

[From the Agamas: The Means to Oneness with God](#)

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From the Agamas

The Means to Oneness with God

Excerpts from a uniquely clear ancient text on yoga and realization

The following text is from the section on yoga of Sarvajnanottara Agama. It deals with preparation, posture, breath control, mantra and perception of the 36 tattvas or categories of existence, leading to attainment of oneness with Lord Siva. The Agama is told to Lord Skanda by Siva Himself.

O Shanmukha! I will explain the disciplines of yoga. These are appropriate for a duly qualified person who lives alone, apart from the company of worldly minded persons. He should have a deep sense of detachment achieved by keeping his mind under control. He should take food in moderation, limit his routine worldly activities and sleep moderately. Listen to my instructions on yoga for such a sadhaka.

Only that sadhaka who knows well the nature of meditator, meditation and the fruit of meditation is fit enough to undertake the disciplines of yoga. The individual self is the meditator. The mind is the instrument of meditation. The Great Lord Siva is the One to be meditated upon. The attainment of the supreme qualities of Siva, superior to which there is nothing, is the fruit of meditation.

The sadhaka should continuously practice the disciplines of yoga while keeping the mind well balanced, whether honored or abused, delighted or distressed. He should be no longer subject to excessive delight, fearfulness or despondency.

The sadhaka should find a suitable place for his yoga practice, such as a solitary house, a charming monastery, an auspicious temple charged with divinity, a solitary river bank, his own house, an impenetrable forest or a sequestered spot hidden among the trees. This place should be well protected from the scorching sun and

not be owned by others. It should be free from disturbing sounds and the presence of humans, animals, insects or anything else which might hinder or disturb the practice of yoga.

The sadhaka should immerse himself in the disciplines of yoga after taking the usual ceremonial bath. He should sustain purity in body and mind by performing the additional rites such as the application of holy ash and sprinkling with consecrated water. He should prostrate before Lord Siva and before his guru who initiated him into the discipline of yoga.

There are many postures suitable to yoga practice. They include padmaka (lotus posture), svastika, ardha pitha, ardha chandra, sarvatobhadra and so forth. The sadhaka should assume a posture comfortable to him, sit upright with his head aligned and fold his hands together in supplication. He should release all negative thoughts from his mind. O, Guha, with his mind focused within his own self, the sadhaka should thus practice yoga.

The sadhaka should repeat the mula mantra of Siva (such as "Om Ham Haum Sivaya Namah") exactly as instructed by his guru. He should do so without allowing the upper row of teeth to touch the lower teeth or his tongue to touch the corners of his mouth. He should keep his eyes half-closed and turned upwards. Repetition of the mula mantra is also essential for pranayama, breath control, and pratyahara (withdrawal of the senses).

The systematic repetition of the mula mantra illuminates and reveals to the embodied self all the 36 tattvas (categories of existence), including the subtle elements (tanmatras) and others. O, Shanmukha! The sadhaka thus becomes capable of severing the bonds born of these tattvas through the intense repetition of astra mantra ("Om Hah Astraya Hum Phat") invoking Lord Siva's revealing grace as taught to him by his guru.

The skilled sadhaka should deeply meditate on Lord Siva after equalizing and arresting the out-breath and the in-breath, thereby allowing the breath to flow through and within the central channel of the spine, the sushumna.

Through the continued practice of such discipline, the sadhaka can establish himself in unending and inseparable union with the Lord Siva's luminous form, which is subtle, pervasive, eternal and unchanging. (continued next issue)

Dr. S. P. Sabharathnam Sivacharyar, 67, of the Adisaiva priest lineage is an expert in ancient Tamil and Sanskrit, specializing in the Vedas, Agamas and Silpa Shastras. The revered Sarvajnanottara Agama, is not counted among the 28 Saiva Agamas, but is believed to excel them all in its presentation of the monistic Saivite view.

The Vedas and Agamas are the divinely revealed and most revered scriptures, shruti, of Hinduism, likened to the Torah (1200 bce), Bible New Testament (100 ce), Koran (630 ce) or Zend Avesta (600 bce). The oldest portions of the Vedas may date back as far as 6,000 bce. The Saiva Agamas are also ancient, but dating is uncertain.