



ĪSVARA & RELIGIOUS DISCIPLINE

PŪRNA VIDYĀ VEDIC HERITAGE TEACHING PROGRAMME

ĪŚVARA AS THE ELEMENTS



Review

- Who is Īśvara?
 - What does material cause “upādāna kāraṇa” mean?
 - What does intelligent cause “nimitta kāraṇa” mean?



Review

- Where is Īśvara?
 - Īśvara is like the example of electricity which the cause for many different appliances to work!
 - We can understand Īśvara's presence because his presence is in everything that is manifest
- Is Īśvara male or female?
 - We do not see Īśvara as an object in creation
 - Therefore, we cannot assign a gender to Īśvara

Vedic & Other Traditions

- Vedic tradition is different from other traditions (sampradāyās) because it enquires into the nature of the creator!
- In most traditions, the creator is presented as one who is beyond the realm of human understanding

Vedic Tradition

- In the Vedic tradition, the Śāstra (i.e., the Veda) becomes the pramana (means) for revealing the nature of Īśvara as one who is available to the human intellect:
 - By virtue of the essential identity of the individual (jiva) with the total (Īśvara)
 - By virtue of being available to the individual as the manifest creation



Vedic Tradition

- We do not say there is a God or even that there is one God
- We say there is God
- The difference is that there is nothing other than God
- God is the *material cause* and the *intelligent cause* for creation
- We worship God in many forms

Dipavali Festival

- Dipavali celebrated for five days
- *Dhanatrayodaśi*: Focus on external purification (e.g. bath)
- *Narakachaturdaśi*: Focus on internal purification (story)
- *Amāvāsya*: Seek blessings from learned teachers, ancestors...
- *Balipādyami*: Giving without pride (story of Maha Bali)
- *Bhavya Dooj*: Understanding the connection with everyone

Significance of Dipam

- Significance of Dipam
 - Vessel
 - Oil
 - Light/Flame
- Values of *amānitvam* and *adambhitvam*
- Recognizing the “oneness” in everyone

Īśvara is Everywhere

- Story of the great *Śiva bhakta* Chenthanar
- Chidambaram temple, the *Chola king* (another great *Śiva bhakta*), the *ratha yātra* for Lord Nataraja

Īśvara worshipped as element Air

- Kalahasti temple
- Story of Hanumān, son of Vāyu devatā and the rising sun

Īśvara worshipped as element Fire

- Arunācaleśvara temple in Tiruvannamalai
- Story of Brahmā and Viṣṇu and the blazing pillar of light
- Siva appears in the form of fire (i.e., knowledge) to destroy darkness (ignorance)
- Significance of Kartikai dipam

Īśvara worshipped as element Water

- Jambukeśvara temple in Tiruchirapalli
- Story of a sage who offered a jambu fruit offered as *naivedya* to Lord Śiva
- The sage ate the *prasāda* (jambu fruit) and the fruit sprouted as a body in the saint!
- Lord Siva took the sage's place under the tree as a *liṅga*

Īśvara worshipped as element Earth

- Ekāmreśvara temple in Tiruchirapalli
- Story of Pārvati engaged in *tapas* to Lord Śiva in the form of a mud liṅga
- Lord Śiva tested her sincerity by creating a sudden flood
- Pārvati rushed to the mud liṅga and embraced it to protect it from the rising waters
- Lord Śiva blessed her and said that the liṅga made of earth would be always worshipped thereafter by humanity

Concluding Śānti Mantra

ॐ पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदम् पूर्णात् पूर्णमुदच्यते
पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते ॥
ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

- Om pūrṇamadah pūrṇamidam pūrṇātpūrṇamudacyate
pūrṇasya pūrṇamādāya pūrṇamevāvaśiṣyate ॥
Om śāntiḥ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ ॥

That is fullness, this is fullness. From that fullness this fullness came. From that fullness (when) this fullness (is) removed, what remains is fullness. Om peace, peace, peace