego, Ahamkaar. Sakti, the Time Spirit, created the three qualities of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas..." Just as he was speaking thus, Sakti manifested herself in Siva who merged with her assuming the shape of a *Linga*. On seeing this divine vision, Ganapati was astounded. He found Brahma, Rudra, Vishnu and all in and of the shape of the *Linga* and Sakti without any differentiation of identity or dynamism. Also innumerable globes of universe were found merged in the *Lingamurthy*. The *Linga* was immersed in Prakriti and Prakriti was pervaded by the *Linga*. Sakti and *Linga* were found mutually internal. Ganapati praised the Lord, the *Lingodbhavamurthy*.

On hearing the praise of Ganapati and out of compassion for the Devas and the whole creation, the *Lingodbhavamurthy* made the poison into a tiny ball and took it in. He kept it in the neck. The neck became black earning for him the name of *Neelakanta*. The Devas praised him.

*"Hara Sambho Mahaadeva Visvesamaravallabha
Siva Sankara Sarvaatman Neelakanta Namostute!"*

“Salutations to the Lord going by the names of Hara, Sambhu, Mahadeva, Viswesa, Amaravallabha, Siva, Sankara and Neelakanta who is *Sarvaatman* being present in all.”

Thanks to Lord Siva the worlds were saved from total extinction. The gods and the Rakshasas were freed from their stupor. All praised the *Lingamurthy*. Lord Siva then came out in his own shape from the Linga and said: "Of what use are these yajnas and meditations and other acts of welfare without any contact of mine with them? You wanted Amritha from the Milky Ocean well and good. But you have neglected me, *Mriyujaya*, the conqueror of death. That was why you came very near annihilation. We had enjoined that Ganapati should be worshipped first before venturing on any mission. Without worshipping him and Goddess Durga at the beginning of any work one can meet only with insurmountable obstacles. You have all been puffed up with Ego thinking of yourselves as the mainsprings of all action. Curb that Ahankaar and act humbly for the wellbeing of the universe." Thus admonished, the gods including Brahma and Vishnu prayed to him for the success of *Amrithamanthan*. They made Chandra, the moon god, the Goddess Ganga reside in the matted hairlocks of the Lord to keep him cool and unaffected by the effects of the poison Haalaahala. The Lord thus became *Somasundara*.

*"Yasyapranaamaatrena santi sarvaascha sampadaha
Sarvasiddhipradam Sambhum tam vande Somasundaram!"*

Salutations are for the Lord beautified by Soma, the moon god, by worshipping whom we can achieve all our desires and get all riches. He also became Gangadhara. He said

that any one deigning to worship him on every chaturdasi or fourteenth day in the dark part of the month and on Monday would have all his or her desires fulfilled apart from worship to him on Mahasivaratri day.

Mahasivaratri thus was a day of deliverance to all from death physically and mentally and a day of deliverance of the gods from the tentacles of the Ego. It became the day of days when Lord Siva could be easily pleased. Any one who fasts on that day and keeps awake all night whether thinking of the Lord or not would surely attain the grace of the Lord and get salvation. A hunter called Chanda climbed up a tree one day after the day's work was over to escape from a wild animal. He kept watch all night. In the course of his sojourn in the tree he tore out some leaves from it and let them fall down. These leaves fell on a Linga which was under the tree without his noticing its existence there. The day happened to be Mahasivaratri day and the tree happened to be a vilva tree sacred to Lord Siva. In the morning he got down from the tree and went home where his wife kept awake all night waiting for his arrival. They had no food that night. She had meat ready for him. But by the time they came back it was swallowed by a dog. The wife wanted to kill the dog. But the man prevented her from doing so. He said: "I am satisfied as the dog is satisfied. This wretched body is only transient. Much care for its protection is mere foolishness. Forgive the dog." As both of them kept awake during the whole of the night and fasted without having the knowledge that it was *Mahasivaratri*, they attained salvation.

Mahasivaratri is so auspicious that Lord Siva sheds his grace on any one who even accidentally and unintentionally listens

to his sankirtan on that day.

Once a brahmin widow led an evil life and had a son by a Chandala. That fellow became the worst sinner, a gambler and a thief to boot. One Mahasivaratri day he came near a Siva temple. There was a discourse at that time on the blessed acts and qualities of Lord Siva, the All Merciful and Omnipresent yogeaswara. As he kept awake all through the night listening to the discourse he became blessed. In the next birth he was born to Chitrangada and ruled the country. He attained spiritual elevation and developed deep devotion to Lord Siva. It was he that was later born as Veerabhadra, the destroyer of Dakshayajna.

Contemplation of Lord Siva on *Mahasivaratri* day is very fruitful. The worshipper will have longevity of life, success and prosperity in all fields without let or hindrance. The *Linga* form was assumed to dispel the *avidya* of Brahma and Vishnu. They were made aware of the unity of the Trinity Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara. Worship of the *Linga* on Sivaratri day will lead us from untruth to truth, from darkness to light and from death to immortality. One who is true, courageous and pure and has faith in the unconquerable majesty of Lord Siva will get Rudra's inspiration from his innerbeing and gets released from this bondage of samsara. It is only upto Lord Siva, the *Somasundara* who has the moon god that controls the mind in his locks of hair in a good grip, to transform the minds of people, make them spiritually alert and attain oneness with him. Hence the importance of the night of Siva when the mind can undergo this magic alchemy and become one with the cosmic mind. So we shall pray:

"Brahma Muraari Suraari Suraarchita Lingam

Nirmala Bhasita sobhita Lingam

Janmaja dbukka Vinaasakalingam

Tatpranamaami Sadaasiva Lingam"

Prayers are unto the *Linga* of Sadasiva worshipped by Brahma and Vishnu, the vanquisher of the giant Mura, to the *Linga* shining in full crystal splendour with pristine purity and unto the *Linga* that wipes out the sorrows of births. Siva is *Brahmaanandaswaroopa*, the eternal bliss and *Nirvikaara*, unaffected by change. He is found resting in the minds of men of purity. He does not make any discrimination between persons or things and does not have any prejudice. He bestows auspicious things in abundance on his devotees and makes them immortal. He is the redeemer and one who utters his name 'Hara' even without intention or volition is sure to attain him. He is *sulabhakrasanna*-easily propitiated. What other day can you have to think of him than the *Mahasivaratri* day, the day of deliverance of the universe from *Haalaabala* of Ahankaar?

