

The Satguru





The Satguru

Exploring the centrality of the enlightened master in Hinduism, with verses from the *Kularnava Tantra* on reverence for one's preceptor

EVERYONE NEEDS A TEACHER, A MODEL TO LOOK UP TO AND FOLLOW, A MASTER OF HIS art, a champion in his field, one who sets the standards of aspiration. These days, heroes are often rock stars, athletes or actors, but there is, indeed, a class of souls of a higher calling. For century upon century, Hindu society has been uniquely inwardly oriented, ever intrigued with the deeper realities of existence, fascinated with the search for Truth, the control of mind and realization of the Self, God, within, through the practice of yoga. Thus, it honors the great rishis, gurus, *sants* and *mahatmas* as the greatest heroes of all. These are beings who walk with God and hold truth in the palm of their hand, who seem to know everything, because they do, because they have discovered the source of all knowing. Though perhaps rare, such awakened beings still walk among us today. All too often amid the pace of modern life, humans are too busy to recognize and honor these pure souls until after they have departed this earthly stage. Only in their absence is their greatness apparent to many, in the vacuum of their prodigious presence, which had filled with faith and courage the voids of doubt and discouragement for everyone they touched. This chapter offers wisdom from Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami on the role and importance of the illumined master, or *satguru*, in Hindu culture, as well as select verses from the *Kularnava Tantra*, an ancient text extolling the guru as the embodiment of God and speaking boldly of the necessity to strive for spiritual progress in this lifetime.

Precious Darshan of the Illumined Master

If you were to travel through India on a spiritual pilgrimage, you would undoubtedly hear much about the Sanskrit word *darshan*. The religious leaders of the Orient are categorized according to the darshan they give, for there are various kinds of darshan. Darshan is the vibration that emanates from the illumined soul as a result of his inner attainment, be he a yogi, pandit, swami, guru or a rishi. Usually the yogi, swami, saint or sage attracts his following not so much by what he says as by the darshan he radiates. Hindus travel for miles to receive the darshan of an illumined soul established in his enlightenment. Perhaps he doesn't even speak to them. Perhaps he scolds some of them. Perhaps he gives the most inspired of talks to them. In any case, they feel the darshan flooding out from him.

A great soul is always giving darshan. Hindus believe that the darshan coming from a great soul helps them in their evolution, changes patterns in their life by cleaning up areas of their subconscious mind that they could not possibly have

done for themselves. They further believe that if his darshan is strong enough, if they are in tune with him enough, by its power the kundalini force can be stimulated enough that they can really begin to meditate. This is called the grace of the guru. The ability for one to meditate comes from this grace. You must have it before you can begin to meditate, or you must do severe austerities by yourself instead. Darshan is not well understood in the West, because the West is outwardly refined but not necessarily inwardly refined. The peoples of the Orient, by their heritage, are inwardly sensitive enough to understand and appreciate darshan.

One who is closed on the inside of himself misses the darshan of the awakened soul. He sees in the greater soul just another ordinary person like himself. The darshan is there, but he is too negative to feel it. But the darshan permeates him just the same. He goes away from the garden not having smelled a rose, but carrying the perfume of the rose himself. If you stand away from the rose, you smell less of its fragrance.

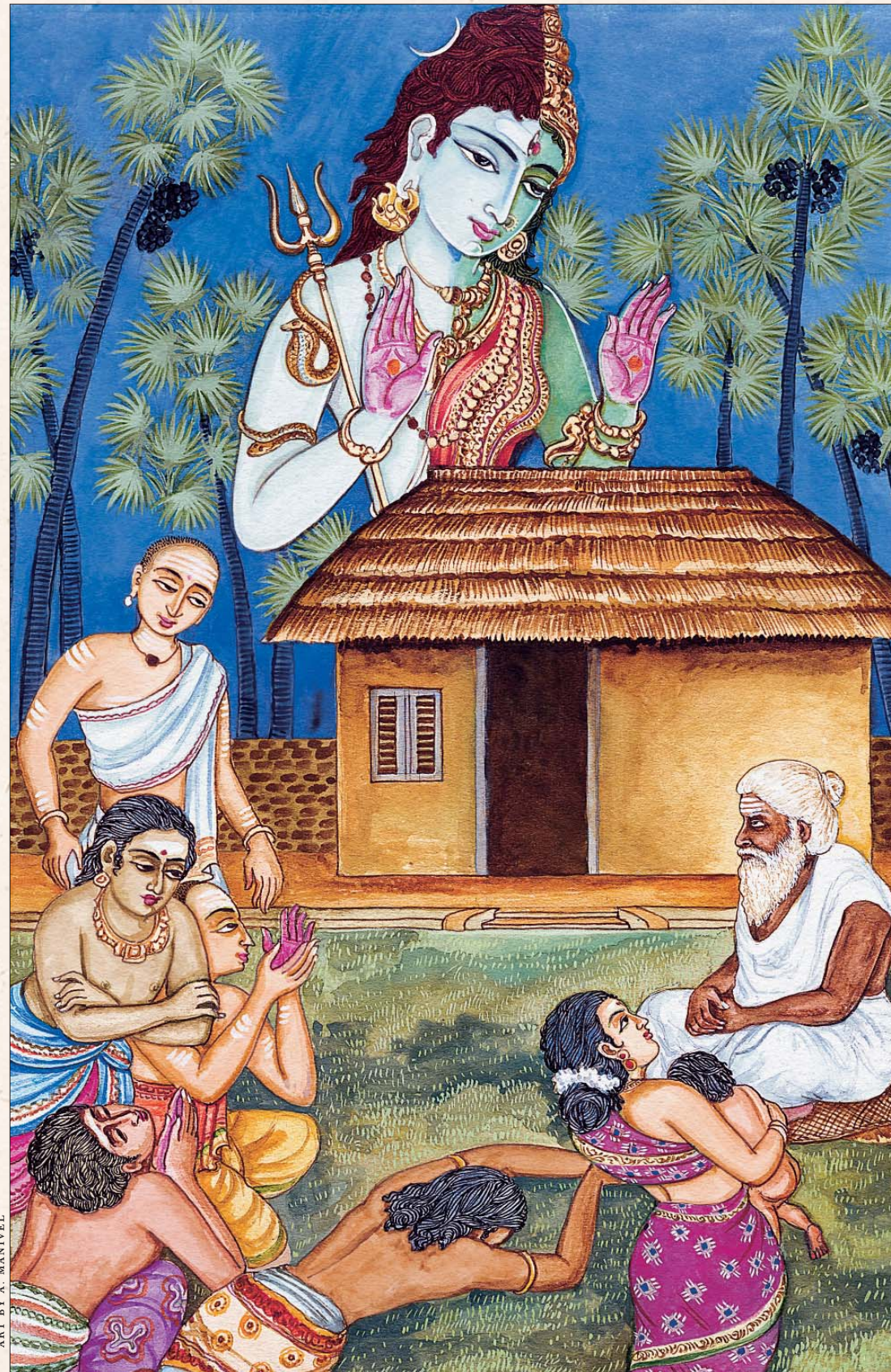
Bring yourself really close, and more of its strong and sweet scent will penetrate your body.

Darshan from a great soul, like the pollen of the flowers, can stimulate healthy sneezing and cleansing if one's subconscious happens to be congested. Call it, if you like, an allergy to flowers. Some people have allergies to gurus, too. The guru's darshan lifts repressed subconscious patterns that have been out of the flow of the cosmic pattern of regenerative life, bringing them up before one's conscious attention. Instead of feeling wonderful, the visitor to the garden feels miserable, as the fire is brought up from within, releasing his awareness to view the polluted state of the subconscious mind.

Some people are more sensitive to fragrance than others. Others are so selfless and sensitive, they can become the fragrance itself for a time. In such a person, the rose smells sweet through every pore of his body. He is not in the least aware of any subconscious congested area of the mind. He sits in the garden and goes deep into meditation on the subtle fragrance of the flowers. The same principle relates to the unfolded soul. Darshan pours forth from within the unfolded soul just as fragrance flows from the rose—stronger at some times than at others because some devotees are more in tune than others. For them, the room begins to ring and vibrate. Some people are so sensitive that when a great soul comes to the same town, they feel his presence. This shows their inner attunement to the constant flowing power of the darshan.

Everyone has some feelings radiating from within, but they are emanations that fluctuate. Because you feel these vibrations coming from them, you can intuit how they are feeling. They do not emanate a constant or a building flow. It is a fluctuating flow of emotional, or astral, energy. The darshan I am explaining is really the energies flowing from the deeper chakras, sahasrara and ajna, the seventh and sixth chakras, or psychic force centers, in the head, through the kundalini force within the spine. These energy flows do not fluctuate as the emotional odic-force energies do. They go on day and night and night and day through the illumined soul. Those devotees who are in tune with the guru can feel his physical presence when he enters their town because the darshan gets stronger. And it feels to them more ethereal when he is farther away.

These energy flows are very important to study, because it is possible to draw and enjoy a great darshan from an illumined soul if you approach him in just the right way. If you can become as a sponge when you approach him, you will draw out inspiring talks and gracious blessings from him. The Hindu is conscious that he is drawing darshan from his rishi or his *satguru*, just as you are conscious of drawing the perfume of



At the sage's hermitage: Yogaswami sits outside his Sri Lankan hut, enjoying the darshan of Siva as Ardhanarishvara. Some devotees have come to worship, sing, listen, seek his counsel, and have his grace uplift their life.

the rose into your body. When approaching a soul who is known to give darshan, be in the same area of the superconscious mind that you feel he must be in. The guru does not have to be necessarily functioning in that same area. He could be externalized in consciousness at the time. This is not important. It does not stop his darshan at all. The guru, feeling you draw the darshan, would immediately go within and enjoy it himself. Once darshan is there in him, it is always there.

Hindu devotees are very careful not to upset their guru, for they do not want his forces strongly directed at them. It is the same darshan, however. At a time such as this, it is like a distilled perfume from the rose. It becomes too potent. Therefore, the devotee tries to maintain a good atmosphere around the guru so that his darshan is pleasant and natural. The darshan of a guru is the power that stabilizes the devotee on the path. The philosophies, teachings and practices that he is given to do are important, but it is the power of darshan that is his stabilizing influence, enabling him to unfold easily on the path of enlightenment.

Darshan is a mystical power emanating from the adept who has gone deep enough within to awaken this power. By stabilizing that power, he gives psychic protection to his disciples and devotees, even during their sleep at night. Devout Hindus sit before a *satguru* and, in seeing him, draw the darshan vibration from him, absorbing it into themselves. They are sensitive enough to distinguish the vibration of darshan from the other vibrations around the guru. They also believe that any physical thing the *satguru* touches begins to carry some of his darshan or personal vibration, and that when away from him they can just hold the article to receive the full impact of his darshan, for the physical object is a direct link to the *satguru* himself. It is darshan vibration that makes a human being a holy person. When we say someone is holy or saintly we are feeling the radiations of that divine energy flooding through him and out into the world.

The inner life of a devotee has to be stabilized, cherished and well protected by the guru. The guru is able to do this through his well-developed facilities of darshan, even if his devotee lives at great distances from him. Unless the inner vibratory rate of the devotee is held stable, he will not come into his fullness in this life. If a plant is transplanted too often, it won't come into its full growth. If the bud is picked before it blooms, it will not flower or give forth its redolent fragrance. Yes, the grace of the *satguru* fires the ability to meditate in the seeker, the erudite Hindu believes.

The *satguru* is like the sun. He is just there, radiating this very pure energy like the sun evaporates water. The *satguru* hardly does anything at all. It is the seeker who opens himself to the great accumulated power of darshan which the guru inherited from his guru and his guru's guru, as well as the

natural darshan he unfolded from within himself through his evolution and practices of sadhana and tapas. It's all up to the aspirant at first.

A COMMON QUESTION

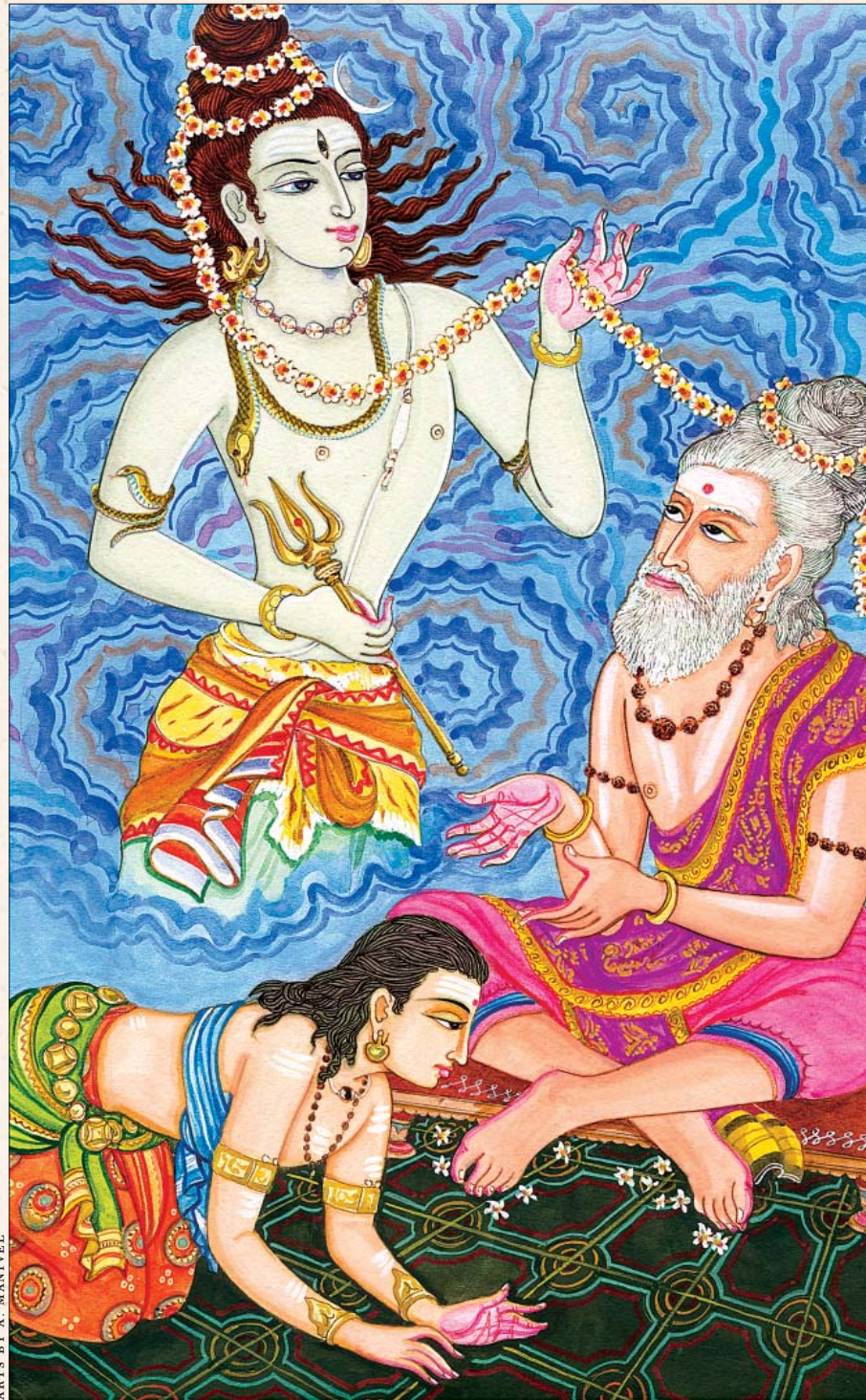
Why We Worship The Feet of the Guru

The uninitiated may wonder why the feet of holy ones are so reverently worshiped in the Hindu faith. According to tradition, the totality of the *satguru* is contained within his feet. All nerve currents terminate there. The vital points of every organ of his bodies—inner astral, inner mental and soul—are there. Touch the feet and we touch the spiritual master.

Mystics teach that the big toe on the left foot exudes the most grace. The left leg is the revealing grace, and the big toe of that leg connects to the guru's pituitary gland, the entrance to the door of Brahm, deep within the *sahasrara* chakra where, in contemplation, he merges with Siva. The vibration of the *satguru* can be subtly felt through gently touching his sandals. In doing so, one tunes in to the feet of the preceptor's physical, pranic, astral, mental and soul bodies.

In deep spirituality there is little presumption of ego. All that one hopes for, all that one prays for, all that one strives for is to touch the Divine in the most modest of ways. Worship of the feet epitomizes this humble attitude. Devotees worship the feet of the guru as the feet of God Siva, the attainable attainment, seeking to partake of, absorb into themselves, the vibration of their guru, ultimately to become like their guru, who has realized his oneness with God Siva.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniaswami wrote, "Practices to advance spiritual unfoldment include prostrating before God, Gods and guru, full body, face down, arms and hands outstretched, and in that act, total giving up, giving up, giving up, giving up. What are these devoted ones giving up? By this act they are giving the lower energies to the higher energies. It is a merger, a blending. When one is performing this traditional devotional act, awakening true *prapatti*, it is easy to see the lower energies from the base of the spine, the *muladhara* chakra, rising, rising, rising up the spine through all six chakras above it and out through the top of the head. It is transmuting, changing the form of, the base energies which breed conflict and resistance, 'mine and yours' and 'you and me,' division, insecurity and separateness, into the spiritual energies of 'us and we,' amalgamation, security, togetherness. Once the giving up of the lower is total—body and face on the ground, hands outstretched before the image of God, Gods or guru—those energies are surrendered into the higher chakras within the devotee, and it is a blissful moment, into the consciousness of 'us and ours,' 'we and oneness,' and inseparable love, thus claiming their individuality, not as a separate thing, but as a shared oneness with all. Thereafter, these devoted ones, having been transformed, are able to uplift others, to harmonize forces around them that they work with day after day, year after year after year. This total surrender,



ARTS BY A. MANIVEL

A devotee falls humbly at his guru's feet, prayerful that training, protection may come. The *satguru's* mind is on Siva within, who blesses with a garland of jasmine flowers.

prapatti, is the meaning of Siddhanta. This is the true meaning of Vedanta. The combination of both, and the pure practice of *prapatti* as just described brings out from within the deeper meanings of Vedanta, the Vedic philosophy, without having to depend on the path of words, lectures and debates.”

Devotees are admonished to choose their guru carefully, forsaking all previous beliefs, religious inclinations and aspirations

relationship are excerpted here. This translation was completed in 1916 by Sri M.P. Pandit and Sir Arthur Avalon in north India. The selected verses have been slightly edited for this presentation.

The scripture opens with a single question posed by Shakti, the Mother of the universe, as to how all souls may attain release from sorrow, ignorance and birth. Lord Siva answers, speaking out the verses of the *Kularnava Tantra*.

and adopting his revelation of the Sanatana Dharma as their own. Therefore, choose your spiritual model carefully, because you are going to become like that model if you worship that guru's feet. There is yet another meaning of the holy feet. When a person walks upon the Earth, only the feet touch the ground. Similarly, when God and guru contact the Earth, it is the esoteric feet, the lowest part of consciousness, which make that contact. This, then, becomes the locus of communion with the Divine. In India the greatest of all initiations is for the *satguru* to place his holy feet upon the worthy disciple's head.

VERSES FROM SCRIPTURE

The Ancient Kularnava Tantra

Around 1150 ce, a scripture was recorded, called the *Kularnava Tantra*, that pours forth exaltation to such spiritual lights and admonishes seekers to raise slumbersome eyelids and recognize their glory. Among its messages is that the guru is like a deep well from which one can and should draw forth wisdom and blessings, taking advantage of his rare presence, his radiant darshan, to advance oneself on the spiritual path. This tantra of guru devotion and protocol gives guidance that is as practical and poignant today as it was when first scribed on palm leaves and etched in stone long, long ago.

The *Kularnava Tantra* is an important and authoritative text of the Shakta Agamic tantra tradition and a major statement of Hindu spiritual thought. It focuses unequivocally on the quest for God Realization calling on us to leave aside our attachments, our desires, our misapprehensions and to live a divine life, a holy life, on this Earth and seek for the Self within.

The original, first translated from the Sanskrit and published in English in 1878, contains 2,058 verses on many profound subjects, of which a small fraction dealing with the *guru-shishya* (teacher-disciple)

FROM CHAPTER ONE

Devotion to the Guru

Lord Siva said: There is One Real. Call it Siva. This Parabrahman is formless, stainless, one without a second, changeless, beyond the highest. This Mahesvara is all-knowing, all-doing, sovereign of all, self-luminous, without beginning or end. All embodied souls, *jivas*, all the born creatures, are portions of Me, like sparks of the fire. But human birth is the most important, for it is then that one becomes awake, aware of his state of bondage and the necessity of release. It is then that one is in a position to take steps for his liberation from bondage's hold.

Humans have a self-will and are not totally subject to the impulses and drives of nature, as are other creatures. It is only on this Earth—and that, too, in a human body endowed with a soul—that one can choose one's path for spiritual progress. But not all are aware of the precious opportunity afforded by human birth, which is truly the ladder to Liberation. The Self is to be realized only here in this life. If here you do not find it and work out the means for your Liberation, where else is it possible? It is possible nowhere else. It has to be worked out by yourself from within yourself.

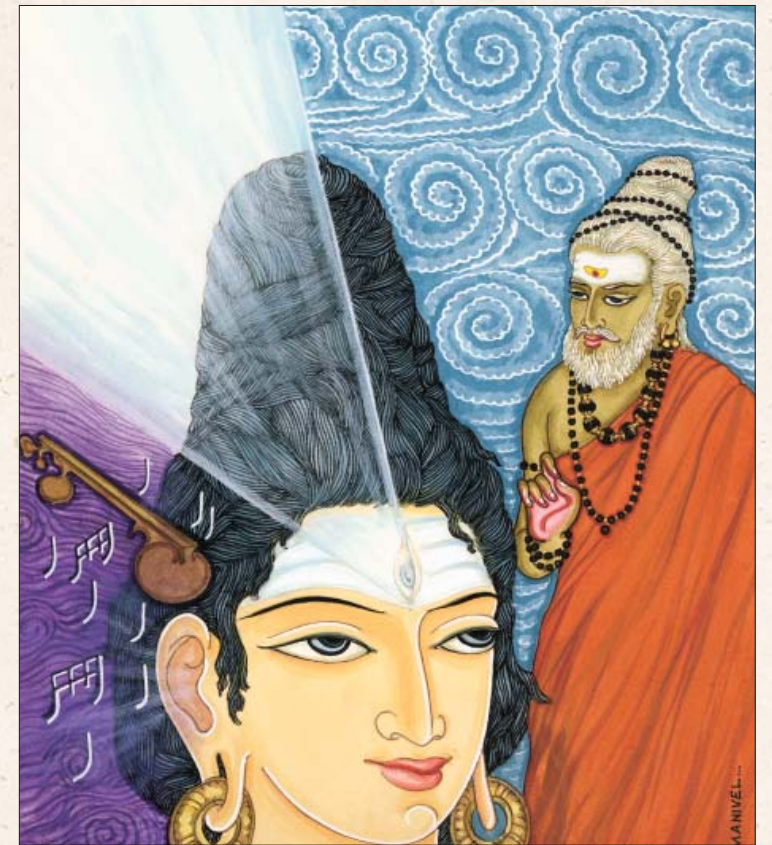
The world you reach after the physical body is shed is determined by the level of consciousness reached while in the body. So, as long as the body lasts, exert yourself towards the goal of Liberation. Remember, the physical body does not last forever. Age prowls like a leopard; diseases attack like an enemy. Death waits not to see what is done or not done. Before the limbs lose their vitality, before adversities crowd in upon you, take to the auspicious path.

Therefore, choose, then worship a *satguru*. Worship his feet. Cherish the very sandals (*paduka*) which hold his feet. All knowledge is founded on those *paduka*. Remember and cherish those *paduka*, which yield infinitely more merit than any number of observances, gifts, sacrifices, pilgrimages, *mantra-japa* and rituals of worship.

It is these feet, when remembered, that protect in times of distress, danger or calamity. Study, remembrance, knowledge, donations, sacrifices and worship are truly done by him who ever remembers the *satguru's* feet. Look toward the direction in which the lotus feet of the *satguru* lie and bow down to them every day with devotion. There is no mantra higher than that of his feet, no merit higher than his worship.

All fear of distress, grief, avarice, delusion and bewilderment exist only as long as one does not take refuge in the *satguru*. All wanderings in the ocean of births, called samsara, fraught with grief and impurity, last as long as one has no devotion to a holy Sivaguru. As the boon-giving guru gives the mantra in contentment and beatitude, try to please him with devotion, wealth, your very life.

The *shishya* who has complete devotion, steady and constant, what has he to worry about? *Moksha* is in the hollow of his palm. For him who remembers, “My *satguru* is Siva Himself who grants Liberation,” fulfillment is not far off. As the steady devotion for the *satguru* grows, so grows one's knowledge. The sacred *paduka* of the guru are the ornament. Remembrance of his name is *japa*. Carrying out his command is duty. Service to him is worship.



The guru offers blessings as his devotee experiences the bliss of beholding the inner clear white light and hearing the vina-like tones of the high “eee”

FROM CHAPTER TWO

Serving the Preceptor

Why the pains of long pilgrimage? Why observances that emaciate the body? All the fruit anticipated from such austerities can be easily obtained by motiveless service to the holy *satguru*. Therefore, bear your karma for the sake of the guru. Acquire wealth for the sake of the guru. Exert yourself for the guru, regardless of your own life.

Service to the *satguru* and his mission is fourfold: service with your own hands, service by wealth or through others, service by spiritual enthusiasm and service by happy feeling. Service done with devotion, according to one's means, has the same merit whether little or much, whether by the rich or by the poor.

With your mind dedicated to selfless service, please the *satguru*. The fruit obtained is the same as from great rituals. Such service invites the grace of the Mother of the Universe.

In the service of the guru, either expressed or unexpressed by him, do not be unmindful. Be always in service of the guru, ever in his presence, giving up desire and anger, humble and devoted, lauding in spirit, upright in doing his work.

If service is accompanied by *santosha* (happy devotion), it brings with it all fulfillment. Sins dissolve away and merit grows by leaps and bounds.

Power of the Guru

When the entire universe is looked on as pervaded by the Sivaguru, what mantra can fail to achieve its purpose for the *shishya*? When the *satguru* is present, no *tapas* is necessary, neither by fasting nor observances, neither pilgrimage nor purificatory bath. What he speaks is as scripture.

Feel one with your guru and not separate from him, and do good to all as your own. Whatever is beneficial to yourself, term that beneficial to him. Whether moving or standing, sleeping or waking, performing *japa* or making offerings, carry out only the injunctions of your guru with your inner being dwelling in him.

As in the vicinity of fire, butter gets melted, so in the proximity of the holy Sivaguru all bad karmas dissolve. As lighted fire burns up all fuel, dry and moist, so the glance of the Sivaguru burns up in a moment the karmas of the *shishya*. As the heap of cotton blown up by a great storm scatters in all ten directions, so the heap of negative karmas is blown away by the compassion of the Sivaguru. As darkness is destroyed at the very sight of the lamp, so is ignorance destroyed at the sight of the holy Sivaguru.

I tell you now that there can be no Liberation without *diksha*, initiation. Nor can there be initiation without a preceptor. Hence the dharma, the *shakti* and the tradition come down the line of masters, called *parampara*.

Without a *satguru* all philosophy, knowledge and mantras are fruitless. Him alone the Gods praise who is the *satguru*, keeping active what is handed down to him by tradition. Therefore, one should seek with all effort to obtain a preceptor of the unbroken tradition, born of Supreme Siva.



A knower of God strides along the path of enlightenment. Having lived many lives, mastered his energies and resolved his karmas, he has reached Siva consciousness, which symbolically surrounds him as the Ganges water flowing from Siva's hair.

I not act directly? I am really all-pervading, subtle, above the mind, with and without form, imperishable, of the form of ether, eternal and infinite. How can such a One be worshiped? That is why, out of compassion for My creations, I take the form of the *satguru*, and when so worshiped in devotion grant Liberation and fulfillment.

Because I have no binding form that is perceived by the human eye, I protect the *shishya*, revealing the dharma in the form of the guru. Therefore, the *satguru* is none other than the Supreme Siva enclosed in a human skin. Within him I walk the Earth concealed.

To the *jivas*, embodied souls laden with beclouding karmas, the *satguru* appears to be merely human. But to them whose karmas are auspicious, meritorious, the *satguru* appears as Lord Siva Himself. The less fortunate do not recognize the *satguru* as the embodiment of Supreme Truth even when face to face with him, like the blind before the arisen sun.

But verily, the *satguru* is none other than Sadasiva. This is the truth.

I Myself am the Truth. Otherwise, who is it who gives fulfillment and Liberation? There is no difference between God Siva and *Sat-sivaguru*. It is ignorance to make such a distinction.

Gurus are of six kinds: 1) *preraka* is the "impeller" who instigates interest that leads to initiation; 2) *suchaka* is the "indicator" who describes the *sadhana* in which interest has been awakened; 3) *vachana* is the "explainer" who describes the process and its object; 4) *darshaka* is the "shower" who definitely points out the working and aims of the path in greater detail; 5) *shikshaka* is the "trainer" who actually instructs how to do *sadhana*; 6) *bodhaka* is the "illuminator," the *satguru* who lights in the *shishya* the lamp of spiritual knowledge. He is the cause of the other five.

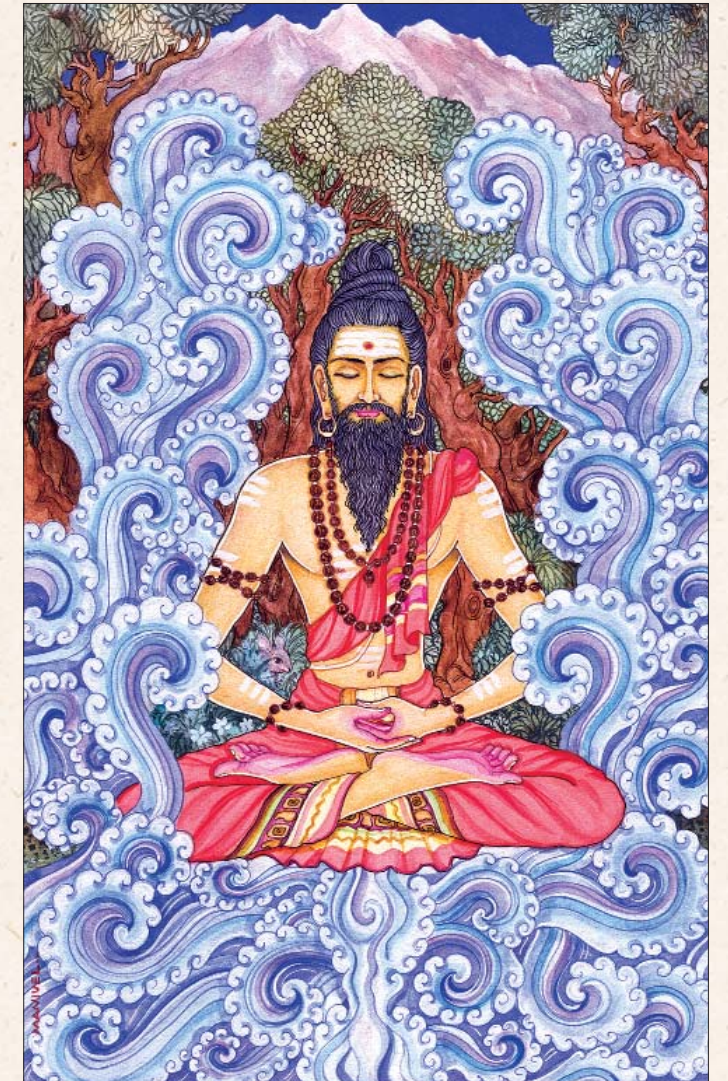
The *Vedas* and shastras are many, but life is very short. Moreover, in this life there are millions of hindrances. Therefore, one should acquire only the essence of all shastras, just as the swan takes the milk out of water with which it has been mixed.

Neither the *Vedas* nor the philosophies are causes of Liberation. Realization alone is the cause of Liberation. Better it is to bear even a single life-inspiring great mantra taught by a *satguru* than to carry a load of lifeless blocks of wood which are various forms of worldly knowledge.

Only from the mouth of a *satguru* can a *jiva* realize the one immutable Brahman which has been taught by Siva Himself. Such knowledge cannot be attained through the study of even ten million shastras.

Many are the gurus who, like lamps, offer light in a house. But rare is the *satguru* who illumines the village like the sun. Many are the gurus who are proficient to the utmost in the *Vedas* and shastras. But rare is the *satguru* who has attained Parasiva. Many are the gurus on Earth who give what is other than the Self. But rare is the *satguru* who brings the atma to light. Many are the gurus who rob *shishyas* of their wealth. But rare is the *satguru* who removes the afflictions of the *shishya*.

He is the *satguru* in whose very presence there flows the supreme bliss called ananda. The intelligent person will choose such a one as *satguru* and none other.



A *satguru* sits in *samadhi*, immersed in pure consciousness, having withdrawn his awareness from the swirling forces of the world that surround him, radiating blessings and stabilizing humanity on Earth

When he bestows confidential knowledge, do not speak of it to others, for sacred is secret. To talk of it is to weaken the *guru-shishya* understanding.

Even your own wealth you shall utilize only after mentally offering it to your *satguru*.

Do not lend your ear to any censure of your guru. Where such criticism appears, close your ears, leave immediately and chant his name to counteract.

Do not disrespect the retinue of a *satguru*. Do not criticize his traditions, whether based on the *Vedas*, *Agamas* or other scriptures.

In the presence of a *satguru*, take care to avoid dozing, harsh speech, ordering others, frivolous laughter, uncontrolled weeping, loosening or tightening of the clothes, informal or immodest dress, stretching of the legs toward him; debate, expressing hatred or blame. Avoid contortion of the body, whistling, striking of the hands in command, amusements, playful wrestling, smoking and the like. Such acts invoke the asuras in dreams and visions and invite calamity in your life.

The Guru's Inner Nature

Lord Siva said: At the root of dhyana, meditation, is the form of the *satguru*. At the root of puja, worship, is the feet of the *satguru*. At the root of mantra, incantation, is the word of the *satguru*. At the root of all Liberation is the grace of the *satguru*. In this world all holy actions are rooted in the *satguru*. Therefore, he is to be constantly served with devotion for fulfillment.

For the *shishya* who devotedly remembers, "My guru is actually Siva Himself who grants Liberation," fulfillment is not far off. Look upon your *satguru* as mother, as father, as Siva. The *satguru*, it is to be declared in unmistakable terms, is the very Lord Himself. To approach the *satguru*, to worship the *satguru*, is to approach Siva, to worship Siva.

Why should I choose to manifest through the *satguru*? Why should

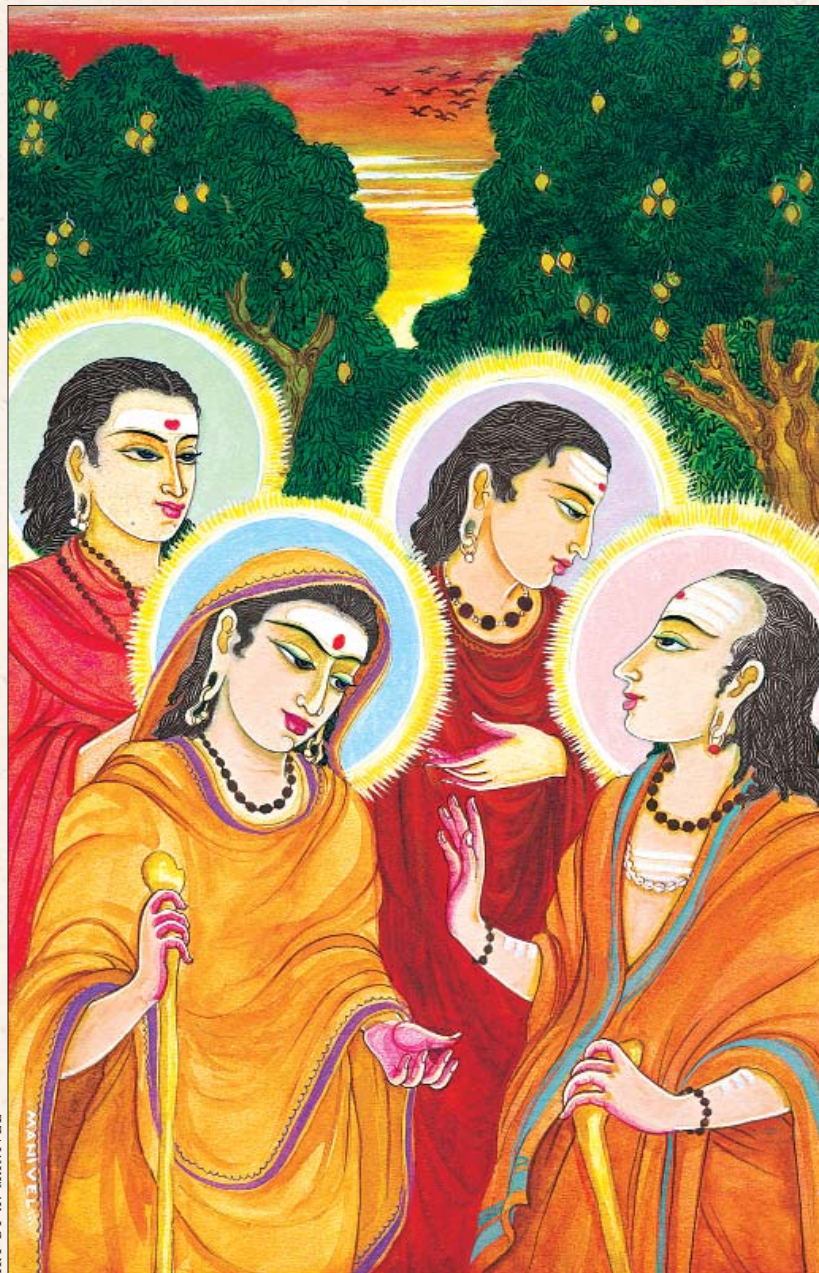
Guru Protocol

When entering the presence of a *satguru*, be calm of mind and devoted in the extreme. Dress traditionally or conservatively. Leave outside your sandals, umbrella, fan, make-up and other stimulating things.

If the spiritual preceptor speaks harshly, take it as a benediction. Whatever objects of enjoyment there be, offer these first to the guru and enjoy only what he leaves as *prasadam*.

To the *satguru* you shall not command or talk to as an equal. Do not enter into argument with those who deny your guru, nor even talk to them. Avoid them from afar. Do not sit in their company at any time. They are to be shunned.

What you hear elsewhere regarding mantras, tantras, *sadhana*, spiritual advice and scriptures, report to him and accept only what is approved by your guru, and reject what is not.



ART BY A. MANIVEL

Four Self-realized sages gather in a mango grove, radiant auras displaying their purity and refined consciousness. One among them may be a satguru.

In the presence of the *satguru* remain poised. Do not enter with desire. Serve him looking at his face. Do what he says. Honor wholeheartedly what he says and, when understood, do it without questioning.

Intensely devoted to the *satguru*, do not commission others for his work if you yourself can do it, even though you may have any number of attendants. Do not be proud because of class, learning or wealth. Knowing the mind of the *satguru*, be by his side, humble and cheerful of countenance.

Should you do anything in the presence of a *satguru* which is normally prohibited, it is extremely blameworthy. Do not, therefore, out of disregard, hear with the face turned away what the *satguru* says, whether it is beneficial or otherwise.

To speak falsehood before the *satguru* is to commit the highest sin. In the absence of the *satguru* who is away or in distress, do not abandon him. Go wherever he commands.

When he stands below, do not yourself stand above. Do not walk or drive in front of him. Do not sit when he stands up. Do not sleep in his presence. Unless directed by him, do not speak, do not read, do not sing, do not eat there. Do nothing without bowing to him. Never fail to carry out his injunctions.

In the presence of your guru's guru, bow to your own guru mentally. Should you eat food without first mentally offering it to your *satguru*, it becomes impure. Do not approach him empty-handed. Offer in the measure of your capacity fruit, flowers, cloth and the like.

FROM CHAPTER SEVEN

Guru Urgency

If *atma* itself does not keep *atma* from injury, then where in the world is the benefactor who can deliver *atma* from this sea of *samsara*? He who in this world does not undergo treatment for that disease which leads to lower-world states, what will he do with such disease when he goes to the next world, in which there is no medicine for this ailment?

The supreme Truth should be sought from the *satguru* so long as this body exists. Who is there so perverse as to commence the excavation of a well with a view to extinguish a fire which has already caught his house? Like a tigress, old age waits with open mouth to swallow the *jiva*.

As water continually exudes from a broken vessel, so is the period of life constantly being shortened. Diseases constantly inflict wounds like enemies laying siege to a fortress. Hence one should, as early as possible, engage in the working of good to oneself and *satguru*. Good work should be done in times when there is no sorrow or danger, and when the senses are not disabled.

Time passes in various involvements, but the *jiva* remains unaware of its passing. Happiness and sorrow born of *samsara* slay the *jiva*, but even then he does not awaken to the path of the welfare of the *atma*. How

many *jivas* are born, fall into dangers, become subject to suffering and sorrow, and die? Even the sight of such does not enlighten the *jiva*, maddened as he is by drinking the wine of delusion as to what is his own good. Prosperity is like a dream, youth is short-lived like a flower, and life passes like a flash of lightning.

How can one be satisfied who has seen all of this? The utmost period of one's life is a hundred years. Half of it is passed in sleep, and the remaining half is made useless by childhood, disease, old age, sorrow and other causes.

Utterly indifferent to the spiritual work which ought to be begun by all means, sleeping during the time he should be awake, and imagining danger when he should have firm faith—alas! How can such a *jiva*, cherishing the fleeting *samsara* so dear to him, live without

fear in this body which is as evanescent as a bubble of water, enduring no longer than the stay of a bird on the branch of a tree?

He seeks benefit from things which do him injury, thinks the impermanent to be permanent, sees the highest good in that which is evil, and yet he does not see that death is coming upon him.

Deluded by the great *maya*, the *jiva* looks and yet sees not, reads and yet knows not. The whole of this world is at each moment sinking into the deep sea of time infested with the great alligators of death and disease.

We speak of "my son," "my wife," "my wealth" and "my friend," but even as we indulge in such senseless talk, death seizes the body like a tiger. Death seizes a person while still engaged in doing this thing or that thing. Seeing all this, the awakened *jiva* does today the works of tomorrow, and in the forenoon the work of the afternoon, for death is indifferent to the finishing or unfinished of any work.

The slumbering *jiva* does not see approaching him before his very eyes death's terrible army of diseases guided by old age and with orders from death himself. Death devours people after piercing them with the roasting skewer of thirsting desire, smearing them with the ghee of mundane objects, and barbecuing them in the fire of attachment and dislike. Death brings all under Yama's rule, both boy or youth, old man, or child in the womb. The visible world and all classes of beings therein thus remain vulnerable to death and subject to Yama, My emissary.

Therefore, *jivas* awakened to the path should be prompt in doing with all their heart such things as are calculated to benefit their *satguru* and themselves in this world and hereafter.

FROM CHAPTER NINE

Divine Manifestation

Lord Siva said: How can My subtle perfection, which is one, omnipresent, attributeless, indifferent, undecaying, unattached like space, unbeginning and unending, be an object of worship for the dualistic mind? Hence it is that I, as the Supreme Guru, have entered into the bodies of human *satgurus*.

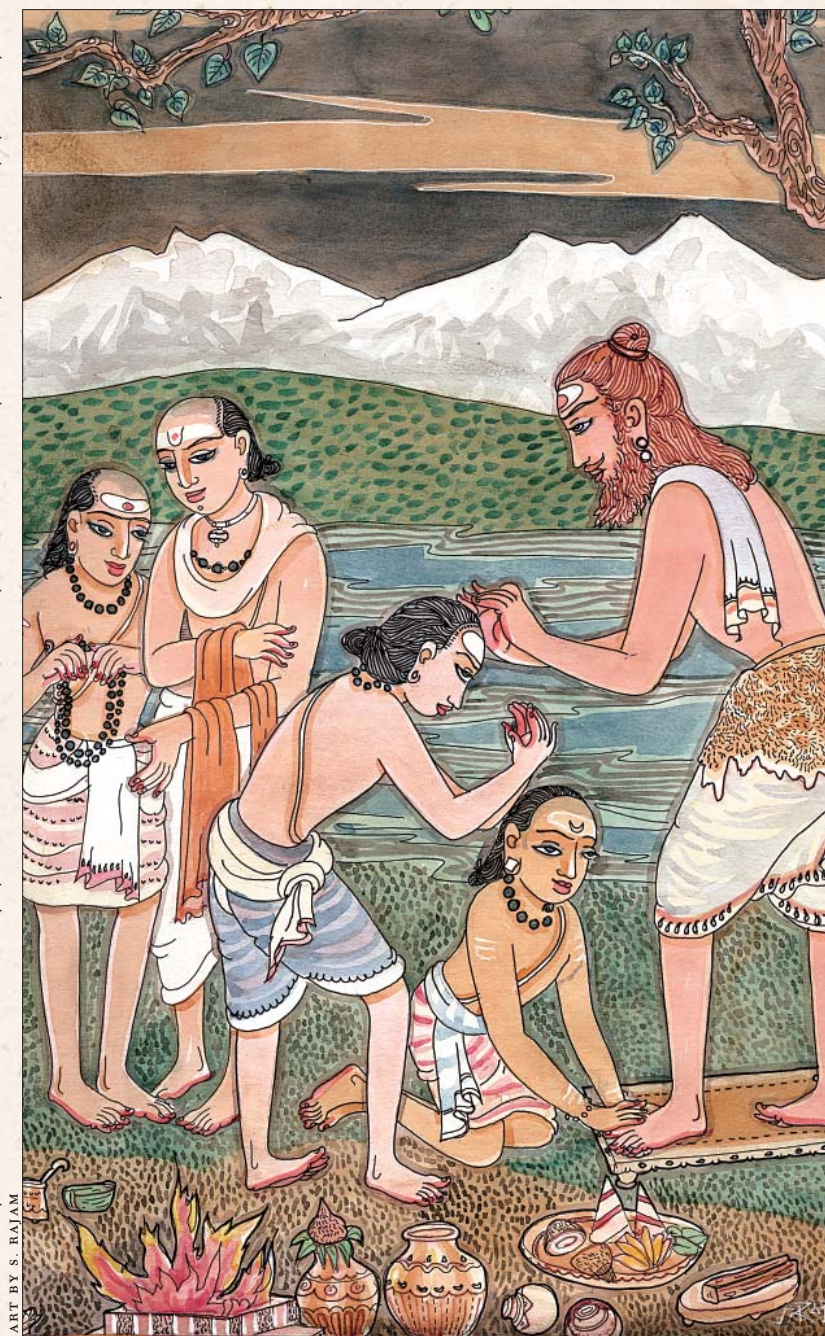
Even My gross aspect, being full of light and energy, is imperceptible to human eyes. For this reason I have assumed the form of the *satguru* in the world, and thus protect the race of *shishyas*.

As Mahesvara, in human body I secretly wander on the Earth in order to favor *shishyas*. As Sadasiva, I assume the modest and merciful form for the protection of *sadhakas*. Though remaining above *samsara*, yet I appear and act in this world as though I were a man of *samsara*.

When the fruits of sin predominate, *satguru* is seen as a person. And when the fruits of virtuous acts prevail, *satguru* is seen as Siva. Like blind men deprived for-

ever of seeing the sun, unfortunate *jivas* are unable to see the real *satguru*, the embodiment of Mahesvara, though He is present before their eyes. It is undoubtedly true that Satguru is Deva Sadasiva Himself, for who is it that grants Liberation to seekers if *satguru* be not Siva Himself?

O Beloved, there is not the least difference between Deva Sadasiva and Sriguru. Whoever makes a distinction between them commits a sin. For by assuming the form of a preceptor, the Gurudeva severs the multitude of bonds which bind *jivas* to the state of *pashu* and enables them to attain the Self, Parasiva.



ART BY S. RAJAM

On the banks of the Ganga, a Sivaguru places his hands on the head of a swami candidate. A *homa* fire burns where the initiation rites will occur, after which the youth will don the orange cloth and holy beads being held by his spiritual brothers.