

NATCHINTANAI

SONGS AND SAYINGS OF YOGASWAMI

PART I

PROSE WRITINGS AND LETTERS

WE ARE THE SERVANTS OF ŚIVA

We are the servants of Śiva.¹ We are the servants of Śiva.
We are the servants of Śiva. We are the servants of Śiva.
This is *charyā*; this is *kriyā*; this is *yoga*; this is *jñāna*.² This
is *mantra*; this is *tantra*. This is the panacea.

To become established in this meditation is *nishdai*. For those who enjoy this *nishdai*, there is no need for rules of conduct, or *tapas*, or fasting, or the observances of any of the four *āśramas*?³ Such people have lived, are living and will live in the world as they please. No one understands their greatness. For only he who eats sugar-candy will know its sweetness.

There is not even one thing that is wrong.

It was all accomplished long, long ago.

We do not know.

All is truth.⁴

1. Here and in the other prose writings the Tamil word translated as ‘servants of Śiva’ is *Śivanāḍiyār*, which has the same meaning as *Śivathoṇḍar*, i. e. ‘devoted servants of Śiva’. See Introduction p. xxxvii.

2. See Introduction pp. xxvi, xxvii.

3. (lit: ‘a place of striving’).

The four *āśramas* are the four stages in life, in which effort is made to fulfill the duties appropriate to each, as laid down in the Hindu Scriptures — first that of the *brahmachārin* or celibate student; then that of the *gṛhastha* or householder, in which a man fulfils all the duties of married life and then, having educated his sons and seen his daughters married, retires (with or without his wife, according to her wish) to a secluded place and devotes his life to meditation and worship and thus enters the stage of *vanaprastha* (lit: ‘forest-dweller’); finally, he may become a *sannyāsin*, a homeless wanderer, who has renounced everything.

4. See Introduction p. xxxiv.

THE TRUE PATH

More precious than life itself is rectitude.¹ Those who practise rectitude possess everything that is worth while. Avoidance of killing and stealing, refraining from slandering others, absence of covetousness, humility, truthfulness and so forth—these are the characteristics of a life of rectitude.

Whatever the work may be, a man should train himself to carry it out with perseverance, devotion and joy. By disciplining himself in this way he will acquire steadiness of mind, that is to say, the mind will become one-pointed. This will allow the Ātmā increasingly to manifest its power. What one thinks will take place immediately, and the differentiation that arises from calling this man a friend and that man an enemy will not enter the mind and give room for care and worry.

“From me is all evolved; by me is all sustained; into me is all dissolved”² — let such pure thoughts occupy our minds. Further, let us meditate constantly on the ideas, that I am not lacking in anything, that all love me and I love all. If we practise in this way, we shall easily acquire the capacity to know everything and the power to do everything.

*Om Tat Sat Om*³

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1. The Tamil word *olukkam*, here rendered as ‘rectitude’, has the combined meaning of right conduct, virtue, integrity and good manners.
 2. This is a quotation from the *Kaivalya Upanishad* (v. 19).
 3. This is one of the most important of all *mantras*. It is given in the *Bhagavad Gīta* (Chap. XVII vv 23-28). The literal meaning is—‘*Om* is That, the Reality’. *Sat* denotes ‘that which is real’ and also has the meaning of ‘goodness’. *Tat* means literally ‘that’ and signifies the universality or omnipresence of the One Reality. For *Om*, see Introduction, p. x.

PERSEVERE UNTIL YOU ATTAIN SUCCESS

We are the servants of Śiva.

There will be nothing lacking for him, who, without ever forgetting it, meditates on the holy *mantra*, that for us there is neither beginning nor end, neither birth nor death, neither day nor night, neither happiness nor sorrow. What you think, that you become.

For all this it is necessary to persevere continuously; which means that you must never become discouraged. No profit will result for him who is afraid of effort. It is a common saying in the world that no reward will be gained without hard work.

Persevere until you attain success. Why do you continually allow your mind to dwell on mean, unpleasant things? Give up that kind of thinking and pray to God with a full heart. Gladly accept and carry out whatever fate decrees for you. Finally everything will end in success.

Always impress on your mind that everything is as it is, and perform all the work and all the duties that naturally come your way—or do not be concerned with them. Either course is right. It does not depend on action, nor on inaction. Do not desire to be without work. Do not become caught in work. Devote yourself to that which naturally befalls you, whether it involves action or inaction.

SIVATHONDU

We are the servants of *Śiva*. We are lacking in nothing. Our work is to do *Śivathondu*. It is for that alone that we are living in this world.

The moon is doing *Śivathondu*. The sun and all the planets are performing the same holy service. In like manner, the *Devas*, *Asuras*, *Kinnaras*, *Kimpuruṣas* and *Vidyādhāras*¹ are all ever doing *Śivathonḍu*.

Everything is the work of *Śiva*. Without Him not an atom can move. We lose nothing, we gain nothing. We are as we have always been.

There is no one equal to us or superior to us. For us there is no good or evil, no birth or death, no like or dislike. We are free of the desires for land and gold and woman.² The devilish mind is absent for us. We are not concerned with matters of time and place. We live as the witness of everything.

*Om Tat Sat Om*³

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1. *Devas* (lit: 'shining ones') are gods and *asuras* are demons. See Introduction pp. xiii, xiv. *Kinnaras*, *Kimpuruṣas* and *Vidyādhāras* represent different categories of celestial beings.
 2. These are the objects of what are known in Hinduism as 'the three desires'.
 3. See p. 4. Note 3.

LET GOD BE YOUR ONLY AIM

Have faith in God. Believe in Him with all your heart. Think that in the world He is for you the sweetest of all sweet things. Think that there is nothing other than God. Sitting or standing, walking or lying down, think of Him. Let the thought of Him permeate your nerves, flesh and blood. Think that you are non-existent and that He alone exists. Let the aim of your life be to worship Him.

What one thinks, that one becomes. Have God in your heart and bring Him up there. Let all actions be His action. Finally all will be seen as He.

SIVABHAKTI

It is devotion to God (*Śivabhakti*) alone that makes a man blessed. Everything else is useless. Therefore without break practise *Śivadhyāna*.¹ Do not be afraid of anything. Victory is yours! No matter how often you fail, do not lose courage. Failure relates to matter; but your nature is consciousness—that is, you are of the essence of knowledge. You can never be destroyed. Arise, be awake, and, until you achieve your aim, stop not on the way, but march on with a zealous spirit!

See how all forces submit to you! Do not spend your time in vain disputes and arguments. Wherever you go, the Lord will go with you.

Do not put on any outward show. Become strong within yourself. True religion is a solitary state that conforms to no pattern. Body, soul, possessions—surrender all three to God. Thereafter, give up everything that concerns yourself and see that all is He and He alone.

1, Meditation on Śiva or what is Real.

GOD IS OUR ALL

God is the Life of our lives. Therefore we are His possession. We are His bondsmen. All our movements are His movements. We can never forget Him.

We are lacking in nothing.

We are for ever.

We are everywhere.

We know everything.

By ceaselessly meditating and contemplating in this way, let us eliminate baser qualities and attain the higher Divine Reality.

The following rare and holy utterance of Tayumānavar¹ bears ample testimony to this:

“Always my action is Your action. I am not other than You, because the essence of myself which I call ‘I’ does not exist apart from You. Herein lies the natural harmony between Vedānta and Siddhānta”.

I AM HE

The Supreme Lord is not two (*advaita*). Tome belongs the glory of meditating that I, His devoted servant, am He. As one imagines, so one becomes. Therefore practise the meditation of “I am He”. Then all your actions will become His action. There is nothing other than He. He is all. Being all, He manifests Himself in various forms, in which He carries on His play.

For Him, there is no birth or death, no beginning or end, no change. All is truth.

*Om Śanti*²

1. A famous Tamil poet and saint, who lived about 250 years ago.

2. *Śanti* is a Sanskrit word meaning ‘peace’, which is often used as an invocation and benediction to ward off unfavourable influences.

TAPAS

The senses drag down to unlimited depths even those who have done great *tapas*.¹ Consequently, to overcome them you must practise *Śivādhyāna*. Only by that means can they be brought under control. Therefore, do this meditation uninterruptedly.

Whenever one dwells on sense impressions, attachment arises; from attachment springs desire; from desire, anger; from anger, delusion; and delusion causes one's downfall.² Therefore, guard yourself by *Śivādhyāna*.

Because of our pettiness our true nature is obscured and we stray from the path of *Dharma*. To free oneself from error and to make oneself steadfast, *Śivādhyāna* is the best means. Though we may possess great wealth in this world, and though we may have the power to make even celestial beings serve us, we still cannot control our senses. Therefore, invoking the Grace of God, restrain the mind from wandering along the path of the senses.

It is precisely this that great sages have called *tapas*. If this is neglected, even though you may perform ostentatious sacrifices and such like things, you will never achieve firmness.

1. See Introduction p. iv.

2. c.f. *Bhagavad Gītā*. Chap. II. vv. 61 and 62.

SEEK THE PROFIT OF THE SOUL

“My mind jumps about like a monkey. I do not know how to control its agitation.”

That is well said. But you are already in possession of a good medicine for this, only you have forgotten it. Listen, and I will tell it to you.

Take daily doses of *Śivadhyāna*, Then the ‘monkey-mind disease’ will be cured.

When you take this pill¹, you must first dissolve it in a decoction, which is also in your possession. This means that, combined with the pill, you must swallow the mixture made from the herbs of restraint of the tongue and subjugation of desires.

But even this is not enough. Everything depends upon proper diet. And that, too, is in your control. It consists in moderation in eating, moderation in sleeping and moderation in bodily exercise. Follow this prescription for the well-being of your soul, and success will be assured.

If a man yearns whole-heartedly for victory in subduing the mind, let him practise *Śivadhyāna* daily. Then he will see for himself that, step by step, his mind will become one-pointed. Serenity, forbearance, control and other such good qualities will arise in him. His mind will be always full of joy. He will not be dragged down by praise or blame, but will enjoy happiness in his inmost soul, and the thought that the well-being of others is his own will flood his heart.

If a man goes out into the night with a lantern, will he be disturbed in mind ? He will not. In the same way, if one practises *Śivadhyāna* will the darkness of *māyā* approach him? Most certainly not!

1. The analogy here is taken from *āyurvedic* medicine (the traditional Indian science of medicine), in which it is the general practice for a dose to be given in the form of a pill, which before being administered is ground up and mixed with a liquid decoction made of herbs and other natural ingredients; at the same time certain dietary restrictions are usually prescribed.

Practice is better than precept.

There is not even one thing that is wrong.¹

The wise, who have seen that the profit of the soul is what is truly of value, will not be carried away by the transient joys and sorrows of this earth, but will live in the world like water on a lotus leaf.² On the other hand, those who are unmindful of the good of their souls will go through life confused and agitated by worldly pains and pleasures. But the wise, who, having the well-being of the soul as their aim, have rid themselves of the ideas of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ and ‘I’ and ‘mine’, will live in heavenly bliss beneath the holy feet of the Lord, free from birth and death. The ignorant, who do not know this, fall into an ocean of misery and put themselves in danger of entering the fiery mouth of hell.

Just as insects lie senseless after drinking the honey they have sucked from the flowers, so the *bhakta* extracts by *Śivādhyāna* the honey of bliss that wells up from the flower of the mind, and, having eaten it, remains satiated and replete, oblivious of the distinctions between ‘one’ and ‘two’ and ‘good’ and ‘bad’.

A farmer sows good seed on his land, pulls out all the weeds growing among the plants, and finally garners the grain. In the same way, the *bhakta* sows the seed of devotion in the field of God, roots out the weeds of lust, anger, desire, pride and envy, gathers in the grain of heavenly bliss, and lives in enjoyment of it.

In the flower-garden of the world, souls are the flowers that are blooming there, which God delights to behold.

A goldsmith fashions several ornaments out of gold. So God, the Great Goldsmith, makes many ornaments—different souls—out of the One Universal Spirit.

A physician takes various roots, mixes them together into one medicine, and with it cures the disease. Likewise,

1. See Introduction p. xxxiv.
2. Water does not wet the leaves of the lotus, and a drop will roll about on their surface without losing its spherical shape.

the Great All-Knowing Physician, by giving to the soul its body, its faculties, the world and all its experiences, cures its disease and establishes it in the bliss of liberation.

A Mother delights her children by giving them toys. So God bestows on us joys of various kinds, and makes us happy.

The wise will not give room for the mind to stray along the path of the senses, because they know that they are the *Ātmā*. Will they then allow any place for the disease of desire? Never! Even the *Vedas* and *Śiva Āgamas* extol their greatness. At the sight of them the very stones will melt and for them there will be victory in everything.

ŚIVADHYĀNA

O man! You are Truth. You are indestructible. No one can cause you harm. You are present here, there and everywhere. You are eternal.

Wander about in the jungle of the world with the assurance of a lion roaming the forest. Do not be discouraged on any account. There is nothing strange here. All is truth. There is not even one thing that is wrong.

O man! Even if heaven and earth be offered to you, do not seek to rule or possess them. Be a witness. Greatness is your birthright.

It cannot be attained by any device. It is as It is—Everything else is simply jugglery. You have neither knowledge nor ignorance. You are the *Paramātmā*.¹

Om Tat Sat Om ²

1. The Supreme Spirit. According to *Vedānta* there is only one *Ātmā* or universal spirit, whereas in the *Saiva Siddhānta* doctrine there are many *ātmās* (*jīvātmās*) or individual souls, but only one *Paramātmā*, which is *Paraśivam*.

2. See p. 4. Note 3.

O man! Be a little patient and see! You will understand who you are. Do not grieve over that which does not merit grief. Joy and sorrow are of the world. You are a conscious being. Nothing can affect you. Arise ! Be awake ! Open the door of heaven with the key of *Śivadhyāna* and look! Everything will be revealed.

*Om Śānti, Śānti, Śānti*¹

O friend! Who has the right to call you a sinner? Are you not part and parcel of God ? You have forgotten that. Repeat “*Om Tat Sat Om*” incessantly and surrender yourself to Him with your whole heart.

Do not neglect *Śivadhyāna*. Finally everything will end well. Be not a slave to idleness nor to activity. What is the use of many words? A good harvest is reaped from soil that is well cultivated. So have no fear.

We are the servants of Śiva. Ever since He has been, so have we also been. Heat and cold, joy and sorrow, youth and old age are the attributes of nature. Why then should we be worried by their impact? They appear and disappear. We neither appear nor do we disappear. Reality cannot become unreal. Unreality cannot become real.

Can there be dissatisfaction for us who have realized that everything is the work of Śiva? Or, for that matter, can there be satisfaction ? We are like beads strung on the thread that is Lord Śiva Himself. The thread never breaks and we are never scattered. There is no use in explaining this further.

Om Śānti, Śānti, Śānti

O Comrade! Think with all your heart that you are the servant of God. All victory will be yours. There is nothing beyond that. Everything is at your feet.

Om Śānti, Śānti, Śānti

1. See p. 8. Note 2.

O LORD OF BLISS

A father does not scorn the prattle of his children, but, on the contrary, takes pleasure in listening to it. In the same way, O Lord, You must graciously give ear to the supplication of Your devoted servant.

There are so many categories of people on this earth, whose manners and customs are different and contradictory. Each class proclaims that its habits and ways of life alone are good. The various religions also do the same. But all these are nothing but the distinctive characteristics of the world. All these different conflicts were also prevalent in times of old. There is nothing strange about them. They are simply the-phenomena of Nature. The sage, who knows that they are one thing and that he is quite another, will live with them and yet remain unaffected by them. Though great *avatāras*¹ of the highest level have come at different times and performed many mighty works, yet even so the world remains the same. This is a great mystery.

O God! You know all this full well. I do not know anything. Please forgive me.

WE ARE BRINGING UP GOD

We are bringing up God in our hearts. We are His mother. There is nothing lacking either for us or for Him. He cannot separate Himself from us. All is truth.

*Om Śānti, Śānti, Śānti*²

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1. *Avatāra*, lit: 'one who comes down'. A divine incarnation. This is a concept of the Vaishnava tradition, according to which Lord Viṣṇu has ten *avatāras*, of whom Rāma was one, Kṛṣṇa another and the last—Kalki—is yet to come. There are no *avatāras* of Lord Śiva.
 2. See p. 8. Note 2.

LETTERS

I¹

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*Śivamāyām*²

You are not the body. You are not the mind, nor the intellect, nor the will. You are the *Ātmā*.

The *Ātmā* is eternal. This is the conclusion at which great souls have arrived from their experience. Let this truth become well impressed on your mind.

But there is one thing to which you must give attention. Never swerve from the path of *dharmā*. Let it be your practice to regard every life as the holy presence of God. He is both within and without.

I remain,
'I am He'.

II.³

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Śivamāyām

The *Ātmā* is eternal, indivisible, whole and perfect. The body is subject to destruction and divisible. When that is so, can we say that they are equal? Is there anything more sacrilegious than to speak in that way?

The *Ātmā* is the origin of all things. Everything is under its sway. The body has a beginning, and is by nature subject to domination. Under these circumstances,

1. This letter appeared on p. 381 of the second Tamil edition of *Naṭchintanai*.
2. It is common practice among South Indian Śaivas, before beginning any letter, to put at the top of the page a sign similar to that shown above, and underneath it the word '*Śivamāyām*'. The sign, known as a *cūḷi* (i. e. a whorl or circle), is a symbol of Gaṇeśa. See Introduction p. xiii. *Śivamāyām* means 'pervaded by' or 'consisting of Śiva', and conveys the idea that everything, including the letter in question, is His work.
3. For this letter, which appeared on pp. 379—380 of the second Tamil edition, c.f. Śankarāchāryā's *Aparokṣānubhūti*.

is it possible to compare the one with the other ? There is nothing more reprehensible than to do so.

Intrinsically the Ātmā consists of knowledge. It is purity itself. The body is by nature ignorant and devoid of purity. Can one conceive of any greater folly than to compare the two ?

The Ātma is radiant and self-effulgent. The body is darkness itself. Is there then any basis for comparison?

Who is more debased than he who thinks of himself as a corporeal being? There is indeed no difference between a man calling his body 'mine' and another speaking of a lump of earth as 'mine'.

He is truly wise who regards himself as perfect, eternal and by nature possessed of knowledge. There is no god equal to him.

He who thinks of himself as immune to pollution, changeless and the purest of the pure—him the wise will call a sage.

When the *Vedas* and *Āgamas* all proclaim that the whole world is filled with God and that there is nothing else, how can we say that the world exists and the body exists? Is there anything more worthy of reproach than to attribute an independent reality to them? Sages too have declared: "Those who have become Your own are not other than You".¹ Thus, for several reasons of this kind, there is nothing other than God. Everything is His doing.

He who never forgets.

He who does nothing, while doing everything. He who acts without acting—

Love is *Śiva*. Love is you. Love is I. Love is everything.

"All speech is silence.

All activity is silence.

All is the fullness of blessed silence."²

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1. A quotation from *Tirunāvukkarasu*, one of the 'four *Śaiva* saints'.
 2. This is a quotation from *Tāyumānavar*, a famous poet and saint, who lived about 250 years ago. The word translated as 'silence' is *maunam*, the meaning of which includes silence, but also conveys something wider and deeper. It signifies quiescence in word, thought and action, and implies consciousness without thought.

III.¹Kāśi
(India)

30-11-40

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Śivamāyām

Wandering in search, I came to Kāśi and saw the Lord of the Universe²—within myself. There is no need to fatigue yourself by roaming about, and to make yourself unhappy. There is a saying, which never cloys, that “the herb you are seeking is under your feet.”

Here also the people are like ourselves. In this world, there is nothing whatsoever that can be the cause of anything new or curious. All the last rites³ have been performed on behalf of the people of Jaffna—the departed, the living, and those yet to live. Hereafter conduct yourself in the world with love according to your lot. Long may you live, abiding beneath the feet of the Lord!

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1. This letter appeared on p. 373 of the second Tamil edition of *Naṅchintanai*.
 2. The principal temple at Kāśi (Benares) is that of Lord Śiva as *Viśvanāthan*—the Lord of the Universe.
 3. It is the custom among Hindus to cremate their dead and for the relatives of the deceased to throw the ashes into the sea or a river at some sacred spot soon after the day of death. To throw the ashes into the Ganges at Benares is considered to be especially propitious. The meaning here is that all the people of Jaffna (and indeed all humanity) have been already blessed.

IV.

*Kollam*२

(India)

17-6-38

Śivamāyām

Look inwards! Then happiness will all once arise.

By what does the eye see? By what does the ear hear? By what does the nose smell? By what does the mouth speak? That is the Ātmā or God. What an easy path!

Ponder on this and see. Everything is in your grasp. Think deeply just for one instant and you will know clearly that you are That. Realize the Divine Nature within yourself. You are your own master. It is you who directs yourself. You are the sole emperor of the universe! If you forget this pure thought, you will continue to suffocate in the ocean of birth and death.

Arise ! Awake ! Henceforth nothing can overcome you ! To light a lamp, the wick and the oil are both necessary. If you want to succeed in this, you must repeat *Om̐ Tat Sat*¹ incessantly and with feeling—that is, you must rouse your soul.

1. See p. 4. Note 3.

V.

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Śivamāyām

14-11-33

“There is nothing to be feared and nothing will come that can cause fear.”¹ This true saying of the sage is a raft that will carry us across the ocean of birth and death. Can we be wanting in anything when we have this to help us? Therefore let us set out on this great journey with a full heart.

“The incomparable Lord abides as consciousness permeating everything like the vowel ‘a’.”²

He who never forgets.

VI.

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Śivamāyām

Whether he be a *sannyāsīn* or a householder,³ he who is devoid of both affection and hatred is a superman. Great souls speak of him as a *jīvanmukta*.

To live in communion with one’s true nature is the greatest bliss. That does not entail conformity with any external pattern—it is real feeling. Everything will become clear, if one is true to oneself.

To love others as oneself is *tapas*. That is *Dharma*.

Everywhere *Śiva*.

1. A quotation from *Tirunāvukkarasu*, one of the ‘four *Śaiva* saints’.

2. This is a quotation from one of the fourteen scriptures, in which the doctrine of *Saiva Siddhānta* is set forth. The meaning is that the letter ‘a’, which in most languages is pronounced as the ‘u’ in ‘but’ and is the first sound that issues from the mouth when it is opened, exists in all the other letters and is essential to their formation, while remaining itself a distinct letter and the first of all letters. In the same way God pervades and energizes all beings and yet remains distinct from them. Without Him nothing would exist, just as without the letter ‘a’ there could be no other letters.

3. See p. 3. Note 3.

VII.

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*Śivamāyam*Yogendra! ¹

Listen carefully to what I say! Who are you? Are you the body? Are you the mind? Or the eyes, or the ears, or the mouth, or the nose, or any of the other organ? No. Why? Because, if we speak of 'our body', 'our hand', does that not mean that we are separate from the body? Yes. Then what is my real nature? I am the Immortal One. Therefore can fear or anything else affect me? No. But, by the laws of *Dharma* that govern, body and mind, you must fear sin and act righteously. Wise men, by thinking and behaving in this way, become worthy to gain bliss both here and hereafter. God lives in this house built of earth, water, fire, air and ether.² Therefore, keep the house clean and the mind pure, and conduct yourself with calmness.

He who never forgets.

1. Yogendra, to whom this and the next four letters were written, was then a small boy, the son of one of Yogaswami's devotees, i.e. the five elements of which the physical body consists.

VIII.

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Śivamāyām

To my beloved self!

There is nothing for me to tell you. We are all in the presence of God. This is a great truth. Everything is going on as it always has. Grief, love, hatred—these are all the play of the Lord. It will always be thus. It is the same with us. Death is like birth; blame is like praise; evil is like good. All is truth¹. Everything is in the Self, and the Self is without a second. Be active without acting. Where is the end?

“And so we travel round and round.

But still remain in *Suppar*'s compound.”²

He who never forgets.

IX.

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Śivamāyām

Yogendra!

See! All is pervaded by *Śiva*. Then who are you? Who am I? Who is your father? What are all others? Are they not all *Śiva*? Are you still in doubt? Why fear? Look! I am with you; you are with me. All being One and One being all, all remain as they have ever been without any change. Arise! Learn as you go on!

All's well, all's well, all's well!

No time!

He who is not born and does not die.

1. See Introduction p. xxxiv.

2. This is a common Tamil proverb. A 'compound' is a fenced or walled enclosure. '*Suppar*' is a common Tamil name like 'Smith' in England.

X.

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Śivamāyām

To dear Yogendra, who is love itself, the following lines are sent—

I am with you and you are with me. There is no distance between us. I am you. You are I. What is there to fear? Look! I exist as you. Then what must you do? You must love. Whom? Everyone. To speak more clearly, your very nature is love. Not only you, but all are pervaded by love. But there is no 'all', for you alone exist! All are you!

Study well. Be obedient. Hear and follow the advice of your father, mother, brothers and sisters, and your aunt and uncle. You alone always set a good example in obedience.

All is Śiva's action.

I am you.

XI.

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11-4-32

Śivamāyām

Yogendra!

It will soon be New Year's day¹ ! You will white-wash the house, and prepare various excellent cakes and sweetmeats, and put on a silk *vetti*.² You will go to the temple and worship and give offerings. But I will bathe in the waters of Peace, and don the shawl of Patience, and then listen to the words of my guru—Poverty. And, applying Holy Ash³, which purifies the mind, I will humbly beg for more and more of the wealth of Detachment, and then, wielding the shield of Fearlessness, I will dance on the breast of Lord Subrahmanya⁴.

XII.

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6-12-37

Śivamāyām

Who is equal to you? See *Śiva* everywhere. Who is a friend, who is an enemy? Whatever you do is *puja*. Whatever you think is *mantra*. Whatever you sing is *tēvāram*.⁵ You are blessed! You are blessed! There is no use in saying this in different ways.

Yogaswāmi,

Swāmi before and *Swāmi* after

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1. The Hindu New Year begins in the middle of April.
 2. A white cloth used as a garment for the lower part of the body
 3. See Appendix I. p. iii.
 4. One of the names of Lord Murukan. See Introduction pp. xiii, xiv.
 5. (lit: 'divine garland') A collective word for the songs and hymns of three of the 'four Saiva saints',

XIII.

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Śivamāyām

In my kingdom there is no day or night, no good or evil, no you or I, no today or tomorrow, no big or small. If you also want to enjoy and experience this bliss, you must set forth now with all your heart and soul. You don't need a train or a bullock-cart¹. What then is required? All you want is the cart of *vairāgya*² that never has to be renewed, and two white bulls, which are called *śāntam*³; and you will need for your journey the uncooked rice⁴ of contentment, the shawl⁵ of begging alms to cover your body and the spectacles of wisdom. Then, without looking backwards or forwards, follow me. I cannot describe to you the sights that you will see. God is my witness.

I am you.

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1. At the time when this letter was written there were very few cars in Ceylon, and the only means of travel was either by train or by a cart drawn by bullocks.
 2. *Vairāgya* means 'dispassion' or 'desirelessness', and also 'zeal' or 'fervour'.
 3. *Śāntam* means 'peace' or 'calmness'.
 4. In earlier days, when going on a long journey, the traveller would cook his meals on the way. In Tamil there are separate words for uncooked and cooked rice.
 5. While the *veṭṭi* (See p. 23. note 2) is used by Tamil men to cover the lower part of the body, when they wish to cover the chest and shoulders, they simply throw over them a shawl, usually consisting of a smaller piece of cloth.

XIV.

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7-2-34

Śivamāyām

THE BEST SECRET

We are all of the same race and religion. Within us there is no change. We are holy beings established in Divinity Itself. All multifarious changes represent the characteristic beauty of Reality. Great souls say that these are *māyā*. This truth can be understood only by those who have grasped it through the magical charm of a life of rectitude¹—not by others. Because of that, sages have emphatically proclaimed again and again that it is necessary to love all existing lives as one's own. Therefore everything depends upon the practice of rectitude. By establishing ourselves in this path of rectitude and by constantly imagining that all are ourselves, we come, through wonderful experiences, to the understanding that we are not gross matter, but conscious beings.

He who never forgets.

1. See p. 4. Note 1.