

वित्तेश्वर ईश्वरेश्वर



Swami Harshananda

Preface

Siva, Devi (Sakti) and Vishnu are the three major aspects of God presented in the Hindu pantheon during the post-Vedic period.

In this pamphlet an attempt has been made to introduce to the reader the various facets of Saivism in as simple a manner as the subject permits.

It is aimed at giving the Saivites a basic knowledge of their cult. The non- Saivites also, can — if they peruse through the booklet — get at least a 'nodding acquaintance' of the same.

We hope that this brochure too will be well-received by the students of Hinduism, as the other booklets published from here.

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1. Introduction

Saivism is the religion and philosophy of those who believe that god Siva is the Supreme Being.

Whether Rudra, the Terrible of the Vedas and Siva, the Auspicious One, of the 'non-Vedic' ('non-Aryan') 'Dravidian' cults battled for centuries and then blended to 'emerge as one deity of compromise — Siva-Mahadeva, the Auspicious Great God — is a moot point. As the Indus Valley civilisation, which had once been believed to be pre-Aryan, non-Vedic or Dravidian, came to be accepted as a continuation of the Vedic civilisation itself, in fact its later phase, scholars had to concede that Siva as depicted on some of the seals with a trident and a bull, was very much a Vedic deity even as the Mother Goddess was.

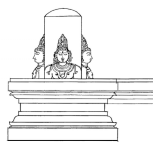
Being the god of destruction and dissolution of the world, as delineated in later literature, Siva had to be Rudra, the terrible. Hence supplications to him to be propitious to one's children (vide Rig-Veda 7.46.2), descendants, cattle and property (ibid., 1.114.8) are quite in order. However, he also has a benign form (Shambhu, the beneficent one), is the heavenly physician who cures one's diseases and protects one's cattle.

By the time of the Atharva-Veda and the Svetasvatara Upanishad (1.10; 3.2; 4.12,21,22; 3.14; 4.10), the concept had further evolved to indicate him as the supreme or the highest God.

Along with the development of the concept of Rudra-Siva, there had also been an evolution of the concept and symbology of the linga as the chief emblem of Siva. The Linga resembles a pillar with a semi spherical top. Being a rounded surface in all directions, it is, perhaps, the

closest approximation to a god considered as beyond all names, forms and attributes. Whereas some scholars find in it the remnants of phallic worship of aboriginal tribes, others feel it is a metamorphosed form of the Vedic yupa-stambha (sacrificial post.) as the *yaga-shala* (sacrificial shed) gradually evolved into the now common Hindu temple. Even if a phallic origin is admitted, a third section of savants argue, that there is nothing wrong in it since it represents the generative principle of God, the creator.

Though Saivism might have started as a simple faith and a mode of worshipping Lord Siva as the Supreme Being, over the centuries, it branched off into several varieties of sects and cults. Six of these have left their imprint on the religious history of India though two or three only are surviving and thriving. These may now be considered by arranging them in the English alphabetical order.



2. Kalamukhas

Based on the fierce descriptions of Rudra in the Vedas, some bizarre cults emerged in course of time. The *Kalamukhas* and the *Kapalikas* are two such sects worshipping Rudra-Siva as Bhairava and Candi.

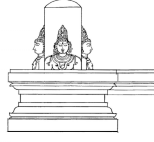
The *kalamukhas* were so called, probably because they were defacing their faces with black marks and symbols (kala = black, mukha = face).

Scholars of Saivism consider this sect as a branch of the Pasupata cult of Lakulisha, also spelt as 'Nakulisha'.

These *kalamukhas* (sometimes called '*ekkoti-munis*') had some connections with the descendants of a Devavrata Muni of Kashmir. They were quite powerful during the period A. D. 700-1200 in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. Kedareshvara temple of Balligave (in the Shimoga district of Karnataka) and the temple town of Srishaila (near Kurnool, Andhra Pradesh) were their strongholds. Edicts of the Calukyan kings (11th cent. A. D) speak of royal patronage to this cult. One of their gurus — Sarvesvara Saktideva — was the master of 77 temples. They were also well known for austerity and scholarship.

However, some horrendous practices of theirs, like drinking wine in human skulls, smearing the body with the ashes of crematories, cannibalism and loose morals, made them outcasts in the society.

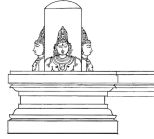
The teachers of this sect were divided into two groups: Rasi and Sakti. Raja-raja-guru (circa A. D. 1370), a well known Kalamukha teacher, was a contemporary of the sage Vidyaranya (14th century A.D).



3. Kapalikas

Members of a powerful Saiva sect, the *Kapalikas*, were named as such because they were using a *kapala* or human skull, as their begging bowl. They were also wearing a garland of human skulls. They were quite active and powerful during the period 7th century on-wards for about 500 years in Srishaila (Andhra Pradesh) and some parts of Tamil Nadu like Kañcipuram, Tiruvotriyur, Melpadi and Kodumbalur. Worship of Bhairava and Candi, drinking wine, eating human flesh and ash, arming themselves with a mace and promiscuous sex were common among the members of the sect.

According to a work called Sabara-tantra 24 teachers, starting with Adinatha and ending with Malayarjuna, have been mentioned. They were fiercely anti- Vaishnava.



4. Kashmir Saivism

Introduction

Though Saivism is an old religio-philosophical system prevalent in many parts of India, certain erudite and enlightened teachers from Kashmir developed a special brand of the same. This came to be popularly known as 'Kashmir Saivism' in the annals of philosophical literature of later periods. However, a more technical and acceptable title has been '*Pratyabhiñña-darsana*'.

Basic Literature

Although the basic literature of Kashmir Saivism is some of the agamas like the *Svacchanda*, the *Netra* and the *Vijñana-bhairava*, a new class of cardinal works was produced by the later writers. Among them, the following are the principal ones: *Siva-sutras* (revealed to Vasugupta (9th century A.D.) *Spanda-sutra* of Vasugupta, *Spanda-sutra-vrtti* of Kallata (the chief disciple of Vasugupta), *Siva-drsti* of Somananda (9th century A. D) and *Isvara-pratyabhijñña* of Utpala (A.D. 900).

Abhinavagupta (A.D. 950-1000) was the most brilliant of the later writers whose *Vrtti* (gloss) on the *Isvara-pratyabhijñña* of Utpala, and his own independent works *Tantra-loka* and *Paramartha-sara* have made him immortal in the chronicles of Kashmir Saivism.

Kshemaraja (A. D. 975-1025), Bhaskara and Varadaraja were the other noted writers who have enriched this literature.

Philosophical Tenets in Brief

This system puts forward 36 *tattvas* or fundamental principles out of which the whole creation has evolved. They are divided into three main groups:

Suddha-tattva, Suddha-asuddha-tattva and Asuddha-tattva.

The *Suddha-tattvas* (pure principles) are five: —

*Siva-tattva,
Sakti-tattva,
Sadasiva- tattva,
Isvara-tattva
Suddha-vidya- tattva.*

The *Suddha-asuddha-tattvas* are six: —

*Maya
kaala
niyati
raga
vidya
kalaa.*

The *Asuddha-tattvas* are twenty-five. They are:—

*Purusa-tattva,
Prakrti-tattva,
buddhi
ahamkara,
manas,
five jñanendriyas,
five karmendriyas,
five tanmatras
five bhutas.*

These tenets appear to be similar to the ones described in the Advaita Vedanta and the Sankhya systems. But there are some basic differences.

These *tattvas* or principles may now be taken up one by one.

The fundamental *tattva* of this system is *Siva-tattva*, generally described as *Para-samvit* or the highest (and pure) consciousness, the same as the Nirguna Brahman of the Advaita Vedanta.

How- ever, as against the two aspects there — the Saguna and the Nirguna aspects—there are five in this system.

This *Parasamvit* is the original primeval *tattva* from which all the other *tattvas* have emerged. It is eternal and ineffable.

The *Shakti-tattva* is primarily the *prathama-spandana* or first vibration- product (if we can use such a word) of *Parasamvit*. Ananda or bliss is its chief characteristic. It is the primary source of all movement in further creation and the rise of 'aham' or 'I-consciousness'.

Then comes the *Sada-Shiva-tattva*, a further evolution of the *Parasamvit*, wherein there is an awareness of 'aham' ('I') and 'idam' ('this'), the former being more prominent. Since 'idam' (creation) is still in an extremely subtle state, Sada-Shiva may also feel 'aham idam' identifying himself with the creation about to be projected.

In *Isvara-tattva*, the fourth, the consciousness 'idam' (creation) becomes equal in prominence to 'aham' ('I').

In *Suddha-vidya-tattva*, the fifth form of *Parasamvit*, 'idam' (creation) becomes more prominent. This is the starting point of the actual process of creation or evolution or projection.

These five principles have been named '*Shaktyanda*'.

The next six principles are called '*Mayanda*'.

Maya, the first, is the unique power of Siva, which can make the impossible possible. It is not an illusory power responsible only for ignorance as in Advaita metaphysics. It is the real power by which Siva envelops himself, producing *bheda* (differences), *nama* (names), *rupa* (forms) and so on, where they did not exist.

This *maya* gives rise to the '*panca kancukas*' or five coverings that apparently limit the powers of Siva and make him appear as the *jivatman* (individual Self), subject to *kala* (time), *niyati* (cause and effect relationship, law of karma), *raga* (desire and attachment), *vidya* (limited knowledge, or *avidya*, ignorance) and *kala* (limited powers of action).

The next group of principles beginning with prakrti is called '*Prakrtyanda*'.

Prakrti is the matrix of the three *gunas* (*sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*) in a state of balance. When this balance is upset, the products that gradually emerge are: *buddhi* (discriminative faculty), *ahamkara* (ego-sense, sense of individuation and separation), *manas* (mind, general power of thinking, feeling and willing), the five *jñanendriyas* (organs of perception, viz., eyes, ears, nose, tongue and skin or the sense of touch), the five *karmendriyas* (organs of action viz., speech, hands, feet and the two organs of evacuation) and the five *tanmatras* (the five subtle elements of earth, water, fire, air and ether or space).

The *tanmatras*, by their combination, produce the five *mahabhutas* or gross elements. Further creation proceeds from them. This group is called '*Prthivyanda*'. The significant points to be noted in this system are: —

- (1) Srsiti or creation is the evolution of the Sakti or power of Siva.
- (2) The individual Self in bondage in creation, is also, really speaking, Siva himself.
- (3) The total number of fundamental cosmic principles are 36 and not 25 as in the Sankhya system.

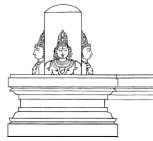
Since the created world is an evolute of Siva, it is not different from him. But, it also appears to have its own separate identity. Hence, this system accepts the theory of *bhedabheda* (both difference and non-difference) between God (Siva) and his creation.

Similarly, the jivatman (the individual Self) who is called '*Pashu*' (bound Self) is also Shiva himself. By practising *pratyabhijña* (remembrance of his real nature as Siva himself) the jiva can get rid of all *avaranas* (coverings) and become one with Siva. This is his mukti or liberation.

However, this can be secured only by service to the guru (spiritual teacher), listening to the teachings of the Shastras (Scriptures), reflection on them and the practice of yoga. But, the final deliverance can come only by *Shiva-anugraha* (grace of Lord Shiva), technically called '*Shaktipata*' (descent of Lord's power).

Ultimately, as per this system, it is Shiva that covers himself and becomes the jiva, the bound-self. It is Shiva, again, that recognises his real nature and 'regains' it as it were.

Thus self-forgetfulness (*svatma-vismaranam*) and self-remembrance (*svatma-pratyabhijna*) are two scenes in the world-play of Siva!



5. Pashupata Cult

Introduction

The cult of Pashupati or the Pashupata cult seems to be an ancient one. The use of words '*pati*,' '*pasha*,' and '*prasada*' in the Shvetasvatara Upanishad (1.11; 6.9; 3.20), worship of Siva as *linga*, the practice of tying the Sivalinga on the arm as per the stone edict of the king Pravarasena (A. D. 428), Sivalingas discovered in Cambodia (now Kampuchia) and assigned to the period A. D. 550 — all these confirm this belief.

The Pashupata cult is based mainly on the Saivagamas, certain puranas and a few minor Upanisads of the post-Vedic period. Some of the agamas are: Kamika, Ajita, Amshuman, Suprabhedha, Svayambhuva, Raurava, Mrgendra, Pauskara and Vatula. The puranas are: Vayu,

Karma and Shiva. As for their authoritative nature, they have been considered equal to the Vedas, the Vedangas, the Mahabharata and the Dharma-shastras.

The period of the agamas ranges from the first century to the fourteenth. They are prevalent mostly in South India, that too in Tamil Nadu. Whether they — some of them at least — were originally composed in Tamil and later rendered into Sanskrit, or were directly written in Sanskrit itself, opinion seems to be divided.

Chief Tenets

The topics dealt with in the Pashupata literature are technically called Pancarthas, the five basic subjects. They are: *karana*, *karya*, *yoga*, *vidhi* and *duhkhanta*.

KARANA

Karana, the primeval cause, is Shiva, called '*Pati*' (Lord) here. Some of his other names are: Rudra, Sankara, Kala, Balavikarana, Aghora, Sarva, Sharva, Tatpuruṣa, Isana, Isvara and Brahma. He is *anadi* (without beginning or origin), *avyaya* (indestructible) and the cause of creation, sustenance and dissolution of the world. He is transcendent as well as immanent. He is compassion unlimited. Pranava or Om is his best symbol.

Unlike the Vedantic systems, Siva or Isvara is only the *nimitta-karana* (efficient cause) of creation and not the *upadana-karana* (material cause). Though the jivas (individual Selves) and the world have a separate existence, they are completely under his control. It is due to him that the world and the jivas undergo changes. However, being a *prasadi* (one who bestows grace), he is ever compassionate to the jivas. That is why they can get liberation by meditating on him.

It may not be out of place to mention here that the Pashupata system is very much akin to the Dvaita Vedanta system of Madhva (A. D. 1197-1276). The only difference is that Shiva has replaced Vishnu, in this case.

KARYA

Karya is the second of the five basics mentioned above. *Karya* is defined here not as an effect, but as that which is *asvatantra* or dependent, *karana* being that which is *svatantra* or independent. In this sense, Isvara or Shiva alone is the *karana*, the *jagat* (world) and the jivas being *karyas* since they are dependent upon him.

Though Isvara is the *karana*, the jivas, being prodded by him, can also be the *karanas* in the further process of creation. So also prakṛti or pradhana which is responsible for further evolution of the world. Hence these two have been called '*karya-karana*'.

Evolution of the world from the prakṛti is the same as in the Sankhya philosophy.

One thing has to be noted here. Isvara as the original *karana* never gets affected by the evolution of the world whereas prakrti which is a 'karya-karana' does. Two examples can make this concept clear. Lotus blooms when the sunlight falls on it. Iron filings move in the vicinity of a magnet. In these cases, neither the sun nor the magnet is affected though the lotus and the iron filings are. So also, Isvara remains unaffected by the evolution of the world through the *prakrti* (and the jivas).

Among the karyas, the *jivatman* (individual Self) is the most important. He has been called '*pashu*' since he is subject to '*pasha*' (bondage) and sees ('*pashyati*') himself as the body-mind complex forgetting that he is the spirit, whereas Shiva has been declared as 'Pashupati' (Lord of pashus).

The pashu or the jiva is eternal, all-pervading and possesses the powers to see (*drk-shakti*) and to act (*kriya-shakti*).

The pashus, depending on their spiritual evolution, are classified into two groups: *sañjana* (those attached to the body, the senses and the mind) and *nirañjana* (the liberated ones).

The *pashas* or bonds that bind the *pashu* are called *malas* or impurities. They are three: *anava-mala*, *mayiya-mala* and *karma-mala*.

The impurity that makes the pashu (or jiva) identify with the limited body though he is really infinite, is *anava-mala*.

The bondage that has been brought about by *maya* (the power of Isvara) is *mayiya-mala*. Limitations that arise due to past karmas are *karma-mala*. With the help of yoga, the pashu is able to cleanse himself of all these *malas* and attain the *dukhanta* state (destruction or cessation of all sorrow and suffering).

YOGA

This takes us to the next subject, viz, yoga. Yoga is defined as the *samyoga* (union) of *atman* (*pashu*.) and Isvara (*Pashu-pati*). It consists in detachment from the comforts and pleasures of the life here and looking upon Isvara alone as the sole aim of one's life. This yoga can be achieved either through the grace of Isvara or through total surrender to him as the only refuge for a pashu.

Yamas like *ahimsa* (nonviolence), *brahmacarya* (celibacy), *satya* (speaking the truth in a way that helps living beings), *asangraha* (non-accumulation of things) are useful sadhanas in yoga. So also the niyamas viz., *akrodha* (conquest of anger), *guruseva* (service to the guru), *sauca* (cleanliness), *mitahara* (moderation in eating) and *jagarukata* (vigilance).

VIDHI

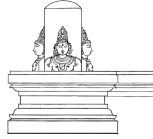
Vidhi' is the fourth in the pancarthas. It means activities like bhasma-snana (bathing in holy ash), *upahara* (deliberately acting in a way that the people in general will shun the company of

the sadhaka), *japa* (repetition of Siva's mantra) and *pradaksina* (circumambulation of the Sivalinga).

DUHKHANTA

Duhkhanta is the last of the pancarthas. It means cessation of all sorrow and suffering, the same as mukti or liberation. It is achieved by withdrawing the mind from all objects and directing it towards the Lord Pashupati only. This will result in total surrender to him and living near him (*samipa prapti*). In this mukti, there is no 'living alone' (kaivalya, as in the Sankhya-Yoga systems) or total merging (aikya as in Advaita Vedanta). The pashu will then be in the eternal company of Pashupati.

It is interesting to note that the Pashupata texts describe the attainment of psychic powers like clairvoyance or clairaudience as a part of *dukhanta*. But they also discourage the yogi from paying attention to them since they can prevent him from attaining liberation in the ultimate sense.



6. Saiva-siddhanta

Though the word 'Saiva-siddhanta' means the doctrine of Saivism in general, it has come to be particularly identified with the brand of Saivism that has been prevalent in the Tamil country over the last thousand three hundred years. It is more a religion of devotional mysticism than a systematic and speculative philosophy, based on the compositions of the Nayanmars or Nayanars who were 63 in number and lived during the period 7th to 12th centuries A. D.

The canonical literature of Tamil Saivism as redacted by Nambi Andar Nambi (A. D. 1000) can be given as follows:

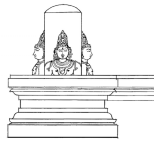
| The books | Authors | Period |
|------------|--|-----------------------|
| 1, 2 and 3 | Tirujñana Sambandar | 7th cent. A.D. |
| 4, 5 and 6 | Tirunavukkarasar | 7th cent. A.D. |
| 7* | Sundarar | 9th cent. A.D. |
| 8 | Manikkavacagar (works;- tiru-vacakam and tiruk-kovai) | 3rd or 9th cent. A.D. |
| 9 | Nine different saints (works:- Tiruvisaippa and Tirup-pallandu) | AD. 900-1100 |
| 10. | TirumtuIar (work;- Tiru-mandiram) | 6th cent. A.D. |
| 11 | Miscellany of poems by saints Pattinattar, Karaikkal Ammaiyyar and others, | |
| 12 | Sekkilar (work;- Periyapuram) | 12th cent. A. D. |

*These seven collections are generally called *Tevarams* or *Devarams*.

The first attempt at a systematic presentation of Tamil Saivism was by Meykandar (13th cent. A.D) in his well known work *Siva-jñāna -bodham*, a short treatise of 12 aphorisms. It seems to be a translation in Tamil, of a Sanskrit original.

Next in importance, considered as a classic in Tamil Saivism, is the work *Siva-jñāna-sittiyar* by Arunandi, a disciple of Meykandar. This work along with its numerous commentaries is most widely read even now. The *Siva-jñāna -bodham* mentions and defines the three basic concepts:— *Pati*, *pashu* and *pasha* — deals with the *sadhana* for the *pashu* to realise *Pati* and the *phala* or spiritual fruit that accrues to him.

The philosophy of Saiva-siddhanta is very similar to that of the Pasupata cult, the only difference being that the former accepts 36 basic principles (like Kashmir Saivism) whereas the latter only 25.



7. Vira-Saivism

Introduction

Vira-saivism, also known as the *Lingayata* Religion or Sect, is a variant of Saivism found mostly in the Karnataka region of South India. Though the more orthodox sections claim that it is an ancient religion originating from some mythical teachers like Revanaradhya, Marularadhya, Panditaradhya and others, there are others who are inclined to treat it in a figurative sense. For all practical purposes, Basavesvara (d. A.D. 1168), also known as Basavanna or Basava, who was the prime minister of the king Bijjala (who ruled from A.D. 1157 to 1167) was the chief organiser and reformer (if not the founder) of this sect.

A galaxy of saints (numbering more than 300) of this sect like Allama Prabhu and Cannabasavanna, and women-saints like Akka-mahadevi have enriched the Lingayata Movement. They revolutionised the religio-social fabric of their times.

Principal Dogmas

A special feature of Vira-saivism is the supreme importance, reverence and worship given to the *Shiva-linga* or *linga* as the sole emblem of God Siva. Hence the appropriateness of the name 'Lingayata' ('a religion that considers the linga as the chief support or basis'). After receiving it from a qualified guru in *diksha* or initiation, it should be worn on the body always, thereby purifying every part of the body.

The chief tenets of this faith are: Siva is the Supreme God. The linga is his chief symbol or emblem. The *pancaksari*-mantra, *namas-sivaya*, is the redeeming spiritual formula. *Pancacaras* and *asta-varanas* are the main code of conduct. *Sakti-visistadvaita* is the philosophy behind this system.

As for the process of evolution of the world, the same 36 tattvas or principles given by Kashmir Saivism have been adopted here also.

Practical Disciplines

But for the three *malas* or impurities (viz., *anava-mala*, *mayiya-mala* and *karma-mala* explained earlier), the jiva or pasu (the individual) would have been as wise as Siva, the *pati*. In order to get rid of these *malas*, the individual has to take *diksha* (initiation) from a duly qualified guru. *Diksha* is a simple ritual in which the guru worships a linga and then ties it round the neck of the disciple which will hang like a necklace. The Linga is usually encased in a small silver casket. By this process, the guru gives the mantra (*namassivaya*) and also transmits his spiritual power. Women also are entitled for *diksha* in this cult.

One who is thus initiated is expected to practise the five disciplines known as *pancacaras* and also protect himself with eight 'coverings,' the *astavaranas*, stipulated by the system.

The *pancacaras* are:—

1. *Linga-acara* — Worshipping daily, the linga given to him in *diksha*.
2. *Sada-acara* — Earning money by a virtuous profession and utilising the savings for serving the needy, including the jangamas (itinerant preachers).
3. *Siva-acara* — Treating all lingayats equally as if they are Siva himself.
4. *Bhrtya-acara* — Cultivating humility towards Siva and his devotees.
5. *Gana-acara* — Zealously guarding one's religion, protesting against disrespect to one's God and religion as also not tolerating cruelty to animals.

The *asta-avaranas* are:—

1. *Guru* — Faith and respect towards the guru.
2. *Linga* — Treating the linga with reverence and devotion.
3. *Jangama* — Respectful treatment of the ascetics and mendicants.
4. *Pada-odaka* — Purifying oneself by drinking or sprinkling oneself, with the water, with which guru's or a jangama's feet have been washed.
5. *Prasada* — Accepting food sanctified in worship.
6. *Bhasma* — Wearing holy ash on the forehead and other parts of the body as prescribed.
7. *Rudraksa* — using a rudraksa rosary for japa and also wearing it on the body.
8. *Mantra* — Repetition of the panca- aksari-mantra (*namassivaya*) as directed by the diksa guru.

Since the five *acaras* and the eight *avaranas* purify a virasaiva (or lingayata) by burning up all his impurities, there is — theoretically at least — no need for him to observe *sutakas* (ceremonial impurities) or cremate his body after death. Hence it is buried.

The Doctrine of *Shakti-visistadvaita*

Like the Visistadvaita philosophy of Ramanuja (A. D. 1017-1137), the virasaivas also accept a Visistadvaita philosophy, which, however, is a little different. In Ramanuja's system, Brahman is *advaita* (one without a second), but qualified (*visista*), since he has prakrti (*acit*) and the jivas (*cit*) in himself, as inseparable entities. However, in Virasaivism, the visistatva (being 'qualified') is confined only to his Sakti or power, with the help of which creation, sustenance and dissolution of the world take place. Brahman or God and his Sakti are non-different, even as heat is from fire or light from the sun. And, Brahman is always conscious of his power. Thus here, *visistatva* implies only *vimarsa* or self-consciousness of the inherent power. Hence the name *Shakti-Visistadvaita* for this system.

The Doctrine of Sat-sthala

In Virasaivism, Siva or Brahman or God is called '*Sthala*'. He is '*Sthala*' because he, like the sky or space (*sthala* - space) is limitless or infinite. Also the word '*sthala*' can, etymologically, mean that from which the world emerges and evolves, in which it is stationed and into which it gets dissolved (*stha* = being stationed; *la* = getting dissolved). According to the doctrine '*Sat-sthala-siddhanta*,' Siva divides himself into two aspects, *Linga* and *Anga*, the former being himself and the latter, the jiva. Both these, again, divide themselves into three further aspects;—

- (a) *Linga* into *ista-linga*, *prana-linga* and *bhava-linga*;
- (b) *Anga* into *tyaga-anga*, *bhoga-anga* and *yoga-anga*.

When the jiva renounces his attachment to worldly objects, he is called '*tyaga-anga*' and the *linga* given to him by his guru at the time of diksha or initiation is the '*ista-linga*' which is the means of his *upasana* or worship. When due to the *upasana* of the *ista-linga* he is purified, then he enjoys the things of the world as the grace of Siva, becomes '*bhoga-anga*' and experiences the '*prana-linga*' (Siva's presence in his heart). When he progresses further, to very high states of consciousness in the *sahasrara-cakra*, he is called '*yoga-anga*' and enjoys highest bliss by his identity with Siva, now called '*bhava-linga*'.

Conclusion

Virasaivism, rooted in the ancient Saivism, was nourished by a galaxy of saints. Its active propagation of social equality, its stress on work, not only as a social obligation but also as a part of one's spiritual evolution, earned for itself a large number of followers. Even though the social revolution part of it has gradually fizzled out (mainly due to the rigidity of the caste system that still has a sway over the Hindu society,) other aspects of its religio-philosophical system have certainly enriched Hinduism.

8. Epilogue

Like the two important cults of Vishnu and Shakti (or Devi), the cult of Siva (or Shaivism) also has contributed significantly to the ethos and spiritual grace of Hinduism. Rooted in the Vedas and nourished by the secondary scriptures like the Agamas and the Puranas, Saivism has grown into a widely accepted and popular religious system, well-integrated with other systems, sects and sub-sects within Hinduism.

