

**My Lord,  
the Mystery -**

**Ardhanarishwara**

**Swami Tswarananda Giri**

**My Lord, the Mystery –**

**Ardhanarishwara**

*Discourses by*

**Swami Ishwarananda Giri**

Published by :  
Samvit Sadhanayana  
Santa Sarovar  
Mount Abu  
Rajasthan-307 501  
India

© Publisher

1st Edition - 1000 Copies  
New Year's Day 2010

Designed & Printed by :

**Urvee** ....friends of nature, Bangalore

Telefax : 91-80-23346434, 98804 80646, 98456 26132

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**Shri D. Krishnan IPS**

**1924 – 2007**

**This publication is sponsored  
in the memory of Samvit Sadhaka**

**Late Shri D. Krishnan IPS**

**by**

**His Wife and Family Members,**

**Chennai**



# **Shri D. Krishnan IPS**

1924 – 2007

Born to a family with long and distinguished Police Traditions.

Served Tamil Nadu as Inspector General of Police.

Decorated many times with medals including the Poorvi Star, the President's Police Medal for Meritorious Service, and the President's Independence Day Medal for Distinguished Service in Nagaland.

Long association with Poojya Swamiji:

1981 – Conducted a pilgrimage of South Indian temples for Poojya Shri and North Indian Sadhakas, marking a milestone in Samvit Sadhanayana's extension

1985 – Established Chennai Samvit Kendra "Samvit Triveni"

1991 – Organized historic Samvit meet in Tiruchengode with Rudrabhisheka to Lord Ardhanarishwara.

1995 – Part of organizing committee of Mahakumbhabhisheka and Pratishta of Shri Dakshina Murti at Dhyana Mandapa, Tiruvannamalai Ashram

2004 – Blessed with Kanakabhisheka by family members and great-grandsons on the occasion of “seeing a thousand moons” on his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday.

We dedicate the holy publication of “Ardhanarishwara” to the sacred memory of this great soul.

- Susheela Amma (wife) and family  
members  
(Sponsorers)

## Prastaava, a prologue —

சுவகாவன் என் சிந்தனையுள் நின்றதனால்  
அவனானாரே அவன்தான் வணங்கி  
சிறந்த மகிழ் உறையாள்பங்குத் தன்மை  
முந்தாத விக்ரமுத்தியம் ஓய உறைய்ப்பன் நான்

The Lord having chosen my mind  
for His abode, impelled by His grace  
That bends me to His feet,  
My heart brimming with joy,  
I proceed to speak of  
The divine nature of Ardhanarishwara,  
To the utter dissolution of  
All the bonds of the past.







**The idol in the temple of Lord Somanatha  
Santasarovar, Mount Abu**

## ध्यान श्लोक

नीलप्रवाल रुचिरं विलसत् त्रिनेत्रम्  
पाशारुणोत्पलभयापहटंकहस्तम् ।  
बालेन्दुबद्धमुकुटं प्रविभक्तभूषम्  
अर्धाम्बिकेशमनिशं प्रणमामि भक्त्या ॥

Lord Ardhambikesha's divine form is blue gem-like as well as of the coral hue. It is endowed with three eyes. In His four hands He carries the paasha, the red-lotus, the mudra of Abhaya and the axe. The Moon shines from the locks of His hair. The masculine right-half and the other feminine-half are decorated with suitable divine ornaments.

I offer myself with love unceasingly to this Ardhanarishwara.

## Diacritical Marks

The following diacritical marks have been used in transliterating Sanskrit words. The use of diacritical marks for popular Sanskrit words like atma, karma, sadhana, sadhaka, veda etc. is avoided.

अ a, आ ā, इ i, ई ī, उ u, ऊ ū

ऋ r, ए e, ऐ ai, ओ o, औ au

÷ m̐, : ḥ

क् k, ख kh, ग् g, घ gh, ङ ṅ

च् c, छ ch, ज् j, झ jh, ञ ñ

ट् ṭ, ठ् ṭh, ड् ḍ, ढ् ḍh, ण ṇ

त् t, थ् th, द् d, ध् dh, न् n

प् p, फ् ph, ब् b, भ् bh, म् m

य् y, र् r, ल् l, व् v, श् ś

ष् sh, स् s, ह् h

## Foreword

Of the four mountains that have played key-roles in my spiritual sojourn, the “Serpent Mount” in Tamil Nadu is the least known and less celebrated by common masses. Its main attraction is the shrine of Lord Ardhanārīṣwara, with its unique svayambhū statue that is half-Śiva and half-Devi and is made of unidentified rock-like material having contrasting shades of white and black. The influence exerted by Ardhanārīṣwara Śiva on my life has also been equally mysterious and indefinable, but strong and undeniable. Only in later years of my development did I realize how deep-rooted that influence has been. The love for Lord Śiva I had accepted as almost my birth-right or inborn trait. The desire to fully grasp the significance behind the forms of God I adored had not awakened. Love, perhaps, does not require it at its nativity. But as I came into contact with śāstras and satpuruṣas, I could

get glimpses of the mystical depths behind the upasana forms; and the desire to dive into those depths asserted itself. Still, after more than half a century of explorations, the Ardhanārīśwara, who was my starting point, remained untouched on His high pedestal of incomprehensible majesty and mystery. My feeble attempts to make short flights or leaps to touch that pedestal were fuelled by some rare moments of inspiration which my limited wanderings in Śruti and Āgamic literature yielded. All those sorties helped me muster courage to agree to a three-day lecture-series on “Ardhanārīśwara” for the Samvit sādhakas of Bangalore, at Malleswaram, in July 1990, immediately after the Guru-Pūrnima celebrations. This venture worked like a stimulus, compelling me to focus all those scattered inspirations on to a complete understanding of Ardhanārīśwara mūrti. I need not say that the completeness was not achieved, as this book itself will reveal.

Yet I allow this publication mainly for two reasons: one, the sadhakas at the time of the discourses derived much joy and some of them took the trouble of writing down the text of the lectures as recorded in audio cassettes. That manuscript of three lectures has been lying with me all these years, since I was not sure if it was worth publishing. But, in the end, the feeling prevailed that the efforts put by the sadhakas in that direction should not be allowed to go in vain. Secondly, a time has come when, irrespective of scriptural sanction and the value these thoughts contain, I feel I must make a final palpable offering to Ardhanārīśwara before it becomes too late. This book is, thus, an act of love, and should be forgiven for whatever is clumsy or unclear.

From the above statements one can understand the background in which the present work is to be placed. It is not a philosophical treatise, not a study of Ardhanārī as an icon. Sensitive

sadhakas may derive some sort of meditative-patterns in the upasana of Brahman according to Vedanta tradition. Some of the imaginations laid out in the talks almost two decades ago are getting substantiated by recent findings in the fast developing scenario. For instance, sometime back it was reported in the media that, in a study case, scientists had monitored, with suitable instruments, the movements of the speaker and audience in an auditorium during an absorbing lecture. They found that not only in the process of speaking but also in that of listening, the human body was constantly changing posture and making gestures, mostly unconsciously. When these natural movements were coordinated and projected on a screen as electric pulses, the graph clearly showed that the body of the speaker and that of the listener were both responding to each other and moving in a harmony, as in a ballet. This not only enhances

our idea of creation as a Cosmic Dance, it also indicates that there must be a process of transference of knowledge, a dialogue amongst the elements. If creation is the self-expression of a great Truth, it needs to be listened to raptly; failing which, the harmony of the Universe is lost; it ceases to be a song or dance, an orchestra or ballet.

The specialty of the Ardhanārīṣwara form is, it is not explicitly a dancing pose like Natarāja or wielding a vīnā like Saraswati or Dakṣiṇāmūrti. So, here a sadhaka has to meditate and arrive at the implications and understand how the half-Śiva, half- Śakti stands for Guru conveying knowledge. That form is not a symbol of physical forces of creation but of a spiritual process of enlightenment. Therefore we have leaned heavily on Kalidāsa's stupendous expression "vāgarthāviva samprktau."

Scholars agree that Śiva is Vedapuruṣa,



embodying the essence of the Vedic spirit. Upaniṣads name the Supreme Self “prāṇcopaśamam Śivam.” It is equally clear and acceptable that the Divine Mother, Parā Śakti, is the favourite theme of all the āgamas. Therefore, Ardhanārīśwara inspires us to realize the oneness or harmony of Nigama and Āgama, which we find eminently illustrated in the life and works of Bhagavan Bhaṣyakara Sri Śankara. Indeed, one may even say Ardhanārīśwara is a Brahma-vidya-mūrti. It is natural that a lot of space in this book is taken up with the concept of Brahman as jagat-kāraṇa, almost amounting to be repetitive.

Also, I had freely used ślokas of Ardhanārī Nāṭeśwara and Umamahēśwara stotras by Sri Śankara, to explain different aspects of Śiva-Śakti-Sāmarasya. To help those readers unfamiliar with these stotrās, we have given them in the appendix along with a free translation.

Photographs of the two types of Ardhanārīṣwara vighrahās used in worship lend an added value to this volume. In the four-handed version of the idol, some dhyānaślokaś replace the paraśu and abhaya mudra of Śiva with the triśula and kāpala. The most majestic is the two-handed svayambhū vighraha at Tirchengodu (holy-red-fort). The whole hill appears to be as much a svayambhū as Ardhanārīṣwara and equally powerful as the tall idol in the sanctum sanctorum of the very ancient, crumbling temple-structure atop the hill. The hill is called Sarpagiri in the Puranas; and to justify it, a huge three-headed serpent is carved on the rock by the side of steps ascending to the shrine. I humbly dedicate these discourses as my pranams to the most sacred divinity enshrined in that unique hill.

My deep gratitude to the following sadhakas:  
Snehalatha Ravindranath (transcription of

cassettes), Balaji Srinivasan (editing and arranging for printing), Praful (photos) and Sowmini (sponsorship).

Deepavali 2009

**Iswarananda Giri**

# Discourse One

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The month śrāvan is very sacred to Śiva who is Abhišekapriyā. At this time, the entire prithvi is made into a pāṛthiva linga by the Kālātmā, and Indra supplies him the jaladhāra. So in tune with this cosmic adoration, our minds also turn towards the Śivamūrti and on this occasion I have selected a very difficult aspect of Śiva. This time we have chosen to meditate upon the Ardhanārīṣwara-mūrti that is not so very well known. Maheṣwara-mūrti is familiar and beautifully depicted in all temples. At the other end of the spectrum, we have Dakṣina-mūrti, an utterly abstract concept embedded in the deep metaphysicāl mysticism of Vedantic tantra in which the Iṣwara, Guru and the Atma appear as one undivided awareness. In between, the Maheṣa and Dakṣineṣa forms we find the upasana field decked with beautiful aspects of Śiva. We have the meditative aspect of Yogeṣwara worshipped

by yogis. The purānakārās depicted the kāla-samhāra, the Tripurasamhāra and the Gajasamhāra in most dynamic architectural vigrahas of Śiva. The tantrikās evolved their own very intricate forms of the Bhairava murti, combining the mystical and ritualistic. And of course the artists were not to be left behind, and they envisioned that absolute awareness, Parabrahman as Natarāja. From his resounding Damaru, all the secrets of the Sanskrit language were revealed to Pānini, Patanjali and Vyāghrapada, who ever worship Him at Chidambaram as the Kaladhara. All arts emanate from Him. Compared to all these, the aspect of Ardhanārīśwara is a little unfamiliar and perhaps mind-boggling. We will meditate upon that form employing the orientation of the present Guru Satra already in front of us. We have fixed our gaze upon Bhagavan Veda Vyāsa – so we will adopt that attitude which Vyāsa had towards the entire

Indian culture and upasana and we will not deviate from the pure Vedantic aspect of Bādarāyana's philosophy. Otherwise, these upāsya murtis, just like our śāstras, can accommodate any aspect from the most sublime to the most ludicrous. The acāryas claim that nothing is hidden from the gaze of the Vaidika rishis – 'sarvam vedavido viduḥ .' The Ardhanārīśwara murti is particularly vulnerable. A biologist, for instance, may find that it has something to do with genetics. So let me make it clear that we are here as upāsakas of Bhagavan Veda Vyāsa and this mūrti comes to us dancing to the tunes of Vedanta. I want you to catch the thoughts of Adi Śankaracarya expressed predominantly in the slokas of Ardhanārī Nateśwara Stotra which we have recited just now (see Appendix). It gives you a clue that the Ardhanārī concept has something to do with Nateśwara. If it were mere Śiva, He



would sit in meditation, and if it were mere Śakti – She'll try to inspire into action. What will Ardhanārī do? He'll simply dance. Try to understand this through Vedanta.

What is Vedanta? Let us take the first aphorisms of the Brahma-Sutra:

“Athato Brahma Jignyāsa”,  
“Janmādyasya yataḥ”,  
“Śāstrayonitvat”,  
“Tat tu samanvayāt”

Let us gather the essence of these four sutras without going into details of their philosophical implications.

Vedanta has to begin with Jignyāsa – a great yearning to know the Truth. But the truth of what? Brahma Jignyāsa – yearning to realize the Absolute, the Whole, the Perfect that is Brahman. It is natural to every human being. Vyāsa here is giving it a Śāstriya mārga.

Through satsanga, development of Śraddhā and the samadamādi adhikāri sampatti, the aspirant gains this jignyāsa. This is implied by 'Atha.'— What is Brahman? You may have your own concept of Brahman. But here it is made clear - "Janmādyasya yataḥ ." This Brahman is not a hypothetical concept. He is the fundamental ground of existence, the cause of janma-sthiti-bhanga of the jagat. But then even about this there are so many schools of thought clashing with one another. Therefore the sutra says "śāstrayonitvāt", the very idea of the fundamental ground of being here has to be derived from the Śāstras. The question may arise, "If the Śāstras themselves are in disagreement, then what?" The answer is given in the fourth sutra - "Tat tu samanvayāt"- By Śāstras we mean the entire body of revealed spiritual literature that has come to us from the beginning of creation as Vedas etc., and they have to yield one

common truth that fulfills all human aspirations. This is Vedanta.

You have a very perfect definition of Brahman and perhaps by constantly reading about it you may hypnotize yourself into believing that you have known it. The question is – can you do samanvaya to your life, to your neighbour's life and to this nation's life, to this earth sailing through millions of years of beautiful living? Can you strike a note of harmony threading through all this? That is the idea here. Then only will it be true Vedanta – Vyāsa's Vedanta. He is our only Guru, and his is the true Vedanta. True to the Guru, our Vedanta is a Rasamaya Vedanta. If it is rasa, it will live. A tree may temporarily shed its leaves and go into hibernation in winter but when the vasanta-ṛtu comes again, it will flower. That virility and variety signifies the rasa of life. The meaning of life is to sustain all these blows and yet to bloom – not

to merely exist but to come out with a spectacular variety and richness. It is an irony that some get petrified into pet theories in the name of Vedanta. At every stage of life, Vedanta becomes fresh and new. Nitya-nava – that is the nature of Beauty. Beauty cannot be defined, but we still have to understand what it is. It is that which is ever fresh. If Vedanta is not beautiful, we don't want it. We are rasikas – we want rasa and the Upaniṣad's say – raso vai saḥ – our God is Rasa.

What happened to Hinduism when Buddhism was born? Vedas were there but somewhere, at sometime, the rasa dried up and the tātparya of the Veda was forgotten. We thought it was just a set of dos and don'ts, just karma and bhoga. It could not sustain life and change, so it was blown away. Don't blame Buddha. He was just the last straw! But see what happened to that Buddhism that came in his name. It put Buddha into a shrine

and made him into a God – an avatāra. Buddha came for life, lived a full life and this horrible Sūnyavāda was created in his name and launched by such powerful missiles of tarka that great intellects like Nagārjuna bowed to it. But Vedanta was not afraid of it. So we produced our own missiles. That is the virility of Vedanta. It brought out its navya nyāya to destroy these theistic missiles. If you read the works of these great Masters who demolished the opposition to Vedanta, you will find that ultimately their motive is not destruction but that they came to unite. They had the rasa. Essentially neither Vyāsa, nor Śaṅkara, nor any of our Masters came merely to oppose something. Sri Harṣa says in his famous Khandanakhandā Khadya - “All the yuktis I have used to show Sūnyavāda is untenable can be used for Vedanta also.” Then what is Truth? Certainly you don’t reach Truth by argumentation, Tarka. What to do? Do

Upāsana, have Śraddha to the Masters and the scriptures.

So this is the question, what can you accept and live with? Certainly you can't live with Emptiness. Therefore Buddhism went away from India. The good that was in Buddha's wisdom, all the fragrance that was in Buddha's personality wafted all over Asia, what happened to it? Somewhere it turned into Tantrism and elaborate rituals or somewhere else it became the utter naked simplicity of Zen Buddhism. To be true to life, these extremities have to be accommodated – samanvaya has to be done.

In Tibet I found a beautiful huge image of Sahasrabāhu closely embracing the Śakti. At first it was incomprehensible, but if you go to their Upāsana form we get to know that the concept is of Śiva trying to hold Śakti. Two hands were not enough; He needs a thousand

hands to hold this saundarya or a thousand streams of Joy. We didn't show such an embracing form; we invented this Ardhanārīśwara where it is Nitya Āsliṣṭa, Nitya Yukta.

A disciple once asked the Master - "How do you keep the wisdom intact?" It is something like Arjuna's question: "stitha prajñasya kā bhāṣa". The Zen Master replied in his own way, "Well, I eat when I am hungry and I sleep when I am tired." The disciple was completely let down. He said, "Well, everybody does that." The Master said "No. Very few people do that." Come to think of it most people consider eating an exercise of their jaws and teeth, and most people don't go to sleep, nature tricks them into it. That is to say, they don't know how they slip into sleep and how they wake up. This is a very relevant question. Here the Zen Master is pointing out the fullness of life. Every act is

fully lived and experienced. As an example he says,“ I eat with awareness and sleep with awareness.” That awareness is Brahmajnāna. If you think Brahmajnāna is separate and needs protection from invasion of other jñānas, then woe unto you, you will never be released.

“Pratibodha viditam matam amritatvam hi vindate”. If you want amritatvam, then don't fall for the trap for which all the Gods have fallen. Not only did they suffer in churning the ocean for amrita but they made God suffer by asking Him to bring Meru parvat and become the tortoise to keep it afloat, and with all that the amrita was snatched by the daityas. That is not the real amrita of life. “Amrita iha bhavati nānyaḥ panthā vidyate ayanāya”. Your fulfillment, your blessedness, your immortality has something to do with this ground of mortality. It has something to do with iha - the present. How do you get it?



Pratibodh veditam - Every (bodha) “knowing” should reveal that. So if you have known Brahman, every bodha will preserve it. There is no special bodha, no special posture.

But this simplicity should not be told to the uncultured. They will misunderstand. They will try just to eat and sleep and keep the paṣu bhāva intact. They will neither understand what is sleep nor what is waking. “Yā niṣa sarva bhutānām tasyām jāgarti samyami” He’ll neither be the bhuta nor the samyami. So with things like Zen you must be careful. We can accept it only through proper sāmpradāya. The amrita in ‘amrita iha bhavati’ is a state of utter alertness. Everything that comes is received, including sleep, and nothing is omitted, nothing is insignificant. It is an unending alertness, not something that lasts for a few moments. Some say, “I meditated; I enjoyed my meditation.” That is good, but when you come out of meditation

if you wear a castor oil face, then what is the use of that meditation? To the contrary if you wear a castor oil face during meditation and come out beaming I will understand that it is a therapy. No one goes smiling into a hospital, they come out smiling. So beware when you say you enjoy your sādhanā.

There is a beautiful saying in the Āgamas:

Grāhya grāhaka samvitti  
sāmānyā sarvadehinām  
Yogīnām tu viśeṣoyam  
sambandhe sāvadhānatā

Samvit is a means to knowledge. That awareness will always come as 'grāhya grāhaka samvitti' – grāhya, that which is seen, grasped, experienced, and grāhaka - the seer, the experiencer. This duality will always be there. Dṛik-dṛṣya is the fundamental sambandha. Don't try to explain it away through ajātavāda. Life is not to be explained

away but to be experienced fully. So this grāhya grāhaka samvitti will be there common to all perceptions, so what is the viśeṣata of an enlightened person, a yogi:

Yoginām tu viśeso yam  
sambandhe sāvadhānatā

He is sāvadhāna, very careful to avoid even a little mistake, a little misidentification. The Gita says “Kāranam gunasangosya sadasad-yoni-janmasu”. We are not afraid of taking a body – sadasad-yoni-janmasu - endless births in useless yonis or very fine yonis; but if it comes meaninglessly, that is the greatest tragedy of Life. What we get and what we lose, both are meaningless. So ‘sambandhe sāvadhānatā’. Be very careful. What is this sambandha that gives you this experience? Brahman is there and you are there, so what is the sambandha? Only the Mahavakyas can tell you. ‘Tatwam Asi Svetaketu.’ ‘Sambandhe Sāvadhānatā’ That ultimate alertness you

achieve when you go through the Mahavakyas. Mind you, it is just not three words. I think it is the Trikalātīta. It is past, present and future that are the three words that take you beyond time. In all that you should see the pervading, one continuity of awareness “sambandhe sāvadhānatā”. So this sambandha has to be caught hold of. That which is Truth is that what you are. That is the sambandha given in this beautiful mūrti. Śiva is Brahman is it not? That is the definition of Brahman.

“Prapancopaśaṃam Śivam Advaitam” The perfect Bliss, Peace, that which is undivided. That same was put forth as Jagat Kārana by Vyāsa in his sutra “janmādyasya yataḥ” Śiva is the Jagat Kārana, Jagat Adhistāna. He creates; He sustains and takes the Universe back into Him. This is the definition of Brahman, but that is not enough. This would have misled people, disarmed them from the

only armour they have while they face life with this Truth.

There is the well-known episode in the life of Bhagavan Śankara. It is told in various ways since, as I told you, we always want a variety. We don't have the least hesitation in trying to add 'salt and pepper' to a story and make it a little different. The same 'driṣṭānta' when I tell after two years you will find I have changed it a little. Don't blame me for cheating. It is well known that Bhāṣyakāra established Brahmovāda and went around the country convincing people of its efficacy and value. He happened to be in Assam which at that time was called Kāmarūpa. The people there were sāktas and the worship of mere Śakti is bound to lead you to mischief, as it is being done through our scientists. They are also Śakti upāsakas as they are dedicated to discover power. So Ācārya Śankara went there to preach Brahmovāda to them. It seems as

soon as he arrived, as usual as it happens in mountains, he got hill diarrhea. But his illness developed into such a serious thing; it lasted for three days and then the śāstrārtha was kept and he could not get up. So when the Ācārya was deeply pondering over this problem a young girl entered his kutiya. She asked, "Why are you lying down?" He said "Devi, I am ill". "You are ill? What does it matter? I heard that the preparations are made for you, I want to hear you speak. Get up and come." "Devi, I can't get up. I have no Śakti." Then she said, "Then why are you going on telling Brahman, Brahman; tell Śakti, Śakti" and she went away. Glorify Śakti, without Her you can't even speak about Brahman. The other story also you may know. In Kaśi, Annapūrṇa came to tell Śankara that without Her, Śiva cannot move. The Ācārya says in the first sloka of the Soundaryalahiri, "Devi, you are the only one to be propitiated,

without whom Śiva can't even bat his eyelids, so to say." His eyes are enough for Sṛiṣṭi, Sthiti, Samahāra. He has three eyes to do this. But can He open His eyes? Śaktiyukta gives a total re-orientation of Brahman's presentation. I am not telling you he did not realize Brahman. He is doing some work. He is trying to share his experience with you. Śaktiyukta it should be.

Vedanta has given you the warning in these beautiful episodes of our Masters themselves to orient ourselves to that. 'Sambandhe sāvadhānatā' was told earlier - what sambandha will you give here? Half Nara and half Nārī. What sambandha will Brahma have with the world? You have to connect it or you cannot experience it. So the entire effort of the acāryas in helping you to experience this fullness in life is to establish this Śakti and Śiva Sambandha.

An example is given in Yogavasiṣṭha - the wind is called pavana as it moves. Similarly spanda is natural to Śiva. Spanda – movement. Just as the vibration is natural to wind, so Icchā is natural to Śiva. Icchā is the Śiva spanda, because He is Awareness, Consciousness. If He is Sat and Chit, He will have Icchā. Can you think of Icchā in jada? There is Śiva in jada, that also is a different thing. Awareness that is trying to express itself will first experience Icchā. So Icchā is inherent in Caitanya. Suppose there is no movement in the wind – that can certainly happen – and that will correspond to Praśānta Śiva.

When that Icchā in Śiva moves, it is Śakti. Praśānta Icchā is Śiva. The two are the same. Ramakrishna Paramahansa and others use the illustration of the snake coiled up and the snake gliding – Kundalini Sarpa and Prasārita Sarpa. How will you connect these two concepts? You cannot connect them with a



movement, nor can they be connected with an understanding. All knowledge and all kriya will come out of Icchā – they cannot establish Icchā. Once Icchā is there, then it can create a thousand kriyās and it can project its own thousand Jñānas for its own movement. Icchā is unquestionable. But unfortunately, you are hopelessly mature, so you can only question – why did you buy this? Why did you go? etc. Try questioning a child – Why did you come here? It will just chuckle; it will not utter a word. “I want a pencil ” – “Why do you want a pencil?” People usually scold and drive it away. A small two year old comes into my room at the āśrama and always asks for paper and pencil, and I always give them to him. What will he write? We should not ask him – he is a child. There is no kriyā and no bodha for him, it is just kṛīda or self-expression. Icchā mātra. Icchā you can see, but you cannot ask why Icchā. But if that Icchā is

curbed then that child will not become talented at all, he will not become a sadhaka since, as a sadhaka, one has to be niṣkāma. You have nipped in the bud this desire to be niṣkāma by insisting there should be a kāmanā – why's and what's.

Be nirmukta caitanya and then be spandita Caitanya. If you are icchā mātra, then Bhagavan will call you Nimitta Mātra. All actions are beautiful when you do them as they come out of you – that is all. 'I will get this so that I will be appreciated' – all this is paṣu bhāva. This is something that comes when things are materialized. The Icchā bhāva comes before things get materialized – hence they are divine – Nirviṣaya – hence they are beautiful and hence they give you joy.

One may ask, can Śiva act with motivation? Will Śiva act at all? No. Śiva does not act. Then is He a paralysed person? No! He dances, He

is Nateṣwara! Yogavasiṣṭha says, "The wind moves by its own nature, it has to move, and in moving it creates a world of sound in the expanse of formless space. Even so does Śiva create the world." I won't go into that theory of how out of that movement in space particles come out and then all those things including the earth and the solar system all come as effects of pulsating space – Akāṣa Spandana. First comes śabda, and out of it all sṛiṣṭi comes. Similarly Śiva's icchā creates jagat. So when you say Brahman creates jagat, it is Śiva icchā you are dealing with, icchā yukta Śiva. But you also have come with a jīva icchā. Your jignyāsa itself is valid only when you have the intense desire to know the Truth and the Truth only. What for? Where? Why? No, there are no questions. I must know it. So your Jignyāsa, your Jīva Icchā will be fulfilled only by Śiva Icchā. Śiva Icchā is the entire universe.

So if you want salvation the entire world becomes your means and if you want a TV set, the entire world will be your enemy – “I want this, I want that” - then everything resists, as there are other people also wanting it and that creates tension. He who can push and pull – go and grab – will get it. This is all jivakrita jagat. In Śivakrita jagat there is no push and pull – it is a dance. So Acārya Śankara had to state his kāranatva vada artistically or poetically – as stated by other acāryas – “sva śhaktya natavat brahma kāranam śankaro abravīt” – I am fond of this statement of Kalpataru of Amlānandaswami. He says this is what Śankara means by Brahman being the kārana of jagat. This is Śankara siddhānta: out of His own power, Brahman becomes a dancer. That is how we can picture or imagine it. In the beginning of sādhana, it is only picturing, experiencing comes later on.

What is this Brahman you are doing upasana of? Sva śaktya natavat - and his natana is the jagat. That is why I insist on the Nateśwara being combined with the Ardhanārīśwara. Ardhanārīśwara is considered as “śiva śaktya yukta” – but that is not enough, what is Śakti? What for? For natana. So this concept of art, an artistic expression is brought forth. That is the sambandha. Your sambandha with Śakti in the wordly sense tends to be exploitation; in the correct sambandha, it is natavat. Natana is just an example, any art, like playing the vīnā will do. Therefore we have Brahman as Vīnā Dakṣiṇāmūrti.

There was a boy who was very fond of buying kāvyas of modern Hindi poets. His father came complaining, “Please make this boy understand. First of all we cannot afford to buy the books and further these so called poetry books are so costly, as they don’t write in a straight line but staggering, so much of

the pages are wasted. And what will he gain reading poetry? It is utter waste." I asked, "Why is it waste?" "I want him to become a doctor. He has to study something else for that." In his viewpoint all literature is a waste. So I asked, "Shall we tear all the pages of the Mahabharata, the itihāsās and the purānās?" "No, that is good, Swamiji, but there is an age to read it. Young men should not read it". For earning and eating, Ramayana and Mahabharata are not needed. But do you know that this earning and eating will become meaningless if those itihāsās and literature are not there and if credibility is not inculcated in your child. You always talk of utility – do you think of credibility also? But that comes to you when someone dares to tell you that you are a nobody. Then only you think of your credibility. When you had the money and you were the boss, no one questioned. Later on you question yourself, "Who am I and what

am I?" If you don't have self-credibility, your whole life crumbles.

I want you to understand this and let your children behave in such a way that they will understand. Life is not science or technology, nor discoveries; but certainly life is art, life is participation and life is creation. You cannot create. Art creates in the true sense. You say, "Yes, we create a bulldozer." You have not 'created' a bulldozer – you have only assembled certain elements. But an artist creates. That is the distinction – an artist creates without destruction, whereas you create after destroying something. An artist understands this fundamental difference. Our rasa śāstras, our kāvya śāstras, all explain what is the rasa. Don't think it is meant for people who only dream all the time. You know how the ādikavi Vālmiki wrote his mahakāvyas – analyse this. When he expressed his anger towards the hunter who

had killed one male krounca bird and the female was wailing over it, and at that point he uttered a few words. How do we consider that to be the birth of kāvya? To know this, you have to study the kāvya śāstra to find out why this was an astounding discovery. The candas was there before also but here it was an expression. He was not expressing his anger – it was not he who was scolding someone – he saw that incident in a pure aesthetic way with karunā. It was a way of expression in which the object is not important – the person experiencing it creates a vision. That śloka of Vālmiki creates a vision of a cruel death of one form of life resulting in the killer's life being led to worlds of shadow and sorrow. It speaks about life and not about things. A real artist can't create if he is personal. He has to become perfectly impersonal.

The Lord says, if you do every act



impersonally, then that will be yoga – “karmanyeva adhikāraṣṭe mā phaleṣu kadācana” Do act, but act in such a way as to create a new vision, you must always act to create, that is a good act, and not just imitate. Imitation does not give you joy, and if it does not give you joy, how will it give joy to others? It is only a transaction – vyāpāra. It is prapancatīta – can you gulp these? So in the seeming non-utility of kāvyas and art, you find the meaningfulness of life. The Masters say:

Dharmārthakāmamokṣeṣu  
vaicakṣanyam kalāsu ca  
Karoti prītim buddhim ca  
sadhu kāvyā niṣīvanam

It is undoubtedly a very good, defectless aspect of life that you apply yourself to kāvyā because in that you will have dharma, artha, kāma, and mokṣa vaicakṣanyam. What

is your Ramayana – is it just a story of some man, whose wife was stolen, who defeated the thief and brought back the wife. No – it is an ideal – an ideal is invoked without telling in so many words that you have to do this. If you read the Ramayana you are induced to shape your life according to the Rama ideal. An ideal is given with inspiration. The very concept of śikṣa is not a transfer of information but it is the capacity to invoke a vision of life. Can you give that to a man? Then he will live by himself. A vision of life inspires him to try to create it. This is the secret of creation. And if you speak of Brahman and jagat kāraṇa, you must have some inkling of creation. When the Lord creates, He has nothing to create upon, He is alone. What will he create? He creates a kāvya.

An ordinary artist may make use of your ordinary situation but he is not talking about

the situation itself. Let me explain that to you – a modern painter had painted a scene of a sunset and showed it to his friend. The friend said “I have never seen a sunset like this.” and the artist said, “Only an artist can see that. For you, it is just a splash of color, that’s all.” We insist that everyone should be artistic. Even our pūja is artistic. Once, when I was in Kāsi, I met a foreigner and asked him, “How do you like Benaras?” Usually people say, “It is so dirty, the gullies are so narrow, etc.” But this man said, “I am just in ecstasy, everything is so beautiful!” For instance, he had bought a shoe from a shoemaker on the footpath. He said “Look how beautiful this shoe is – I am going to put it in my drawing room.” Why was there beauty in that shoe? I thought about it. Because in making that shoe, the cobbler does not think of the money he will get out of it but is just pouring himself into it. If someone says change it, he will say no, my

father and grandfather all are there in making this shoe. He has a philosophy even in shoe making. Don't disturb this culture.

We want to see our God as an artist, a songster and a dancer, who has no idea of giving you some knowledge or some motive to work. If you understand Him, the His inspiration will automatically lead you to a good moral life. But we are not talking of moral. We are talking of God who creates the world. Certainly he does not sermonize. Certainly he does not run the show with a whip in His hand.

Raso vai saḥ – He is the rasa. This is brought out in the Ardhanārī as the icchā in one half and the saundarya in the other half, the inner essence. If you have seen some design of a machine or a plan of a house you are going to build, it will look like some strange drawing, and you will not understand what is inside. So we give what we call a section, a

vertical section or a half section. In a diagram of a machine, for example, there is a casing and inside is a motor and perhaps inside the motor are some gears. So the people who sell the machine give you a picture in which half the casing is cut away to reveal what is inside. Similarly we have a half-cut Brahman in Ardhanārī.

Whatever manifests, it is through Śakti only. So having manifested, all is Śakti. She is jaganmayi. Śiva is not jaganmaya – he is prapancopaśama – when the whole prapanca vanishes, that is Śiva. Both are at the same time in Brahman who is ‘janmādyasya yataḥ.’ Only Ardhanārī can be a proper symbol for it.

So Bhagavati says in the Devi-bhāgavat, “I become all things and I enact all the great things of creation like the exploding of stars, the receding of galaxies etc.” Not only did

God create the world, He entered into it. That means She is there totally in the carācara jagat. Until She entered into it She could not become either the witness of the experience or the experiencer. There should be somebody to experience it. So She became both the viṣaya and the viṣayi. Everything is citi-śakti. But who is to join both and take you to that which has become both viṣaya and viṣayi? Śiva will do that. So She keeps that Śiva very much intact in all the prapanca. The concept of Ardhanārī Nateśwara conveys this idea. Mere Śakti means She will create and permeate. Mere Śiva means he will efface and sit still. So you make a compromise and you have the Divine Dance.

Remember the concepts of Cidākāśa, Citsabhā and Citguha mentioned in the various shastras. When you think of Nateśwara, it is Cidambara Nateśwara. Cidambara is the

space of Cit with the potential of expression. That pure Cit and pure Sat is expressed through dance. Ākāśa means movement in harmony. Cit is movement in rasa that will reveal something, a meaningful movement, and that is dance. On the third day we will particularly dwell upon the significance of nritya.

Just as there is the Cidākāśa, there is Citsabhā. When you go to Cidambaram, they will describe the temple as the Sabhā also. Sabhā is a place where people come to learn something, to transact in the company of other cultured people. In this Cit-sabhā, Śiva is the Sabhāpati. He is Iśwara. Kevala Nirguna becomes the karunāmaya Adhyakṣha. He presides over the deliberations, the process of liberation, sravana, manana, nididhyāsana etc.

Then there is the Citguheṣa. Sruti speaks of

‘satyam jñānam anantam Brahma’ and ‘yo veda nihitam guhāyām parame vyoman.’ The cidakāśa loses its cosmic dimension and becomes what is called parama-ākāśa. It is a cave – you can’t hold a court there – so what will you do? You sit and do tapasya – so the Guheśa is a yati and Sabeśa is a pati. The Sabhāpati has the power to govern; he has the authority and he protects you. And the cit-guha is the place for your japa and sadhana. The same Śiva is there as the Nateśwara, the Sabeśwara and the Guheśwara also. All the three have to be equated – how to do this we will see in the next lecture.

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# Discourse Two

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In the first lecture, we began our meditations upon the Brahmamūrti, the Supreme Lord in his very special form - special in its mystical significance and its mind-boggling set-up. These meditations are naturally an intense exercise, as they are some very rare gems that our Masters have cultured. With great tapasya, they have collected these gems after having dug them out from the śāstras and their own meditations. Hence we have to handle them carefully. Maybe they are only to be shown from a distance; so take a good look, but don't try to grab them! Let them radiate their own light, and you absorb as much as you can. Let the Lord reveal His own name, His own meaning. It is this aspect of the Brahmamūrti about which the Śruti says:

“na tatra sūryo bhāti na candratāarakam  
nema vidyuto bhānti kutoyamagniḥ”

This is the theme of Ardhanārīśwara – a challenging puzzle. It is like the modern Picasso. When Picasso started his modern paintings, he said, “So far, people appreciated my paintings where reality as they knew it, was presented. They saw an apple – but there was no apple, only canvas and colour. But they mistook it for an apple – that was the deception of the senses, but now I am going to deceive their mind and senses, because they will not understand at all what I have painted.” Perhaps that is the secret of art – to make you give up senses and mind, and to see something utterly new, beyond the art, in and through that art.

This is the idea I was trying to convey to you – and it may not be so very digestible to you; perhaps you do not expect all this talk about art from a sanyasi. You may think it is a matter only for academicians. But I want to impress upon you this thought - that the true approach

to Brahman should, apart from anything else, be artistic; that, true art is the art of creation, the art of God, not man-made art, which is but a feeble reflection of that true art. Dance and music would perhaps have been better commentaries on the Ardhanārī Nateswara. I wish I had learnt Bharatanatyam and classical sangeeta śāstra. But here let me confess that I fell in love with the Lord too early, and He would not allow me to do all this. However, I soon discovered that all the notes of music – sa ri ga ma pa da ni sa – have been taken from the sounds of nature. Maybe the karanas and the mudras of dance too originate from trees and animals..The original music and dance is the music and dance of life. A scientist may see it in the movement of atoms; a poet may discover it in the swinging of galaxies and the singing of the winds. When we try and express art, we cannot help but reproduce and recreate the music and dance of nature. And

that re-creation is not what *you* see – this is the trick of Maya.

Creation is in the eyes of the Lord – it is Śiva dṛiṣṭi. It is only by invoking Śiva dṛiṣṭi that you can create, and in re-creating, you enter into that Śiva dṛiṣṭi. It is a reversal of the process, but uses the same upāya – just like the staircase that brings you from the top floor to the bottom floor is the same staircase you use to go from the bottom floor to the top floor. The dṛiṣṭi that Brahman had in creating the world has to be understood by living it and using the same creative process to go to the Śiva dṛiṣṭi. His art creates, and then our art re-creates, and takes us to Śiva beyond all creation. This is real art – not mere simple childish reproduction.

This idea was the burden of the whole first discourse, in which it was explained why Ardhanārī has to be a Nateśwara. The secret

lies in the fact that Ardhanārī represents the Creator, and creating must be an art. I was trying to tell you that an artist does not reproduce the reality that he sees; he may use a theme that is visible in front of him, but when he produces art, it will be something that has nothing to do with this world reality. This is pratibhāsita. In making it, in taking it up into a vyavahārika satta, actually he is making it into a paramārtika. So the artist creates something that is not there at all; and only if you appreciate it, and are in rapport with it, only if you are a rasika, only then can you go to that state in which the artist created; and that is what allows you to appreciate the creation. Without this, all your upāsana is futile – the only purpose of upāsana is to achieve this rapport with the Creator, to go near Him.

We need to understand that Iṣwara, or Śiva, appears in front of us as a representation, a



symbol, a linga of Brahman. It is to Brahman that we are dedicated. We worship that Brahman and not any other Deva – neither do we want to go to any Deva Loka, or any other Loka. The sādḥaka in the Upaniṣad exclaims, “What shall we do with these lokas – for us, the Atman is the only loka to live in for eternity.”

What is Brahman? He is the jagat-kārana. How can we symbolize this jagat-kārana? In our tradition, great care has been taken to explain who it is that creates. The Masters have had to express it somehow. Even the ṛṣis, with their impeccable intellects, could not dare to do it out of their own minds. “Te dhyāna yogānugatā apaśyat” - they started to meditate upon that principle, and then forms flashed forth in their minds – these are our upasya forms. These are the forms through which the ṛṣis could understand the subtle truths of creation. This concept is similar to

the one in our previous discussion of Panini and language. There we had śabda, which is so subtle and yet so vast, and we need to be able to handle it. So we use the 'damaru nināda' as a symbol. Seeing the 'dakkā' we understand at once the beginnings of creation. It is like a scientist trying to understand the structure of a molecule, or like the Wright brothers trying to understand the correct design of an airplane. It all comes in a moment – in a flash of insight. Call it 'in'-sight or 'out'-sight, but there should be sight! "Vimūdhā nānupaśyanti" - we have to catch what the Lord is demonstrating through creation - "utkrāmantam sthitam vāpi bhunjānam va gunānvitam" (Gita). What the very world is revealing in all its gunas, its intricacies, its inter-relatedness and a thousand delightful bondages – 'cascades of joy', as Tagore says, crashing, falling and breaking into thousand streams – we need to be able to see all this through jñāna dr̥ṣṭi, with jñāna cakṣu.

The same Lord to whom you offer puja and japa will grant this jñāna cakṣu to you. That is why we do all these upāsanās. Certainly the vaidika is not an idolator. He is trying to develop the jñāna cakṣu, trying to become an artist by practicing a spiritual art through which he will understand God's creation. In understanding that, he will indeed be one with God.

Earlier we saw that the kāranatva of the jagat has to be something that exercises śakti; that citi śakti alone is the sṛṣṭi hetu. This is why jagat-kāraṇa Brahman is best represented as Ardhanārī Śiva. In our previous discussion, we closely followed how the entire world is Śaktimāya, but this may lead you to mistake Śakti to be what you see in the world. The world is just a casket – something that holds the real essence of Truth. To ensure that you may not mistake the Jaganmayi to be the Truth, a cross section of the Truth is exposed

as half Cinmaya Śiva and half Jaganmayi Śakti, that great and inscrutable power that has entered into all things. In all this there is a “Śivatā” that cannot be broken or divided. That should be advaita. We are told in the Upanisads that the state of undivided awareness is bliss. So in this discourse, we are going to touch upon this aspect of bliss or Ānanda, and try to see Ardhanārīśwara as Ānandamurti.

The Trika-Ācārya says:

“Nirupādānasambhāram abhittaveva tanvate  
jagat-citram namastasmai kalāślāghyāya sūline  
..

I bow to the Lord who carries the triśūla of Icchā, Jnāna and Kriyā.” Śiva’s Icchā manifests Kriyā and Jnāna. The śloka says, “My namaskāra to you, O Triśūladhāri. You have painted the jagat-citra” – here it is citra, previously it was dance, next it may be music. This should be taken in the sense of art. ‘Jagat

citram tanvate' - to make a painting, you need canvas, paint and brush, but Brahman does not need this "sambharam" – these ingredients and paraphernalia – to paint His picture. "Nirupādāna sambhāram" – without upadana or material cause - there is no canvas, no paint and no brush in this jagat-citram; in the Cidākāṣa, His own consciousness, without any upadana of materiality, the samsāra picture comes up. That is the Śiva camatkāra. Because he is kalā ślāghyaḥ – expert in excellent art. It implies that appreciation of the Lord can only come through kalā. It is only the artist who can create without material. Lord creates out of Himself without material – that is art, the art of life.

In Sanskrit, art is called kalā which is feminine. So the kalā is there in the Lord's half form. She is the divine kalā. She creates Herself and projects the Lord through it, and this self-creating is the joy. Ordinary men

cannot create, they merely produce and this leads to the inevitable consequences of production, distribution, profit, loss, taxation and labour problems. All this is not involved in the Lord's Creation; the supreme svatantratā of the Lord has no dependence on anything. For you too, as a sadhaka, your concept of kaivalya - liberation or freedom - has to be derived from that svatantrata of the Lord. He is the Kevala, Sākṣi, Cetana and Nirguna. You realize his kaivalya and you will be liberated. If you can touch that kevali bhāva, it is mokṣa. So what is this kevali bhāva of Śiva? If it is expressed, it has to be projected and he projects a dance. What for? Because there is joy in it - joy of oneself, and this joy cannot be contained. Because there is ānanda, there will be ucchalana, a heaving or uprising. The very nature of ānanda is like that. Ānanda has to manifest, and any aspect of life will do for that manifestation. You can

experience this joy in a simple act like eating ice cream. But you have to be very careful in your perception. What you recall in the eating of ice cream is just a sense experience, and that cannot be ānanda. Very few people – the enlightened ones – are aware of this point. This refers back to the concept of “sambandhe sāvadhānata” from the previous lecture. If you are not careful, the same grāhya grāhaka vritti will come in; but the yogis with pure awareness can see the paramānanda. The Upanisads speak of Brahman as that ocean of ānanda, and a spray of foam of a single wave of it is enough to allow the worlds to exult in. That is to say, the same ānanda bursts forth when you rejoice after any singular achievement. For instance, when you saw the Indian cricket team winning the World Cup, if you had been following the game, you might have shouted and done a small jig. Why did you do that? Because nāma and rūpa –

sound and form - are the only expressions of joy. When ānanda manifests, there must be some sound and some movement - you just cannot help it. Ānanda bursts forth in song and dance, and behind that there is no purpose at all; because true ānanda is completely purposeless, it is nirupādana and nirnimitta. This same cascading of svarūpa joy is described in the Chandogya Upanisad – “yatra nānyat paśyati nānyat vijānati sa bhūmā; yo vai bhūmā tat sukham”. Any true form of art should enable you to taste this nirviṣaya ānanda. The subject matter is irrelevant; what matters is that the art should take you to the nirviṣaya; not by eliminating viṣayas, but by allowing you to express yourself as the pure Self. This rasa is the pure expression of joy. This is creation, and it is hence that the Creator is called Śambhu. Śam = ānanda and bhu = ground; Śambhu is that ground from which beauty springs, flows and



merges into the ocean.

There is a beautiful śloka in Somastavaraja:

Jagatrāyam śāmbhavanartanasthali  
natādhi rājotra sivaḥparaḥ svayam  
Sabhānatoranga iti vyavasthitiḥ  
svarūpataḥ śaktiyutāt prapancitā

What a stupendous and delightful concept!  
Jagatrāyam śāmbhavanartanasthali – the three  
worlds are a dancing stage for śambhu.  
Immediately we ask, who is the dancer?  
Natādhi rājotra śivaḥparaḥ svayam – that  
Parabrahman Himself has become the dancer.  
But what about the stage etc.?  
Sabhānatoranga iti vyavasthitiḥ svarūpataḥ  
śaktiyutāt prapancitā – the stage, audience,  
conductor, curtains etc. are all produced by  
His own power. This is the specialty you have  
to understand about this very special dance.  
Usually, apart from the dancer, we need an  
audience, stage, curtain, lights – this is the  
vyavasthā - the properly made arrangements.

All your upasana and philosophy are also mere vyavastha only. In Śiva's performance, Śiva, through his svarūpa śakti, himself becomes all the materials and means. It is svarūpataḥsaktiyutāt prapancitā – He has that power within him to create and project all this and to use all this. He is the dancer and, at the same time, He is the stage, the curtain etc. He is everything. Nothing is apart from Him.

In whatever you do, you have the following four factors: karaṇa = instrument, kāraṇa = motivation, kriyā = action and kārya = effect, the things that come out of that action. Śiva is free from all this. To some extent, because you are also caitanya, you also experience this independence. In the dream state, you create and enjoy whatever you lacked in your waking state. But this creation in your dream is because of your vāsanās. In the Lord's creation, there are no vāsanās; things are created only as part of a blissful dance. If you

miss this main concept of Śiva's dance, then all life becomes burdensome, differentiated and divided. And where there is division, there is fear, *dwitiyād vai bhayam bhavati*.

In creative art, your attempt is to utilize that art to go back into the *swarūpa śakti* by which Śiva created this dance of life. This is what we call *tapas* – it is a process by which we manifest and radiate a power that we are, much like heat is radiated by fire. When you heat a metal, it begins to radiate heat. No one heats the Sun, it is self-radiant. Hence, in our tradition, the Sun is the symbol of the creator, *Savitā*, with inexhaustible energy coming from nowhere. The Sun is thus eternally in *tapas*, which is why He is called *tapana*. So every artist, every person who wants to do creative activity should become a *tapasvi*, an orb of Sun by himself. Through *tapas*, he should become so effulgent that he creates strength and radiates it. You should have your own

energy (urjā) that should be created through tapas. The Upanisad says that Brahman also did tapas to create. The śruti explains: 'sa tapo tapyat sa tapasatatva lokān asrijat'. That tapas is swarūpa śakti, manifesting through jñāna: yasya jñānamayam tapaḥ. So when awareness concentrates upon itself, its self-power radiates. We adapt this in our meditation. For the Lord, it is natural. Creation is from meditation of the Lord; therefore all creative activity is a form of meditation only. It invariably radiates a power that sometimes becomes palpable or even visible.

When my Master used to lecture, some have seen an aura around him. This is said of many holy people. When St. Francis of Assisi was preaching to those birds as depicted in paintings, there was a halo around him. It is a radiation that is there because these saints, when they were preaching, were concentrating upon themselves, and not upon

“to whom should I speak to”, or “what will be the effect” etc.

Have you tried to understand why the Kathakali dancers have that thick green paint, a colour that no deva or daitya has? This is done deliberately. Like the Ardhanārī svarūpa, it has to be something that is mind-boggling, something out of the ordinary. And with all that make up, the actor is completely covered and his face is not seen at all. And one other rule of Kathakali is that if two people are performing, one will not face the other. This is because each, by his intense svarūpa śakti, is projecting a scene. For example, in the dance portraying the Hiranyakaśipu Samhāra, Narasimha never faces Prahalāda – it is the audience that must feel Narasimha’s presence. That Narasimha is in the feeling of the audience. The actor as Narasimha is projecting that feeling of Narasimha, and the actor should see that

Narasimha in the audience. If he looks at Prahalāda, then he will be reminded - "he is acting, and I am also acting". Because no matter how effective the make up, one actor will always recognize another actor as they were both together in the same green room. So one actor should never see the other actor, he should only see the audience, which is where the artist is creating the Hiranyakaśipu Samhāra. The artist should see his creation. That is why Śiva does not look at Śakti, and keeps her in half his body. This is pure creativity and She is His svarūpa śakti. Here there is the rapture of intense identification.

..

Ardhanārīṣwara has so many secrets to reveal to you, so that you may use your svarūpa śakti, and not any other śakti. Another example of this comes in the episode of Śumbha-vada in the tenth chapter of the Durga Mahatmya. When Śumbha first accosts the Mother, he wants to grab her thinking that

she is a strī-ratna - this is the vulgar aspect of life; whenever we see anything good, we want to grab it. Real good should come from within us; we should radiate goodness. In the case of Śumbha, the Mother says that unless you fight it out with me, I cannot accept you. So Śumbha sends his sena bala – and the Mother produces her own bala, and reduces everything around into a śmaśāna, until in the end, Śumba alone is left. At that time, Śumbha suddenly remembers that he was supposed to fight with the Mother, and now he is standing alone while this lady is standing with thousands of her śaktīs. So he accuses her, “We were supposed to fight with each other, and you are using all these other Śaktīs.” The Devi then withdraws all the Śaktīs into herself and tells him, “You are a fool to take all these other Śaktīs as different from me – these are all my Śaktīs.” This reminds us that there is no dwaita in Śakti.

This is why we insist that Śakti must be there as, or along with, Śiva because nothing else but Śakti can express that ekatā. This unity of all things is only there in the Śakti tattva; in the Śiva tattva, there are no things at all. Śiva tattva is prapancopaśama – bereft of all things and utterly quiet. So the Mother manifests all the forms by Her own power to demonstrate and say – “ All this power comes from Me, is in me and will go back in Me – this is My swarūpa śakti”.

The creation of this world certainly demands an unimaginably great power. That this great power is the atman’s swarūpa śakti can be revealed only by Advaita Vedānta through the Mahavākyas – tat tvam asi, Svetaketu. That great power which becomes the banyan tree is in the seed, and you are the seed of this entire creation - this is Sat. Out of the seed of Sat, this world tree has come. This is the dance you have to perform in life. You have to



establish that rapport with God, and then you will experience that Paramānanda.

This swarūpa śakti may appear as a jada śakti or a caitanya śakti. She has playfully created these differentiations, and even contradictions; in reality, there are no differentiations, and She is always the advaita śakti. Take, for example, the gross example of electricity that is used in various functions, often with opposite effects like giving heat or coolness. In spite of this, the power that works in the oven and the refrigerator is the same power.

Just as śakti is one in essence, there is no bheda between śakti and śaktimān, as we find in the case of the dāhakatva and the agnitva of fire. Similarly, there is no bheda in the unceasing variety of forms created by Śakti – they are all one, and this is what gives us the perspective of the entire variety of the world as vibhuti. This is the unity of sakti. Further,

Śakti as Ardhanārīśwara is identified with Śiva. If She were sitting side by side with Śiva, then there is a possibility she may be separated, so she is half of Śiva's body, to signify that they are inseparable. You may ask, if this is so, why do we have the Uma-Maheśwara mūrti? The answer is that Śakti appears separate as an act of kṛīḍa to express Her līlā which is essential for ānanda to express itself in variety.

In Hinduism, we have three aspects of Brahman – Śiva, Śakti and Viṣṇu – which are seen as aspects of the jagat-kāraṇa-Brahman relating to the adhistāna, nimitta and the upadāna kāraṇas respectively. When we speak of these three aspects, we must see these three as Brahman, and not make a differentiation between the three. Similarly, just as the Bhagavata speaks of this trimūrti, the Puranas mention the panca-mūrti relating to the panca-bhūtas of pṛitvi, jala, teja, vāyu

and ākāśa, each of which is a perfect linga for Brahman. This gives us these panca-devatas, but here again we are cautioned not to differentiate between them.

Eko hi pancadhā bhinnā  
krīdārtham bhuvane akhile

So in all these cases, of the dual śiva-śakti, the tri-murti, or the panca-devas, the apparent differentiation is seen as mere krīda. The Ācāryas say: “Bhaktyartam kalpitam dvaitam advaitādapi sundaram.”

This dvaita is even more beautiful than that absolute advaita, as long as it is a means for developing bhakti - devotion for the Lord. But when the Lord creates, there are no devatas, so it must be bhakti of Himself for which dvaita is created by Him as an illusion. All these relationships of husband-wife-son must be viewed in the context of this dvaita. Without this point of view, we will commit

the horrible mistake of dragging the Lord down to the level of human bondage that is the same in the animal kingdom also. The least paśutva cannot be tolerated in sādhana. The Lord is the Paśupati. Even in the material for pūja, we avoid paśutva by purifying all the materials with mantras and bhāvana so that we have divya material worthy of offering to the Lord Paśupati. This krīda or play is necessary to manifest joy or ānanda. When the spirit of the play is understood, then the joy is transferred to the observer, the audience. To understand this krīda is our sādhana, and so we study this play, for which we may separate the inseparable.

The Ācaryās help us by narrating the līla of the ānandamūrtis. Take, for instance, the following verse attributed to Sureswaracharya:

Ganga pūra pracalita jatā  
srastabhogīndra bhītām

Ālangantīm acalatanayām  
sasmitam vīksyamānaḥ  
Līlāpāngai pranatajanatān  
nandayan candramouliḥ  
Mohandhvāntam haratu  
paramānandamūrti śivo naḥ

May paramānandamūrti Śiva destroy our moha, the condensed darkness of our ignorance. This is the main prayer. There is beautiful poetry in this verse: as the daughter of the acala – mountain – Uma should be firm, but the poet contrasts this with how easily She is swayed because one snake comes from above and falls on Her lap. After all, She is represented as nārī – hence the bhaya is natural! Srastabhogīndra bhītām acalatanayām – She is afraid of the snake, but what made that snake come to fall on Her lap? It is an act of deliberate mischief of the Lord. In His jatā, there is the Ganga and the snakes. The Lord induces Ganga to increase her force

of flow so that it loosens one knot of His jatā, dislodging the serpent. It happens like an accident – but it is not. Nothing is an accident in Śiva dṛiṣṭi. It is a deliberate sequence where He causes the Ganga to make the jata pracalita, the jata makes the sarpa pracalita and the sarpa lands on the Devi and makes Her pracalita! She becomes bhaya bhīta and instinctively embraces Lord Śiva. Laughingly He looks at Her as if to say, “What are you doing in front of all these people” – but He is enjoying the entire play, and at the same time, with the corner of His eyes, He is seeing whether the devotees assembled for darsan (pranatajanatān) are observing or not, even as they bow down in front of Him.

A creeper cannot exist without a tree to hug. The Ācārya says – let the Samvit-valli flash forth in my mind where I have established Śiva as the sthānu. She is a vidruma-bāla-valli – a fresh young creeper of coral that takes hold

of that sthanu. 'Pranatajanatān nandayan candramoulih' – all the prajāś are in joy seeing this krīda. This concept of the Aṣṭiṣṭa vapuḥ takes us back to our main theme. Ardhanārī is a Nitya aṣṭiṣṭa vapuḥ. To unfold that, and to bring meaningfulness to this coming together, this play is enacted.

Each pulsation of ānanda – should decrease so much of the moha within you. Only then is it divine joy; if not, it will be mere emotion. When you meditate upon the Lord as the Ānandamūrti, your moha goes away in a thrill of joy. Many people believe that by merely reading commentaries on the Mahavākyas they can remove their ignorance or moha. However, the Lord says in the sixth chapter of the Gita that if you have even a little jignyāsa of Brahman, you will go beyond the śabda Brahman – beyond letters. The Mahavakyas themselves should take you beyond the letters. It is not about the letters

at all, not about analyzing 'tat', 'tvam', and 'asi'. It should be made into a dance or a song, where bheda comes and goes away in a thrill of joy of vimarsha or pratyabhijna. The proper use of bheda material is art, and that is what the Mahavakyas do – they use the bheda and then ask you to transcend it. In the sloka "līlāpāngai pranatajanatān nandayan candramouliḥ" – we get the apānga līla. Śiva dṛṣṭi is always towards Śakti alone. He cannot give us that dṛṣṭi, and we do not deserve it, but one sidelong glance is enough to give us that joy – that ānanda. This is Līlā. Similarly, Ācārya Śankara in Gauridaśakam says "līlalabdha sthāpitāluptakhilalokān lokatitairyogibhirantasciramrigyam". All three worlds are "labdha", "sthāpita" and "lupta" all at once – this is the līlā here. In all these slokas, the līlā concept is a common thread – this līlā alone unravels the mystery of how Brahman becomes loka, so that you



may become lokātīta. You receive these sense perceptions so that you may become super-sensual and transcend the senses. It is not possible to be sensual and artistic at the same time – because becoming sensual excludes joy – ānanda. “Yatra nānyat pasyati srūnoti nānyat vijānāti” – this is joy – so the seeing, grasping etc., all these are sense-based, and they cannot exist in the Bhūma state where joy manifests.

At the end of this book, you will find the Umāmaheśwara Stotra and the Ardhanārī Nateśwara Stotra with translations. The difference between these two stotras is that in one, there is a description of the contrast, and in the other, it is all about the similarity between Śiva and Śakti.

In the Umāmaheśwara stotram we have -

Namaśivābhyām paramouṣadhābhyām  
pancākṣarīpanjararanjitābhyām

Prapancasriṣṭiṣṭhitisamhritābhyām  
namo namaḥ śaṅkarapārvatībhyām

Both are doing the same thing – it is one sequence of dance. The hands may move in unison, or they may move in opposite directions – still it is one dance.

By contrast, in the Ardhanārī stotram, opposites are described:

Prapancasriṣṭyunmukhaḥśasyakāyai  
samasta samhāra katāṇḍavāya

Jagat jananyai jagadekapitre  
namaśivāyāi ca namaśivāya

In this śloka, She is ever unmukha in the sṛiṣṭi, and He is ever tatpara in the samhāra. “You create and I will destroy. You bowl and I will bat!” But in the previous śloka from the Umamaheśwara Stotra, both are doing the same thing. Both are completely enclosed in the same pañcākṣarī mantra. When you say

“namah śivāya”, you also mean “namah śivāyai” – the same mantra will do for both – they are both paramousadi. Sṛiṣṭi, sthiti and samhāra are all being done by both – this is the līlā. Even opposing concepts come together in harmony.

Līlā. stands for the spirit of play where harmony is a must, whether the components are working together or in opposition – you will find this concept in music and dance as well. You have to meditate upon this līlā., since Ardhanārīṣwara is a līlā mūrti. Ānanda can only be expressed only through līlā., not by any serious process. Similarly, in sadhana, in the beginning, we tell you to do japa to make your janma kṛtārtha. But at some stage, we have to ask you to do away with all this muttering and moving of malas, and let the breath do japa or let the mind be in mauna. Then only will you be one with the Lord’s līlā. If you get accustomed to this idea

– this sense of līlā. – then you will see the world in a more proper way, and your reactions will be more artistic. This perspective will become a sadhana for your own liberation.

Before the recent England-India cricket series began, the British reporters interviewed some of the Indians settled in England, and they asked them a mischievous question – “For whom will you clap; who will you encourage, the English team or the Indian team?” Of course, the Indians responded diplomatically. They said they would clap for good cricket, no matter which side is playing. The players may play good cricket, but the real question is, will we be able to applaud well? In our present context of Śiva and Śakti, there are no opposing teams and there is no question of Śiva losing – He always wins – satyameva jayate. If this is the case, you may ask, where is the question of sports? The answer is that

he may lose sportingly, but even in that loss,  
there is a winning.

In the *Saundaralyalahari*, there is a very delicate  
śloka where Śankarācārya wants us to  
remember that the Mother also plays mischief  
with Him –

Mṛsā kṛtvā gotra-  
-skhalanamatha vailakṣyanamitam  
Lalāte bhartāram  
caraṇakamale tāḍayati te  
Cīrādantaḥ śalyam  
dahanakṛitamunmūlitavatā  
Tulākoṭi kvāṇaiḥ  
kilikilitamīśanaripuṇā

The idea here is that the Lord is sitting in a  
composed mood and the Mother is in a  
romantic mood. She comes from behind and  
maybe She tickles Him with grass. The Lord  
wanted to say “Girijā, what are you doing?”;  
instead, He said, “Gangā, what are you

doing?” That was enough to make Umā erupt with anger, and she went and closeted herself away in the Kopabhāvana. Taking Gangā’s name was a slip or a mistake (skhalana), or was it mischief? However, now that She is angry, He has to go and pacify Her, even if it be by falling at Her feet. But then She was not ready to listen “lalāte bhartāram caranakamale tādāyati” – “Mother, your two lotus feet are adorned with beautiful anklets. When You just moved those feet away from Him, You did not mean to strike Him, but He had put his head at Your feet, and Your foot struck His forehead which had the third eye that had burnt Kāmadeva. At that time Your anklets made a sound. That sound of anklets sounded like the victory laughter of Kāmadeva – Īsānaripu. Was it the defeat of Śiva? He may have been defeated, but we know that Śiva’s defeat is kridārtham, because in reality He is Kāmeswara. For those who

are kāma hata, this is vulgar. Only an akāma hata can have the desire to win, and for him even losing is a śhobana. Think of it like this – only he who has mastered himself can have a kāmāna; no one else can have a kāmāna with impunity.

There is a story of Badshah Ibrahim who once got a new slave who was an alert young boy. The Badshah asked him, “What is your name?”, and he replied, “Whatever you call me, master”. “What do you like to eat?” – “Whatever you give me, master.” “What kind of clothes would you like?” – “Whatever you give me, master.” Exasperated, the Badshah asked, “Don’t you have a desire yourself?” In response, the boy replied with bated breath, “Can a slave have a desire?” The Badshah burst into tears. But the boy’s words were true; a slave is not free, so for him, desire is meaningless. Desire is meant for fulfillment, and a slave cannot fulfill anything, and hence

has no right to nurture a desire. One should first be free, and then only can one have a desire. Ibrahim realized this, so he first released the boy, and then tried to give up all the activities he was indulging in, and tried to find out for himself – am I really free? Can I have a desire? Or am I really a slave? And by this, his life was totally transformed.

The main point of this story is that a paśu cannot have desire. A paśu only has vāsana or instinct. If you become the pati instead of the paśu, then you can have desire, and then, even if you lose, it will be like winning because you are the Master – the pati; hence Śiva bowing down to Śakti is also winning. Bliss can manifest only where there is complete mastery over everything. So this brings in the question of a subtle sadhana, which we will examine in the next lecture.

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# Discourse Three

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In the earlier lectures, we first viewed the Brahmamūrti as the cause of all creation, and then we saw Him as the manifestation of bliss – ānanda. In this lecture, we will concentrate just on the left part of the Ardhanārīśwara mūrti, because there we find the means (upāya) and the meaning.

Our attention will be on Śakti as the Guru, because although Śiva is there as Īśwara, He is incomplete without the Guru; and for this, He had to become Ardhanārīśwara. She is the Gurusvarūpiṇī and She gives us the upāya. The Lord creates, but someone has to make that creation meaningful and deliver that meaning. She who knows the rasa of creation – the true rasa of the jagat-nāṭaka - She alone can explain that meaningfulness. That is why Śiva creates and Śakti explains. Śiva is the Īśwara and Śakti is the Guru. This is how the līlā goes on – the Lord Himself writes, and the Lord Himself comments upon it – no one

else can possibly do it.

Earlier we were considering the concept of *līlā*, which accounts for the continuous appearance and disappearance of the world. This *līlā* has a fluidity and flexibility about it; no fixed routine or conditioned process, no beginning and no end, it is *ananta*. In this *līlā*, both creation and destruction are the same. At some level or depth, in every experience of life, you get the feeling that the beginning is the end, and the end is the beginning. That depth is what we are trying to catch through the *Samvit dṛiṣṭi*.

The very word *līlā* is so beautiful. *Lī* = to merge; and *lā* = to bring; referring to an ebb and flow. In the very intonation of it, the word *līlā* captures the vision of the *ananta samsāra*, the *ananta kalpa*. “*Sahasrakoti yugadhārine namaḥ*.” But to relate to this you must be conversant with the language of *līlā*

. If you don't tune yourself to the mood of līlā, then you might perceive that this līlā is a very cruel and unjust infliction upon you. You will be unable to find justice in the world as it appears, and in the society that you have created out of your egotism. You can discover the harmony of creation only if you tune the tanpura of your life to the swara of His līlā.

“Lokātītai yogibhirantaściramrigyām” – the yogis are eternally seeking Her, that source of līlā, internally and not externally. The external world is all jada and anitya; the quest for the source of līlā is internal. The Upanisad asks you to see everything as “devasyaisa mahimā tu loke yenedam bhrāmyate brahmacakram” – the universal life is a cyclic movement of the Absolute glory of the Lord. Like a child just watching the ceaseless movement of the ceiling fan as if it is an infinite mystery, so too do the ṛṣis, the great Masters, gaze at the movement of the

Brahmachakram and discover in it 'devasyaisa mahima'. Call it kalā, līlā or mahimā, it is a feminine principle that is the ardhāṅga of Śiva – He can never be without His līlā. In the Ardhanārīśwara mūrti, the Truth is there as the right half and the meaning, the mahimā, is the left half.

Kalidasa captures the relation between these halves:

Vāgarthavivasamprktau,  
vāgartha pratipattaye  
Jagataḥpitarau vande,  
pārvati-parameswarau

This mangalācarana sloka contains the entire upāsana, the entire philosophy and the entire culture of this country. Pārvati-parameswarau are the presiding deities of Bhārata. They are viewed as jagataha-pitarau, parents of the world. Brahman and His Śakti are seen to function as the Guru. Therefore the analogy

is 'vāgarthavivasamprktau' – joined together like word and its meaning, She being vāṇī and Śiva being the artha. This allows us to understand the Ardhanārīśwara through the very familiar, but very subtle, principle of cognition, the uttered word revealing the meaning.

For vāk to reveal its meaning, you have to first understand what 'vāk' is. To transact with God, you must first learn His language, or else you may ask for something, and there may be no response – everything may seem to be denied. For instance, take the earth. There is no dearth or lack in prithvi's richness. She is ratna-garbhā. But we do not understand the language of the Earth, so we have misused it. We have used all our intelligence and technology to provide for ourselves, and in that very attempt we have invited such poverty upon ourselves, that we now we face the risk of our own extinction. It is very



dangerous to handle life without understanding the cosmic language. In the spiritual context, we need to understand the language of the Lord's līlā where there is no motive, no differentiation and in which all varieties are accepted and held in one harmony. That harmony, that sāmārasatā, is the language of the Lord's līlā. When understood, it will manifest the ānanda that is in Brahman. There is no other purpose of creation. Out of ānanda, sṛiṣṭi comes, and into ānanda, sṛiṣṭi has to go back, thus forming a harmonious and meaningful circle. Hence, if creation is a burst of Brahman's bliss, we should live our lives in such a way that our life ends also in Brahman's bliss.

How do we learn to do this? Kalidasa answers by saying merely 'jagataḥpitarau vande' – all we can do is vandanā. Just as Ganeśa went round and round Pārvati-Parameśwara and obtained the fruit of all three lokas, we too

will get adhyātma buddhi or Samvit buddhi which is 'vāgartha pratipatti'. We must know what is vāk and what is the meaning or artha; for this pratipatti, which is knowing through intense awareness, we need prapatti – surrender, which is indicated by the word 'vande'.

This entire creation is vāk-based. In the beginning was the word. How do we understand the word – by realizing that the word was with God, and this is Ardhanārīṣwara. Even the Bible has to speak of Ardhanārīṣwara! "The word was with God." Not sitting side-by-side, but "the word was God!" God and the word are one entity. When it comes to you as a means, it is vāñī, and when it is understood, it is artha, so the two cannot be separated. When it is sādhyā, the end of achievement, it is Śiva; and when it is upāya or sādhana, it is Śakti. Hence Śakti is the upāya and without Her, without that

Ardhabhāga, Brahman will be unapproachable and inscrutable and hence of no benefit to us.

So She is the Guru and the upāya. The Āgamas say that the Lord manifests the upāya :

Śivādabhinnāpi śivāptihetuḥ  
Śaktiśivam naḥ satatam tanotu

This is a beautiful prayer – “May Śakti give us the Śiva” – Śiva’s position is such that we cannot directly approach Him, so we pray to Śakti that She may bring Śiva to us continuously. And She is Śivādabhinnāpi śivāptihetuḥ- though She is one with Śiva, She is the means for attaining Śiva, because She is not separate from Him. As a sadhaka, the mistake you make is that you think if you do a little japa, then as a result Śiva will come running and reveal Himself to you. Instead, it is She who is the real hetu, not you or your

kriya, so you need to give up that notion of your kriya being the means for the end.

Our Acaryas define upāśana as 'Śakti vijñānam upāśanam' – any upāśana and upāśya will do, as long as we are sure our upāśana is Śakti vijñānam – embracing the Brahmaśakti. 'Jagatswarupāpi apānita rūpa.' She takes the form of the world, and yet she is 'apānita rūpa' – She is nirākāra, and so She is called anirvācaniya-rūpa. You cannot define Her. She can maintain Her nirākāra ānanda rūpa while still being jagat-ākāra. Therefore, She is a boat for the saṁsāra ocean, or a bridge for us to cross over from the world to God and from death to immortality. Simply sitting and clinging to this worldliness has no meaning at all. We need to cross over, but this crossing over is not a physical giving up. It is an internal illumination that leads us from darkness to light, and from death to immortality. She provides this illumination,

and this is why we conceive of Her as the Guru Śakti, and without gaining Her grace, all your japa, pūja and tapa are useless.

There is a story of the Ardhanārīśwara kṣetra in Tamilnadu, where, on top of a mystic hill we find a unique uncarved image of Ardhanārīśwara. When I went there, the arcakās told me that this was the place of tapasya of Bhr̥ṅgi Ṛṣi. Bhr̥ṅgi was such a fanatic Śiva-bhakta that he could not think of any other deity. Therefor śivāpti-hetu was eliminated from his horizon. So naturally Śiva was very worried: "He is very dedicated to Me, but he will never attain to Me, as he has closed the door to attainment." So one day Śiva appeared before him in the Ardhanārī Swarūpa. When this vision rose before him, Bhr̥ṅgi wanted to offer arghya, and when he looked upon the image, he was stunned to see that that the female half was also there, and he could not bring himself to offer anything

to that. Even if he tried to offer incense, the smoke would go to both nostrils. So, since he could not offer it to Śiva alone, he put off the dhūpa, and decided that the only way to worship Śiva alone was by doing parikrama. So he took the form of a bee and bored a hole through that form, and did parikrama only to Śiva. Boring a hole through the Lord is what we are all trying to do as fanatics. In the Viṣṇupurāṇa, the Lord puts it even more dramatically – “They hack me to pieces who say Śiva is different, Śakti is different and Viṣṇu is different – ‘mām angam hīnam kalayanti mūḍaḥ.’ However, when Bhṛṅgi bored into the Ardhanārīśwara swarūpa with all his good intent, he was illumined. It was a Śakti-pata – he had to touch Śakti to bore the hole to go around Śiva. Just like Śiśupāla, when he came into contact with Her, he was illumined and saw the oneness of Śiva-Śakti. But this oneness must be seen as a sāmāsyā.

Only when you see this sāmārasya mūrti, you get the concept of līlā and you are fulfilled. Understanding this līlā mūrti is the only way of understanding the world.

Here I wish to recall a stupendous experience of another great Śiva-bhakta – one of the four great Śaiva ācāryas of Tamil nade, who was called Vāgiśa Swami or Appar. It is said that Appar had the ultimate contact with the Lord at all levels from the grossest to the most subtle, and yet he chose to serve the Lord by cleaning His temple courtyards with a spade. He believed in seva – a physical contact with the jaganmūrti. So he went from shrine to shrine, cleaning the Śiva temples, until only one was left – Kailasa. So he decided that he should go to Kailasa and clean the grass there.

Kailasa is such a divine place. I remember when I went there, Bhāṣyakāra's song used to echo and vibrate in my mind during the

entire parikrama; in that song, Śankara bows down not only to the Devas, Dānavas and the Kinnaras, but also to every blade of grass and every pebble there, just because these things happen to adorn Kailasa. You cannot go to Kailasa and not have a vision of the Lord's līlā.

But Appar was eighty years old, and going to Kailasa proved to be a very difficult task for him since he did it by foot. On the way, he crawled and fainted, and in that swoon the Lord appeared and said, "Why are you torturing yourself like this? With this weak frame you cannot come to Kailasa." The Ācārya told Śiva that he was prepared to let this frame go, and Śiva replied, "If you want Kailasa darśana, you just take a dip in this nearby lake." When Appar came to his senses, it was very clear to him that he had heard the Lord's message, and indeed, there was a Himalayan lake in front of him. So he crawled



to the lake and dipped into it, and when he came out, he found that he was in his hometown of Tiruvāyur, on the bank of the temple pond in the temple of Lord Tyāgarāja. At first, he thought that the Lord had deceived him by sending him back. But when he looked around intently, it was a transformed Tiruvāyur that he saw. We know this because he sang about what he saw. He saw the people coming for worship carrying flowers and he saw the temple elephant carrying the pot of holy water for worship. But, he sings, “I saw everywhere it was Ardhanārīṣwara. Everything was Śivaśaktimayam jagat.” Kailasa is not something located in time and space; it is in all things. That is the sāmārasya which gives the stamp of authority for your celebration of the Lord’s presence. If it is a true presence, it cannot be any other rasa but sāmārasa. ‘Nirdoṣam hi samam Brahma’ – until you have tasted this sāmārasata, you

cannot say that you have understood or comprehended the Lord. The entire creation is one word and the meaning is Śiva-Śakti-sāmarasya. Understanding this is the vāgartha pratipatti.

Mother Herself is the Guru and She Herself is the word. Every pulsation of life is an utterance of this divine word with the divine meaning. If you are an āstika, then for you everything that happens is because of the Lord. In each happening, the Lord is contacting you. So how can it be meaningless? But how are we to understand the meaning? The answer is by prapatti – surrender. This is why prapatti must be there in whatever happens, in every moment of life.

This prapatti is the only way by which you have to handle the word. You cannot grab the word, tear it to pieces and extract the meaning. No education ever comes like that.

The Veda says – ‘vācam dhenum upāśmahe’. According to the Vedas, vāni is a dhenu, a Kāmadhenu. Now, by beating you cannot milk even an ordinary cow, especially in this country. If it is a true cow then if you try to beat it, it will just take in whatever milk is there. ‘Dhenum upāśmahe’ – May this dhenu called vāṇī come to us – we cannot even go to Her, much less drag her. She will come whenever She wants, and we will let Her go whenever She wants. This upāśana of vāṇī, like every true learning, is an artistic process that does not use any force. But you have to be prepared for it, and for this preparation we are told in the Gita - ‘tatviddhi prānipātena paripraśnena sevayā’ – learn it by surrendering to the Guru, by sincere inquiry and by devoted application.

In the mangalacārana to these lectures, we used the following prayer composed by Kalidasa:

Yām āmananti munīḥ prakṛitīm pūrṇīm  
Vidyeti yām śruti rahasya vido vadanti  
Tāmradhā pallavita Śankara-rūpa mudrām  
Devīmananyaśaraṇaḥ śaraṇamgatosmi

Munis like Kapila and the Sankhyas describe her as prakritim puranim. She is the pradhāna and the avyakta from which everything comes. To those who know the rahasya of the Vedas, She is vidya. Now let us combine both: She is prakriti as vidyā, She reveals and does not conceal. The concealing prakriti is your mūdhata. Prakriti becomes a bondage to you because you do not know Her language. Like often, when we are doing pūja, we have all the sāmāgrīs in front of us, and after vastram, we are going to offer the yagnopavīta, and it happens to be all knots. Now if the person does not know what an yagnopavīta is, where the Brahmagranthi is, which they need to take hold of to remove

the knots, then the person catches hold of the yagnopavīta clumsily like a tangle of threads. True upāsana consists of proper handling and understanding.

In the previous lecture, in the pictures of līlā, Śiva takes recourse to Gangā to tease Bhagavati. In another instance, He uses Gangā to loosen His locks and unleash a serpent to induce fear in Mother. All rasas are there in Bhagavati, but they are all manipulated by Śiva and directed to Śiva. Let bhāvas come in sāmārasa. If it is not sāmārasa, then it will be viśāmārasa, and then you will merely have a henpecked husband or a tyrant husband.

Remember the śloka of Saundaryalahiri quoted earlier – ‘kilikilitamīśanaripuṇā’ – Kāmadeva seems to laugh triumphantly seeing Śiva being denounced by Devi. We can see the beauty of it, because here Kāmadeva has become the anklet of

Bhagavati, and Śiva is ready to accept punishment from the feet of Śakti that are adorned by the Kāma bhuṣaṇa. Instead, if Kāma is an embellishment of an egotistic aggrandizement, even if it is that of the Devas, then Śiva will burn that Kāma. What I am trying to point out is that all these bhāvas-vīra, adbhuta, bhibatsya, karuṇā etc. are all accepted as waves in prakṛiti that is the ocean of samsāra. We should not confuse them as being in us – they are all present as divine forces that come to us. When sleep comes, it should be through tamoguna only, and when we wake up, we should wake up with a surge of rajoguna. This is the natural state, but man can reverse it by making the night full of rajoguna and by waking up in tamoguna. This is a wrong way of living, and will go against prapatti. Kālidasa says – ‘Devīm ananya śaraṇaḥ saraṇam gatosmi’.

Every pulse of life should prove your

śaraṇāgati in your sādhana. Then, everything that happens to you will be a revelation. Only if you are alert in all your actions, in your eating and sleeping, then only will you be protecting the light or vidya that she brings to you. You cannot protect that vidya by merely living in a cave with closed eyes. That only enhances the bondage of life, because you need a cave and you get the idea that Brahmajñāna can only come in a cave. You need to remove the idea from your head that you can extract knowledge through artificial methods. Śiva will give you that jñāna; not through your transactions, but through a drama that He is playing out with His own Śakti. If you observe this drama in the proper mood with the correct rapport, then you will get ānanda.

In the sloka 'pranatajanatān-nandayan candramouliḥ' – if we are the pranatajanata, then She will give knowledge and ānanda –

we just have to be properly poised to receive, and that poise is prapatti.

Bhāṣyakāra tells us that karma cannot lead you to mukti, but you are making every one of your sādhanas into a karma. Sādhana should instead be merely a prapatti, which is the offering of your karma. Your body, breath and all your action are karma. But with that same body and breath you must perform nr̥tya or sangīta. Again and again, we are brought back to the same theme of self-discipline. Even in the university, for every branch of learning, they use the word discipline. Education comes through discipline – the discipline of just observing and following the proper spandana of prāna, the proper movement of your limbs and the proper rising and subsiding of thought – that is what is dance or music. This gives the capacity to observe God in such a way that His meaning is conveyed to you. This



receptivity is called prapatti. And you can do any sādhana to get this receptivity and rapport. But the main event is something very grand – it is the Mother’s embrace of the Lord – ‘ālinganti acalatanayām’ – and this touching of Śiva by Śakti is realization. If you observe the entire universe carefully as a play of Śiva and Śakti, somewhere you will catch it. This touching is put beautifully in the Yoga Vasista:

Samvin matraikya dharmitvāt

kākatalīya yogataḥ

Samvid-devi śivam spṛiṣṭvā

tanmayiva bhavatyalam

Samvid-devi accidentally touches Śiva and, having touched him, She becomes tanmaya – one with It. What is the accidental nature of this touching? It is kākatalīya yogataḥ – like the crow alighting on the palm tree branch and the fruit simultaneously falling, making it look as if the crow caused it to fall. It is a

līlā, so any ascribing of a cause and effect is a restricted perception. “Samvit matraikya dharmitvāt” – There is only one dharma – the Samvit dharma – that is the light of knowing that radiates and creates, and hence there is continuous creation and continuous illumination. She is Samvit and only Samvit. So the moment She touches Śiva, She becomes tanmaya. If you are one with her, you too will become tanmaya. This relates to the emblem of our Samvit Sadhanayana – ‘tanmayo bhavet.’ All your sadhana is hitting that target and like the arrow becoming one with the target, you become one with Brahman. But who will shoot the arrow for you? She will shoot – be in her hands, straight, sharp and supple like an arrow. She becomes tanmaya, and then you too will become tanmaya. Wait for that entrance to the antahpura of Śiva. Be blessed by finding a secret place there. You don’t deserve it – even the Masters did not

consider themselves deserving – that was the extent of their namratā! Your getting a human body is an entrance into the antahpura. Bhāṣyakāra says in Devi Bhujanga stotram – ‘purāreraṭhantaḥ puram naumi nityam’ – I bow down to Her who is the antahpura – inner court – of Śiva who destroyed the Tripura. Tripurāsura is bahirmukhata and opposes Śiva. The Acārya wants you to make life the antahpura of Śiva, and that will be the place where that mysterious act of illumination will take place.

In the Gita too, the Lord hints at the same thing: for those who worship me with this ananya bhakti , I will do whatever is needed for them -

Ananyāścintayanto mām  
ye janāḥ paryupāsate  
Teṣām nityābhiyuktānām  
yogaksemam vahāmyaham

You be 'nitya abhiyukta' – which is prapatti – and His Śakti will do the enlightening. Be very careful, and tanmayatā will come to you. The Vijnāna Bhairava says: "Be careful, be wide awake in your eating, drinking or even in your just walking without purpose." If purpose is there, all your attention will be on that purpose. But when you are acting without a specific purpose, your awareness is freed from all calculations, and at that time something wonderful happens. While watching a dance or listening to beautiful music, you get a sukha that is not comparable to any sensual experience at that moment of rapture and aesthetic experience – this is a taste of tanmayatā. If you are alert, you can find Śiva and Śakti in every experience of Life. Keep Samvit always in your mind. At least try and practice the thought of 'Śiva-Śakti-mayam jagat.'

Āgamas say that the arūda mana of the yogi

attains to tanmayatā. And the Lord in the Gita says:

Yogārūdasya tasyaiva śamaḥ kāraṇamucyate

This is the śama that starts in the everyday active life of the karmayogi. When he enters into the śama state of utter quiet, ānanda is revealed to him. That is why we are cautioned that, even when there is mana-tuṣṭi, be careful to concentrate on that and not on the indriya-tuṣṭi, or worse still, on the tuṣṭi of someone else. Our problem is that we are always trying to please people. We are bothered by jagat, and we neglect to touch the jagan-mūla. If you give water in the mūla, the root of the tree, then it will automatically go to the fruits and the leaves.

I would like to mention a couple of points that will help you cultivate this sensitivity. Constant satsanga is needed – without this, you cannot get the samskāra for Śiva-Śakti.

Secondly, you must try to maintain the spirit of sports in life-transactions, seeing them as the play of Śiva. Even at times of intense work, you need to have complete prapatti. Someone asked me whether it is possible to do sādhana living in a busy city. If you identify sādhana with particular actions or religious items, then it will indeed be very difficult. For instance, if sandhyāvandana has to be done, it might clash with your other duties or routines – but this sandhyāvandana is not the sādhana we are speaking of– this sādhana is your whole lifetime. You have given yourself completely to Samvit Sādhana, and it is a jivana yagna.

..

The only thing that comes close to our illustration is either sports or fine arts. But being a songster, a dancer or a sportsman does not clash with life in a busy city; to the contrary, it helps. At one time, the seat of our culture was in the villages, in beautiful temples or forest schools, where the guru-

śiṣya relationship could find a suitable atmosphere. For any education, one had to go to the Gurukula in the forest, where it was natural to have the mood of prapatti. Once this was developed, you could have that prapatti anywhere. So you have sportsmen, musicians and dancers who are all directed towards a particular discipline – swara, mudra – either the word mudra, or the rūpa mudra. Kālidasa puts it beautifully in his sloka where he identifies Her as mudra – ‘Śankarārūpa mudram devim ananya saraṇaḥ.’

She is – ‘ardhapallavita śankarārūpa mudra’ – Sankara’s rupa is adṛṣya, but it is ardhapallavita – like a flower that has not completely blossomed. It is just opening, petal-by-petal, and Siva has opened it a little on one side of it. This is what you must find in every one of your spiritual experiences in the world – to see the world as a mudra, a revealing gesture. Because it reveals, it will

give you joy. Mudam rati iti mudra – that which yields and releases joy. Hence you should see the natural mudras around you.

Every mudra should be very natural; if it is artificial, it will not be a mudra at all. Even in music and dance, your steps and notes should be natural. Why is it that all your movements are not all natural – why you are always trembling and using the wrong word, and then correcting yourself? Because you have become artificial – the very idea that you should not commit mistakes makes you commit mistakes, makes you cease to be natural.

Even in sports, especially in a tough situation, when the player plays a natural game and scores well, that is true craftsmanship. When there is no stress, it is easy to be natural.

“Karmanī vyajyate prajna suste ko va na panditaḥ”. When everything is all right,



everyone is a pandita in advising people. In this, I would like to replace 'karmaṇi' with 'viṣame.' In a viṣama paristhiti, can you be artistic and cool-headed? Can you make your movements as graceful as possible? This is the challenge in dance and music – you are asked to make graceful movements in sound and space. Dance cannot be without music, and music cannot be without measuring the movements. Music cannot be without tāla, and Nṛtya cannot be without swara. It is natural that when there is the Lord's song, you make your movements of karma according to the music of His song, and not inconsistent with it.

According to Bharatanatyam śāstra, the first thing that is performed is 'adavu'. These units of movements are the fundamental universal rhythms of movement, and we accept them and keep them with us. 'Adavu' means belonging. You make your movements

without ugly jerks, every movement must be graceful. For that, intense discipline is needed to be able to do these naturally, and only then will there be grace. Similarly, in music, there are only three swaritas. The sangīta śāstra says that these three change with what is called graha bheda, and this makes the rāgas come out. The same three pitches – high, low and medium – lead to the fundamental rāgas due to the graha bhedas. In our country, we have discovered that these fine arts of classical music and dance are entirely devoted to discovering the divine within you and outside you. Apply that same discipline to your Samvit dṛiṣṭi – in eating, drinking and playing, act with that Samvit artistry.

So, in conclusion, I will list three important things to remember for leading your life with Samvit dṛiṣṭi. These are austerity, non-possession and purity. Take care to bring in these three aspects in every one of your

sādhana to prove your prapatti. I have already explained that prapatti is needed even to be a sportsman or a songster, what to say about being a samvit sādha.

The first item is austerity, which is sukha tyāga, not seeking to enjoy things. Sukha is not to be sought by one who is learning. Vidyārthi and sukhārthi cannot co-exist. Sukha and dukha, both will come. Why do you think that, unless you seek, pleasure will not come. Pleasure will come even without seeking. But, when it comes, receive it from God. Epictetus was a great philosopher. In the beginning, he was a slave, but later his Master released him. Once his Master gave him a very bitter cucumber, and he was eating it quietly. The Master asked, "Is it not bitter?" He said, "Yes." Then the Master said, "But you are not making any faces or any noise?" He replied, "Master, you have given me such sweet things in the past, and I ate them

quietly. Now, once you have given me a bitter thing, should I make a lot of noise?" That is prapatti.

He gives sorrow also and He gives joy as well. What is important is that it is He who is giving. "Unless it is from Him, I will not take even amṛtā" – this is what Upamanyu told Indra when he appeared to give amruta to Upamanyu. "If Śiva gives me even viṣa, then I will take it" – this is 'avyabhicariṇī bhakti.' Receive everything from the Divine Mother – this is what we call austerity. This is why we find very often disaster and sorrow is more desirable for us. Just like sometimes, under stress, sportsmen can exercise their skill even more. As Kunti says, addressing the Lord as Jagat-guru – "I am your śiṣya and am asking for vidya. Greater the sorrow, the better it is for me because I am learning better in that."

The second point is non-possession – don't

cling to things. If you remember that nothing belongs to you, then there will be nothing to stop you from entering the court of līlā. My Guru used to tell me about a Swami who was wandering from one town to another. At the outskirts of one town, he found a nice garden house. There was no watchman, so he let himself into the garden and went to sleep under a creeper shed. When the watchman returned, he found the Swami and shook him awake and asked, "How did you come here?" "By the gate." "Are you making fun of me?" "No, I am just answering." "Who asked you to come?" "No one." "What business have you here?" "No business." "But you have trespassed into the King's garden and so I am going to punish you".

The Swami said, "You cannot punish me, take me to the Master of the house." So the watchman took him to the King, who was there at that time. The King said, "You entered

into my house without permission?" The Swami replied, "To enter a choultry you don't need permission." The King got angry and said, "This is not a choultry. This is my garden palace." Then the Swami said, "How do you say this is your palace?" The King replied, "How can you question me? I am here as the Master."

Swami: Don't get all excited. Now you are here. But who was here before you?

King : My father.

Swami: And before him?

King : His father.

Swami: And before him?

King : Before him it was a village – villagers were here.

Swami: And before that?

King : It was a forest – animals were there.

Swami: You see – so many different people have come and gone – that is a choultry. You will also go, O Rājan, and I am also going.

Everything is a choultry – if you remember this you will be a better artist. You should not take the ‘anityam asukham’ material to be śāśwatam; otherwise bhajana is not possible. Once you remove the misconception that all relations will be with you always, then there will be better bhajana.

The third thing I mentioned is purity – śuddhi. I don’t want to expand on this because all disciples are śuddhi only. Music is swara śuddhi, dance is anga śuddhi, and, for most of us, all our karma is chitta śuddhi. Life itself in essence meant to be the cleaning of the mind. So you should adopt everything that purifies your mental moods.

With these three aspects – austerity, non-possession and purity – you will be able to make your life into a creative artistic experience that will gradually bring the enlightenment that everything is really the Lord’s artistry – the Ardhanārīnateśwara’s natana – and that will be real blessedness.

Om Śanti Śanti Śantiḥ

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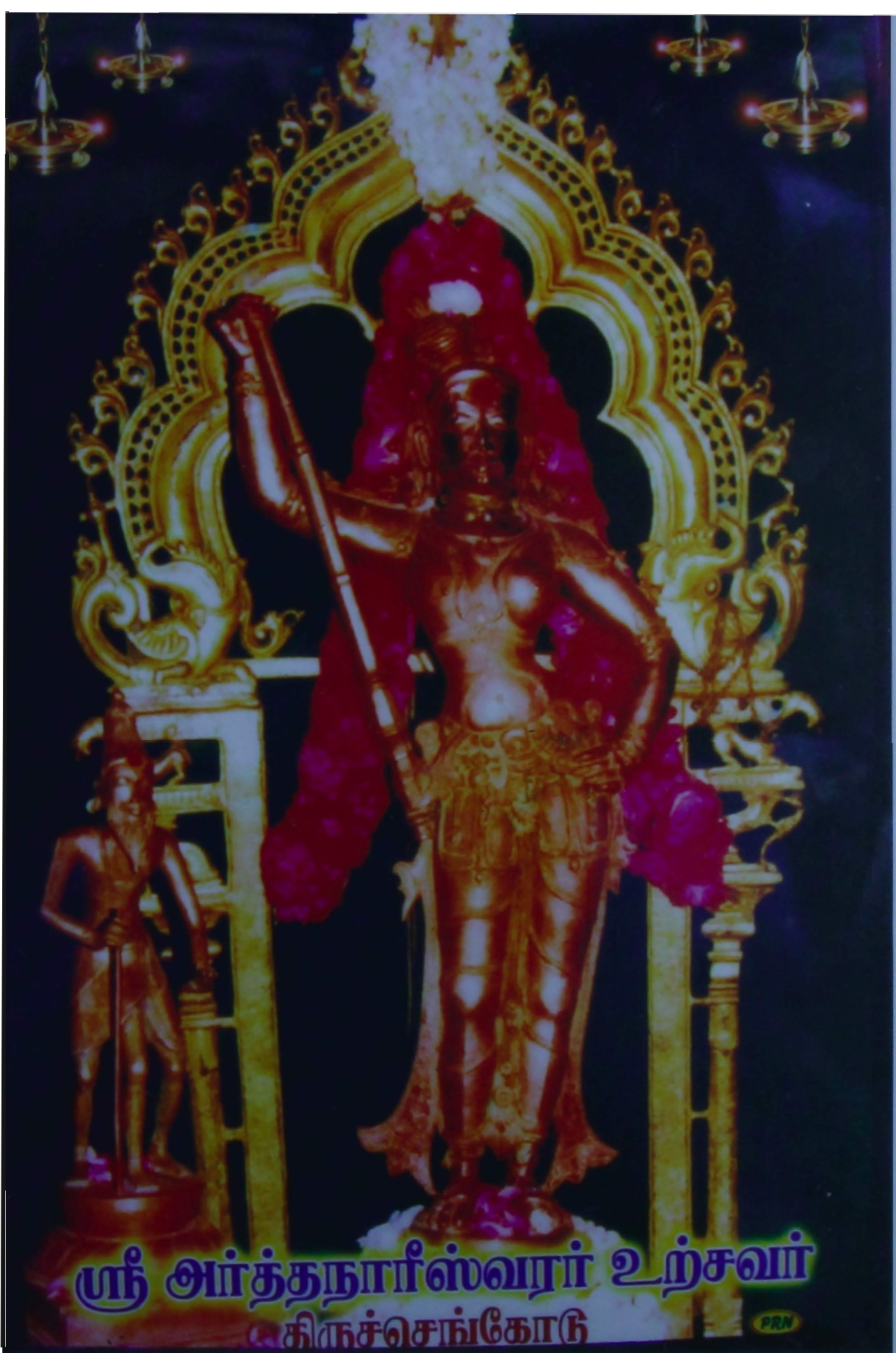




## **Appendices**

- (a) Ardhanariswara Pancakam
- (b) Ardhanari Nateswara Stotram
- (c) Umamaheswara Stotram





ஸ்ரீ அர்த்தநாரீஸ்வரர் உற்சவர்  
கிருச்செங்கோடு

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## अर्धनारीश्वर पञ्चकम्

अभीतिदं पद्मगुच्छं पाशं परशुमेव च ।

दधानमर्धनारीशं वन्दे द्वैतविवर्जितम् ॥१॥

श्रृंगारे मुद्रितो वामे करे वज्रोद्यतोपरे ।

स्फुरत्वन्तः शिवश्चाग्रे सर्पशैलशिखामणिः ॥२॥

कथं सृष्टिः किं स्वरूप-मिति चिन्ताहरं विधेः ।

शिवशक्त्यविनाभाव - मूर्तिं अर्धाम्बिकां भजे ॥३॥

एकमेवेतिवेदोक्त-ब्रह्मसंविद् विमर्शकम् ।

उमागृहीतदेहार्थं ध्यायेच्छिवमयं महः ॥४॥

यत्र यत्र मनो याति स्तोत्रभावार्थपूरितः ।

तत्रतत्रानुपश्यति शिवाशिवमयं जगत् ॥ ५ ॥

## Ardhanarishwara Panchakam

1. He holds in his lower right and left hands the Abhaya Mudra and a clutch of lotus blooms. The left and right upper hands respectively wield the paasha and the parashu. I bow down to this Ardhanarishwara who defies all concepts of duality.
2. His left hand displays the Shringara mudra (romantic pose), while the uplifted right hand holds a thunderbolt. May this form of Shiva adorning the top of Sarpashaila be ever revealed within me and in front of me.
3. Swayambhu Brahma, ordered by God the Parameshwara to create the worlds, was lost in thought: "How can I sustain the process of creation naturally? What will be its lasting form?" To remove his worries God revealed the form of Ardhambika which indicates that all life is endowed with the inseparable natures of Shiva and Shakti. I adore that Divine Form.

4. "The Truth of everything is one indivisible existence only (ekamevadvitiam)" – that is how Upanisads speak of the cognition of the Absolute Truth (Brahmasamvit). To reveal the significance of this saying, the effulgence of Shiva appears in a Divine form, half of which is shared by Devi. I meditate upon Ardhanarishwara.
5. Imbued with the import of the above Stotra, wherever the devoted mind of the sadhaka goes, there it will discover the world as the samarasa essence of Shiva and Shakti.

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## श्री अर्धनारीनटेश्वर स्तोत्रम्

चाम्पेयगौरार्धशरीरकायै कर्पूरगौरार्धशरीरकाय ।  
धम्मिल्लकायै च जटाधराय नमः शिवायै च नमः शिवाय  
॥१॥

कस्तूरिका कुङ्कुमचर्चितायै चितारजः पुञ्जविचर्चिताय ।  
कृतस्मरायै विकृतस्मराय नमः शिवायै च नमः शिवाय  
॥२॥

चलत्क्वणत्कङ्कणनूपुरायै मिलत्फणाभासुरनूपुराय ।  
हेमाङ्गदायै भुजगाङ्गदाय नमः शिवायै च नमः शिवाय  
॥३॥

विलोलनीलोत्पललोचनायै विकासिपङ्केरुहलोचनाय ।  
समेक्षणायै विषमेक्षणाय नमः शिवायै च नमः शिवाय  
॥४॥

मन्दारमालाकलितालकायै कपालमालाङ्कित-कन्धराय ।  
दिव्याम्बरायै च दिगम्बराय नमः शिवायै च नमः शिवाय  
॥५॥

अम्भोधरश्यामलकुन्तलायै तडित्प्रभाताम्रजटाधराय ।  
गिरीश्वरायै निखिलेश्वराय नमः शिवायै च नमः शिवाय

॥६॥

प्रपः।सृष्ट्युन्मुखलास्यकायै समस्तसंहारकताण्डवाय ।  
जगज्जनन्यै जगदेकपित्रे नमः शिवायै च नमः शिवाय

॥७॥

प्रदीप्तरत्नोज्ज्वलकुण्डलायै स्फुरन्महापन्नगभूषणाय ।  
शिवान्वितायै च शिवान्विताय नमः शिवायै च नमः शिवाय

॥८॥

॥इति श्रीमच्छङ्कराचार्यप्रणीतमर्धनारीश्वरस्तोत्रं सम्पूर्णम् ॥

# Ardhanari Nateshwara Stotram

(free translation)

1. The Devi-half of Ardhanari's body appears yellow-hued like a fair champa flower. The Shiva-half is resplendent white, like camphor. Her head is ornate with braided hair, while He has His matted locks. Prostrations to the united form of Shiva-Shakti, Ardhanari.
2. She is worshipped with kasturi-sandal paste and red-kumkum. His limbs are smeared with ashes from the crematorium. He burns down the rajasic Kamadeva while she rejuvenates Cupid's essential form. Our prostrations to Ardhanari.
3. Jangling anklets adorn Her feet. Shiny snakes entwine His ankle. There are snakes as His armlets also, while Devi's arms are decked with golden bracelets.
4. Her eye resembles a swaying blue lily; Shiva's eye is a full-blown red lotus. Her benign look is bestowed on all alike, while Shiva's eye searches to detect and destroy the evil.

5. Mother's tresses are decorated with strings of Mandara flowers. A garland of skulls gleams on Shiva's shoulders. The Devi wears divine clothes while Shiva has nothing but the four quarters to enclose Him. Our obeisance to Her and to Him.
6. Her hair is as dark as the rain-cloud. Shiva's tawny matted locks of copper-colour flash like lightning. To Uma, the presiding deity of the Himalayas, and to Shiva, the Lord of all worlds, our obeisance.
7. Her graceful dance (laasya) sustains the process of creation; His dynamic tandava Nritya effaces the universe. To the Mother and to the Father of all worlds, our obeisance.
8. The bright rubies in Her ear-ring spread a fiery brilliance all around. The eight great Snake-Lords serving as His various ornaments are equally radiant. To Her ever inseparable from Him, and to Him ever united with Her, we offer our obeisance.

## श्री उमामहेश्वरस्तोत्रम्

नमः शिवाभ्यां नवयौवनाभ्यां परस्पराश्लिष्टवपुर्धराभ्याम् ।  
नगेन्द्रकन्यावृषकेतनाभ्यां नमो नमः शङ्करपार्वतीभ्याम् ॥१॥

नमः शिवाभ्यां सरसोत्सवाभ्यां नमस्कृताभीष्टवरप्रदाभ्याम् ।  
नारायणेनार्चितपादुकाभ्यां नमो नमः शङ्करपार्वतीभ्याम् ॥२॥

नमः शिवाभ्यां वृषवाहनाभ्यां विरिणि विष्ण्विन्द्रसुपूजिताभ्याम् ।  
विभूतिपाटीरविलेपनाभ्यां नमो नमः शङ्करपार्वतीभ्याम् ॥३॥

नमः शिवाभ्यां जगदीश्वराभ्यां जगत्पतिभ्यां जयविग्रहाभ्याम् ।  
जंभारिमुख्यैरभिवन्दिताभ्यां नमो नमः शङ्करपार्वतीभ्याम् ॥४॥

नमः शिवाभ्यां परमौषधाभ्यां पः॥क्षरीपञ्जररज्जिताभ्याम् ।  
प्रपः॥सृष्टिस्थितिसंहताभ्यां नमो नमः शङ्करपार्वतीभ्याम् ॥५॥

नमः शिवाभ्यां कलिनाशनाभ्यां कंकालकल्याणवपुर्धराभ्याम् ।  
कैलासशैलस्थितदेवताभ्यां नमो नमः शङ्करपार्वतीभ्याम् ॥६॥

नमः शिवाभ्यामशुभापहाभ्यां अशेषलोकैकविशेषिताभ्याम् ।  
अकुण्ठिताभ्यां स्मृतिसंभृताभ्यां नमो नमः शङ्करपार्वतीभ्याम् ॥७॥  
नम शिवाभ्यां विषमेक्षणाभ्यां बिल्वच्छदामल्लिकदामभृद्भ्याम् ।  
शोभावती शान्तवतीश्वराभ्यां नमो नमः शङ्करपार्वतीभ्याम् ॥८॥

इति श्रीशङ्करभगवत्पादकृतं स्तोत्रं संक्षिप्तम् ॥

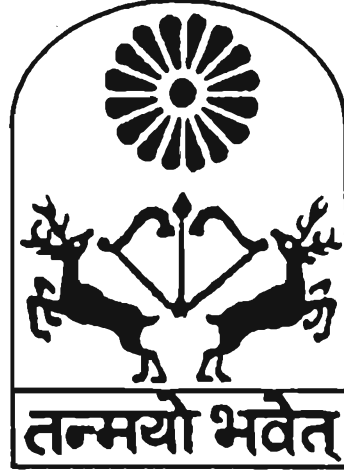
# Umamaheswara Stotram

(free translation)

1. Our prostrations to Shankara and Parvati, the divine couple who are ever auspicious and youthful, entwining each other in loving embrace. Dharma comes as Himalaya to nurture the Devi as a daughter. The same Dharma becomes the Sacred Bull for Shiva to ride to meet Her.
2. Shankara and Parvati both partake of festivities joyously offered by devotees and grant chosen boons to them. Both are worshipped by Narayana.
3. Devi and Shiva are seated on the Nandi, their chariot and are worshipped by Brahma, Vishnu and Indra. They are anointed with sandal-paste as well as with sacred ash.
4. They are the rulers and protectors of the world, ever triumphant. All beings, including Indra and other gods, are ever devoted to them.

5. They are the supreme remedy for the ills of the world; easily accessible through the sacred five-lettered mantra pervaded by their power and presence. They account for the creation, sustenance and dissolution of the Universe.
6. They destroy evil, assuming terrible and benign forms. They have their heavenly sport in the holy Mount Kailasa.
7. They help to remove inauspiciousness. All manifest universe is but an adjunct qualifying their Truth. Their ways are unobstructed and they are held in the sustained remembrances of devotees.
8. Both are three-eyed. Both are decorated with heaps of bilva-leaves and jasmine-flowers. They are the Gods of Magnificence and Mighty Repose. We bow down to Shankara and Parvati.





*Published by :*  
**SAMVIT SADHANAYANA**  
Mt. Abu, Rajasthan - 307501 (India)



वागर्थाविव सम्पृक्तौ वागर्थप्रतिपत्तये  
जगतः पितरौ वन्दे पार्वतीपरमेश्वरौ



Parvati - Parameshwara are intertwined like the uttered word and what it signifies. They form the Parental Pair of the world.

I offer myself to them, that I may enter into the meaningfulness of all that is.

- Kalidasa