

Dr. Shuddhananda Bharati

Experiences of a Pilgrim Soul

A faithful record of a long Yogic-life and its contact
with great souls of the age. A valuable treasure of
self experiments, poetic dreams, spiritual
attainments and picturesque accounts
of the Pilgrim's tours all over
the world!

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Preface

H.H. Swami Sivananda Saraswatiji Maharaj, Rishikesh.

Maharishi Kavi Yogi Shuddhananda Bharati is a rare gem among the sons of India and he is an inspired saint, seer, poet, and a versatile genius who has perfected himself by Yoga, tapasya, inner communion and by the company of saints. It is with immense joy that I welcome this self-revelatory autobiographical work which enshrines his hard trials in life, his spiritual journey and also the life and teachings of great souls like Purnananda, Jnana Siddha, Sai Baba, Ramana, Aurobindo and Gandhiji who guided his long pilgrimage. This book is a treasure of immortal wisdom handed down to humanity.

The record of a saint's life is verily the record of man's ascent to divinity. To reveal the inner process of this ascent is to put into the hands of suffering mankind the most precious life-giving secrets of a successful inner struggle and blissful attainment. Such an immortal work forms a priceless document throbbing with life-transforming impulses, fully alive with inspiration and vital with the vibrant spirituality of the enlightened author's shining personality. His love and compassion has made him hold this beacon light of hope for the benefit of countless seekers.

Worship, meditation and song-offering were the imborn traits of the Kavi Yogi from his childhood. Pure Yogic attainments in the precocious spirituality right from his childhood marked him out a born saint. The practice of Hatha Yoga, Raja Yoga and Japa Yoga early in life kept his body strong and the mind well controlled for the reception of later spiritual experiences. The grace-light descended into him and enabled him to live in God-consciousness all his life. He had a gifted brain, and God-immersed heart streaming with exquisite poetical outpourings worthy of the old Masters. He was a passionate votary at the shrine of *Bharata Shakti*, the Universal Mother and She bestowed upon Her ardent devotee the well

merited Pure-Bliss and the power to radiate that bliss to pure souls. During a silence of twenty-five years, he developed a tremendous Yogic force and attained an integral perfection and he has come before humanity with that perfection. He has travelled all over the world, disseminating his God-given wisdom everywhere. He would have all rise up from the unreal to the real, from darkness to light, and from sorrow and death to immortal bliss.

Experiences of a Pilgrim Soul is an invaluable work that throws a flood of light upon the path of perfection, sainthood and eternal bliss. This invaluable work comes now at this critical moment like a sudden ray from the beacon tower flashing upon the dark storm-tossed waters of an ocean agitated by numerous conflicting forces. May all seekers take heart and guide themselves smoothly to the Divine Destination through this Pilgrim-Soul-Light. Let this spiritual radiance guide struggling souls to peace and bliss! Humanity should hail this monumental work with delight, devotion and sincere gratitude! Hail Maharishi Shuddhananda Bharati, the Bliss-Light now self-revealed! May joy, peace and immortality be unto all!

Ananda Kutir, Sivananda Nagar, Rishikesh, 11th May 1960

Swami Sivananda

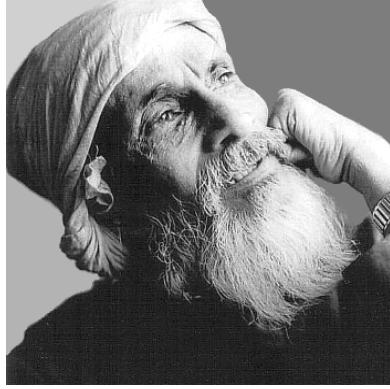


Editor's Notes

Experiences of a Pilgrim Soul has been out of print for the past forty four years. It is an invaluable work that throws a flood of light upon the path of perfection, sainthood and eternal bliss. I take the privilege of reprinting this marvellous and precious book for the memory of the Master and author Kavi Yogi Maharishi Dr. Shuddhananda Bharati, which is a must and need for the new generation as well for the spiritual seekers.

The book was translated by the author himself from the original Tamil work titled *Atma Sodhanai*. It is the treasure of a life lived from within, in tune with God in the soul. Every day of his embodied existence has been an experiment on himself. This autobiography in the third person is a record of those experiments and their results. He has lived with great souls of the age. We read in this book interesting accounts of 65 great souls. This book is the fulfilment of the author's aspiration. It took ten years for the Kavi Yogi to finish this autobiography full of inner experiences. This is a record of a saint's life which is verily the record of man's ascent to divinity. To reveal the inner process of this ascent is to put into the hands of suffering mankind the most precious life-giving secrets of a successful inner struggle and blissful attainment. I hope this autobiography may guide the spiritual seekers to attain divine consciousness and bliss! *Experiences of a Pilgrim Soul* is dedicated to all spiritual seekers and all nations.

Christian Piaget



Dr. Shuddhananda Bharati



Song of Unity

*Unite. Unite, Unite, Oh Souls
Unite and play your roles
Unite in mind, unite in heart
Unite in whole, unite in part
Like words and tunes and sense in song
Let East and West unite and live long
Trees are many; the grove is one
Branches are many; tree is one
Shores are many; sea is one
Limbs are many; body is one
Bodies are many; self is one
Stars are many; sky is one
Flowers are many; honey is one
Pages are many; book is one
Thoughts are many; thinker is one
Tastes are many; taster is one
Actors are many; the drama is one
Nations are many; the world is one
Religions are many; Truth is one
The wise are many; Wisdom is one
Beings are many; breath is one
Classes are many; college is one
Find out this One behind the many
Then life shall enjoy peaceful harmony*

Presentation of Dr. Shuddhananda Bharati

11th May 1897 – 7th March 1990

The wise one to the cosmic age

Although more than 90 years old, in his school in the south of India, *Kavi Yogi Maharishi* (great divine visionary, wise poet), Dr. Shuddhananda Bharati worked like a young man of twenty. When he was asked his age, he answered: "My age is Courage!" The Yogi wrote several hundred works in English, French, Tamil, Hindi, Telugu and Sanskrit; five thousand songs, and fifteen hundred poems in French. The magnum opus of the man conscious of the presence of God in him, *Bharata Shakti*, (in 50,000 verses) described his ideal: only One Humanity living in communion with only One God in a transformed world! *Bharata Shakti* is a monumental and unique work. The Yogi depicts the essence of all the religions, of all the prophets and saints, all the approaches of yoga and all the cultures on an allegorical fabric. It is a book for any age which all spiritual researchers and all nations should read and meditate on. His commitment is summarized in his book celebrating his life, *Pilgrim Soul*. The three poems mentioned in the opening express perfectly his ideal. His mantra, *Aum Shuddha Shakti Aum*, nourishes our souls and guides our steps toward the inner joy *Ananda*. It means: The light of Grace and power of the pure supreme Almighty bless us of peace, happiness and prosperity! Let the beauty and greatness of soul of Dr. Bharati Shuddhananda bloom and scent the entire Earth of its divine message and his spiritual and unifying benefactor!

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Chapter I

Experiences of a Pilgrim Soul

1. To fellow Pilgrims

We are all pilgrims of eternity coming from an unknown past, living in a multicoloured universe and passing into a mystic future. Whence we come and where we go, we know not; but we come and go playing our role in this evolutionary drama of existence! Who exists, why, how and who started this cosmic play and what is its goal? Every intelligent man and woman must find out an answer to these age-long inquiries. Through the dark inferno, burning purgatory and pleasing paradise of this mounting Divina Commedia, a rhythmic heart-beat keeps time to a mystic song whose refrain is "I am Aum." Who is this "I" – that is the first person in us, and the baffling personality in the second and the third persons? That universal "I" in the individual is the pilgrim soul here. Fellow pilgrims, pray walk with him as he talks with you.

These are random foot-prints left on the sands of time by the patient Pilgrim, whose plodding steps met with grim trials in the ups and downs of human destiny. Hard was his lonely journey, long his search in the tangled woodlands of cosmic life and high was the aim of his inner aspiration, guided and fulfilled by a Pure Almighty Grace-Light. In heat and cold, weal and woe, in storm and stress, in sun and in shower, a bright vernal hope kept cooing in his heart "I am, Pilgrim! Onward!" Birth and death, exit and entrance, coming and going, cradle and grave, childhood and dotage are but punctuations in this Song Celestial – "I am Aum". His last birth saw him meditating on the banks of the Ganges, and this birth was brought about by an aspiration to reveal for the good of humanity, his meditative intuitions. In the present body, the Pilgrim lives in tune with the Inner Divine, loving the beauty of Nature and basking in the company of saints. Nature made him a poet and saints made him a

Yogi. This book is a record of everything fearful and peaceful that helped the Pilgrim to know the mystery of existence.

He was born in a family of saints and savants; but admitted no caste, race or religious difference. He had a good modern education; but he created a university whose professor was "I" in the conscious heart. He was born in India but considered himself a universal citizen, a friend of mankind. Books he read in several languages; but Nature was his supreme book of knowledge. He rapturously studied Nature with the eye of intuition. He took delight in giving for the good of all what he gained by hard work. He kept enough for himself and never asked even God to give him his daily bread. He lived, a seeker among saints, following his inner voice and going from saint to saint. He never subjected himself to the pressure of person and planet.

God's will-in-conscience was the guiding light of his life. He ate leaves, fruits and nuts when he was hungry, kept his body and mind healthy, and maintained an equilibrium of inner serenity. He lived in the soul and wore the gross, subtle and psychic bodies as robes.

This is the Pilgrim with whom you now walk... come fellow-pilgrims – onward!

2. Nature inspires

The curtain rings up; the golden dawn gilds the calm stage of floral beauty round Azhagar Malai, near Madurai. The gemmed book of stellar heaven dissolves into her golden smile. The balmy kiss of nature blossoms into colourful poems of living fragrance. The perfumed breath of gorgeous Nature, awakens the song of universal harmony. The silent hill mumbles its message in the flowing stream. Birds warble welcome to the new dawn. The song of Nature mingles with Vedic hymns proceeding from the temple nearby.

The Pilgrim, now a little boy, is immersed in the sylvan symphony of solemn Nature. The grand hill speaks to him in the language of the flowing stream. Stones were cut out from this hill for the temple and its image. In the vast temple of sky-roofed Nature, the hill stands like a majestic witness of God. The mystic sky above envelops the earth. Blessings flow from that to this world spinning between Mars and Venus. The hill stands as evidence of God's grand presence. The stream bathes it with the resonant mantra Aum. Flowers adorn it. Green Nature clothes it. The rising sun waves golden light to the rapturous God of Beauty in Nature. That celestial beauty kindles the imagination of the Self-immersed Pilgrim-Soul. "Hail, Pure Almighty Grace!" ejaculates his heart. Heaven to him is the pure Omnipresent One. All emanations of Nature – the sun, the moon, air, sea, rain, stream, field and flower – are manifestations of His cosmic energy. The best worship is to live in tune with universal Nature. The young Pilgrim is immersed in the radiant sunrise gracefully held in the golden plate of the new dawn. An ineffable joy fills his being. He has lost a tongue to express his rushing thoughts.

Crowds throng around and pour into the temple; drums drown the music of Nature; shrill pipes absorb human voices. Temple bells ring in ceremonial worship. "Quick, Anand, the time is up," cries father Jatadhar as he drags the boy to the barber. The dreamy urchin bends his head to the barber brother who applies his painful knife to scrape off the ringlets and as they fall kissing the dust, the boy touches them. The father cries, "Ah, pollution." "Why? This was my crown, a part of my body, oiled, combed tied and adorned with flowers by my mother; has pollution entered it now?" thought the boy. "Now, for a bath," cries Mother Kamakshi. Bathing finished, clothed in rich silk, the boy follows his parents and his uncle to the sanctum sanctorum and stands before the decorated image. It was a suffocating atmosphere amidst squeezing crowds hailing "Govinda, Govinda!" The smell of sweat and breath spoiled his inspiration. The sanctorum where the beautiful image of God stood was fuming with incense, and cluttered with

ceremonial articles and offerings. The priest ran through his professional ritual, muttering mantras and waving lights. He received the stipulated amount and poured three spoonfuls of holy water, gave some tulsi leaves and plantain in a half coconut. The uncle, with the boy, squeezed himself through the unruly crowd to the temple of limitless freedom. Pitiable scenes met the eyes. A poor lady with her baby, caught in the jostling crowd, hit against a stone pillar; her head was bleeding and her baby was trampled upon. The boy rushed forward to save the child. "Ay, don't touch her" cried Mr Caste. "Off with your caste. Compassion is above caste and religion," cried the boy as he lifted the weeping child to the bleeding Mother. He tore off his silk cloth and dressed her wound; a group of devotees afar kept on crying in deep fervour, "Govinda, Govinda!" But they were not allowed to enter in. Why? Mr Caste had laid down that only certain people could approach the man-made image. A hundred whys and hows confused his brain as the boy was pushed into the bullock cart jingling forward to witness the Boat Festival. His whys were often silenced by a curt "Keep quiet, chatterbox" – his uncle hushed up his surging mind. The festival crowd and the rustic indiscipline around did not please him. He saw a boat festival; the image was taken across a sheet of water in a decorated float with music, dance and fanfare around. He witnessed drunken villagers rolling on the dust. He saw thieves and pick-pockets in police custody. There was feasting for a privileged caste on one side and starvation crying for food on the other side. A hundred such scenes touched his heart, and there his pilgrimage commenced – from the sanctum of rational compassion!

The precocious boy silently escaped from his vigilant guardians and roamed all day long in wistful freedom. He attended service in a church and witnessed a conversion. He entered a Masjid and saw Muslims in solemn prayer before the Kaaba. He trudged four miles to Tiruparan Hill, famous for the Skanda temple below and a mosque above. He left the ceremonial pomp below and climbed up the hill, pushing through bushes, briars and boulders on the steep path. He reached a grotto near a pond above the precipice,

and sat still gazing at the sky and Nature, absorbing knowledge with a tranquil mind. From that height he saw the temple tower, the steeple-cross, and dome-crescent; but above all these human buildings, the heaven-bound universal temple lit up by the sun, moon and stars appealed to him. Silent prayer in the inner sanctum gave him greater peace than the noisy worship in walled temples. Walled castes and dogmatic circles did not appeal to him. One young man, after conversion, called his aged father an ignoramus. This touched him to the quick. Caste and religion stood between man and man and divided the world into fragments of narrow sectarian camps. The young Pilgrim was perturbed in the mind which was yearning for a mystic guidance to pure Truth. The old frame-work was gone. He kept his mind clear for the reception of new knowledge. The idea of one vast heaven embracing the earth, one life breathing in all creatures, and one soul throbbing in all hearts was deeply imbedded in his evolving mind and he was sure that there must be one common path of salvation for humanity. Humanity seemed to him to be the collective embodiment of one soul. Intuition led him on and he sang his way to the sanctuary of Truth, struggling through a thousand social impediments, through dark clouds and thunder peals, finding his path with the help of the inner Master who was the guiding light of his life.

3. Want-wit melancholia

The Pilgrim found the world a battle-field of opposing forces. The inner Master revealed to him the vanity of human wishes and the serenity of ingathered life. He heard from his brothers and uncles stories of Shakespeare's dramas and the lives of heroes and sages. The young Pilgrim saw around him the play of lust, greed, envy, anger, prejudice and treachery. He saw gangs of Iago, Tartuffe, Rasputin and gluttonous sycophants raping Truth and Innocence.

He witnessed murderous Othellos and Macbeths killing the purity. Selfishness blows trumpets. Ambitious Pride plays the

band. Passions shoot out angry words. The battle of human acrimony rages wild and people are trapped and jammed in the melee for self, power and pleasure. Friends of today part as enemies tomorrow. Passion ends in tension. Honeymoon wanes anaemic. Greedy hunger loots greeting generosity. Innocence is cheated; debts are denied. Intelligence is starved. Scholarship sleeps over manuscripts. Degrees are wet with tears. Culture is measured by caste. Conscience is gagged. Arrogance parades in golden pomp. Envy insults merit. Truth is mortified. Justice is falsified. Sacrifice is strangled. Freedom is coerced. Spiritual nations are held in subjection. Birth raises the curtain; Illusion stages the drama. Death brings down the curtain leaving behind a sordid silence. Is this life?

The wise grandfather died suddenly; the chaste grandmother followed him to the grave. Two lovely blossoms were plucked cruelly by Fate and thrown into the dust. A bridegroom died of snake-bite and his young wife swooned and died. The glitter of gold cost the life of a rich miser. A doctor's son was sickly. An astrologer's daughter became a child-widow. A professor's son was a failure. A sorcerer's wife was hysterical. A strumpet poisoned her good husband. Is this life?

Enough. The Pilgrim saw enough of the world before him and that with the interest of a press reporter. The Pilgrim observed and observed the ways of the world and the tragi-comic phantasmagoria of events. He was possessed by a want-wit melancholia which brought him to the stage of "to be, or not to be." He felt a mystic hunger which none could appease – no book, no preacher, no philosopher. He resorted often to lonely groves and hills and forests and temple-towers to brood over his inner problems. The riddle of the Self called for a Master who alone could solve it. Mother Kamakshi, grand-mother Minakshi, great-grand-mother Bangaru, the old Guruvamma who served Saint Thyagaraja, father Jatadhar, Pandit Sundara Sastry and a lot of wise and learned souls poured into his ears, morals and stories. Book lore seemed a twice-told tale and his soul yearned for the "Look Lore." He felt as if he

had already known all these things and facts. His thought moved far above the frameworks of mental creeds and mosaic formalities. He sought for a brighter horizon far away from the humdrum monotony of ordinary life. He heard from his elders the history of his own ancestry and how the river of life flowed from Delhi to Sivaganga. Musician Gopal Sastry was taken from Amalpuram to Delhi. He adorned the court of the Kilji sultans. His descendants served the Moghul emperors. They came with Aurangzeb to Golkonda, and settled there. In 1748, a political storm swept away Shankara Bharati to Benares where he took Sanyasa and resorted to the Himalayan solitudes for Yoga. His son, a Yogi, poet and scholar, moved south and married a girl at Nellore. The girl's father recommended him to Purnayya, the minister of Tippu Sultan. Vedam Sankara Bharati became a private secretary of Purnayya, who sent him as his ambassador to Fort Dindigal. The fall of Tippu at Srirangapatnam changed the destiny of the family, which settled in a village near Madurai. The terrible sufferings of the family in the battle of life moved his heart. His ancestors lived in pomp and luxury as royal favourites. Now he saw a sudden change in their destiny.

His parents were healthy, godly and learned, but poor. His father was a living *Upanishad* and his mother a breathing *Gita*. His brothers were good modern gentlemen and finished products of English culture. And yet economic difficulties handicapped their liberal hearts. The Pilgrim was so much moved by the pinch of poverty at home that he refused to be an additional burden to his parents. He earned a little money by book-binding and singing songs in holy concerts and thereby met his school expenses. Unto the last, he worked six hours a day for his livelihood.

On his mother's side, his uncles were affluent in Madurai. They rolled in wealth and luxury but they did not have the peace of his pious home at Sivaganga. Their home was a frivolous pandemonium; their tinkling gold, their jewelled arrogance and disdainful smiles of insolent pride, their hysteric fits, uncontrolled passions, moaning sickbeds, mutual suspicions of green-eyed jealousy, the

scenes created by sorcerers, astrologers and doctors – all these made a deep impression on his thinking mind. The elder uncle, Ramaswami, was the one wise man in that mansion. He put before the Pilgrim's mind the life-examples of saints and heroes and expatiated upon the miseries of family life. The young Pilgrim was resolved not to entangle himself in the meshes of dark uncertainties. He was absentminded in the class at school which seemed to him a prison. He cared to read his lessons only a month before-examinations. Songs came to him; but they were soaked in doleful tears. He took pleasure in visiting saints and monks in the neighbourhood and listlessly wandered with them. He learnt many things from them but the riddle of life remained to him yet unsolved! "Where is that Master who can hold the nectar of wisdom to his thirsty lips?" – queried his mind.

4. Saint Purnananda

One day, there was a new stir in the family, a new enthusiasm. A ripe old sage, tall and majestic, stepped into the garden where the Pilgrim was contemplating at the foot of a maragosa tree. His mother and uncle worshipped the saint. His gray beard and shining eyes attracted all. But the boy was simply observing him from his seat under the tree. The sage suddenly walked towards him and exclaimed, "Who is this Yogin?" "Here is my last son, lost to the world, roaming here and there, inattentive in class, murmuring poems, and talking to himself – an eccentric boy" said his mother. Sage Purnananda remarked, "He is a sage, looking within; leave him in my hands." The boy rose up, fell at the feet of the sage and wept out his melancholia. Purnananda affectionately caressed the boy, and brought solace to his burning heart by a single sentence, "My child, be centred within." The Pilgrim Soul found his first Master whom he faithfully served and followed. He named him Satyarka.

Purnananda was the elder brother of his grand-father Mahadev, an advocate, a mantra Siddha. As a boy, Purnananda fled from home and did hard penance in Uttarakasi up in the Himalayas. He studied the *Vedas* and *Puranas* in Benares and entered the order of Shankarite Sanyasins. He was a fully qualified Yoga Vedantin. He was like a bearded Ramana Maharshi in appearance. During his long journey, he had opportunities to meet all the saints of the last century, like Ramakrishna, Vivekananda, Ramalinga, Dayananda, Sundara Swami, Siddharuda, Santananda and B. R. Rajam Ayyar, the author of *Rambles in Vedanta*. He was a genuine Vedantin who could boldly declare "I am I. 'I' is God." He took special care in moulding the spiritual life of the Pilgrim and gave him for two years, an esoteric training.

A course in asanas and *Gita*-study were finished in one year. Next year, the great sage taught him the life and works of God-men. This naturally led him to self-reflection. He was dreamy in the class; the teacher scolded him in the school and his parents scolded him at home. Mere materialists discouraged his spiritual mood and called him mad. Disappointments blasted his mystic hopes. With pale despair, he ran to his only sympathiser Purnananda, and demanded, "Bhagavan, even study and contemplation could not remove my giant grief. My inner depression has no expression."

Purnananda: Satyarka, the soul wants something else. It is not satisfied with home, school, teacher, kith and kin.

Pilgrim: Yes, Sir. Teacher canes me, father scolds me, mother chides me, brother bothers me, friends desert me, the school frightens me, home disgusts me and the tumultuous vanity of human life calls me mad.

Purnananda: Compose yourself, Satyarka. Noumenon outshines the phenomenon, know this. Heart is home; mind is world; God is father, Grace mother, Virtue brother, Purity friend, and Divine Love the leader of your life. Conscience is your master. His voice is

the eloquence of Truth. Follow that. There is a mystic university in your brain and a light in your heart. Nature is the principal and intuition the method of revelation. You will get all knowledge from within, just as you get your poems in finished forms from within. Observe an artist. Who paints pictures from the point of his brush? Brush? Colours? Hand? No. It is the pure soul that uses as instruments the brain, heart, hand and brush to paint the picture. So the soul within shall use your pure mind and loving heart to reveal itself.

Pilgrim: Yes, thanks, Bhagavan. He who makes the plants blossom and fructify, He who makes the sun shine, the spring smile, the winter cold and the summer warm, He who makes the wind blow and the earth grow green, He who has led the stream to flow and the sea to swell, shall teach me wisdom.

Purnananda: Satyarka, wisdom is already there, just as fire is latent in the wood. A mystic Master kindles it. You are a Yogi, born for a divine work. You cannot live like others, an animal life of eating, drinking, sleeping, earning, enjoying, mourning and dying. Your stars shall never lead you into the labyrinth of worldliness. Go ahead and God shall guide you from saint to saint. Listen to the story of Sadasiva Brahman.

5. Sadasiva – The silent sage

Nerur is a charming village on the banks of the Cauvery. Nature smiles green and gold around it and birds warble sweet and solemn in the peaceful woodlands crowning its majesty. A solitary temple stands in the heart of the sonorous woodland like a Yogi in trance. A Sivalingam adorns its sanctum. Behind the temple

stands an ever green bilva tree under which a Jivanmukta lies interred. You can hear the eternal symphony of 'Aum' in that peaceful serenity. Seekers meditate under that tree and enter into spontaneous introspection and meditation. We feel a mystic presence there and that vibrating presence was created by the spiritual dynamism of a silent sage of blissful trance. This sage of supreme knowledge was Sadasiva Brahman. He was born in Tiruvisanallur on the banks of the Cauvery. His father was Somasundara Avadani and his mother Parvatidevi. Both were pious, learned in Vedic lore and devoted to God and the saints. Sadasiva was brought up in Vedic traditions. Under the tutelage of the famous poet and scholar Ramabhadra Dikshita (the author of *Janaki – Parinayam*), Sadasiva attained peerless merit in literature, grammar, logic and philosophy.

He bloomed into a Sanskrit poet of rare genius. He breathed in his songs, the fervour of inner ecstasy. Hear this song:

“Nil worry! No care, for the self-controlled souls of inner equipoise, the gracious compassionate saints who are elated in the company of Sadhus. They were, are and shall be, victorious over Cupid, the tempter. Their senses are free from infatuation. Their hearts are laid at the feet of the Paramahansa Guru and they are intoxicated with the nectar of divine bliss and beatitude. Nil worry for them – Chinta nasti kila thesham.”

Sadasiva was a fair youth, an ideal celibate. He longed for renunciation. Prompted by elders, he bowed unwillingly to the yoke of wedlock. His wife attained puberty. A grand feast was being prepared. The son-in-law was hungry for some simple food and entered in. “Enter not! Wait, wait,” shot forth a feminine voice.

This was a timely hint to the seeker. “Yes, I shall not enter home. For my simple hunger, they keep me waiting so long. Can they satisfy my inner hunger? Never. Off! Off!” he said to himself. Off he flashed away like a quick lightning. None could trace him for years. His wife spent her lonely days in prayer and contemplation.

Sadasiva, free like the wind, wandered in forests repeating “Sivo-
ham, I’m Sivam, I’m Sivam. O Lord, wake up within me the bliss
that I am.” This was his constant prayer. He walked with open
palms along village streets. Pious people gave him food, he ate it
standing and vanished into woodland solitudes. He composed a
poem called *Siva Manasa Puja* for his worship. Here are a few lines
from it:

O Transcendence! How can mind think of Thee,
Where shall I adore Thee, O Omnipresence?
O Purity, Should I bathe Thee with water?
Should I clothe Thee? Space is Thy garment!
What shall I offer Thee, O Giver of Plenty?
To wave a lamp before Thee, O luminous Splendour!
My mind has been swallowed by Thy infinite glory.
Words fail, I am overwhelmed by silence, silence!

Thus singing and meditating, Sadasiva reached Kumbakonam and
saw the Kamakoti Acharya Parama Sivendra Saraswati who was a
Vedic scholar adored by thousands of disciples. He at once knew
the sage in Sadasivam. He trained him in hard ascetic discipline,
taught him Shankara’s works and had a desire to install him in his
place. Sadasiva served the Master as a fervent disciple. He sang his
melodious songs during the hours of worship. He wrote a com-
mentary on Brahma Sutra Patanjali’s *Yoga Sutra*. He practised Raja
Yoga. His *Atmavilasa* written at this time is a treasure of vedantic
ideals. Let me translate a few lines from the book here:

“Life flows along the mind, between the banks of likes and dis-
likes. It wends its course through ups and downs and pours itself
into the ocean at last.”

“The vast ocean has only one answer to the enigmatic enquiries of
the river – From cloud to current I am everything. All are my
becomings.”

“The Sun devours into its effulgence millions of stars. Even so the mind of million thought-impressions must be devoured into the Self- Light.”

Sadasiva discomfited learned savants in logical discussions. They grew envious of his sharp intellect and complained to the Master. The Master one day cried, “Silence, Sadasiva, silence.” Sadasiva plunged into eternal silence from that moment. Not only that, he threw away his clothes and set out as a naked wandering monk. He travelled all over India and beyond its borders as far as Turkey. Relatives called him mad. They complained to Sivendra, who exclaimed, “Ah, when shall I be mad like Sadasivam?” Scholars called him a shameless sham. They cast on him scandalous aspersions. The silent sage gave power to a humble washerman who challenged those puffed-up book worms. He enlightened many by his cosmic energy. Critics tortured him with painful remarks and rainful stones. The naked sage ran to sylvan solitudes, ignoring the world.

The body consciousness was cast away like the slough of a serpent. Self-immersed in speechless trance, Sadasiva walked on in his natural majesty. Sadasiva one day fixed himself in trance on the sands on the Cauvery, near Kodumudi. Heat and cold did not affect him – rains poured down. The violent flood carried and buried him somewhere. None could trace him. The world thought he was dead. The bright summer returned. Labourers dug sand in the river. Suddenly a spade was stained with blood. Surprised, they dug carefully and lo, an effulgent figure stood up from the depth of the sandy grave. “Lo! Sadasiva Brahman!” cried the crowd. But the Brahman walked away with a serene smile as if he rose from sleep.

Great Yogins do not care about their powers; God fulfils His will in them. For the ego is lost in them. Sadasivam walked unattached, unnoticed. Yet miscreants gave him trouble.

Those were days when the land was a cockpit of rival forces. Armies were camping on the way. The commander of a regiment overloaded Sadasivam with firewood to be carried to barracks. He treated him roughly. Lo, the heap caught fire and the wood was burnt to ashes. Sadasiva cured chronic patients and restored life to a bride who died from snake bite. Once, mischievous boys set a mad dog upon him. The dog bite ulcerated his leg. Maggots dropped from it. He replaced them saying, "Eat your karma."

Once, a Muslim army chief felt insulted by the nudity of the innocent saint. He drew his sword and cut off his arm. Blood flowed; the sage in trance took no notice of it. The culprit was stunned; he begged forgiveness of the sage. The sage remembered his arm just then. He touched the arm and it was healed. Sadasiva went smiling in peace.

Pilgrim Soul

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