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# GLORIES OF SHAIVAISM

BY

S. SHIVAPADASUNDARAM, B. A.

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# GLORIES OF SHAIVAISM



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SAIVA BODHAM SERIES ETC.

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COLLEGE OF SHALAYAM

1950

A. N. KARASAMBAKAVAR

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# PREFACE

GLORIES of Shaivaism was written at request. It was undertaken soon after the completion of the author's little book on Logic, the writing of which, had already devitalised his normally low spirits. Thus at the conclusion of the present work he wrote:—

Kandavanam

Valvettiturai

14, May 1953.

MY DEAR COUSIN,

When I was unwell at home in December last, you asked me to give up Logic and write a book on the beauties of Shaivaism. I have finished writing this book. It has cost me much of my health. I had to suffer from headache and indigestion for several days as a result of writing this book. It is now your duty to criticise it, to revise it, to improve the language and give it the final shape. I am too tired to do all these myself.....

Yours Affectionately,  
Sgd: S. SHIVAPADASUNDARAM

The book was written down mainly by his devoted disciple, Mr. V. Nadaraja, to his dictation over a few week ends. The work was discussed at length and improved upon at his Polikandy retreat hard by the temple, loved of him best for over five decades. On the last discussion day he felt indisposed and partly for this reason and more to get away from the profanities at the festivals then coming on, he contemplated a brief change from his beloved resort to his Point Pedro home. He wished that there his book should receive the benefit of a discussion with another of his cousins, Thanikasalam. The talk about the book ended; he grew reminiscent. He recalled to mind his pupilage under his own father Subramaniam, under my father, his uncle Kumaraswamy Pulavar, under our uncle Kanapathipillai, Professor of Sanskrit and Tamil, and under our aunt Parupathipillai. He remembered them all with great respect and affection.

The indisposition was the setting in of typhoid which took him to the Moolai Hospital where he received, he said later, the liberal attention of Dr. N. T. Sampanthar F. R. C. S. From there he moved to his nephew Proctor V. Manickavasagar's house and was nursed by him and his children. Back to Polikandy



he resorted within a few days only to be advised instantly by his disciples and relations to rest at Point Pedro. From Polikandy he addressed me a card to take full charge of the publication of the book as he was not at all feeling fit for anything. At Point Pedro the manuscript was again altered slightly under the progressive criticism of my brother Thanikasalam and my further criticisms as it was copied fair for him. The condition of his health was vacillating inspite of the kindly continued care of Dr. Sampanthar, and of the author's good old pupil Dr. R. Nichingam who came down specially from Colombo and of Dr. R. Viswalingam. During intervals of slight relief from illness he talked mainly of the book. After the attack of typhoid at his age, one (even he) would have thought that this book was his last will and testament to the Shaiva World. But that was not so. He asked me to write a book on The Essence of Siddhiar under his tuition. It was useless pointing out to him his physical inability or my own incompetence for that great task. While applauding the opportunity to study a noble work under a great master, I still was afraid since then to stay long with him in my evening visits lest he should start me all too soon on the step to writing the book. In the meantime

the first proof copy of the Glories of Shaivism came to him from Saiva Prakasa Press. He himself read through the proof sheets, as none else was then near, and handed them to me for despatch just as I visited him. Owing to this strain (he said) he had a relapse. Before he could have seen his entire book through the press and before he could have inspired the Essence of Siddhiar he laid aside his pen to join the loveliest and the best. As I returned to him after day's duty and saw him lie a corse, a feeling came to me much like the heart's cry of Mark Antony at first seeing the body of Caesar. A Caesar he was intellectually, and had a will and integrity as unbending as Caesar's.

After his retirement from the Principalship of Victoria College which he raised and ennobled through years of patient industry he wrote books on a variety of subjects, Logic, Psychology, Education, Religion, etc. The Shaiva School of Hinduism, which earned him much praise from zealous readers of Britain, India and America, is a classic and is now a text books at the Benares Hindu University for the Philosophy Course. It is somewhat abstract, it must be said, and is too wise for the uninitiated, But Glories of

Shaivism is, except for the first Chapter which condenses Shaiva Philosophy, easy reading. The remaining chapters just lay down the practices which will advance one and all, nay anyone—and herein lies the beauty of Shaivism—even the most depraved debauchee, on the path to the attainment of MOKSHA. Not a moth is cloven in vain according to Shaivism. But at last, MOKSHA comes to all. But these practices are explained, accounted for, and supported by authority. It may, however, be mentioned in passing that his note on Paramukti and his exposition of the different forms of worship are original. The book can be read by young students with advantage. It obviates the necessity to read so many hard books in Tamil which rarely one has the patience and training to comprehend. And every Shaivite ought to understand his religion.

It was his deep lament that many of the ancient books on Shaiva Philosophy had, through long neglect at the impact of Western Education and all that it signified, disappeared and were now not directly available. They left however traces behind. He points out that their theme has been redeemed and incorporated in later works by a few choice and master spirits who had laboured in that

field. To each of them, the author said, a shrine might be built. On the other hand, he denounced many top politicians in India whose utterances, notwithstanding the fact that they were Hindus and were vastly learned, either betrayed ignorance of the unique excellence of Hinduism or were designed to placate other religionists. It is a pity that casual and even irrelevant statements concerning religion from politicians of power should win weight with the swaying mass.

The author never had two ways of saying the same thing. He spoke just what he thought right, nothing more, nothing less. Truth he felt was no respecter of persons and personalities. He spoke it out from the platform, through the press and before the special committees with incontrovertible logic. He simply routed the pseudo-scholars in religion in all directions. He knew what he said, and said just what he knew. He had a clear head and was a flinty debater.

It was the author's bidding that I should write a preface. This preface would have taken a different complexion had the author lived to see the book published. But now the circumstances of the writing of the book and the end phase of the author's life have

predominated. This will perhaps serve to wean many readers from the grief at his loss.

Many readers from Malaya, Ceylon and India have clamoured long for copies of the book. The proof reading, I regret much, has gone on tardily. Now it is done.

I thank my colleagues Vidwan K. Nadaraja and Pandit S. Subramaniam for their help in proof reading of the Tamil portions and my colleague Mr. S. Sivagnanam, my nephew Proctor V. Manickavasagar, J. P., his daughter Miss Kanagambikai, B. A. and my brother of the English portions.

**K. Shivaprakasam.**





## CHAPTER I. SHAIVAISM

**S**HAIVAISM is the religion of those who accept the authority of the Vedas and the Shivagamas and regard them as having been revealed by God.

The Vedas are intended for all; but the Shivagamas are meant only for the spiritually minded. All the four Vedas are still in existence. But most of the Shivagamas have disappeared. They were in existence in the time of Arulnandi Shivam, who had studied all of them and was hence called Sakalagama Panditer. Fortunately for us, he has included in his magnum opus, the Shivagnana Siddhiar, the essence of the most of the Agamas. The commentators of this book mention seventeen Shivagamas, which contain teachings identical with the more important teachings in Siddhiar. This shows that those Agamas existed in the times of these commentators. Besides Siddhiar, we have the Shivagnana Bodham, which is a portion of the Rourava Shivagama and is believed to be its essence. This was rendered into Tamil with a short commentary by Meikandar. These two Tamil books give us the philosophical portion (the Gnana Padam) of the Agamas. There are twelve other works in Tamil which supplement these, and form with them

what are called the fourteen Siddhanta Shastras. Of these, Irupa Irupathu was written by Arulnandi Shivam himself; seven or eight others were written by his disciple's disciple, Umaphathi Shivam. Thirumantram of Tirumular, believed to have been written more than two thousand years ago, also contains Shaiva philosophy. These fifteen works seem to be able to take the place of the philosophical portion of the Shivagamas.

Shaiva philosophy posits a God and only one God. Besides positing God, it also gives reasons in support of it.

The Universe as a whole undergoes change. For every change there must be a cause. Therefore, there must be a cause for the change in the Universe. This cause must be something different from the Universe. That which causes this is called God.

But it may be argued that it is the nature of the Universe to undergo change and that an outside cause is not necessary. \*But change cannot be the nature of a thing; for,

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\*Says Siddhiar: If it be said that the change the Universe undergoes is its nature it must be remembered that there can be no change in the nature of a thing. If it be said that it changes because its nature is so, then it has no nature and it is nothing.



first of all, we do not find anything which is changed by itself. Everything remains as it is unless it is subjected to an outside agency. Water remains water and does not become ice unless it is cooled by something else. Secondly, if it is the nature of a thing to change, we must find everything changing continually, and at random, and without reference to anything else. We should not even be surprised if a man suddenly changes into a pillar. Thirdly, if changing should be the nature of a thing, it loses its identity and is no longer that thing but a different one. So change cannot be said to be the quality of a thing. For example, if one of the right angles of a square changes into an acute angle it is no longer a square but a rhombus, and we never find a square becoming a rhombus by itself. Therefore, change cannot be the nature of a thing; the change in the Universe as a whole cannot be due to its nature. It must be caused by something which is not the Universe, and that which causes this is God.

Changes take place not only in the inorganic Universe. At one time, this earth had been part of the sun. It must have been a burning mass at the time of separation. Life was impossible in that burning mass. But we see life now, and this is a change; not merely

life, but life of such marvellous development as man; not merely man, but men of such wonderful intelligence as Einstein and Ramanujam. It is a tremendous change from lifelessness to the intelligence of Einstein, and the change must have been caused by something which is all-knowing and which Shaivaism calls God.

A reason for the belief in the existence of God comes from the need for protecting ourselves and our belongings. Everyone wants to be safe, and everyone wants his belongings also to be safe. Nobody wishes to be murdered or robbed. If he and his properties are to be safe, people must know what is right and be bound to do what is right. A man who believes in God and follows a particular religion finds out from its revelation what is right, and is bound by it to do the right.

The science of ethics has miserably failed in its attempt to discover a basis for discriminating right from wrong. Every ethical theory put forward by ethics has been found to be slippery. Tell an atheist that just as he has the right to claim the safety of his person and property others also have the right to claim the safety of their persons and properties and that he ought to respect their claim, he can

say "There is no such thing as right. I have no claim for my personal safety. What counts is might. If I do not have the might to protect my property, I must lose it. If I have the might to take another man's property, I take it. By might I mean the might of myself and of those who help me, including the State, if it happens to be on my side. I will stab or murder, steal or rob, break a house or set fire to it, if these will serve my interests, provided my safety is ensured. Even highly civilised countries like England and America, France and Germany, regard might as the supreme arbiter and have, on this basis, fought the two great World Wars of the present century. No sensible man will accept your dictum 'Do unto others what you wish that they should do unto you'. This is the dictum of weaklings and imbeciles. According to your line of reasoning, a lamb has as much right to live as yourself. But you slaughter it and eat it because you have the might to do so. An atheist is not bound to have any regard for morals\*.

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\*But there are atheists who are not only righteous but are even self-sacrificing. This is the result of their inherent nature, their culture, the high moral standard of those about them and so on, but, in spite of their atheism but, there are theists who are very unethical, in consequence of their inherent nature etc.

The existence of God and of His revelation must be postulated for the acceptance of moral laws. Siddhiar says “The true dharma is Shiva’s Law”†. It may be observed in this connection that it is only Shaivaism which prohibits all kinds of wrongs, including killing, meat-eating and drinking.

But there are those who very comfortably say “I have no need for God. I have a conscience, which tells me what is right and what is wrong. I will endeavour to obey it.” But, conscience is a myth. What a man calls conscience is nothing other than the decision of his intellect, based on his ideals, knowledge etc. There have been persons who at one time hated bribery, but later became ardent votaries of it. So putting in terms of conscience, at one time their conscience disapproved bribery, and at another time approved it. Orthodox meat-eaters have become orthodox vegetarians i. e. at one time their conscience approved meat-eating and at another time condemned it. Again, we see the conscience of one man approving murder for political purposes and the conscience of another man abhorring it. We thus see that conscience differs in the same man from time, and in different persons at the same time. Conscience is therefore altogether undependable.

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† இறைவன் சொன்னவாறு அறம்.

Morality can depend only on religion, and the existence of God has to be admitted for the maintenance of moral life.

Having thus demonstrated the need for the belief in the existence of God, our philosophy says that there can be only one God. We first arrived at the existence of God in our attempt to explain the change the Universe undergoes. God is thus the wielder of the Universe. There cannot be two beings each independently controlling the Universe. So the Veda says, "There is only one God; but sages call Him by different names."\*

The next teaching of Shāivaism is that we are all souls and that souls are realities. A reality cannot come out of nothing, and a reality which is not composite is eternal. The soul is not composite and is therefore eternal.

But there are those who deny the existence of the soul and regard the body as the individual. They hold that thinking is done by the nervous system in the brain. But nerves are mere chemical products and are therefore non-intelligent. If a man frequently repeats "7 times 12 is 84" this truth will come to him whenever he wishes to know what 7 times 12 is.

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\*Uma, Vinayaka, Subramania are different names of Shiva, indicating different aspects of him.

But intricate mathematical problems cannot be solved by such habit formations. There must, therefore, be something other than the body to do work of this kind. Shaiva philosophy says that which does this is the soul.

But another class of philosophers say that the solution of problems can be done by the mind and that the existence of the soul does not follow from this. In answer to this, Shaiva philosophy says that the mind is only a tool and not the agent. We control our minds in several ways. When the mind is prone to be idle, we sometimes press it to do the work in hand. When it starts a wrong act as a reflex, we mend it. The mind is thus only a tool and not the agent. The agent is what our philosophy calls the soul. Mind and body are its tools.

We also see that our knowledge is very limited. There are phenomena which even the greatest scientist is still unable to explain. We are therefore not omniscient. But, when we see men possessing varying amounts of knowledge, the jungle-dweller having a drop of knowledge, an ordinary graduate a well of knowledge, a professor a sea of knowledge and a Raman an ocean of knowledge, we have a right to infer that the soul is capable of omniscience. Since men are actually not omniscient, there must

be something which keeps down this omniscience. Our philosophy calls this Anava.

The next teaching of our philosophy is regarding the Ultimate cause of the inanimate Universe. There was a time when atoms were regarded as the ultimate cause of the physical Universe. But Siddhīar says\* that atoms cannot be the ultimate cause because they are themselves composed of other things. The Ultimate cause must be a non-composite thing, which our philosophy calls Maya.

The soul gains full knowledge by the gradual lifting of the anavic veil. This it can do only by experience. When a soul finds itself in a situation which is altogether new, it is unable to adjust itself correctly and does wrong. It suffers in consequence and discovers some mistake in the adjustment. The next time it finds itself in a similar situation, it corrects the mistake and makes a better adjustment. But even this adjustment may not be quite correct and it suffers in consequence. It thus discovers some other mistake. This discovery of mistakes is a permanent addition to the knowledge of the soul. To put this in philosophic language, we perform acts which are called Kārma, and

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\*காரிய மென்பதென்றை காரண அணுவை யென்றிற்  
காரியம் அவயவத்தாற் கண்டனம்.

experience the fruits of the Karma, which gives us additional knowledge. The attainment of such knowledge means slightly lifting of the anavic veil. It must be remembered that only acts which have a moral bearing are called Karma in our philosophy. Acts like solving mathematical problems and spinning cotton thread are not Karma in the philosophic sense and are referred to in this book as actions. Secondly, the knowledge obtained by experiencing the fruits of Karma is absolute knowledge unlike knowledge obtained through the intellect, such as scientific knowledge. A man may be an ocean of scientific knowledge and yet be inferior in spiritual knowledge to an illiterate jungle-dweller.

Our experiences are the result of three factors. One of these is our past Karma called prarabdha. The second is that portion of the Karma of the present birth called drishta-agamya, the third is our exertion or toil. The effects of these cannot cancel one another but may counter-act one another. For example, suppose, as the result of prarabdha, my house is burning and as a result of a good drishta Karma, a large number of people may just then appear on the scene, say, in a wedding procession and put out the fire immediately. In this case the drishta Karma, counteracts prarabdha. On the



other hand, if the house is reduced to ashes, I can rebuild it with the money that I earned by hard labour. In symbolic language, if our experience is denoted by  $y$ , our drishta Agamyā by  $x$ , our toil by  $z$  and prarabdha by  $c$ , we find that  $y = x + z + c$ . This shows that the more drishta agamyā we perform, the more we labour hard, the more pleasant will be our experience in this world. Our philosophy thus gives a strong stimulus to hard work.\*

Whereas, *pain is the consequence of wrong Karma, pleasure is the consequence of right Karma. This is the Law of Karma* While pain gives right understanding, pleasure confirms it. These consequences of Karma do not all reach the soul immediately after it is performed. The law is administered by God, and the pain or pleasure corresponding to a Karma is given to the soul at a time when its experience will give it the maximum benefit. If it reaches the soul in the birth in which it is committed it is called dhrishtam,, if in some subsequent birth, it is called adhrishtam; and if partly in some other birth and partly in some other birth, it is called dhrishta-dhrish-

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\*Valluvar Says : தெய்வத்தா லாகாதெனினும் முயற்சிதன்  
மெய்வருத்தக் கூலி தரும்.

These are called the fruits of Karma.

tam. Everything that we get, whether wealth or poverty, loss or gain, health or disease, is the fruit either of our action or our Karma. We cannot get anything except as the fruit of some action or Karma. People pray to God for certain things. If they ever get them, it is according to the law of Karma or as a reward for labour but not in consequence of their prayer. No one gets anything from God for mere begging†.

One of the greatest glories of Shaivaism is that it offers godliness to each and every soul without exception. Godliness cannot be attained, in a single birth. We do not know the soul though we are ourselves souls; and we know next to nothing of God. Our spiritual knowledge is thus very poor. We also know that our spiritual progress in this birth is almost negligible. It thus follows that we must take several births before we can become godly.

To summarise Shaiva philosophy:—There is one God. There are many souls. Their ability

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†Many people misinterpret 'வேண்டுவார் வேண்டுவதே ஈவான் கண்டாய்' and waste their time in begging God. The correct meaning of this passage seems to be that God gives those who pray only "what they actually need," but not everything thing they ask for. What they actually need are the fruits of their Karma, which they will have whether they ask for them or not. வேண்டுவது = what they need.

to know is hindered by Anava. This hindrance is gradually removed by their performing of Karma and experiencing its fruits. The law of Karma is "pain is the consequence of wrong doing, and pleasure is the consequence of right doing". Every soul without exception will ultimately attain divine bliss. This requires several births. The doctrine of rebirth is one of the characteristics of Shaiva philosophy. The anavic veil varies in hardness from soul to soul, which explains, not only inequality in the present situations of souls, but also in the time taken by them to attain divinity. Millions of souls have already attained it and millions are left who will attain it in future.

The evolution of the soul takes place in the mere presence of God. This consists of five elements. One of these is the soul taking a body so that it may perform Karma and get rid of the anavic barrier. This element is called creation (படைத்தல்). The body that the soul takes is such as will be fit to experience that portion of its past Karma called prarabdha\*. The body will be maintained till the whole prarabdha is exhausted. This element is called maintenance (காத்தல்). When prarabdha is

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\*Prarabdha is that part of past Karma which is experienced in a particular birth.

exhausted the body is destroyed. This is called dissolution (அழித்தல்). The weakening of the anavic grip that took place during that life is called suppression (மறைத்தல்). The granting of Divine bliss on the total removal of the Anavic barrier is called liberation (அருளல்). God's presence in virtue of which the soul undergoes evolution is called His Shakti. That which performs the first four acts is called the Adishakti (ஆதிசக்தி) or Tirodhana (திரோதான) Shakti, and that which performs the fifth act is called Arul Shakti. The two Shaktis are really one but are given different names during the performance of different acts. Anava, Maya and Karma are called Malams or Pasams.

Another glory of Shaivism is that it is consonant with life. We are dependent on God, and therefore feel bound to obey His laws. He loves us, and we love Him, adore Him and worship Him. But, there are several religions whose philosophy and life are poles asunder. There is a religion which says that every soul is created by God afresh and that every soul which commits sin is sent by God to eternal hell. There can be no human being who will not commit at least one sin in his life time. So every man is bound to feel that he will surely be sent to hell, having

been destined to go to hell, whether he commits a single sin or many sins. He prefers to commit a sin everytime it is found to be expedient. If the religion says that all those who believe in the founder of the religion will not go to hell, the believer would commit sins still more freely as he would never be sent to hell. Such a philosophy is not helpful to righteous life. Besides, he cannot be a good god who creates souls afresh and is pleased to doom most of them to eternal suffering in hell.

We shall now try to find out the elements in the concepts of God, Soul and Malam. As these are not material things, they have no form.\* God is an eternally knowing thing and is hence called Chit. He has therefore no need to think. He does not see things in parts as we do. He is all Love and this infinite Love leads the infinite souls to liberation. Since there is no one more powerful than He to produce any change in Him, He is changeless. Being changeless and being perfect, He is the highest reality and is hence called Sat. In His pre-

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\*God is said to have appeared to saints in certain forms. These are forms made to appear to them by his Arul, or rather they are forms of his Arul. Arul is everywhere present, but assumes certain forms at certain times, just as sea water sometimes assumes the form of an iceberg.

sence, the soul dwindles to nothing, as the light of a glow-worm does in sunlight. The Soul is therefore said to be Asat on this account. But, as Malam is non-intelligent and inanimate, the soul is Sat compared to it and Malam is regarded as Asat. So the soul is Sat-Asat.

According to Shaiva philosophy, the whole Universe obeys God's law, and everything that takes place is in accord with it. Since God is good, His law is good, and every phenomenon in the Universe must be good. There are several religions in this world, each of which is followed by a large number of people. Since it is God's law which places a person in a particular religion, that religion is the best for him for the time being. If he changes his religion, the new religion is the best for him for the time being. Shaiva philosophy has therefore no regular programme for proselytism. This is another glory of Shaivaism. Shaivaism regards the various religions as the rungs of ladder, the topmost of which reaches the feet of God Divine bliss. Says Siddhiar, "A soul follows alien religions, then enters those allied to Shaivaism, plods through the path of Smritis, enters the haven of Ashrams, practises rare Tapas, learns rare Vidyas, studies the Vedas and the right kind of Puranas and realises the truths of the Upanishads. It will then reach the Saiva Siddhanta. There it practises Charya, Kriya and Yoga, and attains

Gnana through which it reaches the Feet of Shiva.

Another corollary of the rule of the Universe by God's Law is that whether in this world or elsewhere there is nothing which is not good. That is, there is no evil; neither is there anywhere any suffering, usually called misery, which is not productive of good to the soul in this world or elsewhere. He is all good, all knowing, all powerful. It is therefore impossible for either evil or misery to find a place anywhere. It is out of ignorance that we regard good as evil, and a salutary life as misery. But there are religions which are based on the existence of misery, and which try to find the means of evading misery. They collapse on the discovery of the non-existence of misery.

Misery is suffering which is harmful to us. But there is no suffering which is really harmful. On the other hand, suffering is the result of wrong Karma and is a means of increasing our true knowledge and of weakening Anava. It is therefore of great value to the soul and ought to be welcomed. Secondly, it is altogether untrue that suffering is Universal. With most people, life in this world is on the whole rather pleasant. Sufferings come to them only occasionally. A few, no doubt, suffer more

than others. and even of these few, most people get used to it and hardly ever feel it keenly. Fortunately for us. our philosophy presents no such false conceptions and keeps us always happy.

Shaivaism is thus a bright and elevating religion. Far from being gloomy and depressing, it regards all men as good. Though they do wrong they do no evil\*. Wrong doing leads to painful experience which causes the attrition of Anava and corresponding spiritual advancement. Thus, even wrong doing† is good. and the wrong doer is a good man. The difference is that the wrong doer suffers and the right doer is happy. Wrong doing is generally indispensable to right doing. A child must write the letter "a" several times wrongly, before it can write it correctly. One must sink several times before one becomes a swimmer.

The Shaiva religion begins where all other religions end. To enter the Shaiva religion, one must possess ethical transcendence (பசுவினை

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\* It is impossible for an evil act to enter the Universe under the administration of God, who is all-knowing all-powerful and all-loving.

† Wrong doing is acting against God's Laws. Evil is that which is on the whole injurious to the Soul.



ஒப்பு), Anavic decadence, (மலபரி பாகம்) and spiritual illumination (சத்தி நிபாகம்). He must have been a master of righteousness, which has become a second nature in him. As a concomitant of this mastery, his Anava must have become fairly impotent. He sees that God is the only reality which concerns him and ignores other souls. By ignoring them, he gives up all thoughts of service or disservice to them. At a much earlier stage, he gave up disservice to them; now he gives up service also. This is called ethical transcendence. Actually, he does not give up service to other souls. He renders them service as service to them. Since God protects these other souls, he regards serving them as serving God.

Ethical transcendence and anavic decadence are attended by special spiritual illumination. This qualifies him for entry into Shaivaism. He gains admission to it by receiving Samaya Dheeksha. This section of Shaivaism is called charya. Here he renders bodily service in temples and performs pooja to one of the morphous images of Shiva. This service gives him further spiritual illumination and qualifies him for Vissha Dheeksha which places him in the Kriya section and then in the Yoga section. These lead him to abundance of spiritual illumination, in which he sees the

shadow of an identity of himself with God. Service to God is inconsistent with a feeling of identity with him. He therefore gives up service to Him. This is called religious transcendence (சிவ வினை ஒப்பு), because he regards serving God to be no better than not serving Him. He then gets the last Decksha the Nirvana Dheeksha, and enters the final section of Shaivaism, called Gnanam. Here he gets complete deliverance from Anava (முத்தி), gets full spiritual illumination (சிவஞானம்) and becomes one with God.

Each of these four sections has four subdivisions. There are thus sixteen stages in Shaivaism, each stage leading to the stage above it. If after ethical transcendence, one has to pass through sixteen stages and then only attain godliness what value can we attach to religions which without any serious programme offer divine bliss to everyone, including the most unrighteous of men. and solicit, tempt or compel them to join their fold? The divine bliss these religions profess to offer may be deemed to be on a par only with the M. A. degree conferred by some Universities for a few pieces of gold.

But the Shaivaism we ordinarily see is not the real Shaivaism (உண்மைச் சைவம்). It is what is called superficial Shaivaism உபாய

மார்க்கம்), adopted not by merit but by birth. I call myself a Shaivite because my father called himself a Shaivite and he called himself a Shaivite because his father called himself a Shaivite and so on until an ancestor is reached who was a real Shaivite. Just as kings of the present day, though solely by right of birth, live in all the glories of a king, so we live in all the glories of a Shaivite. We get Dheeksha from a Guru no more qualified to be a Guru than we are to be Shaivites. In consequence of Dheeksha we get into one or the other of the four sections of Shaivaism, and at the end get a funeral ceremony performed on us which would lead a fit soul to some Shivaloka. Post-funeral ceremonies, such as the Annual Shraddam, are poojas performed to the departed souls regarded as divine beings.

The question may be asked "why do you follow a religion for which you are not qualified?". Though I am not qualified for true Shaivaism, my birth qualifies me for what is called superficial Shaivaism and I am immensely benefitted by following it. I undoubtedly gain by wearing sacred ashes by the contemplation of Panchaksharam, by worship, by singing sacred hymns etc. This will in due course lead me, perhaps after several births, to true Shaivaism.

## A note on Paramukti

Those who attain Paramukti fall into two classes:— (a) those whose Prarabtham is exhausted at the same time as liberation from Anava; (b) those whose Prarabtham is not exhausted at the time of liberation. In the former case, as the Prarabtham has been exhausted, the body perishes immediately and the Soul gets freed from the three malams simultaneously. In the case of the second class of souls, Prarabtham remains and the body remains; and the Anava and Karma both remain. As they get liberation from Anava, while the body yet lives, they are called Jeevamuktas. The Prarabtham that is left would have a tendency to produce its effect on the Soul, but as there is no Anava to start a desire for action, it cannot succeed in inducing the Soul to react. It therefore tries to utilize for action the habits the soul has formed immediately before it attained Paramukti. This is the habit of regarding oneself as different from God. This idea, he easily checks, by the contemplation of the Panchadchara and he is thus altogether free from Vasana-malam. He can therefore never be assailed by Prarabtha. This habit is called Vasanamalam. It is compared to a potter's wheel which moves for sometime after the potter has stopped moving it. Just as this free motion of the wheel cannot do any work in the absence of the pot, so Prarabtham can have no effect on the Jeevamukta as he is free from Anava. But there are reckless dolts who regard giving vent to sexual desire as a case of Vasanamalam. The Soul gave up its illicit sex relation long before the Soul obtained the Samayadeekshai and became a Saivite. This is millions of births away from the true Vasanamalan. It is also noteworthy that the Pramuktas have infinite love for other beings and take the utmost care when they gather flowers for Shiva Poojai. They pick them; but never pluck them as that would hurt the trees.

## CHAPTER II. SHAIVA SACRED BOOKS

THE Vedas and the Shaiva Agamas are regarded by Shaivites as God-given. These contain truths which cannot be reached by the human intellect and are therefore believed to have come from God. Our saints such as Thirumular, Manickavachagar, the Devarakarar and Arulnandhi have said that these works come from God\*. Every religion has its own sacred books supposed to have come either from God or from saint. The revelation of the Christians is the Bible, that of Muslims is the Koran, that of Buddhists the tripitaka, and so on. Just as no one would be regarded as a Christian who denies the sacredness of the Bible or as a Muslim who denies the sacredness of the Koran, so no one would be regarded as a Shaivite who refuses to accept this supreme authority of the Vedas and Shaivagamas.

As the Vedas are the authoritative works of several other religions also and all have the right to read them, they are still in existence.

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\*God is said to have illumined the purest class of Souls, Vignana Kalars, who were then able to see truths. These are the truths contained in the Vedas and Shaivagamas. These souls taught them to souls among Pralayakalars from whom they spread to all fit souls who were qualified for Nirvana Dheeksha.

and have gone even to Europe and America. But the Shaivagamas, held sacred only by the Shaivites and accessible only to those who have had the final Deeksha have been less fortunate. Most of them seem to have disappeared within the last two centuries. Sivagnana Munivar who lived about two hundred years ago, refers to the Shivagamas in his commentaries, but does not complain of the loss of any of them. English education attracted the best of intellects during the last one hundred years and left none to study the Shaivagamas which must therefore, have either been thrown away or eaten by white ants.

Fortunately for us the Kiriya portion of the Agamas are safe in the hands of our priests, and Gnana portion has been handed to us in Tamil by our Tamil saints. Thirumoolar who seems to have lived more than two thousand years\* ago has given us in his Tirumantram some portions of the Gnana section of the Shaivagamas. Shivagnanabodam which is a portion of the Rourava Agama and also its essence was taught by the Paramacharia to Manicavachakar about fifteen† centuries ago. He reproduced some teachings of Shivagnana-bodam

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\* These dates are not reliable.

† These dates are not accurate.

in his Thiruvachakam. Paranjothimunivar taught the same Sivagnana-bodham to Meihandhadhevar and asked him to translate it into Tamil; In obedience to his Guru's order, Meihandadhevar translated it into Tamil and added some notes. It has thus been possible for us to have in Tamil the Shivagnana-bodham which is the essence of the Shaivagamas. Meihandadhevar taught this to his disciple Arulnandhi Shivam and asked him to expand Shivananabodham into a comprehensive Agamic work. Arulnandhishivam, therefore, enlarged it by introducing a good deal of matter taken from the Agamas and named Shiyagnanasiddhiar, Commentators of Shivagnanasiddhiar refer to seventeen Shaivagamas which contain truths identical with some of these found in Siddhiar. Arulnandi supplemented Siddhiar by Irupa-irupahtoo. Our Agamas are thus safe in our own language in the works of Meihandar and Arulnandiar, Agamic truths are also found in Devaram. Arulnandi Sivam's disciple's—disciple Umapathi-Sivam, is said to have written eight works such as Shivapragasam and Thiruvvarudpayan which contain some Agamic truths. Three saints who preceded Meihandar wrote Tiruvunthiar, Tirukalitupadiar and Unmaivilakkam. These fourteen works are now called Meihanda shashtrams. To these may be added Shivadharmothram and Sadashivarupam of which the former is derived

from Sravakta Agama and the latter is a translation of a portion of Vatula Agama.

The Vedas and Agamas are in Sanskrit which was the common language of India for conveying sastric truths.\* Just as Sanskrit was the common language of the whole India, so the Vedas were the common revelations of all the religions of India. They are accepted as revelations by Shaivites, Vishnavites, Shaktistes etc; who have interpreted them to suit the philosophies contained in their respective Agamas. They consist of three sections dealing respectively with rituals, worship, and truths (Kanma, Upasana, Gnana). The image used for rituals and worship is fire (Shivagni).

The Agamas consist of four sections; Charya, Kriya, Yoga & Gnana, Shivagnana Munivar says† that there are slight differences among the Agamas, in observance (Kriya). These are due to differences in times and in capacities of Souls. But there can be no difference in the Gnana section, as truth is independent of circumstances. The observances prescribed in the Agamas have been codified into paddhathies for ready use

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\* Sanskrit is as much our language as tamil language. It must be remembered that Sanskrit was never a spoken language. The spoken language of North India is Prakritum.

† Shivagnana bhashyam p. 9. Palvanam Pillai's Edition.



and reference. The Charya section and Kriya section of the Agamas are safe in these paddhathies.

The Thiruvachagam of Manickavasagar is both praise of God and philosophy. It consists of fifty one pathikams containing 658 stanzas. The philosophy which each pathikam teaches is given at its tōp. But not being endowed with higher knowledge, we are unable to discover the philosophical truths contained in the pathikams. The utmost we can make out is the surface literal meaning which itself is of infinite value to us. The hymns thrill with the Grace of God, and melt the hearts of the singers and hearers. There is a proverb "that heart can never melt which Thiruvachagam cannot melt." A staunch Roman Catholic student who happened to read Thiruvachagam became a convert to Shaivaism as a result of reading it.\* Dr. G. U. Pope of the Oxford University, though a Christian, saw its great value and translated it into English. It is regarded as an image of God. Several Shaivites identify it with Lord Natarajah and perform Poojah to it. It is one of the most glorious possessions of the Shaivites. One would rather live in this earth with Thiruvachagam than in heaven without it.\*

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\*He is now occupying a high post in Government service in Ceylon.

Next in order of time come the Devarams. These were the compositions of Appar, Sambandar, and Sundarar and are more voluminous than Thiruvachagam. An anonymous sage has given the headings dealt with by the twenty-five pathigams, which form the Agasthiar Thevara Thiraddu. Whether other pathikams also speak of a particular philosophic topic we are not in a position to say. Even these surface meanings are of great value to us. But infinitely more valuable than philosophic truths and surface truth is the Grace of God present in them. This is available to every devout singer whether literate or illiterate. It heals him. Just as a patient who does not know the properties or even the names of the ingredients of a medicine is fully benefitted, so a singer who knows neither the philosophic nor the surface meaning of a hymn gets the benefit.

No Shaivite can justify his birth as a Shaivite if he has not studied at least ten pathikams of Thiruvachagam or Devaram; and a Shaivite can be proud of himself if he has studied the whole of Thiruvachagam or about fifty pathikams of Devaram. There are some other saints also, like Pattanathar and Thayumanavar whose hymns are held sacred.

After these come the Puranas which, however, are not authoritative. They have puranic

garb and a poetic garb of which they must be divested before the truth in them can be discovered. The author of Kandapurānam says that men of Wisdom must seek and find out the truths contained in the Puranas, meaning thereby that truth is not always on the surface of Puranas. Sri la Sri Arumuga Navalar says that none of the three weddings described in the Kandapurānam ever happened and that they symbolise the manifestation of shakthi at the time of creation of the Universe and that anyone who interprets these portions literally go to hell along with the hearers.

Puranic Stories which do not accord with shastric truths must either be interpreted philosophically or be shelved.

If one wants to eat cocoanut, one must remove the husk and the shell. No one regards the husk as the edible portion and bites it.

But, there are books misnamed Puranas, which are full of filth and chaff and are disowned by us.

## CHAPTER III. SACRED ASHES

THE highest, the simplest and the universal gift of Shaivaism to its followers is the Sacred Ashes, Thiru-Neeru. The Sanskrit name for this is Vibhooti,\* which means a priceless treasure and a superhuman power. It is the highest gift because it is the image of the Love of God, the Parashakti. It is simple because it is obtainable everywhere and for nothing. It is universal because everyone who claims to be a Shaivite is in possession of it. No one is a Shaivite who does not wear it.

Agastyar's Deyara-tirattu (தேவாரத்திரட்டு) consists of twentyfive pathikams and the significance of each of these is given in a poem composed by an anonymous sage. Sambandher's Thiruncetuppathikam is one of these twentyfive. The sage says that this pathikam is a description of Parashakti, the Grace of God, also called Umadevi. His very words are நீற்றுப் பதிகம் நிகழ்த்துங்காலே மாற்றுப் பரையின் வரலா றாகும். But it does not require a sage to discover from the pathikam that Thiru-neeru is Parashakti.

\* Other names of Sacred Ashes are பசிதம் (= ஒளி யைத் தருவது அஃதாவது ஞானத்தைத் தருவது); பஸ்மம் (= பாவங்களைத் தடுப்பது); கூரம் (= தடைகளை அறுப்பது; ரட்சை (= காப்பது).

Sambander gives in the pathikam as many as fifty-four characteristics of Thiru-neeru, a great many of which are well-known attributes of Shiva Shakti. He has identified Thiru-Neeru (மந்திரமாவது நீறு) with the mantram which according to Siddhiar (1-58) is caused and influenced by Shiva Shakti (சத்திதான் பிரேரித்து பிண்தான் அடிட்டித்துக் கொண்டு) It is said to give liberation to the soul (முத்தி தருவது நீறு), which the Shiva Shakti does. It gives Gnanam (போதம் தருவது நீறு) which is given by Shiva Shakti.

When, therefore, we wear Thiru-Neeru, we wear Shiva Shakti, the Love of God. Our forehead and other parts of the body on which we wear Thiru-Neeru become the sacred abode of Shiva Shakti. When we wear it we generally repeat the great mantram "Shiva, Shiva". This mantram is the invocation for the presence of Shiva Shakti in the Thiru-Neeru, a presence such as that of ghee in curd. We wear it on the forehead, which is the seat of thoughts, and on the chest which is the seat of feelings. If worn in the right spirit, Thiru-Neeru induces right thoughts and right feelings.

The orthodox method of wearing Sacred Ashes\* endows it with the presence of Shiva.

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\*Shaiva Anushtanam

Shakti and practically identifies it with the Shakti. This method consists of four processes:

(1) The eleven great mantrams are infused into it by repeating them over it so that the Shiva Shakti present in the mantrams may be specially present in the Sacred Ashes.

(2) Consecrated water is poured on it with the utterance of a mantram and is mixed with the utterance of another mantram.

(3) It is worn on the crown of the head, † on the forehead, † on the chest, † on the navel † and on several other parts of the body with the mantrams in which Shiva Shakti is present respectively as the giver of Divine Bliss (Shivanandam,\* of the suppression of Malam,\* of rest after the chain of births,\* of protection\* and of creation.)

(4) The remaining Sacred Ashes is mixed with additional water and the five great mantrams are impressed on it; it is then sprinkled on the head. In this method, the Sacred Ashes is worn on three lines

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† These are mystic spiritual centres.

\* These are respectively called அருளல், மறைத்தல், அழித்தல், காத்தல், படைத்தல்.

which are respectively Kriya Shakti, Ichcha Shakti and Gnana Shakti. These Shaktis are forms of Parashakti (Kalāgnirudra Upanishad 7-9).

If, therefore, we wear Sacred Ashes in the right way and in the right spirit our actions (Kriya), desires (ichcha), and understanding (gnana) get sublimated; no wrong desires or thoughts can arise in us. The consciousness of the presence of Parashakti in us gives room only for noble and holy thoughts. We feel that our Mother Umadevi, is present in us. If circumstances should conspire to lead us to a wrong deed, this thought of the presence of the Shiva Shakti in us can effectively thwart this attempt and make us their master instead of being mastered by them. We tell ourselves, "How can we who are the sacred abodes of Shiva Shakti condescend to entertain the thought of doing a wrong and foolish deed? This deed can gain for us some worldly end but we will not ignore Shiva Shakti to achieve this ignoble end."

Divine presence in Sacred Ashes is still more pronounced when it has been used to bathe a Shiva Lingam or some other sacred image. This is also true of Sacred Ashes offered by saintly persons. The Sacred Ashes given by Tilakavatiyar to Appar kindled his passionate

love for Shiva, which had been lying dormant in him. There was a time when the temple-priest was saintly and worshippers longed to get Sacred Ashes from him.

Everyone of our Saints has sung praises of Thiru-Neeru and have also exhorted us to wear it with devotion. Manickavachakar says, “If desirous of wearing Thiru-Neeru, wear it *in abundance.....*” (புசித்தான் திருநீறே நிறையப்பூசி). This abundance is a sign of our real love for Parashakti. If it is worn niggardly, it shows half-heartedness, absence of due regard and ignorance of its being the abode of Parashakti. Umapatishivam regards as unholy persons those whose hearts are dead to Sacred Ashes and to the Shivalayam (திருநீறும் சிவாயமும் உள்ளத்துட் சென்ற புலையர்பாற் செல்லாதே). Manickavachakar says in another place that though he does not dread things ordinarily dreaded such as poisonous snakes and sharp arrows, he does dread the sight of those Shaivites who do not wear Sacred Ashes (வெண்ணீறணிகிலாதவரைக்கண்டால் அம்ம நாம் அஞ்சுமாறே).

Sacred Ashes should be available everywhere in the Shaiva world. It is obtained from burnt dung of the cow, an animal held in veneration by us. All places inhabited by Shaivites have cows. Besides, fortunately or unfortunately, it is sold everywhere.



## CHAPTER IV. WORSHIP

THE core of worship is the thought, of God which undoubtedly, is the sweetest of all thoughts says Apparswamikal "O men, please come; just a word. If I give you a fruit, will you be able to eat it? That Pure Thing, that Lord who wins all souls to His Feet, is a fruit very sweet, indeed to those free from faults."\* To enjoy fully the thought of God, we must be free from faults. As we have faults, we cannot have that infinite bliss enjoyed by saintly souls. But we can get at least limited joy if we turn our thoughts to God and worship Him. The joy, though limited, is superior in quality to all other joys and is the highest within our reach.

Umapatishivam says, "In sublimity, in the difficulty of comprehension and of access and in endless love, He has no equal." Let us try to understand the four points. The stars in the sky are numberless. Of these stars, our Sun is the smallest. Still, it is 1,300,000 times bigger than our earth, such a vast universe

\* மனிதர்கள் இங்கே வம்ஓன்று சொல்கிறேன்  
கனிதந்தால் கனி தின்னீவுப் வல்லீரே  
புனிதன் பொற்கழ லீச னெனுங்களி  
இனிது சாலவும் ஏசற் றவர்கட்கே.

is nothing before Him. Moreover, the inanimate, non-intelligent universe is nothing before us, souls. The bringing to my consciousness these great truths is my first step in worship. Seeing that I am infinitely superior to the universe itself I cannot set any value on the things of this world. Since a thing of this world is a speck in this world which again is a speck in the universe, such things of this world as friendship and enmity, wealth and want, relationship and non-relationship, attractions and repulsions, adorations and abuses are of no consequence to me. They cannot captivate my mind, still less take possession of me. I am free from thoughts of them. My thought is only on God and on His infinite Love. I contemplate and sing songs in praise of Him. There are numerous songs in Tamil, which only praise Him and His Love. The following songs are known to every Shaivite and contain nothing but praise.

உலகெலா முணர்ந் தோதற் கரியவன்  
 நிலவு லாவிய நீர்மலி வேணியன்  
 அலகில் சோதியன் அம்பலத் தாடுவான்  
 மலர்சி லம்படி வாழ்த்தி வணங்குவாம்.

- (2) மூவிரு முகங்கள் போற்றி முகம்பொழி கருணை போற்றி  
 ஏவரும் துதிக்க நின்ற வீராறு தோள்போற்றி காஞ்சி  
 மாவடி வைகும் செவ்வேள் மலரடி போற்றி யன்னுன்  
 செவலும்மயிலும்போற்றி திருக்கைவேல் போற்றிபோற்றி.

(3) தந்ததுன் றன்னைக் கொண்டதென் றன்னைச்  
 சங்கரா ஆர்கொலோ சதுரர்  
 அந்தமொன் றில்லா ஆனந்தம் பெற்றேன்  
 யாதூர் பெற்றதொன் றென்பால்  
 சிந்தையே கோயில் கொண்டஎம் பெருமான்  
 திருப்பெருத் துறையுறை சிவனே  
 எந்தையே ஈசா உடலிடம் கொண்டாய்  
 யானிதற் கிலனோர் கைம்மாறே.

The second step in worship is the consciousness of the infinite greatness of God and of my nothingness before him. If I regard Him as the sun, I become a glow worm. Being nothing before Him, I cannot think of anything pertaining to myself. I can think only of Him. I think of his endless Love, the Love. That performs the Five Great Acts (ஐந்தொழில்) for the liberation of souls and for the granting of endless bliss to them. I sing praises of Him. I offer Him flowers to the accompaniment of sacred mantrams. I lead a virtuous life. The best songs for praising God are these of our four great Saints, of Pattinathar and of Thayumanavar.

Worship thus consists of five steps or elements. The first of these is the freedom from feelings towards thing of this world; the second is spiritual contemplation; the third is adoration; the fourth is the offering of mantric flowers and the fifth is the purification of the mind leading to a virtuous life. This is beautifully

enumerated in a single stanza of Sivagnana Siddhiar:—

மனமது நினைய வாக்கு வழுத்தமந் திரங்கள் சொல்ல  
இனமலர் கையிற் கொண்டங் கிச்சித்த தெய்வம் போற்றி  
சினமுத வகற்றி வாழும் செயலற மானு லீயார்க்கும்  
முனமொரு தெய்வ மெங்கும் செயற்குமுன் னிலையா மன்றே.

This form of worship in which both the world and the self are ignored is adopted in the worship of Paramashivam.

In the worship of Parashakti, we contemplate not only God but ourselves also. It is Parashakti, which unites us with God. We cannot therefore think of Her without introducing ourselves. Parashakti is His Love and the thought of Love must include two things. It is therefore essential that in this worship we give a place to ourselves too. This place cannot get beyond the thought of our being the loved ones of hers. She is the giver of endless bliss which is of greater value to us than the mother's milk is to the child. She is, at present, our refuge. She is with us and joins us with God.

In the third form of worship, even the universe cannot be ignored. In this, we contemplate the Adishakti (ஆதிசக்தி) which frees us from the rest of the universe viz. Anava Karma and Maya. Anava has blinded us, does

not allow us to see the truth and has practically taken possession of us. It is Adishakti which is trying to give us sight, to show us the truth and liberate us from Anava. As Shiva-gnanabodham and Siddhiar well put it, the soul is in the hands of savages and believes itself to be a savage. God in his endless Mercy tells the soul that it is His child and takes it away from them. These three forms of worship find expression in the songs of our Saints, For example, in

முத்திரெறி யறியாத மூர்க்கரோடு முயல்வேனைப்  
பத்திரெறி யறிவித்துப் பழவினைகள் பாறும்வண்ணஞ்  
சித்தமல மறுவித்துச் சிவமாக்கி யெனையாண்ட  
அத்தனைனக் கருளியவா றூர்பெறுவா ரச்சோவே.

from beginning to சித்தமலமறுவித்து may be supposed to refer to Adishakti, சிவமாக்கி to Parashakti, எனையாண்ட அத்தன் to Paramashivam. The worshipper thus realises that God has endless Love for him and responds to that Love by himself loving Him. That love begets love is a matter of everyday experience. God's Love for me induces love for Him. One requisite of love is acting as agreeably as possible to the lover. As a result of my love I obey His law as revealed in the Agama. Just as in worldly affairs a thing that I like most comes to my mind at all times, the thought of God comes to me even when I am busy other-

wise. We also see that the laws He made are for our own benefit, however unpleasant they may sometimes appear to be. Thus in obeying Him, our love for Him manifests itself and works for our everlasting welfare.

Though He loves us all in the same way we do not love Him with equal intensity. The Shivagamas have graded our love for God into servant-love, son-love, friend-love and identity-love and have prescribed different forms of worship to these four grades. These are respectively Charya, Kiriya, Yoga and Gnana.

The Charya form of worship consists in rendering bodily service in temples,† service to devotees and poojah to any one of the well-defined images as those of Maheswara, Vinayaka and Subrahmaniam. In the Kiriya grade the love is manifested in poojah to the Shiva Lingam. Those in the Charaya grade can also

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† Appar describes this service in the following thevaram:

நிலைபெறு மாறெண்ணுதியே நெஞ்சே நீவா  
 நித்தலுமெம் பிரானுடைய கோயில்புக்குப்  
 புலர்வதன்முன் னலகிட்டு மெழுக்குமிட்டுப்  
 பூமலை புணைந்தேத்திப் புகழ்ந்துபாடித்  
 தலையாரக்கும் பிட்டுக் கூத்தமாடிச்  
 சங்கரா சய போற்றி போற்றி யென்று  
 மலைபுனல் சேர் செஞ்சடை யெம்மாதீயென்று  
 மாஞ்சார வென்றென் றேயலரூ நிலவே.

worship the Shiva Lingam but cannot perform the poojah. Whereas in the first grade there is more exercise to the body than to the mind and in the second grade more to the mind than to the body, worship in the Yoga grade is purely mental. In these three grades the worshipper regards God as different from himself and uses images for worship. In the fourth grade, the worshipper identifies himself with God and finally becomes one with Him, which is the ultimate goal.

There is another form of our approach to God which can hardly be called worship. In this form, importance is attached to the body and to things concerned with the body. Thoughts of personal welfare, of the welfare of wife and children, of wealth, position, ambition etc, fill the heart of the worshipper who prays for these. These thoughts are inconsistent with worship. They cannot co-exist with the thought of God. Such consideration can find no place in the presence of God. These are functions of Anava† and it must be our sincere endeavour to belittle these as much as possible. Besides, we have ample time to pay attention to these all the time we do not worship and we may think of these if we wish. If we spend an hour a day in worship we can

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† The word is used in the algebraic sense.

devote to these the remaining fifteen hours during which we are awake. Some of these we get as the result of past Karma, some others by hard work and others we may never get. Worship has nothing to do with these things. We derive only what our Karma entitles us to. We shall not attain any good for the merely asking God for it.\* If we could, the Law of Karma would fall to the ground, and with it our religion too. Everyone who begs for favour from God gets only a few of those he begs from God. These reach him as Karmic effects. These he would have got even without begging for them. Everyday we get endless things without asking God for them. Atheists evidently get a great many of the things they wish to have without any appeal to God. It is thus waste of breath to beg favour from God † Cases

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\* No one can get from an examiner marks he is not entitled to however much he may beg him.

† This is an irrefutable piece of argument. But, there are people who are anxious to get over it by quoting Devaram or Tiruvachakam, in which requests appear to be made. First of all, we may not know their inner meanings. Secondly, the saints are infinitely superior to us in possessing shivagnanam, and we ought not to venture to pass any judgment on any act of theirs. One might as well attempt to sound the sea with a fox's tail as to attempt to understand the genesis of their action.



are mentioned in our Puranas of men who performed penances and got from God worldly ends which are only wages. Markandeyar's life is said to have been prolonged as his wages for his poojah.

மைந்த நீ நமை வழத்தி மாசிலா  
முந்து பூசனை முயன்ற தன்மையால்  
அந்த மில்லதோர் ஆயுள் நிற்குயாம்  
தந்து நல்கினும் என்று சாற்றினான்.

## CHAPTER V. PLACES OF WORSHIP

THE home and the temple are the usual places of worship. To a religious man, any place is good enough for worship. Such a man has said, "Think of the Feet of Shiva at all times whether sitting or standing, lying or walking."† With most people, worship at home is short and simple. Immediately after wash they devote a few minutes to worship. Some sing a few sacred songs. Some others repeat a mantram a hundred times with their minds fixed on God. Some others perform Sandhya Vandanam (சந்தியாவந்தனம்) which includes the above two items also. A few perform poojah which is a long form of worship. Just before each meal, most people have a short form of worship. A common practice is to wash the face and hands and to wear Thiru-Neeru with a few repetitions of some mantram. A good many contemplate God on going to bed and on rising from bed.

In the temple, the mind gets most attuned to worship during the poojah which is attended by elevating associations. The temple is equipped with everything necessary for worship and is as

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† நின்று மிருந்துங் கிடந்தும் நடந்தும்நினை  
என்றும் சிவன்றூ ளினை.

superior to the home in the facilities for worship as a school is to a home in the conveniences for study. The unique value of temple worship is recognised not only by the Shaiva religion but by every other religion also. Protestant Christians who use only an empty hall as their place of worship regard it as indispensable to their religious life. Christians call their places of worship the Church which means God's abode. They value it so highly that the word has come to mean religion itself. For example, the Church of England means the religion of the English State. Our Saints regard the temple as the life-centre of a village or town. Appar says "The town without a temple is not a town; it is mere jungle."\* He means that the inhabitants of the place are no better than jungle trees. Umapatishivam tells his mind. "Do not go to those Chandalas whose hearts have killed the thought of Shivalayam." All religionists regard the temple as a sacred place where God's presence is specially felt and which serves as a place of worship and nothing else.

A Shaivite goes to temple after bath but before meals. The bath tones the brain and fits the mind for deep contemplation. A light stomach is helpful to concentration and self-

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\* திருக்கோயி லில்லாத திருவி லூரும்.....அடவிகாடே

control. On his way to temple, he is enjoined to think of God, repeating some mantram or sacred songs. He is thus safe from distraction on the way. When he enters the temple he prostrates and worships, hallowing both his body and his mind. He gets in and finds himself in front of the sacred presence of God.

The temple image is trebly divine. It is called Vighram, which means a body. Just as we identify ourselves with our bodies we identify God with a Vighram.

Secondly, the images signify God. One of the most significant of these is that of Nataraja. The ring which encircles it (சூருவாசி) is Pranava. The Pranava consists of five sounds representing respectively God, Parashakti, the soul, Adishakti and Malams, i. e. God and the whole universe. The drum † in one of the right hands indicates creatorship. The other right indicates protection. It tells you not to be afraid of anything. The fire in one hand means destruction. The right foot pressing down the giant shows the crushing of Anava. The uplifted foot

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† The ordinary drum produces sound, which is motion; and the universe is mere motion.

offers Divine Bliss.\* The smile is the welcome offered to the worshippers.

Besides symbolising the Grace of God they also influence the worshipper. The drum reminds him of the fact that he was created for the attainment of oneness with God and he must therefore lead a religious life. The uplifted hand teaches him that he need have no fear at all, but he should do the\* right with no thought of success or failure. The fire teaches him that it may overtake him at any time and he must therefore make the best use of his talents and time. The right foot induces him to crush anavic desires. The uplifted foot offers to him Divine Bliss, which is his ultimate goal, and towards which he ought to march straight, without deviation.

The stimulus given by these symbols produces an appropriate reaction in the worshipper. Seeing the symbol of creation he realises that he was created by God for the purpose of attaining Divine Bliss and that he must therefore endeavour to make himself Shivamayam by clothing his thoughts, words and deeds with

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\* தோற்றம் துடியதனில் தோயும் திதிஅமைப்பில்  
சாற்றியிடும் அங்கியிலே சங்காரம்—ஊற்றமா  
ஊன்று மலர்ப்பதத்தில் உற்ற திரோத முத்தி  
நான்ற மலர்ப்பதத்தே நாடு.

his love for God. The hand which symbolises protection causes the response in the worshipper of leading a moral and a religious life. His response to the third hand is one of hard work. As death may occur at any time, the present time is everything to him and the future is undependable. He responds to the right foot by subjugating his desires and keeping them under control. In response to the uplifted foot, he loves God with all his heart and constantly thinks of His Sacred Feet. Most other images have two hands called Abhayam and Varadam. The former offers protection and the latter offers Divine Bliss.

The Shiva Lingam intended for the more advanced souls is more concentrated in its significance. The Lingam indicates Gnanam (knowing) and its seat indicates Kriya (doingness). The former shows that God is all knowing and is the source of all knowledge and the latter that He is the Lord who performs the Pancha-kriyam. As Parameshwaram, He is beyond us and is unrelated to us; as Pati, He is in us and with us, our liberator and bliss-giver, liberating us by Shristi, Sthithi, Samharam and Tirobhavam and giving bliss by Anugraham. The word Lingam is a compound of "layam" and "gam" which mean He who causes the involution and evolution (of the animate and inanimate universe).

Another very significant image of God is the sun. It is more than a millien times larger than the earth and gives us an idea of the greatness of God, which no other image can give so tangibly and convincingly. In its presence, living beings are born, live and die in this earth. This shows how, in the mere presence of God, the whole universe undergoes evolution and involution. The worship of God in the sun is the very first item of Shivapoojah.

Thirdly, in the installation ceremony (Prathishtya) of an image, the mantric form of God is impressed on the image. This mantric form over-shadows the stone or metal of which it is made and stands before us as God Himself. Sages say\* that in the mantric form God is as visibly present as butter in curd. The daily mantric poojah performed after the installation makes the presence more and more visible. Just as, if the curd is churned, the butter comes out in its true form, so if we worship God with love and knowledge, He will bless us with His Darsanam.\* Temples visited by Saints are more sacred than others as their invocation of God produces a more lasting effect than the usual installation ceremony.

\*Says Appar: *விறகிற்றீயினன் பாலிற்படு நெர் போல்  
மறைய சின் றுளன் மாமணிச் சோதியான்  
உறவு கோல் நடடுணர்வு கயிற்றினால்  
முறுக் வாங்கிக் கடைய முன் னிற்குமே.*

We now come to the poojah performed in temples, the most important items of which are bathing the image (abishekam), making offerings (naivedyam), waving of lights, offering of flowers and leaves and adorning. We bathe God with milk and ghee<sup>1</sup> which symbolise our love, we offer rice and fruits which symbolise our mind.<sup>2</sup> Incense and light (தூபதீபம்)<sup>3</sup> are intended for the illumination of the soul by Shivagnanam. Of these two, incense is intended to suppress Anava and the light is intended to be the gift of spiritual illumination. The flowers and leaves that we offer are our piety.<sup>4</sup> The camphor light that is waved indi-

1 Appar says:

“நேயமே நெய்யும் பாலாய்”

2 Sadashivarupam says:

“மன அமைதி பிறத்தற் பொருட்டு  
நை வேத்திய முகவாசமும் நல்கி”.

3 Sadashivarupam says:

“நூன விளக்கம் நண்ணுதற் பொருட்டுத்  
தூப தீபம் துதைந்தினி தளித்து”.

Sambandher says:

“ஊனில் உயிர்ப்பினை ஒடுக்கி ஒண்கடர்,  
நூன விளக்கினை ஏற்றி”.

4 Sambandher says:

“சித்தம் தெளிவிர்கள் அத்தனாரரைப்  
பத்தி மலர்தூவ முத்தி ஆகுமே”.

Sadashivarupam says:

“நறு மலரதனை நல்வீட்டின்பம்  
குறுகுதலேது வாகவும் கொடுத்து”.



cates becoming one with God<sup>5</sup>. Adoration consists of praises which are generally songs sung by Saints. Worship thus consists of showering our love on God, of fixing the mind on Him, of suppressing Anava, of getting spiritual illumination and thus endeavouring to become one with him. Love and Gnanam radiate from the image, destroy anavie power and give us bliss and spiritual knowledge. The last item in worship is the most glorious part of it. The worshipper offers to God the fruits of his worship. Since worship is a Karma, it is bound to give the worshipper its fruits which would be most salutary to him. But the worshipper does not worship for the sake of any reward. He worships God because his love for Him impelled him to worship Him. He worships God for his personal satisfaction, to satisfy his burning desire to worship Him. He would not, therefore, accept any reward for the worship. But whether he wants it or not, he will assuredly get it by the Law of Karma. In order, therefore, to avoid it, he offers it to God. While surrendering the fruits of his worship to the Lord, he surrenders himself also to Him. Though the surrender of the fruits

•• 5 Thayumanavar says:

‘ திதணையாக் கர்ப்பூர திப மென நான் கண்ட  
சோதியுடன் ஒன்றாகித் துருசுறுப்பது எந்நாளோ’.

of worship automatically accompanies the surrender of the worshipper to God, he surrenders them separately for fear that his self-surrender may not be quite effective, although self-surrender is the alpha and omega of worship. Those who offer the fruits of their worship to God perform their worship in order to satisfy the desire which arises out of intense love for God. This kind of worship is said to be Nishkama which means without object to be gained.

But there are others who are not prepared to give them up. At the end of the poojah, they offer worship to Chandeesar and obtain through him the reward for their poojah. This reward is usually spiritual illumination or Gnanam†. A third class of worshippers have particular object in view and according to the Puranas some of them have gained their objects.

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† Siddhyar says :

“ புண்ணியனைப் பூசித்த புண்ணியத்தினாலே  
நண்ணிய ஞானத்தால் ”

## CHAPTER VI. PANCHAKSHARAM

THE highest glory of Shaivism is the Panchaksharam—Unlike the Sacred Ashes and the temple, it is not available to all. A Shaivite can get it only from a Guru, at a deeksha. Deeksha is a ceremony in which Gnanam is given and Malaṁ is destroyed. This word is a compound of da (=to give) and kshi (=to destroy). The Gnanam that is given is the Panchaksharam which literally means five letters† These five letters contain the whole universe of true knowledge. Umapatishivam says, “The Agamas, the Vedas and other works containing ultimate truths form the five letters.”§ Those who study these five letters will see for themselves the truth of Umapatishivam’s words.

The five letters include (1) Shiva (2) His Grace which unites the soul with Him (3) the soul (4) His Grace which exhausts the energy of Malaṁ and (5) the Malaṁ. Thus, the Panchaksharam includes God, the animate and non-animate universe. There is nothing, we can think of which is not included in it. Malaṁ includes Anava, Maya and Karma. Panchaksharam

† Pancha = five ; akshara = letter.

§ அருள் நூலும் ஆரணமும் அல்லாதும் ஐந்தின்  
பொருள் நூல் தெரியப் புகின்.

not only includes all entities but also shows the relationship in which they stand. The evolution of the soul, its past, present and future are all very clearly pictured in it. The five letters may be arranged in two ways. In one of these, the first letter is the suppressor of Malam and in the other, the first letter is Shiva. The former is intended for those who are worldly-minded. If they meditate on it they will gradually give up worldly-mindedness and become Godly-minded. Then, they will be entitled to contemplate the second form. The second form leads the Godly-minded to one-ness with God and is hence called Mukti-Panchaksharam. In these two forms of Panchaksharam we see at a glance what we essentially are, how mistaken we are in our view of ourselves, how we find utmost satisfaction in wallowing in the mire of worldliness and how reluctant we are to approach the sparkling, healing transparent spring\* which lies beside us. We also see what infinite value we set on things of no value and how we regard as negligible the real infinities, God and Soul. In the Panchaksharam, we see for the first time, what we intrinsically are, apart from the malams—from our body and from Anava with which we ordinarily identify ourselves. For the first time,

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\* God's Grace.

we also see our loving Lord who has given us His Grace which assumes two forms, one of which stands on our right and the other on our left nursing us, feeding us and looking after us, day and night. One of these wears out the fetters which have made us impotent, the other makes us divine.† The Panchaksharam is really glorious to behold.

The contemplation of Panchaksharam does not end in beholding its glories. It is an image of God and, like other images, acts on the soul. The soul's reactions to it are similar to those that occur during the worship of other images. Besides, it is a power by itself (மந்திரசக்தி). It does not owe its power to any other thing. On the other hand, other images owe their divinity to Panchaksharam and to other mantrams which are its satellites. To the contemplator, it gives the power to protect himself from the inroads of Anava. The word mantra itself means that which protects those who contemplate it.

Whereas most images do not bring home the worshipper the fact of his being bound by Anava, the Panchaksharam places before

† Umapatishivam says :

“தன்னிலைமை மன்னுயிர்கள் சாரத் தருஞ் சக்தி”

him his state of bondage. It places the whole situation clearly, unmistakably, forcefully and convincingly. The first thing that is preached to him by the Mukti-Panchaksharam is the endless Love of God which is shown in the second letter. He sees God and his Love distinctly. The next thing that catches his eye is the vileness of the Anava which has blinded him. But he also sees with a relief and delight the eye-surgeon who stands between him and Anava and is slowly removing the cataract. The sight of God and of His two gifts, the loving nurse on his left and the eye-surgeon on the right, melts the heart of the worshipper who, hence, pours his whole love on God. He sees that his intimate companion, the Anava, with whom he has practically identified himself, is a hardened cut-throat. This is to him a new vision. He makes up his mind to get out of the reach of Anava.

The second set of thoughts that comes to him in the contemplation of Panchaksharam is the values of things. Of the three malams that which makes a direct appeal to him is Maya. His body is a product of Maya. The material universe and the mental universe are all products of Maya. But Maya is insentient and inanimate. On the other hand, he himself is sentient and animate. The products of Maya are

ephemeral. They come and go and finally involve into primordial Maya. Realising his superiority over the things of this world,\* he makes up his mind not to condescend to be the slave of any of them. He has been a slave of most of them, a slave not only of pleasant sensations but also of unpleasant sensations. Tobacco has an unpleasant taste. Still there are people who have become slaves of tobacco.† The taste of opium is worse and opium does greater harm than tobacco. The opium eater is a helpless slave† and men have become millionaires by supplying opium to its slaves. The contemplator of Panchaksharam resolves to give up not only these dangerous products of Maya but also the better class of its products. He would eat to appease his hunger but he would not be a slave to palatableness. He wears clothes to protect his body but sets no value on showy dress. He would make use of only those products of Maya which are indispensable to him. He gives no room to desires for other things. He would not allow himself to be a slave to any kind of lust, whether of wealth, of power or of the charms of the other sex. A living, eternal entity would not be a slave to a lifeless, inert, transitory non-entity. He despises it, or rather takes no notice of it. He is Chit

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† for the sake of other experiences.

whereas these are Achit. Chit cannot be a slave to Achit.

On the other side of the Panchaksharam he sees God who is the source of all knowledge and power, the infinite Being before whom he himself shrinks to insignificance, who is showering on him infinite love to make him an infinite Chit like himself, placing on his either side the two forms of his love, the Parashakti and the Adishakti to illumine him, to help him break the Anavic fetter and to confer on him the eternal bliss of being one with God. He has to choose between kinship with Anava and kinship with God. The Panchaksharam gives him no room even for choice, as the charms of the other side have been annihilated by it. He has only one path before him and walks along that path to the Feet of God.

The contemplation of Panchaksharam thus gives a philosophy, a religion and a way of life which could take the contemplation very close to the ultimate goal of Mukti (liberation). But the life the contemplator has been leading and the lives of all he meets are the direct antithesis of the life chalked out by Panchaksharam. Our wrong habits of ages have such tremendous force as can shatter the glorious ideals presented to him by Panchaksharam. To withstand the onslaughts of his own habits and



of his environments, the contemplator is enjoined to repeat the Panchakshram 108 times at a time. Repetition is called Japam and Contemplation is called Dhyanam. If these are done in the right spirit, the contemplator can slowly efface his former viewpoint of life, replace it by the ideal presented by Panchaksharam and make substantial progress in his march to the goal. He will find that, even in life in this world, he is successful and happy beyond measure.

Our Saints have all sung praises of Panchaksharam. Sampandher has sung two pathikams in praise of it. Appar and Sundarar have sung a pathikam each. Manickavachakar gives it the first place in his Thiruvachakam. The first line of Thiruvachakam is, "Glory to Panchaksharam and Glory to the Feet of God." (நமச்சிவாய வாழ்க நாதன்றூள் வாழ்க). In another place he regards it as the boat which carries the soul through the sea of Samsaram to the heaven or God's Feet.

(ஐஞ்செழுத்தின் புனைபிடித்துக் கிடக்கின்றேனை  
முனைவனை முதலந்தமில்லா மல்லற்கரை காட்டி  
ஆட்கொண்ட)

Sambandher says "That which takes to the Gnana Marga him who, with a loving heart, with devotion and with tears of joy, repeats

it, is Panchaksharam, the essence of the four Vedas." He also insists on the uninterrupted contemplation of Panchaksharam at all times, whether awake or asleep.\* Unceasing contemplation in the waking state naturally leads to contemplation during sleep also. Sundarar insists on incessant repetition—repetition even when busy otherwise.§ There are three forms of repetition varying in the loudness of the sound. In the first form the sound can be heard only by those standing close by. In the second form it is audible only to oneself and in the third it is not audible even to oneself. In the last form the tongue is ap-

\* 1. காதலாகிச் சசிந்து கண்ணீர் மக் கி  
 ஓதுவார் தமைநன் நெறிக்குய்ப்பதும்  
 வேத நான்கினும் மெய்ப்பொருளாவதுந்  
 நாதனாம நமச்சிவாயவே.

2. தஞ்சலும் தஞ்சலிவாத போழ்தினும்  
 நெஞ்சக ரைந்து நினைமினாடொறும்  
 வஞ்சக மற்றடி வாழ்த்த வந்த கூற்  
 நஞ்சவுதைத்தன வஞ்செழுத்துமே.

§ மற்றுப்பற் நெனக்கின்றி நின்றிருப்பாதமே  
 மனம் பாவித்தேன்  
 பெற்றலும் பிறந்தேனினிப் பிறவாத  
 தன்மை வந்தெய்தினேன்  
 கற்றவர் தொழுதேத்துஞ் சீர்க்கறை  
 யூரிற் பாண்டிக்கொடுமுடி  
 நற்றவா உனைநான் மறக்கினும்  
 சொல்லுநா நமச்சிவாயவே,

parently motionless. This is considered to be the most effective of all. It is this form of repetition which is possible when we are otherwise engaged.

Appar says that the Panchaksharam burns all habits of wrong doings.† Sambandher further says that it reforms murderers and men of low§ character.† Even experience gives ample proof of the supreme potency of Panchaksharam. If you wish to resist any temptation or to free yourself from unpleasant feelings, however strong they may be, you can see for yourself that if you appeal to Panchaksharam it saves you from these distressing situations.

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† விண்ணுற வடுக்கிய னிறகின் வெவ்வழல்  
உண்ணிய புகிலவை யொன்று மில்லையாம்  
பண்ணிய வுலகினிற் பயின்ற பாவத்தை  
நண்ணி நின்றறுப்பது நமச்சிவாயவே.

§ கொல் வாரேனும் குணம்பல நன்மைகள்  
இல்லா ரேனுமியப்பு வராயிடின  
எல்லாத் திங்கையும் நீக்குவ ரென்பரால்  
நல்லார் நாம நமச்சிவாயவே.

## CHAPTER VII. THE SHAIVA LIFE

A Shaivite is a worshipper of Shiva, the supreme God. The Shaivite must therefore lead a life consonant with the greatness of the God he worships. He has a dignity to maintain. Appar Swami gives a complete picture of Saiva life in a Single Stanza\*. He says "we are not bound in fealty to any one; we are not afraid of death: we are free from the torments of hell, and hypocrisy is foreign to us; we are self-respecting; we know no suffering; we bow to nobody; we are ever happy; we know no pain; we are the eternal Servants of Him who wears a white ear-ring, who is not subject to any one and who is the giver of all good". Since we are the eternal servants of Shankara, (the giver of bliss) who is not a servant of any one, we cannot be servants of any one else. Since death comes as a release from this body, when it has become unfit for habitation, we would rather

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\* நாமார்க்குங் குடியல்லோம் நமணையஞ்சோம்  
 நரகத்தி லிடர்ப்படோம் நடலையில்லோம்  
 ஏமாப்போம் பிணியறியோம் பணிவேமல்லேம்  
 இன்பமே எந்நானுந் துன்பமில்லை  
 தாமார்க்குங் குடியல்லாத் தன்மையான  
 சங்கரனற் சங்கவெண் குழையோர்காதிற்  
 கோமாற்கே நாமென்று மீளாஆளாய்க்  
 கொய்மலர்ச் சேவடியிணையே குறுகினோமே.

welcome death than fear it. We readily obey Him and are therefore free from every kind of suffering, including hell, which is the consequence of wrong doing. As servants of God, we also occupy the highest place in the world. Any other position is inferior to ours. There is therefore, no need for us to appear to be what we are not\* i. e. to be hypocrites. As the servants of Shiva we cannot condescend to do anything which is not in keeping with our high position. We hail with pleasure every kind of experience we undergo, in order to free us from Karma. So, even suffering is a source of pleasure to us. We cannot bow to others whether they are mighty men of the world or powerful gods of the upper world, as they are all inferior to the servants of Shiva. Divine meditation gives us uninterrupted joy leaving no room for unhappiness. Nothing is greater than being the slave of God. There is, therefore, no other position in this world, which we would care to seek. We would decline any if offered to us. Says Manickavasagar. "I would decline even the positions occupied by Indra, Vishnu and Bramah\*."

We have no legitimate ground for anger, fear or, sorrow. God's Love for us is infinite.

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\* கொள்ளேன் புரந்தரன் மாலயன் வாழ்வு.

Everything that takes place in this world is the result of His Law of Love. Whatever happens to us, therefore, proceeds from His Love for us. It must hence be always good to us. There can then be no occasion for fear, sorrow or anger. We entertain these feelings in consequence of our ignorance of God's ways. In our folly, we fear the advent of what is really good and feel sorry when it comes to us.

Neither do we set any value on others' opinions of us. We must examine ourselves in the light of God's Laws, and if we are able to tell ourselves "you are good", we can certainly rest satisfied with ourselves. But nothing is more difficult to achieve than such an estimate of ourselves. Even Appar does not pass a favourable judgment on himself†. It is therefore, impossible for crude people like us to get a favourable estimate of ourselves. But, it is not impossible for us to be able to say that today we are better than we were yesterday. If I am not able to say of myself, "you are not a righteous man", it is my duty to reject others' praise of me. If they praise me they are mistaken. It also follows that our endeavour to get the praise of others is a folly of follies. Fame is false. It is a product of ignorance.

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† குலம் பொல்லேன் குணம் பொல்லேன் குறியும் பொல்லேன்

The true Shaivite's life is an ideal one. He is fully armed against all tendencies to wrong doing, and is fully equipped to do the right. The sacred ashes which he wears is the Parashakti, the Love of God. With God's Love visibly present in him, he can only be kind and loving towards others. The worship at which he has surrendered himself to God, cannot permit him to do anything outside. "His Holy Laws," says Manikavachakar of God "make full use of me or sell me outright or sell me as Otty"\*. He cannot therefore act contrary to His Laws. The Panchakshara tells him what his actual position is. On one side is Anava, which blinds him, and on the other side is the Surgeon who not only restores his Sight but also gives him a light (Shivagnanam) with which he can see things too subtle to be seen with ordinary light. He easily sees that he must avoid the blinder and join the eye-surgeon, the giver also of Supreme Light. His worship of God gives him a similar lesson and redoubles the might to do the right.

Coming to details the true Shaivite eats not to fatten his body but to get service from

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\* "இருந்தென்னை ஆண்டுகொள் விற்றுக்கொள் ஒற்றிவை".

Otty is a sale with a condition of redeeming with a fixed time.

it to God. He does his work as Service to God. If he is a cultivator, he regards cultivation as Service to God, and on that account, does his work with all his might. He does not allow his senses to run riot. They are as much his Slave as he is of God. He is proof against Anavic allurements made through the senses. If some allurement catches his attention, he dismisses it, saying that it is of no concern to him. Whenever a new project comes to his mind, he measures it with the yard-stick, "How far will this project help me in my onward march to the ultimate goal?" If he finds it not helpful to it, he rejects it. Pomp and power, rank and riches, fame and fashion can have no appeal to him.

The true Shaivite may belong to any class or caste. The Saints of the Periapuranam include men of all trades and castes. Most of them pursued the trades of the families in which they were born. But of these trades, Service to God was the Soul. They could make every item of their work an occasion for worship. There have been men who combined worship with work. One of these was seen one day plucking, one by one, the leaves of a thorny herb for cooking. The plucking of each leaf, he said, was accompanied by the repetition of the Panchaksharam. On several other occasions



also, his lips were found to be busy, while he was engaged in some piece of work. He seemed to have made it a point to repeat Pachaksharam at all times. This was also inferable from the fact, that one day, while his wife was pounding rice, he advised her to repeat the name "Shiva" at each stroke of the pestle. His rule of life seems to be that work and worship must go together. The potter saint of the peria-puranam was worshipping God all the time he was making pots. But his worship did not end there. He made free gifts of pots to saints who needed them.

Coming now to nominal Shaivites like us, even we can improve our position if we make a serious effort. Our worship is capable of assuming one of three forms. It may be almost mechanical. In that case, the great gifts of our religion such as sacred ashes and Pan-chaksharam cannot do us any appreciable good. With most of us this is the case. But it is some satisfaction to remember that the good, though not appreciable, is never negligible. In the second form of worship, the intellect stands the worshipper the significance and potentiality of these Sadanas and can assist him in his attempt to mend and improve his ways. It can tackle desires of moderate strength but is over-powered by strong ones. In the third form

the emotions also are present. They are a power and can keep down even strong rebellious desires. Worship accompanied by both the intellect and by the emotions can reform us and take us nearer true Shaivaism.

## CHAPTER VIII. POPULAR SHAIVAISM

POPULAR Shaivaism is the religion of those who have no idea of the content of the Shaiva Shastras. Their knowledge of religion consists of Puranic stories and of the religious beliefs current in their midst. They worship God, gods, men, women, giants devils' etc. Most of them wear sacred ashes, attend temple worship and observe fasts. Their conception of God ranges from that of the Creator of the Universe to that of a doll. Several of these think that the events of their lives in this world are written on their skulls. They believe in birth after death and are keen on performing post-mortem ceremonies. They have great belief in omens and in the chirping of lizards. Even very important projects are abandoned on the hearing of a lizard chirp. They are devotees of astrology, which causes them endless suffering.

The misfortune of the ordinary Shaivite is his ignorance of Shaivaism. He is a sheep. He says and does what men of his type say and do. Everything novel appeals to him. He has no safe means of distinguishing right from wrong.

At one time there were two distinct religions in Thamilagam. One of these is Shaivaism

which was the religion of the cultured class. The other was a combination of human worship and devil worship. The Annamar and Nachchimar were men and women of high rank whom their dependants adored while alive, and worshipped after death. Kaththavirayar was a giant. Madan, Karuppan, Veeran and Peria-thambiran were devils. The Vairavar of the unrefined class is a preternatural being. A form of Kali also is worshipped by this class. These are all beyond the pale of Shaivaism. In course of time, these two classes of people mixed up, with the result that the ignorant section of the refined class and the more fortunate section of the unrefined class became worshippers of God as well as man and devil.

There are three more beings worshipped by these people. One of these is Mary at the Madhu Church in North Ceylon which is regarded by Roman Catholics to be a holy shrine. Another being is Meera of Nagore in South - East India, held in great veneration by Muslims. Their worship had its birth in suggestions, and its growth was due to the mercenary spirit, which was characteristic of their worship. If a Shaivaite falls ill, his neighbour who has already become a votary of either of these temples advises him to make an offer to the temple to get himself healed. The patient

had already heard stories of miracles being performed there. He accepts the advice and makes the vow. When he recovers, he goes on a pilgrimage to the temple, with his relations and friends, who also cherish reverence for the place whenever a man falls ill the probability is that he will recover, because of the large number of diseases to which a man is subject during his life time, he recovers from all except from the last one. He would therefore, have recovered even if they had not made any offer to those beings.

The worship of the third extraneous being was imposed on the whole of Ceylon by a Sinhalese ruler. This being is Kannaki. Kannaki worship would have been given up on the death of the king who imposed it on them, if it were not for the fact that men of our own religion had been officiating in Kannaki temples. The belief in her divinity further grew out of a false story fabricated by story writers, that Kannaki was an incarnation of some deity. Whoever reads the story of Kannaki in the original work, Silappathiharam, would not accept the incarnation myth.

Silappathiharam says that when Kannaki proved to the king that the punishment of death given to her husband was unjust, the

king was so shocked by the thought of having done an act of injustice that he died immediately. Neither history nor legend speaks of any other king who lost his life on the mere thought of having done an act of injustice.

In the realm of justice, he was a king among kings. My reader, if you had been Kannaki, what would have been your feeling when you saw the king losing his life on the mere thought of having been unjust towards your husband? You stand before the corpse of the noble king. What is the feeling that would arise in your mind when you see the corpse before you? When you went up to him you would have wished some adequate punishment to him for having caused the death of your husband. Is there a greater punishment than death, not an ordinary form of death, but a death caused by the thought of having done a wrong? The scene does not end here. The queen saw that the king, her husband, had died. The sight of his death took away her life. Could a wife be more loyal to her husband? Here are now two corpses, those of two of the noblest creations of God, one an ideal ruler and the other an ideal wife. My reader, what would you have felt if you had been in the position of Kannaki? Whatever you might have felt, Kannaki's thirst

for vengeance still remained unquenched.\* Yet this being is worshipped by a large number of our people, and there are poojaries prepared to perform pooja to it. These poojaries are at best non-shaivites.

Most Shaivites wear sacred ashes. But there are a few in towns who are not keen on wearing it. Some of them are not prepared to take the trouble to make it or procure it. Some others set so little value on it that they prefer to go with an empty forehead before their non-Shaivite bosses. There was a time when it was the rule for boys and girls to get deeksha. Now it has become an exception and even the few who get deeksha either perform Panchakshara-japam mechanically or perform no japam at all. The indifference to the wearing of sacred ashes and to Panchakshara japam is entirely due to the people's ignorance of their supreme value.

We now come to their form of worship. A large proportion of Shaivites think of God everyday at the time they wear sacred ashes.

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\*Even devils are believed to be satisfied with the death of a single being. A story was further fabricated that a pinch of a pap of hers set fire to the city of Madura. How can such a being ever get such a supernatural power?

Very few go to temple daily. A fairly good number go once a week, on Mondays or on Fridays. The others attend temples when situations compel them. If a child falls ill, either the father or the mother goes to temple to beg God to cure the child's illness. This request may assume one of three forms (1) It may be a mere request (2) The request may be accompanied by a gift such as a special pooja or archana (3) It may also be made with the promise of a gift if the prayer is granted.

These requests are made in the belief that they are likely to be granted. But everybody knows from his own experience, that what they ask for, sometimes they get and at other times they do not get it. When they do not get it the better class of people satisfy themselves with the thought that their Karma does not justify their getting it and that nothing can alter the "Vidhi." The others blame God for not granting the request and get displeased with Him. It is distressing to hear even some educated people quoting Appar's line,

“வேண்டுவார் வேண்டுவதே\* ஈவான் கண்டாய்”

in support of the practice of praying to God for worldly ends. But they must have known

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\*வேண்டுவதே=only that which is really needed.



to their cost that very often they did not get what they prayed for. They also know that the whole world, including atheists are getting a great many things they desire, without any appeal to God. Besides, Appar's line does not convey the meaning they give it. What it really seems to mean is that God gives only those things which the worshipper actually needs and which can ultimately help his spiritual progress.

Just as a physician prescribes only that kind of food which suits his patient and not other things that he may ask for, so our Lord Physician administers the Law of Karma in such a way as will give the soul the maximum help for its recovery from Anavie illness.

The offer of gifts to God in return for the granting of requests is based on the gross misunderstanding of the attributes of God. First of all, God is perfect and has no needs. He therefore has no need for the gifts of those who make requests. Secondly He has neither likes nor dislikes. So gifts cannot please Him. They also think that God can be flattered by special poojas but that if His dues are not paid He gets displeased and does them harm. These men bring God down to the level of third-rate men.

We now come to the annual high festivals conducted in some temples (Mahotsavam). In most temples this is celebrated in the right way and in the right spirit. The festivals are a blessing to the locality in which the temple is situated. Men and women regard the festival days as sacred. Even those who would not go to temple on other days make it a point to worship on festival days. But there are some temples which do not justify the conducting of high festival. In some of the festivals of these temples, the sacred spot is made worse than hell. Such festivals are a disgrace to our religion. They desecrate them and deprive them of God's presence. Those who conduct such irreligious festivals have not the least idea of their religion. Their ignorance is so dense that they cannot distinguish the image of God from a doll.

The worst of their iniquities is the tying of false hands and false legs to the image. This requires such a tight and forceful tying that no man would allow such things to be tied to his own body. How then can he justify the tying of these things to the image of God? He can do so only by regarding the image as something inferior to himself, as a mere doll. Can you conceive anything more diabolical than treating God as a doll? Yet,

the priest, the temple manager and the festival man gloat over it.

The second iniquity of these people is the introducing of nautch girls. Sensible people go to temples to purify their hearts. Nautch dance makes their hearts impure. What is worse, thousands flock to temple to have a darsanam (sight) of the nautch women, whereas only a dozen go for the darsanam of God on days without nautch dance. In other words, these festivals give to those women a hundred times the regard given to God. A charge made against our religion by those of alien religions is that our reverence for God is much less than our reverence for such women. A certain Shaivite gave up his religion and became a Roman Catholic for the sole reason that our temples were encouraging vice by the introduction of nautch dance.

We shall now come to a few superstitions which victimise the ordinary Shaivite: The chirping of lizard is a matter of great concern to many a Shaivite. It is interpreted in two ways. Some regard lizard chirp as a mere warning that the purpose in hand is bound to be a fallure. Some others have a lizard Shastram and are guided by it. According to this some lizard chirps are favourable and

others unfavourable. There are three Shastrams\* and very often they disagree. When they disagree, it follows that at least two of them are false Shastrams. On verification, they may all be found false. Besides, common sense must tell one that the chirping of a lizard can have nothing to do with matters relating to us.

Next to this comes astrology. This also has three different bases§ and it is easy to see that the forecast made on one basis must contradict those made on the other bases. Thus at least two of these three systems are false, and experience would show that the third also is false. The most unsound theory of astrology is that a planet unfavourable at the birth of a man would hound him even several decades hence during its Dasha.

Even if astrology should be true, the net result of believing it is misery. A forecast is either favourable or unfavourable. An astro-

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\* One of these recognise eight directions and another 16 directions. The third has reference to planetary positions.

§ In two of these the rising sign is the starting points, but in the third, mesha is always the starting points. Of the former one system measures the distance of planets clockwise and the other counter clockwise.

loger tells a man that his son will get a very high post in government service in three years' time. The man is happy. But the happiness slowly fades. Let the astrologer tell him that his son will die in three years. His sorrow is a hundred times more intense than the joy of hearing of a high appointment for him. The sorrow grows more and more intense. The man and his wife get mentally and physically depressed. They are over-whelmed with sorrow. They become a prey to illness. If we add together the results of a favourable forecast, we easily see that the sum of the forecasts is misery and that astrology is a vampire. It claims credence as the child of astronomy. But, there is nothing to show that it is a legitimate issue of that noble science.

Another superstition is the belief in sunyam in which a devil is supposed to be sent by a magician to injure a person. The person now and then shakes his head and is sometimes beside himself. These are really due to some ailments, with which neither his relations nor the local physicians are familiar. If he gets suitable medical treatment he will recover\*.

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\* An old boy of mine had similar complaints. I succeeded in making him undergo a course of medical treatment. He was cured of his illness, became a government surveyor and amassed so much wealth that he one day told me that he did not know what to do with it.

Popular Shaivism must go. Religious education must come. It must reach both young and old. It can easily reach those fortunate youngsters who are studying in Shaivite schools and state schools. Shaivite societies ought to carry religious knowledge to Shaiva children studying in schools of alien faiths. They must also find means of taking the light of religion to the grown-ups. Then alone can Shaivism shine in all its glory.





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10. கல்வி விதிகளும் முறைகளும்
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