

# **SIVA YOGA SADHANA**

**BY SWAMI SIVANANDA**

## **SECRET OF PANCHAKSHARA**

Panchakshara is a Mahamantra which is composed of five letters, Namassivaya. A Mantra is that which removes all obstacles and miseries of one who reflects on it and bestows eternal bliss and immortality. Panchakshara is the best among seven crores of Mantras. There are seven Skandhas in Yajurveda. There is Rudradhyayi in the centre of the middle Skandha. In this Rudradhyayi there are one thousand Rudra Mantras. Namassivaya or the Siva Panchakshara Mantra shines in the centre of these one thousand Rudra Mantras.

Yajurveda is the head of Paramesvara, who is the Veda Purusha. Rudram which is in the middle is the face, Panchakshara is His eye, Siva which is in the centre of the 'Namassivaya' is the apple of the eye. He who does Japa of this Panchakshara is freed from births and deaths and attains eternal bliss. This is the emphatic declaration of the Vedas. This Panchakshara is the body of Lord Nataraja. This is the abode of Lord Siva. If you add 'Om' to the 'Namassivaya' in the beginning, then it becomes Shadakshara or six-lettered Mantra. 'Om Namoh Mahadevaya' is the eight-lettered Mantra or Ashtakshara.

Panchakshara is of six kinds, viz., Sthula Panchakshara (Namassivaya), Sukshma Panchakshara (Sivaya Namah), Karana Panchakshara (Sivaya Siva), Mahakarana Panchakshara (Sivaya), Mahamanu or Mukti Panchakshara (Si).

'Namah' means 'Prostration'. 'Sivaya Namah' means 'Prostration unto Lord Siva'. The Jiva is the servant of Lord Siva from the Deha-Drishti. 'Namah' represents Jivatman. 'Siva' represents Paramatman. 'Aya' denotes 'Aikyam' or identity of Jivatman and Paramatman. Hence 'Sivaya Namah' is a Mahavakya, like 'Tat Tvam Asi' which signifies the identity between the individual and the supreme soul.

Pranava denotes the external form (husk) of the Lord (paddy) and Panchakshara, the internal Svarupa (rice). Pranava and Panchakshara are one. The five letters denote the five actions or Pancha Kritiyas of the Lord, viz., Srishti (creation), Sthiti (preservation), Samhara (destruction), Tirodhana (veiling) and Anugraha (blessing). They also denote the five elements and all creations through the combination of the five elements.

'Na' represents Tirodhana; 'Ma', the Mala or impurity; 'Si', Lord Siva; 'Va', the Arul Sakti; and 'Ya', the individual soul.

Take bath or wash your face, hands and feet. Wear Bhasma and Rudraksha Mala. Sit on Padmasana or Sukhasana, facing East or North, in a quiet place or room. Repeat silently the Panchakshara and meditate on the form of Lord Siva. Keep the image in the heart or space between the eyebrows.

If you practise meditation regularly, your heart will be purified. All Samskaras and sins will be burnt in toto. You will attain Siva-Yoga-Nishtha or Nirvikalpa Samadhi. You will attain the glorious Siva-Pada or Siva-Gati and become one with Lord Siva. You will enjoy the eternal bliss of Sivanandam and become immortal.

May Lord Siva bless you all!

### **MEDITATION ON LORD SIVA**

**SAGUNA MEDITATION:** Saguna meditation is meditation on a form. An archer first aims at a gross, big object. Then he takes up a medium object. Finally, he shoots at very small and minute objects. Even so, one should take to Saguna meditation to start with, and when the mind is trained and disciplined well, he can have Nirakara, Nirguna meditation. Saguna meditation is meditation on a concrete object. Saguna meditation is peculiarly pleasing the Bhakta, who loves to gaze on the peculiar form of his Ishta. Saguna Upasana removes Vikshepa. For three or six months, practise Trataka on Siva's picture.

Meditate on the mental picture of the Murti from half to two hours only in the Trikuti (space between the eyebrows). See and feel that the Lord is present in every object of the universe. When you meditate, mentally repeat the Mantra of the Devata, 'Om Namah Sivaya'; think of the attributes of the Deity such as omnipresence, omnipotence and omniscience. Feel that Sattvic qualities from the Ishtam flow towards you. Feel that you possess these Sattvic qualities. This is Sattvic or Suddha Bhavana. You will have Darsana of your Ishtam in one or two years, if you are sincere in your Sadhana. Follow this plan. This will help concentration. Move the mind on the various parts of the Murti, the picture or idol of Lord Siva, and meditate. Sit upon your usual Asana. Repeat His name and think of His attributes like bliss, radiance, love, etc., gazing at His picture all the while. Then enthrone Him in the lotus of your heart or between your eyebrows amidst a blazing light. Now mentally think of His lotus-feet, offering your devout salutations. Take the mind to the elephant-skin worn round the waist, then to the necklace of Rudraksha beads, adorning His chest, and the beautiful blue hue of His throat (Nilakantha), serene countenance, radiating the majestic aura of profound meditations, the indrawn half-closed meditative eyes, the mysterious third eye in the centre of the forehead. Next take the mind up to the matted locks, the cool crescent moon, and the sacred Ganga sprouting from the Jata. Rotate your mind on the trident (Trisula) in one hand, and then, the Damaru, in the other. Run your mind over the whole form till you complete all the details. Then fix your mind either on the face or upon the starting point (feet). Repeat the entire process again and again, as many times as you can. By constant practice, you will ultimately be established in meditation and have communion with Siva.

**NIRGUNA MEDITATION:** This is meditation on Lord Siva, in His all-pervasive, unmanifested aspect, as the Supreme Para Brahman. In this form of meditation, you meditate on Lord Siva as the Supreme Brahman without form, attributeless, eternal, infinite. Meditate on Him as the Suddha, Satchidananda, Vyapaka Atman; Nitya, Suddha, Siddha, Buddha, Mukta, eternally free Brahman; an unlimited Ocean of Pure Consciousness. Now, identify yourself with this transcendental Svarupa of Siva. Feel that you are Chaitanya, Akhanda, Paripurna, Ekarasa, Santa, Unchanging Existence.

Every atom, every molecule, every nerve, vein, artery, should powerfully vibrate with these ideas. Lip-repetition of 'Sivoham' will not produce much benefit. It should be through heart, head and soul. This feeling should be kept up continuously. Negate the body-idea while repeating Sivoham mentally. When you chant Sivoham feel:

Infinity I am	Sivoham Sivoham
All light I am	Sivoham Sivoham
All joy I am	Sivoham Sivoham
All glory I am	Sivoham Sivoham
All power I am	Sivoham Sivoham
All knowledge I	Sivoham Sivoham
All Ananda I am	Sivoham Sivoham

Meditate on the above ideas constantly. Constant effort with zeal and enthusiasm, is an indispensable requisite. Repeat mentally the above ideas incessantly. You will realise.

### **WORSHIP OF SIVA**

Lord Siva is worshipped in His Saguna aspect in the form of Sivalingam. Generally Sivabhaktas do Panchayatana Puja. In this Puja, Lord Siva, Ganesa, Parvati, Suryanarayana and Saligram are duly worshipped.

Get the Panchayatana Murtis on an auspicious day. Install them with great faith in your own house. Conduct special prayers, Archana, Puja, Abhisheka, and feeding of Brahmins, Mahatmas and the poor on a grand scale. Install the deity in a separate room. Worship the Lord daily with all sincerity and faith. You will have all wealth, peace of mind, attainment of Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha also. You will lead a prosperous life and enter the Immortal abode of Siva-Sayujya, on death.

Collect plenty of Bael or Bilva leaves for Lord Siva's worship. Get ready Dhupa, Dipa, camphor, sandal-sticks, fresh water, plenty of flowers, food offerings to the Lord, a seat to sit upon, a bell, conch and other things required for the Puja before you begin the worship. Get up in the early morning before sunrise. Wash your face. Take bath. Wear silk dress separately kept for Puja purposes. Decorate the Puja room nicely. Enter the room chanting Lord's names, glorifying Him, repeating Hymns in His praise and prostrating before the Lord. Wash your feet before entering the room. Sit in a comfortable posture and commence your worship. You have to first of all do Sankalpa for beginning the Puja in the prescribed method. You should then do Kalasa (water vessel), Sankha (conch), Atma (self) and Pitha (Lord's seat) Puja in their order. You should then offer Shodasopachara Puja to the Lord and then repeat Mahamrityunjaya Mantra, Rudrapatha, Purushasukta, Gayatri, and do Abhisheka with pure water, milk, sugarcane juice, ghee and other articles according to your capacity or with pure water alone. Rudrabhisheka is highly beneficial. If you do Rudra Japa and Abhisheka, all your worries and agonies will disappear and you will attain the highest beatitude of human existence by the grace of Lord Visvanath. Rudra is a great purifier. There is invisible hidden power in Rudra and Purushasukta. There is a wonderful inspiration in the recitation of Rudra. Start the worship and realise its glory and splendour for yourself.

After Abhisheka, decorate the Lord nicely with sandal paste and flowers. Then do Archana repeating His names, 'Om Sivaya Namah', 'Om Mahesvaraya Namah', etc. Do daily 108 or 1008 Archanas if possible. After Archana, do Arati with different kinds of lights—single Arati, Triple Arati, Pancha Arati and Karpura Arati. Ring bells, cymbals, conch, etc., during Arati. Offer sacred Prasad or Naivedya to the Lord.

After Arati is over, sing the praises of the Lord like Mahimna Stotra, Panchakshara Stotra, etc., waving the Chamara. In the end repeat the prayers '*Kayena vachah*', '*Atma tvam Girija matih*', and '*Kara-charana-kritam*'. Offer everything to the Lord. Feel that you are a mere instrument in His hands. Do everything for obtaining the divine grace only. Develop Nimitta Bhava. Serve the Bhaktas. The Lord is much pleased with the service of His devotees. Distribute the Prasad among the Bhaktas in the end. Take the Prasad with great faith. The glory of Bhagavan's Prasad is indescribable. Vibhuti is taken as Prasad and applied to the forehead.

When you advance in Saguna worship with external objects of worship, you can begin Manasa Puja. You will have Darsana of the Lord and final emancipation.

Have special Pujas on Mondays and Pradosha (thirteenth day of every fortnight—Trayodasi) days. These days and Sivaratri (in the month of February-March) are very sacred for Lord Siva. Celebrate the Sivaratri on a grand scale. Fast the whole day. Have Trikala Puja, special Abhisheka, Ekadasa-rudra-japa, Sahasrarchana, vigil in the night, study of hymns of Lord Siva, Sivapurana, hearing discourses on the Lilas of Lord Siva. After Puja on the next day, break your fast with Abhisheka water. Offer sacred food offerings and partake of the Divine Prasad. You will have great mental peace, and spiritual advancement. Never miss this opportunity. Daily worship is a sure remedy for all ills. You will never suffer from poverty. Take my word and begin the Puja right from this day onwards.

### **SIVA MANASA PUJA**

Manasa Puja is mental worship. Manasa Puja is more powerful and effective than the external worship with flowers, sandals, etc. You will have more concentration when you do Manasa Puja.

Mentally enthrone the Lord on a Simhasana, set with diamonds, pearls, emeralds, etc. Offer Him a seat. Offer Arghya, Madhuparka and various sorts of flowers, clothes, etc. Apply sandal paste to His forehead and body. Burn incense and Agarbatti (scented sticks). Wave lights. Burn camphor and do Arati. Offer various kinds of fruits, sweetmeats, Payasa, coconut and Mahanaivedyam. Do Shodasa-upachara or the sixteen kinds of offerings in worship.

### **PANCHAKSHARA MANTRA WRITING**

Write down in a fine note book '*Om Namah Sivaya*' for half an hour or more. You will have more concentration by taking recourse to this Sadhana. Write the Mantra in ink clearly. When you write the Mantra observe Mouna. You may write the Mantra in any language. Give up looking hither and thither. Repeat the Mantra mentally also when you write the Mantra. Write the whole Mantra at once. When the Mantra notebook is completed, keep it in a box in your meditation room. Be regular in your practice.

Keep a small notebook in your pocket and write Mantra when you get leisure in the office. Have three things in your pocket, viz., the Gita, Mantra notebook and a Japa Mala or rosary. You will be immensely benefited.

## **SIVA JNANAM**

Japa and meditation of the sacred names of Lord Siva will free you from all sins and lead you to the attainment of Siva Jnanam or eternal bliss and immortality. Siva-nama is the very soul of all Mantras.

Lord Siva has manifested in the world in sixty different aspects. Vrishabharudha, Harihara, Nataraja, Bhairava, Dakshinamurti, Ardhanarisvara, Bhikshatana, Somasekharamurti, Urdhvanatana, Kalasamhara, Jalandhara, Surasamhara, Lingodbhava are His forms.

Siva means that which is eternally happy or auspicious, Parama-mangala. Om and Siva are one. Mandukya Upanishad says: '*Santam Sivam Advaitam*'. Even an outcaste can meditate on the name of Lord Siva.

Siva manifests in the Gayatri Mantra, Agni and in the Sun. When you repeat Gayatri and when you worship the Agni and the Sun, you should meditate on Lord Siva.

Japa of Panchakshara and meditation of Lord Siva should be particularly done in the Pradosha Kala or just before the sunset. The Pradosha on the thirteenth Tithi after a full moon or a new moon day, is known as the Mahapradosha. The Devas visit Siva temples for the worship of the Lord at this period. You can worship the Devas also if you visit temples during Mahapradosha. Devotees of Lord Siva observe full fast on Mahapradosha days.

A devotee of Lord Siva should apply Vibhuti to his forehead and body. He should wear a Rudrakshamala. He should worship the Sivalinga with leaves of the Bilva tree. He should do Japa and meditation of the Panchakshara 'Om Namah Sivaya'. Lord Siva is propitiated by everyone of these actions. Vibhuti or Bhasma is very sacred. It is worn by Lord Siva Himself. The bead of a Rudrakshamala represents the third eye on the forehead of Lord Siva. Bilva leaves are regarded to be one of the five abodes of Lakshmi or the Goddess of wealth.

It is Siva only who causes bondage and Mukti for the Jivas. It is Siva who makes the Jivas realise their essential Divine Nature. Siva made Maya as the body, senses and the Universe and thrust the Jivas into the Maya. He created the idea of egoism, 'I'-ness in them. He bound them in Karma and made them experience pleasure and pain according to the nature of their Karmas, virtuous actions or vicious deeds. This is the stage of bondage of the Jivas.

Gradually it is Siva only who releases them from the fetters of egoism, Karma and Maya and makes them shine as Siva. This is the state of Moksha or freedom. It is only through the grace of Lord Siva, they attain the state of final emancipation.

The Jivas have no independence, when they are under the influence of the three impurities, i.e., Anava, Karma and Maya. They are endowed with a little knowledge (Alpajnana).

The Jiva must first know his nature and his relationship with Lord Siva in order to attain His grace. Life or Prana is in the body. Lord Siva is within the Prana. He is the Prana of Pranas, and yet He is distinct from the Pranas and body. If there is no Prana in the body, the body becomes a corpse. It cannot perform any action. Siva is the support for this body, Prana and Jiva. The Jiva cannot do any action without Siva. It is Siva who

illuminates the intellect. Just as the eye cannot see without the light of the sun, although it is endowed with the power to see, so also the intellect cannot function without the light of Lord Siva.

The four Sadhanas, viz., Charya, Kriya, Yoga and Jnana are the four steps to attain Salvation. They are like the bud, flower, unripe fruit and ripe fruit.

Lord Siva gradually frees the individual souls from egoism, Karma and Maya. The Jivas gradually become disgusted with the sensual pleasures. They become balanced in pleasure and pain. Through the grace of the Lord they understand that Karma is the cause for births and deaths. They begin to do actions for the Lord, serve the devotees of the Lord and attain purity of mind. They understand that the soul or Siva is distinct from the body, senses and mind and is beyond the reach of mind and speech. They get initiation into the significance of 'Om Namah Sivaya', the Panchakshara Mantra and meditate on Siva.

They practise Siva Yoga. Their hearts melt. Seer, sight and seen vanish. All the activities of senses, mind and intellect cease. They bathe Lord Siva with the stream of Divine Love that is generated in their heart and offer their heart as flower unto the Lord.

They hear the sound 'Chilambosai' and march forward through the path of the sound and behold the vision of Nataraja in the Chidakasa and are immersed in the ocean of Sivananda. They become one with the Lord, just as camphor melts in the fire.

### **WORSHIP OF SIVA LINGA**

The popular belief is that the Siva Lingam represents the phallus or the virile organ, the emblem of the generative power or principle in nature. This is not only a serious mistake, but also a grave blunder. In the post-Vedic period, the Linga became symbolical of the generative power of the Lord Siva. Linga is the differentiating mark. It is certainly not the sex-mark. You will find in the Linga Purana: *Pradhanam prakritir yadahur-lingamuttamam; Gandhavarnarasairhinam sabda-sparsadi-varjitam*—The foremost Linga which is primary and is devoid of smell, colour, taste, hearing, touch, etc., is spoken of as Prakriti (Nature).

Linga means 'mark', in Sanskrit. It is a symbol which points to an inference. When you see a big flood in a river, you infer that there had been heavy rains the previous day. When you see smoke, you infer that there is fire. This vast world of countless forms is a Linga of the Omnipotent Lord. The Siva Linga is a symbol of Lord Siva. When you look at the Linga, your mind is at once elevated and you begin to think of the Lord.

Lord Siva is really formless. He has no form of his own and yet all forms are His forms. All forms are pervaded by Lord Siva. Every form is the form or Linga of Lord Siva.

There is a mysterious power or indescribable Sakti in the Linga, to induce concentration of the mind. Just as the mind is focussed easily in crystal-gazing, so also the mind attains one-pointedness, when it looks at the Linga. That is the reason why the ancient Rishis and the seers of India have prescribed Linga for being installed in the temples of Lord Siva.

Siva Linga speaks to you in the unmistakable language of silence: "I am one without a second, I am formless". Pure, pious souls only can understand this language. A curious

passionate, impure foreigner of little understanding or intelligence says sarcastically: "Oh, the Hindus worship the phallus or sex organ. They are ignorant people. They have no philosophy". When a foreigner tries to learn Tamil or Hindustani language, he first tries to pick up some vulgar words. This is his curiosity nature. Even so, the curious foreigner tries to find out some defects in the worship of symbol. Linga is only the outward symbol of the formless being, Lord Siva, who is the indivisible, all-pervading, eternal, auspicious, ever-pure, immortal essence of this vast universe, who is the undying Soul seated in the chambers of your heart, who is your Indweller, innermost Self or Atman, and who is identical with the Supreme Brahman.

A Siva Linga consists of three parts, the lowest of which is the Brahma-Pitha, the middle one, the Vishnu-Pitha and the uppermost one, the Siva-Pitha.

Some are Svayambhu-lingas, some are Narmadesvaras. There are twelve Jyotirlingas and five Pancha Bhuta Lingas in India. The twelve Jyotir-lingas are: Kedarnath, Kasi Visvanath, Somanath, Baijnath, Ramesvar, Ghruksnesvar, Bhimasankar, Mahakala, Mallikarjuna, Amalesvar, Nagesvar and Tryambakesvar. The five Pancha Bhuta Lingas are: Kalahastisvar, Jambukesvar, Arunachalesvar, Ekambaresvar of Kanjivaram and Nataraja of Chidambaram. The temple of Lord Mahalinga at Tiruvidaimarudur known also as Madhyarjuna is regarded as the great Siva temple of South India.

Spatikalinga is also a symbol of Lord Siva. This is prescribed for Aradhana or worship of Lord Siva. It is made up of quartz. It has no colour of its own, but takes on the colour of the substances which come in contact with it. It represents the Nirguna Brahman or the attributeless Supreme Self or formless and attributeless Siva.

For a sincere devotee, the Linga is not a block of stone. It is all radiant Tejas or Chaitanya. The Linga talks to him, makes him shed profuse tears, produces horripilation and melting of heart, raises him above body-consciousness and helps to commune with the Lord and attain Nirvikalpa Samadhi. Lord Rama worshipped the Siva Linga at Ramesvar. Ravana, the learned scholar, worshipped the golden Linga. What a lot of mystic Sakti there should be in the Linga!

May you all attain the formless Siva through the worship of the Linga, the symbol of Lord Siva which helps concentration of mind and which serves as a prop for the mind to lean upon in the beginning for the neophytes!

### **SIVA LINGA IS CHINMAYA**

The light of consciousness manifesting out of Sadasiva is, in reality, the Sivalinga. From Him all the moving and unmoving creations take their origin. He is the Linga or cause of everything. In Him, the whole world merges itself finally. The Siva Purana says: "*Pitham Ambamayam Sarvam Sivalingascha Chinmayam.*" The support or Pitham of all is Prakriti or Parvati, and Linga is Chinmaya Purusha, the effulgent light which is self-luminous. Union of Prakriti or Parvati, and Purusha or Sivalinga is the cause of the world. In Sanatkumara-samhita of the Siva Purana, Lord Siva says: "O Parvati, daughter of mountain, there is none dearer to Me than the man who worships Me in the Linga, knowing that Linga is the root-cause of everything and knowing the world to be Linga-maya or Chaitanya-maya."

The Linga is like an egg. It represents the Brahmanda (cosmic egg). Whatever that is contained in the Brahmanda is in the Linga. The whole world is the form of Lord Siva. The world is a Linga. Linga also is the form of Lord Siva.

Linga signifies that the creation is effected by the union of Prakriti and Purusha. It means Laya, Jnana, Vyapya, Prakasa, Arathaprakasa, Samarthya and the symbol which denotes the above meaning. Linga means the place of dissolution for the world and all beings. It signifies also Satya, Jnana and Ananta—Truth, knowledge and Infinity. It indicates that Lord Siva is endowed with all-pervading and self-luminous nature. Linga is a symbol which makes us understand the various kinds of Artha which are indicated above. There are six Lingas, viz., Anda Linga, Pinda Linga, Sadasiva Linga, Atma Linga, Jnana Linga and Siva Linga. These Lingas are taken to mean the characteristics by which the Anda (the Universe), Pinda (the body), Sadasiva, etc., are to be recognised and understood.

The union of Linga with Yoni is a representation of the Eternal Union between the static and the dynamic aspects of the Absolute Reality. This represents the Eternal Spiritual Communion of the paternal and the maternal principles from which all the phenomenal diversities have originated. This is an eternal communion of the Changeless Being and the Dynamic Power or Sakti from which all changes flow.

Further, the lower sexual propensities in the aspirants are eradicated by this sublime conception. The spiritualisation and divinisation of Linga and Yoni, helps the aspirants to free themselves from sexual thoughts. All base thoughts gradually vanish by entertaining this lofty idea. All sexual relations in this world are spiritualised as the manifestations of the ultimate Creative Principle, of the eternal Self-enjoyment and Self-multiplication of Lord Siva in and through His Power or Sakti.

The union of Linga with Yoni symbolises the creation of this universe by Lord Siva in conjunction with His Sakti or Power.

The so-called educated men of the modern age have no spiritual insight and philosophical penetration. Hence, they criticise the union of Linga with Yoni as immoral and obscene, owing to their extreme ignorance and lack of enquiry, deep thinking and Satsanga or association with sages. This is highly deplorable and lamentable indeed! May Lord grant wisdom to these poor ignorant souls!

### **WAY TO ATTAIN LORD SIVA**

Tirumular's Tirumantram is a poetical work, said to be composed in the course of three thousand years. It deals with the practical and theoretical aspects of Saiva religion and philosophy. The treatment of Pati (Lord Siva), Pasu (the individual soul) and Pasa (attachment) in the old method, is found in this book. The following is Tirumular's exposition in his Tirumantram.

God alone is the Guru or the spiritual teacher. He shows Siva or Sat. Sat-Guru is Ambalam or Chidakasa Siva. You will have to search the Guru in your own heart. Knowledge, devotion, purity and Siddhis are obtained through the grace of the Guru. The grace descends in virtuous aspirants who have purity, dispassion, etc.

The thirsting aspirant should get help from Guru Param. Guru Param imparts spiritual instructions to the aspirant. Then Suddha Guru confers upon him Divine Grace. When



the aspirant obtains the Divine Grace, he gets several powers, purity, the power to know the Mantras, higher Siddhis, etc. Then the Sat-Guru reveals himself in the Chidakasa, breaks the three bonds, viz., Anava (egoism), Karma (action) and Maya (illusion) and helps him to enter the illimitable domain of Moksha or supreme abode of eternal bliss. Siva Guru presents himself later on and manifests Sat, Asat and Sadasat. When the Jiva attains this final knowledge, he becomes Siva himself. The Guru who presents himself in the earlier and later stages, is Siva himself.

The devotee attains the grace of the Lord when he meditates on Him in the chambers of his heart, in the space between the two eyebrows and in the head. The holy feet of the Lord are highly eulogised. Tirumular says: "The holy feet of my Lord are Mantra, beauty and truth."

Jneya or that which is to be known, is Siva Ananda which is a product of Siva and His grace, Sakti. The Jnata (knower) is the individual soul or Jiva. He knows Siva by abiding in Siva Ananda and obtains Jnana or knowledge.

Moksha is the attainment of Siva Ananda. He who attains Moksha will attain supreme knowledge of Siva. He who gets established in Siva Ananda will attain knowledge and Moksha (the final emancipation). The Jiva who knows Siva Ananda dwells for ever in it. He attains Siva and Sakti in Siva Ananda. He is endowed with true knowledge which is really union of Siva and Sakti. Lord Siva shows the path which leads on to Moksha, to the aspirant who is endowed with dispassion, non-attachment, renunciation, who praises Him always and performs regular worship.

The devotee of Lord Siva gets strength to resist the temptations of the world and of Indra, through his Tapas or austerity. He does not care at all for the celestial pleasures offered by Indra. He is quite contented with the supreme bliss attained through union with Lord Siva.

When the Sadhaka does rigorous austerities and practises concentration, he attains several powers. Indra and other Devas get terribly afraid that they will lose their position. Hence, they put several obstacles on his path and tempt him in a variety of ways by offering celestial car, damsels and various sorts of celestial pleasures. But the firm Sadhaka stands adamant. He never yields and marches direct to the goal, viz., Siva-Pada or the Immortal seat of eternal Bliss. He who yields gets a downfall. Visvamitra had a downfall.

Sage Tirumular says: "Abandon pride of learning. Introspect. Look within. You will be firmly established in Siva. Nothing will shake you. You will be freed from the trammels of births and deaths."

Saiva Siddhanta teaches Advaita only. It is Siva Advaita.

### **GREATNESS OF THE PRASAD**

Prasad is that which gives peace. During Kirtan, worship, Puja, Havan and Arati, Badam, Kismis, milk, sweets, fruits are offered to the Lord. Puja is done by Bael leaves, flowers, Tulsi, Vibhuti, and these are given as Prasad, from the Lord. They are charged with mysterious powers by the chanting of Mantras during Puja and Havan.

Prasad is a great purifier. Prasad is a panacea. Prasad is a spiritual elixir. Prasad is the Grace of the Lord. Prasad is an embodiment of Sakti. Prasad is divinity in manifestation. Many sincere aspirants get wonderful experiences from Prasad alone. Many incurable diseases are cured. Prasad energises, vivifies, invigorates and infuses devotion. It should be taken with great faith.

Live for a week in Brindavan, Pandharpur or Banares. You will realise the glory and miraculous effects of Prasad. Prasad bestows good health, long life, peace and prosperity on all. Glory to Prasad, the bestower of peace and bliss. Glory to the Lord of the Prasad. Giver of immortality and undying happiness.

*Vibhuti* is the Prasad of Lord Siva, to be applied on the forehead. A small portion can be taken in.

*Kumkum* is the Prasad of Sri Devi or Sakti, to be applied at the space between the eyebrows (Ajna or Bhrumadhya).

*Tulsi* is the Prasad of Lord Vishnu, Rama or Krishna, not to be taken in. Badam, Kismis, sweets, fruits, etc., are to be taken in.

All these Prasads are given on all important religious functions.

### **BENEFIT OF PILGRIMAGE**

You will find a description of Oertel's treatment in books on medicine, for certain cardiac affections (heart-troubles). The patient is asked to climb up hills slowly. So, the Kailasa trip, besides the spiritual benefit, removes many kinds of minor heart-troubles. The heart is invigorated and strengthened. The whole cardiac-vascular, nervous, pulmonary, alimentary, integumentary systems are thoroughly overhauled and purified. There is no necessity for Kuhne's steam bath. You perspire profusely during the march. The whole body is filled with fresh, oxygenated blood. The gentle breeze blowing from the tall pine trees all over, surcharged with natural oil of pine, disinfects the lungs and a consumptive is cured of phthisis when he returns. The excessive fat is reduced. A Kailas trip is the best treatment for reduction of obesity in corpulent persons. Many kinds of stomach troubles, uric acid troubles and various sorts of skin diseases are cured. You will not get any disease for a period of 12 years, as you are charged with new electrons, new atoms, new cells, new molecules and new nuclei with renovated protoplasm. This is no Arthavada (glorification). You get two birds by throwing one stone. The Kailas trip brings spiritual blessings and good health. Hail! Hail to Sambhu, the Lord Siva who dwells in Kailas with His Sakti, Parvati, who gives Mukti to His devotees and who is known by the different names, Hara, Sadasiva, Mahadeva, Nataraja, Sankara, etc.

The goal of life is God-realisation which only can free us from the miseries of Samsara, the wheel of birth and death. The performance of the daily obligatory rites, Nitya-Naimittika Karmas, Yatras, etc., unselfishly, leads to the acquisition of virtue. This leads to the destruction of sin, which in turn results in the purification of the mind. This purification of the mind leads to the comprehension of the true nature of Samsara or relative existence, its false and worthless nature. From this results Vairagya (renunciation), which arouses a desire for liberation. From this desire results a vigilant search for its means. From it comes the renunciation of all actions. Thence, the practice of Yoga, which leads to a habitual tendency of the mind to settle in the Atman or

Brahman. This results in the knowledge of the meaning of such Sruti passages as ‘Tat Tvam Asi’, which destroys the Avidya (ignorance), thus leading to the establishment in one’s own self. Thus you see that Yatra like Kailas trip is a Parampara Sadhana for God-realisation, as it causes Chitta Suddhi and Nididhyasana. Dhyana is a direct Sadhana. Householders who are shut up in the world amidst various sorts of cares and anxieties, find a great relief in a Yatra. Their minds get quite refreshed by a Yatra. Further, during the travel they come across Sadhus and Sannyasins. They can have good Satsanga. They can clear their doubts. They can get various sorts of help from them in spiritual Sadhana. That is the main object of Yatra.

Let me bring to your memory, once more, the last word of the Vedas, Upanishads—‘Tat Tvam Asi’, my dear readers. Om Tat Sat, Om Santi, Peace be unto all beings.

### **BENEFITS OF PARIKRAMA**

Parikrama is the devout perambulation or Pradakshina around a sacred and holy spot. This is either a mountain peak, a sacred Tirtha, a place of pilgrimage or an entire area regarded as holy and sanctified by tradition. This practice of making a circuit is ordinarily done at any time, and especially undertaken by devotees en masse at particular periods during the year.

When done on a smaller scale within a small ambit as round a Murti installed in a shrine, round the sacred Tulsi plant or Pipal tree, the perambulation is in common parlance termed ‘Pradakshina.’ A Parikrama also doubtless constitutes Pradakshina, but by convention, it is come to refer mainly to big circuit.

More difficult forms of Parikrama are in vogue. Additional measures involving greater physical exertion and strain are combined with Parikrama. Some lay themselves fully stretched upon the ground and roll along over the entire route. Some others proceed slowly prostrating full length at every three or ten steps; still others walk step by step, placing one foot in close proximity to the other and cover the whole distance of Parikrama; and others do the circuit themselves gyrating in a continuous Atma-Pradakshina. All these difficult features are adopted by devotees at times as special penance, or in accordance with some vow previously made, or as spontaneous expression of their zeal or fervour. Your mental attitude and motive will bestow on you the highest, maximum spiritual good.

Undaunted Yatris in the icy Himalayas do the difficult Parikrama of Mount Kailas and even longer circuit of Lake Manasarovar. Other Yatris complete a round of entire Uttarakhand, in doing the Kedar-Badri-Yatra by going via one route and returning via another, after circling the Chardham.

Far off in the South, pious devotees make Pradakshina of the holy Arunachala at Tiruvannamalai. Rama Bhaktas and Krishna Premis go round Chitrakuta Parvata, Ayodhya, Brij, Brindavan, Govardhana and Badrinath.

The deep significance of Parikrama lies in the fact that the devotee considers not the physical aspect of the place, hill or Tirtha, but the spiritual power it symbolises and the Divine Presence that is manifested and felt through it. Through the Lord’s revelation in the tenth chapter of the Bhagavad-Gita, you will understand how much special places are saturated with the Divine Presence. By the fervent attitude of faith and veneration,

you make yourself fully receptive to the inflow of the spiritual vibrations of the holy place. These powerful spiritual currents enter and purify all the sheaths, gross and subtle, destroying bad Vasanas and Samskaras. Tamas and Rajas are reduced. The concentrated influence of Sattva awakens the dormant spiritual tendencies. By Parikrama, the devotee drinks deep the Divine atmosphere pervading the place and comes out of this spiritual path steeped in Sattvic vibrations. This is the inner working and significance of doing Parikrama.

Being a great purifier, it is enjoined on all devotees as a method of penance or Tapascharya by wise tradition and convention. It is an act of great spiritual benefit and religious merit too. The devotee takes bath, wears clean clothes, smears Tilak or sacred ash and wears Tulsi or Rudraksha Mala and starts with God's name on his lips. On the Parikrama route, you gain valuable Satsanga by meeting Sadhus and Sannyasins living there. Your sins are destroyed by taking bath in sacred rivers (on big Parikramas) or ponds and Kunds. You are elevated and blessed by Darsana of many holy shrines situated on the way. You develop patience and endurance putting up with various discomforts in the sun or rain or cold. Difficult Parikramas mean giving up many dear articles to which the mind is attached. You have your mind freed from all thoughts and you are absorbed in the one idea of the Divine presence. A devoutly conducted Parikrama constitutes in one single act a triple Sadhana elevating your body, mind and spirit. The spiritual vibrations of the holy places of pilgrimage and shrines purify your base Asuric Vrittis and fill you with Sattva and purity. You need not go in for Satsanga. Mahapurushas come to you of their own accord. They are always in search of real and sincere Sadhakas. Therefore, they also remain in holy places like Badri, Kedar, Kailas, Hardwar, Brindavan, Mathura, etc.

Blessed indeed are those who take part in Parikrama, because they will soon attain peace, bliss and immortality! Glory to Lord Rama, the Lord of Ayodhya! Glory to Krishna the Indweller of all hearts, whose special seat is Brindavan! Glory to Bhaktas! May their blessings be upon you all!

### **REAL FLOWER AND ARATI**

The tower of a temple represents Brahmastrandhra. Balipitha represents the navel or Manipura Chakra. Nandi represents Ajna Chakra. Dhvajastambha represents Sushumna Nadi which runs from Muladhara to Brahmastrandhra.

Dig-devata dwells in the ears, Vayu in the skin, Sun in the eyes, Varuna in the tongue, Asvins in the nose, Vishnu in the feet, Indra in the hands, Agni in the speech, Prajapati in the generative organ, Yama in the anus, Sutratman in the Prana, Hiranyagarbha in Antahkarana, Chandra in mind, Brahma in the intellect, Rudra in egoism, Siva in Chitta, Sarasvati in the end of the tongue, Parvati in Anahata Chakra, Lakshmi in Manipura Chakra, Ganesa in Muladhara and Satchidananda Brahman in Brahmastrandhra at the crown of the head.

Satya, Ahimsa, Tapas, mercy, love, self-restraint, contentment, forgiveness, Jnana, equal vision, peace are the real flowers of Puja. All the Nadas are the waters for Abhisheka. The virtuous actions are the offering of incense. Vedanta is Pitambar. Jnana and Yoga are the Kundalas. Tapas and meditation are the lights. Japa is Chamara. Anahata is the music. Kirtan is umbrella. Pranayama is the fan.

Tattvas are the attendants of the Lord. Jnana-Sakti is the Devi. Agama is the commander. The eight Siddhis are the door-keepers of the Lord. Turiya is the Bhasma. Veda is the bull or Nandi. Kalyana Gunas represent the Trident in the hand. Panchakshara is the holy thread. Suddha Jiva is the ornament. The Vrittis are the Pujopakaranas. The Panchabhutas and the five Tanmatras are the Rudrakshamalas of Lord Siva. Tiger skin represents Ahankara.

Kriya-Sakti and virtuous actions are Dhupa or incense for the Lord. Chit-Sakti which produces knowledge is also Dhupa. Offering of the ego and the mind at the lotus-feet of the Lord is real Naivedya. Just as camphor melts and becomes one with the fire, so also the mind of a sage melts and the individual soul gets merged in the Supreme Soul. This is real Karpura Arati.