

# **SIDDHĀNTA ŚIKHĀMAṆI**

The one hundred one sthala doctrine  
A concise composition

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## PREFACE

At the time of the publication of the book 'A Journey Through Hindu and Viraśaiva Concepts', retired Kannaḍa Professor Chandraiah who is considered as an authority on Viraśaivism, and who has written books on Viraśaivism and Jainism, pointed out that the article entitled 'Hindu and Viraśaiva Scriptures' in the book does not mention anything about Siddhāntaśikhāmaṇi which is considered as the basic scripture for the Viraśaivas. His comments incited my interest in Siddhāntaśikhāmaṇi, to study it and to write about it.

The original Siddhāntaśikhāmaṇi is in Sanskrit. It has been translated into many languages, particularly to Kannaḍa, Telugu, Marāṭhi, Tamil and Hindi. It has also been translated into English. One English version is 'Śrī Śivayogi Śivācārya's Śrī Siddhāntaśikhāmaṇi with Śrī Maritoṇṭadārya's Tattvapradīpika by Dr. M. Sivakumara Swamy. Shaiva Bharati Shodha Pratisthan, Jangamwadi Math, Varanasi-221 001, India. 2007'. Another English version is 'Siddhānta Śikhāmaṇi by Guru S. Bale, PhD. Asha-Sid Publishing Company, 208, 12<sup>th</sup> Main 3<sup>rd</sup> Cross, Saraswathipuram, Mysore-570009, Karnataka State, India. 2010'. These two English versions of Siddhāntaśikhāmaṇi served as the basis for this book, and most of what is written in this book is taken from them.

Again participation of my family members in this project enhanced my spiritual experience. My wife Uma Raju, our daughter Dr. Bindu Raju, and our son Vinay Raju continued their support during this process. Dr. Guru Bale, the author of one of the above two versions of

Siddhāntaśikhāmaṇi, facilitated the writing. I am grateful to all for helping me in my endeavors.

Linga Raju

Please note that some minor changes and correction of detected typographical errors have been made to the original book manuscript.

## DEPICTION IN ENGLISH OF SANSKRIT AND KANNAḌA WORDS

Most of the articles written in English, and published in this book, have many Saṁskṛta (Sanskrit) and Kannaḍa words that are written using the English alphabet. Transliteration of these words for proper pronunciation is a challenge with only about half the number of letters in the English alphabet. Furthermore, in general, the sounds of the English letters f, q, w, x and z, are not usable in both Sanskrit and Kannaḍa, leaving even a lesser number of English letters for the depiction. Each letter/syllable of the Sanskrit and Kannaḍa alphabets has only one pronunciation, and the alphabet is arranged according to the functional structure of the mouth to produce these sounds. There are no capital letters; all the letters are in one case only. The following is the English representation of the letters of the Kannaḍa alphabet (and the corresponding Dēvanāgarī script of Sanskrit) that is in common use nowadays. The lines, dots and other marks used here are called 'diacritics' or 'diacritical marks'. The diacritics are combined with English letters to represent new sounds. This representation is slightly modified from the scheme of transliteration given in ŚŪNYASAMPĀDANE Volumes I through V, published by Karnatak University, Dharwar, India.

Vowels: The vowels are either of a short or a long duration. The short vowels are held for one count, and the long vowels are held for two counts. The complex vowels are held for two counts. **a, ā, i, ī, u, ū, ṛ, ṝ, e, ē, ai, o, ō, au**

Anusvāra: **aṁ** (also **añ**) Visarga: **aḥ**

Consonants: Five sets of five each of the twenty-five consonants are arranged according to five points of articulation with the first vowel 'a' added for pronunciation.

Velars or gutturals - the sound is produced in the throat or back of the mouth:

**Ka, kha, ga, gha, ṅa**

Palatals – the sound is produced with the tongue touching the palate (roof of the mouth): **ḥa, ḥha, ja, jha, ṇa**

Retroflex or cerebrals – the sound is produced with the tongue bent backwards:

**ṭa, ṭha, ḍa, ḍha, ṇa**

Dentals – the sound is produced with the tongue touching the back of the upper teeth: **ta, tha, da, dha, na**

Labials – the sound is produced at the lips: **pa, pha, ba, bha, ma**

Semi-vowels: **ya, ra, la, va**

Palatal sibilant: **śa** Retroflex sibilant: **ṣa**

Dental sibilant: **sa**

Aspirate: **ha** Lateral: **ḷa**

Conjunct (combination of two letters): **kṣa. jña**

If the diacritical marks cannot be used for some reason, then there are a few accepted ways of representing some of the sounds/letters: aa for ā, ee for ī, oo for ū, and sha for the retroflex ṣa. In this version the palatal śa, as in Śiva, seems to have been written both ways – sa and sha.

It is not too difficult to use this type of representation in the articles. Although it takes more effort to properly depict the Samskr̥ta and Kannaḁa words, it is worthwhile to use the diacritical marks so that the words are sounded properly.

## SIDDHĀNTAŚIKHĀMAṆI

Siddhāntaśikhāmaṇi, written in Sanskrit, meaning 'Crest-jewel (of all the) Doctrine(s)' is considered to be the basic scripture, if not the main scripture, of the Vīraśaivas. It is also called Vīraśaiva Siddhānta. It was compiled by Śri Śivayōgi Śivācārya. There is some controversy as to when it was composed. The traditionalists believe that it was composed some time between the eighth and the tenth century of the Common Era (CE/AD). However there seems to be enough evidence that it was composed in the post-Basava period after the 12<sup>th</sup> century CE. It has been developed in the form of a dialog between the sage Śri Rēṇuka and the sage Agastya, and is also called Rēṇukagītā. It is a teaching of the doctrine of 101 sthalas. It harmonizes the concepts of duality and non-duality (oneness). It is a collection of ślōkas (stanzas) grouped into 21 chapters called pariĉchedaḥ. Although many commentaries have been written on the Siddhāntaśikhāmaṇi, the one most often included in the Siddhāntaśikhāmaṇi text itself is the Sanskrit commentary called 'Tattvapradipikā' written by Maritoṇṭadārya in the seventeenth century CE. It is interesting to note that Śūnyasaṃpādane, the main scripture of Vīraśaivas, also has 21 chapters (upadēśa). The first four chapters of Siddhāntaśikhāmaṇi are preliminary chapters; the teaching of the 101 sthalas is in chapters five through twenty; and the twenty-first chapter is devoted to some concluding topics.

The first chapter starts with obeisance to Śiva. Here, it is advisable not to use the English word prayer; it means an earnest request for something, as in the act of petitioning God to grant a favor; it also indicates duality. Vīraśaivas do not pray; they worship and completely



surrender. **The worshipper and the worshipped are one and the same.** Namaḥ, in Ōm Namaḥ Śivāya, means obeisance, or bow-down to show respect, or submission. Next, Śivayōgi Śivācārya gives an account of his heritage; then he gives information as to the source for this scripture to be the Vēdas (particularly the Upaniṣads), Śivāgamas (uttarāgamas) and Śivapurāṇas; and ends the chapter with an appeal to the distinguished Vīraśaivas to give utmost attention to Siddhāntaśikhāmaṇi which is transparent with the revelation of the doctrine of oneness.

The second chapter describes Śiva as 'That One' which is of the nature of Saĉcīdānanda (existence, intelligence, bliss), and which is called differently as Śiva, Rudra, Mahādēva and Bhava; it is without a second, and is no other than Parabrahman. Then it describes the Creation.

The third chapter states that Śri Rēṇuka was sent to establish on earth the **Śivādvaīta** lore, which will be in accordance with Vēdas and Vēdānta, and which is beneficial to all. Rēvaṇa is the Kannaḍa version of Rēṇuka.

The fourth chapter states that Śri Rēṇuka is from a place called Kollipāki on the northern side of Śriśaila in the Tri-Liṅga region. The three Liṅgas are Śri Rēṇuka's Sōmēśvara-Liṅga at the present Konalupāka, Rāmanātha-Liṅga at Drākṣārāma, and Mallikārjuna-Liṅga at Śriśaila; all three are in the present Andhra Pradesh State in India. The chapter describes the nature of Śri Rēṇuka, among other things, as the leader of the lineage of Siddhas, and as a proctor of Siddhānta. It describes his journey to the hermitage of sage Agastya in the Malaya Mountain, and describes the pleasantries of the meeting between Śri Rēṇuka and sage Agastya.

The main part of the teaching of the 101 sthalas is in the chapters 5 through 20. In the fifth chapter, before the actual teaching of the sthala starts, there is a teaching about various doctrines. It states that there are many Siddhāntas which propound different tenets and practices. Sāṅkhya, Yōga, Pāñcharātra, Vēdas and Pāśupata are quite authoritative and are not to be refuted with arguments. Where as Sāṅkhya, Yōga and Pāñcharātra are based on some parts of the Vēda, Śaivasiddhānta is based on the entire Vēda, and hence, is superior to others. The Āgama scriptures are classified as Śaiva, Pāśupata, Sōma and Lākula. Among them, the Śaiva Āgamas are of four kinds, namely, Vāma, Dakṣiṇa, Mīśra and Siddhānta. Vāmatantra has the predominance of Śakti; Dakṣiṇatantra has Bhairava as its deity; Mīśratantra is dedicated to Saptamātrkas; and Siddhānta is agreeable to the Vēda because it advocates Dharma that is taught in the Vēda, and also because it opposes whatever that is unacceptable to the Vēda. In the latter part of the Siddhānta, the supreme doctrine of Vīraśaiva is advocated. It is because of the special experience of bliss in the knowledge that the great souls are called Vīraśaivas. The knowledge which arises from the Vēdānta (Upaniṣads) is called Vidya. He who takes delight (ramate) in that knowledge is Vīra. Vī stands for Vidya, and ra stands for ramate. Vīramāheśvaras assert the giving up of detestable Māyā; are engaged in the sacrifice in the form of action, and perform external Liṅga worship, where as Vīraśaivas are engaged in the sacrifice in the form of knowledge, and perform internal Liṅga worship.

Then the teaching of the one hundred one sthalas starts with the presentation of the order of Ṣaṭsthala - Bhaktasthala, Māheśvarasthala, Prasādisthala, Prāṇaliṅgasthala, Śaraṇasthala and Aikyasthala. Each of

the main sthalas has many subdivisions, and they add up to a total of 101 sthalas. There are two categories of these sub-sthalas, namely, Aṅgasthala (there are forty-four) and Liṅgasthala (there are fifty-seven). Here Aṅga stands for Jīva (soul) and Liṅga for Śiva. Bhaktasthala has 15 Aṅgasthalas and 9 Liṅgasthalas; Māheśvarasthala has nine each; Prasādisthala has 7 Aṅgasthalas and 9 Liṅgasthalas; Prāṇaliṅgasthala has 5 Aṅgasthalas and 9 Liṅgasthalas; Śaraṇasthala has 4 Aṅgasthalas and 12 Liṅgasthalas; and Aikyasthala has 4 Aṅgasthalas and 9 Liṅgasthalas. The details of these one hundred one sthalas are then described in the Siddhāntaśikhāmaṇi.

## OBEISANCE

The first chapter starts with obeisance to Śiva. Here, it is advisable not to use the English word prayer; it means an earnest request for something, as in the act of petitioning God to grant a favor; it also indicates duality. Viraśaivas do not pray; they worship and completely surrender. The worshipper and the worshipped are one and the same. Namaḥ, in Ōm Namaḥ Śivāya, means obeisance, or bow-down to show respect, or submission. The obeisance is as follows.

Obeisance to **Śiva, the Brahman**, of the nature of **Saĉĉidānanda**, who is a canvass for the depiction of the glory of the three worlds (upper world, earth, and the nether world).

(Saĉĉidānanda comes many times here after. Sat means being or eternal existence, Ćit means pure knowledge, consciousness or intelligence, and Ānanda is infinite bliss.)

Obeisance to the Supreme Śiva, the source of the universe, designated as Brahman by the Vēdānta (Upaniṣads) Philosophers.

Obeisance to the One named Śiva without any impurities and with the ocean of intelligence where the thirty-six principles (tattvas) appear as waves.

Obeisance to that Supreme Ātman (soul) who is beyond the three Guṇas (Sattva, Rajas and Tamas), by whose shine the universe shines, and by whose delight the universe is delighted.

Obeisance to the tranquil Śambhu who is free from all defects, and who is responsible for the principles (tattvas) starting with Sadāśiva.

(Śambhu means the one who grants prosperity, and it stands for Śiva.)

Obeisance to Śambhu, with inherent Ambā (mother-of-all/Śakti/Uma/Parvati), who according to His own will, takes forms, acts, and creates the three worlds.

Obeisance to the Great Lord (Mahēśa) the trident (representing the three Śaktis, namely Iĉhā meaning will, Jñāna meaning knowledge, and Kriyā meaning action) bearer Mahādēva in whom the unsurpassed Lordship rests.

Obeisance to the Supreme Śiva (here it refers to Śiva's Supreme Śakti) who is the performer of Dharma of Śambhu, and whom the Śāstra experts consider as the creator of all the worlds.

Obeisance to the Supreme Śakti of Mahēśvara, who takes the name and form of Śambhu, and who is Māyā's own form.

Obeisance to the creator in Śiva, who is the mother of all, who is the bringer of auspiciousness to all, and who is above the Śāntyatīta (these are associated with the five Sādākhyas which were the forms assumed by Śiva through His Śaktis, for His sport of creation) which is among the first born of Śiva.

Obeisance to Śiva of the rising Supreme Bliss, who makes Śambhu manifest as the universe, through the operation of Iĉhā, Jñāna, and Kriyā Śaktis.

Obeisance, day in and day out, to the giver of delight to  
Iśā, and the giver of right knowledge to those who seek  
immortality (liberation).

**ŌM NAMAŚŚIVĀYA**

## THE CREATION

The second chapter describes the Creation. It starts with obeisance.

Obeisance to the Self-manifest Śiva with His Ambā, who is of the nature of Saĉĉidānanda, and who is the cause for the manifestation of beings and non-beings.

Obeisance to Mahēśvara's Śakti, of the nature of Great Māyā, who is like pearls in the form of all the principles (tattvas) starting with Sadāśiva.

Then it continues as, there is '**That One**' of the nature of Saĉĉidānanda which is in an indefinable abode, without any difference, without any form, without any impediments, beyond reach, not dividing, can not be cognized or perceived, self-luminous, free from all defects, omniscient, omnipotent, tranquil, all powerful, free from any obstructions, **called differently as Śiva, Rudra, Mahādēva and Bhava, it is without a second, and is no other than Parabrahman.**

In That, the animate and inanimate universe had merged in the past, and that merged universe was to be manifested.

**That Parabrahman, also called Śiva**, desiring to create the universe, assumed a form with exuberance of joy. This form had the following characteristics: without any relation to defects, without any adjuncts, indestructible, eternal, blue-necked and three-eyed, wearing half moon on its crest, pure, resembling clear crystal with a complexion of clear pearls, with pure knowledge, being an object of meditation for the Yōgis, with brilliance of millions of suns, with the luster of

millions of moons, with extraordinary virtues, and the abode of infinite greatness.

His Supreme Śakti of the nature of existence-intelligence-bliss, of the form of the inherent cause inseparable in the creation of the entire world, on His desire, became one in keeping with the form.

The inseparable relationship of Śiva and Śakti has been compared to the fire and its burning power. The universe including the worldly existence is created in Śiva's consciousness.

But here the description continues. Śiva, with the desire to create the universe, first created Brahma as the maker of all beings and all the worlds. To His first son (meaning Brahma as above), Śiva taught with grace all the sacred knowledge. According to Śiva's order, Brahma was ready to create the world, but became covered with Māyā, and as a consequence was without any knowledge as to the means to create the world. To attain the means to create all the worlds, Brahma went back and requested Śiva, who gave the necessary means. Even then the four-faced Brahma could not create the diverse world. Again Brahma went back to Śiva; stating that he could barely grasp what was taught, requested that Śiva create the first beings, and then after learning the means, he would create the world. Accordingly, Śiva created Pramathās, the first Lords, who were endowed with all powers, and were capable of creating the world and effecting its dissolution. It appears that this section of the creation is stated here to introduce Śri Rēṇuka who is one of the Pramathās.



All Vīraśaiva philosophers, and particularly Prabhudēva, hold the view that the world evolved out of nothing. In the beginning there was nothing, not even Śūnya (Void) or Niśśūnya (Primal Void). Then Śaraṇa arose. This is the fundamental theory of the Vīraśaivas. The Vīraśaiva theory continues 'In the beginning the formless undivided Liṅga (Niṣkala Liṅga), inclusive of the entire Void, which is existence, knowledge, bliss, eternity and perfection, in order not to remain as Void, by an impulse of spontaneous play and sport (līlā), putting forth the glow of Consciousness, creates within Self, an infinity of macrocosms and myriad of microcosms, and attaches to them the twenty-five categories (tattvas). The souls, as a result of attachment of these categories, forget their true nature, and in asserting their body, become subject to pleasure and pain, and become captive to death and desire' (modified from Śūnyasaṃpādane).

The twenty five categories (tattvas) referred to above are: the five gross elements (*ākāśa*, sky/space/ether/cosmos; *vāyu*, air/wind; *tējas*, lustre/fire/light; *ap*, water/liquid; and *prthivī*, the earth), the five subtle elements (*śabda* the subtle element of sound; *sparsana* the subtle element of touch; *rūpa* the subtle element of form; *rasa* the subtle element of taste; and *gandha* the subtle element of smell), the five sensory organs (*śrōtra* the sense organ of hearing; *tvak* the touch sensing organ; *cakṣus* the sight organ; *rasana* the taste sensing organ; and *ghrāṇa* the sense organ of smell), the five motor organs (*vāk* the faculty of communication, speech; *hasta* the faculty of manipulation, hand; *pāda* the faculty of locomotion, foot; *pāyu* the digestive faculty, anus; and *upasthā* the procreative faculty, genitals), and the other five are said to be *Puruṣa*, *Prakṛti*, *Mahat*, *Ahaṅkāra* and *Manas*, which are said to correspond to five Sādākhyas (Śiva,

Amūrta, Mūrta, Karṭṛ and Karma), five Brahmas (Sadyōjāta, Vāmadēva, Aghōra, Tatpuruṣa and Īśāna), the five actions of Śiva (Sṛṣṭi/creation, Sthiti/maintenance, Laya/absorption, Tirōdhāna/covering, and Anugraha/conferring grace) along with the five causes (Bhava, Śarva, Mṛḍa, Rudra and Hara). However, the Vīraśaivas consider these tattvas to be aśuddha or impure.

In **R̥gvēda** three sūktas, 129, 130 and 190, in maṇḍala X are dedicated to creation. This is the description of **The Creation** from sūkta 129 of maṇḍala X.

**In the beginning there was not the non-existent, nor the existent;** there was no realm of air, or the sky beyond it. What covered in and where? What gave shelter? Was water there, the unfathomed depth of water?

Death was not then, nor was immortality; no sign was there of the day's and night's divider. **'That One' thing, breathless, breathed by its own nature (power); apart from it there was nothing whatsoever.**

Darkness was there, at first concealed in darkness; all this was in-discriminated chaos. All that existed then was **Void**; by the great power of tapas (austerity) was born **That One.**

Thereafter rose **Desire**, the primal seed; sages having meditated in their hearts, discovered the existent's kinship in the non-existent.

Across was their line extended; what was above it and what was below it? There were begetters, there were

mighty forces, free action here and energy up yonder (creation of the universe was instantaneous).

Who really knows and who can here declare it? Whence was this creation and whence was it born? **Dēvas (Gods) were subsequent to the creation, so who knows when it arose.**

The One who first arose, whether formed it all, or did not form it, no one knows; whose eye controls this in the highest of the heaven verily knows it, or perhaps knows not.

## ONE HUNDRED ONE STHALA DOCTRINE

Siddhāntaśikhāmaṇi is the one hundred one sthala doctrine. In it, the 101 sthalas are distributed as sub-sthalas into the six main sthalas called Ṣaṭsthala. 'Stha' in sthala is derived from 'sthīyate' meaning stand or originally stood, and 'la' in sthala is derived from 'līyate' meaning absorbed or merged. Thus sthala stands for Paraśivabrahman from where the universe/world emerged, and to where it dissolves. However, the term sthala is used here to mean a stage, a temporary resting place for a progressing soul on its spiritual journey to Paraśivabrahman. At each sthala the aspirant gets more spiritual experience sufficient enough to advance/ascend to the next higher sthala. It is to be noted here that the concept of duality progresses to the concept of non-duality (oneness) from the Bhaktasthala to the Prasādisthala; and from Prāṅliṅgasthala onwards, it is all oneness philosophy.

There are two categories of these sub-sthalas, namely, Aṅgasthala (there are forty-four) and Liṅgasthala (there are fifty-seven). Here Aṅga stands for Jīva (soul) and Liṅga for Śiva. The word **Aṅga**, as used by Vīraśaivas, has a special meaning. It is not an ordinary soul Jīva. Any ordinary soul can not be an Aṅga. Only when the soul yearns to become one with Liṅga (Liṅgāṅga sāmarsya) then only it is an Aṅga. It is said that Jīva is called Aṅga because it moves to Paraśivabrahman; the word Aṅga is derived from 'Aṅ' meaning 'Brahman' and the verb root 'gam' for 'gaççhati' meaning 'goes to'; thus the persons learned in Vīraśaivism call Jīva as Aṅga. Literal meaning of the term **Liṅga** is 'mark' or 'characteristic'. Liṅga of Vīraśaivas represents the whole universe; it is the Ultimate Reality, the Absolute, the Śūnya, the Paraśivabrahman. All forty-four Aṅgasthalas

are described first, and then all the fifty-seven Liṅgasthalas are described. The first sthala is Piṅḍasthala and the last one of the 101 sthala doctrine is Jñānaśūnyasthala.

Siddhāntaśikhāmaṇi uses many different terms/names for the Absolute Reality. In Pariĉcheda I ślōka 1 it begins with the obeisance to **Śiva the Brahman**. Then it uses Param (Supreme) Śiva, Śambhu, Śambhu with inherent Ambā (Śakti/Pārvati/mother-of-all), Mahādeva, Mahēśa, Mahēśvara in association with Paramaśakti, Śaṅkara who is the Lord associated with Śakti, Paramēśvara (Supreme Lord), and Umāpati (Uma's husband). It also states in II.6 that **Parabrahman** is called differently as Śiva, Rudra, Mahādēva, Bhava, and such.

## Aṅgasthalas of Bhaktasthala

A person, in whom the devotion of Śiva has arisen, is a Bhakta. Bhaktasthala provides the part of the doctrine that is to be used for spiritual practice of a Bhakta. There are fifteen Aṅgasthalas in Bhaktasthala.

**1 Piṇḍasthala:** Piṇḍa means 'lump', 'solid', 'round mass' 'lump of rice' or 'rice ball'. In Vīraśaiva philosophy, the term piṇḍa is used to mean 'an embodied soul who is of pure conscience' or 'one with a pure heart'; the soul is believed to be located in the heart. In Piṇḍasthala the inner conscience of the soul (Jīva) is to be rendered pure through acquired merits. The doctrine, here, incorporates the concepts of **guṇa** and **karma** to explain the acquisition.

One and only One is Śiva. Due to inherent beginningless Māyā, Śiva's portion becomes Jīva. Mahēśvara, the possessor of Māyāśakti, resides in the heart of all beings. The Śakti who is of the three guṇas namely, *sattva, rajas and tamas*, adheres in the Brahman (Paraśiva), and due to disparity in the Śakti, three distinctions arise in the Brahman. Bhōjya, the enjoyed, is related to tamas (the darkness), Bhoktr, the enjoyer, Jīva, with limited knowledge, is related to rajas. Preraka, the impeller, is Śambhu (Mahēśvara) whose attribute is of the nature of purity, the sattva. The Jīva of limited potency and limited knowledge is subject to revolve in the cycle of worldly life in accordance with the funds of karma (deeds). Śambhu, the witness and impeller of the embodied soul, reveals the salutary path of emancipation; and hence, by virtue of maturity of one's karma, one gets the eradication of all impurities, and becomes pure of mind. Once the conscience of the soul is pure as a result of pure deeds, there arises a clear

devotion to Śiva. **The embodied soul with pure conscience and devotion to Śiva is designated as Piṇḍa.**

**2 Piṇḍajñānasthala:** Jñāna is knowledge. One who has the discriminative knowledge that the soul is totally different from the body, the senses and the intellect, is a Piṇḍajñānin. This discriminatory knowledge is to be grasped through the 'I-notion'. From the I-notion, meaning 'I possess a body', 'I have sound senses', 'I understand', 'I remember', etc., and because there are occurrences of memory of the objects, one should be able to discern that the soul exists and is different from the body, senses and the intellect. One should also be able to discern that I-notion itself is not the soul because the I-notion does not exist in sleep and it is not eternal. The soul, which resides in a transitory body, is eternal. **When one knows that the immortal soul is different from the mortal body, then that one attains the Piṇḍajñānasthala.**

**3 Samsāraheyasthala:** Samsāraheyatā pertains to the inclination to abandon worldly life of cycle of births - **renunciation**. In this sthala, by virtue of refined impressions, one detaches from the transient worldly pleasures, and eradicates suffering from three-fold afflictions namely, *Ādhyātmika*, *Ādhibhoutika* and *Ādhidaivika*. The worldly pleasures are not only transient, but also cause craving for more transient pleasures. Wise person will not have any attachment to such transient things. *Ādhyātmika*, pertaining to the bodily afflictions, is of two types; physical suffering caused by disorders of the three humors of the body, namely, *Vāta* (air/gas), *Pitta* (fire/bile) and *Kapha* (cold/phlegm), and the mental suffering due to non-acquisition of desired things pertaining to *kāma*

(passion/lust), krōdha (anger/aggression), lōbha (greed/avarice), mōha (infatuation/delusion), bhaya (fear), īrṣyā/mātsarya (jealousy/envy), viṣāda (despair), mada (boasting/arrogance/false sense of greatness), and such inclinations. Ādhibhoutika sufferings are of terrestrial cause from other beings, animals, immovable objects and such. Ādhidaivika obstacles arise from celestial objects, devas and such. The Upaniṣads begin with a peace invocation before the main teachings. Every peace invocation ends with ōm śāntiḥ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ (ōm peace peace peace); this recitation supposedly wards off the three obstacles.

The Jīva which is endowed with merit, pure conscience and devotion to Śiva, which has discriminatory knowledge as to what is eternal and what is not, and which by virtue of refined impression detaches from the transitory worldly pleasures, and eradicates the suffering from the three afflictions, has attained Saṁsāraheyasthala, and is ready to advance further.

**4 Gurukāruṇyasthala:** One who has arrived at this sthala, as above, is ready to be initiated by a Guru. **Guru** is a master of spiritual knowledge, has realized the state of identity with Liṅga, and has all the qualities to achieve such a state. Guru is also a good spiritual teacher and is well known in the community. The prospective disciple is to approach and appeal to the Guru with all sincerity and respect. The Guru then initiates the disciple with Dīkṣā. The term Dīkṣā is derived from 'dī' for 'dīyate' meaning gives knowledge, and 'kṣā' from 'kṣīyate' meaning removes the fetters of bondage. The fetters of bondage are the three malas (taints/impurities). *Āriavamala* is inherent in the Jīva and keeps it separate from Śiva, *Māyāmala* is illusory and masks the real identity, and *Kārmikamala* is related to



the deeds/karma. Dīkṣā is a three-fold process. Vēdādīkṣā is where the Guru infuses the knowledge of Śiva with an intent look and by placing the right palm on the disciple's head; Mantradīkṣā is whispering the mantra ōṃ namaśśivāya into the disciple's right ear; and Kriyādīkṣā is conducting ceremonial rites associated with investing the Iṣṭaliṅga on the disciple's palm.

**5 Liṅgadhāraṇasthala:** This sthala pertains to granting of **Iṣṭaliṅga** by the Guru. Guru is to take an Iṣṭaliṅga made up of crystal, a stone of great mountains like the Śrīśaila Mountain, a stone from the river bed, or such special stone. The Iṣṭaliṅga is to be ceremoniously washed, and sandal-wood paste and flowers applied, and then it is to be infused with Śiva's power by the Guru and sanctified with the Mantra. Guru is to invoke the disciple's Prāṇa (vital-breath/vital-energy) and infuse it into the Iṣṭaliṅga with a notion of oneness between them. The Iṣṭaliṅga is then placed on the palm of the disciple. Guru then gives instruction to the disciple. The personal Iṣṭaliṅga is the life-principle in the form of Prāṇaliṅga and it should not separate from the disciple's body. It is to be worn until the death of the body and liberation of the soul; and then it is to be buried in the ground with the body. Iṣṭaliṅga can be worn on the head, the neck, arm-pit, chest region, belly, wrist or palm. It should not be worn at the top of the tuft of hair, on the back, or near the anus. One should worship the Iṣṭaliṅga on one's palm. To make a point that women should also have Dīkṣā, and should wear and worship the Iṣṭaliṅga, it states that all the Śaktis and Lakṣmi who have clear manifestation of devotion to Śiva wear the Śivaliṅga on the top of their forehead. The Viraśaiva tradition, advocates Dīkṣā for both women and men, and states that both women and men attain liberation.

The sages consider Liᅅgadhāraᅅa to be of two kinds – internal and external. Bearing in mind of the Supreme Liᅅga of the nature of intelligence and the cause of all, is the internal. The undivided and the un-manifest Liᅅga which is the beginning-less Brahman gets itself divided through its Māyāśakti, and gets worshipped by residing inside the body. The Supreme Brahman, the Mahāliᅅga is found as Jyotirliᅅga (lustrous Liᅅga or Liᅅga with light emanating from it) in three places inside the body – in the Mūlādhāra (base support at the level of the lower end of the spine), in the heart, and in the brain at the level of the region between the eye-brows (see 'Prāᅅa and Kuᅅᅅalini' article). Concentration on or cherishing of the Jyotirliᅅga constitutes internal worship. **Cherishing Liᅅga in the heart is Nirupādhika (one without any external factor) and constitutes as internal Liᅅgadhāraᅅa.** Yōgis who are endowed with detachment and knowledge, and who are of firm mind, contemplate on the internal Liᅅga only, and not on the external Iᅅᅅaliᅅga. Through jᅅānayōga they visualize in their heart the Liᅅga which is of the nature of Supreme bliss. Thus, the wise ones should, with all efforts, cherish the internal Supreme Liᅅga. It is also stated that whether one is able to undergo internal Liᅅgadhāraᅅa or not, one should have external Liᅅgadhāraᅅa as its replica. Mahāliᅅga is said to be three-fold - Iᅅᅅaliᅅga worn outside the body is the Sthūla (Gross), Prāᅅaliᅅga made up of feelings inside is the Sūkᅅma (Subtle) and Trᅅᅅtiliᅅga (Liᅅga in the form of contentment) is the Parāᅅpara (Higher than the highest).

It is stated that the Liᅅgadhāraᅅa has been advocated in the Vēdas. It quotes the first part of ᅅgvēda hymn (IX.83.1) and then it explains the rest. The referenced hymn is as follows.

*‘pavitram te vitatam brahmaṇaspate prabhurgātrāṇi paryēṣi viśvataḥ; ataptatanurna tadāmō aśnute śrutāsa idvahanīstastatsamāśata’.*

*Pavitram* = sacred/pure, *te* = your, *vitatam* = expansive/pervasive, *brahmaṇaspate* = O Brahmaṇaspati, *prabhu* = Lord, *gātrāṇi paryēṣi viśvataḥ* = you enter/pervade the bodies from all sides, *ataptatanurna* = body that is not heated/baked/burnt/ripe, *tat* = it, *āma* = raw/immature/ignorant, *aśnute* = not-gets/not-attains, *śrutāsa idvahanīstastatsamāśata* = only those who are dressed/boiled/processed and bear/sacrifice/ready attain it.

The passage is as follows. O Brahmaṇaspati (O Paraśiva) your (your Liṅga) is sacred, is expansive (as Ācāraliṅga, Guruliṅga, Śivaliṅga, Jaṅgaliṅga, Prsādaliṅga, and Mahāliṅga); you pervade the bodies of the devotees from all sides; that ignorant body that is not burnt (one not purified by the process of Dīkṣā) does not get it (Liṅga); only those who are processed (and possess the knowledge), and those who resort to that (Liṅga) attain it (Liṅga). Liṅga is Brahman, Liṅga is sacred, and Liṅga’s worship makes the body pure.

**6 Bhasmadhāraṇasthala:** This sthala describes the preparation of the Bhasma, and its application to the body. Bhasma has five names. ‘Vibhūti’ is the cause for prosperity, ‘Bhasita’ reveals the spiritual truth, ‘Bhasma’ threatens away sins, ‘Kṣāra’ makes all adversaries to go away and ‘Rakṣā’ protects from all evil beings. These five Bhasmas are said to have been born respectively from five Lord’s faces through five different colored cows: tawny colored Nandā cow from Sadyōjāta face, black Bhadrā from Vāmadēva, white Surabhi from

Aghōra, grey Suśīlā from Talpuruṣa and red Sumanas from Īṣāna face. Bhasma is produced by four different methods, but the Kalpa method is the most important. Cow-dung is collected before it falls down to the ground, made into balls, dried and then baked to obtain the Bhasma. There are three methods of application to the body: smearing the whole body called the Bhasma bath, sprinkling the Bhasma on the body, and the so called 'tripuṇḍra'. To apply tripuṇḍra, Bhasma is placed on the left palm and the right palm is used to wet the Bhasma; then with the three middle fingers of right hand, the wet Bhasma is applied making three parallel lines which are straight, unbroken, bright and thick. Fifteen places where tripuṇḍra is applied are head, forehead, two ears, neck, two shoulders, chest, naval, back, two arms, hump region and two fore arms. Forehead is the main area of application where the tripuṇḍra lines are about six inches long or fill the forehead from side to side. Tripuṇḍra is prescribed by the Vēdas, Śivāgamas and the Purāṇas. One who applies tripuṇḍra becomes pure.

**7 Rudrākṣadhāraṇasthala:** This sthala is about wearing of the Rudrākṣa beads made out of hard seeds of the Rudrākṣa tree. The legend is that the three eyed Rudra, the destroyer of ignorance, opens the third eye in the forehead to destroy three cities of the three atrocious demons. As a consequence, tears from the three eyes of Rudra fall to the ground where the Rudrākṣa (from Rudra's eyes) trees grow. It is said that there are 38 varieties of these trees. A good Rudrākṣa is to be free from any holes made by worms or defects, to be of golden hue and should not have been worn by others. Rudrākṣas are worn on the lock of hair on the crown of head, on the head, on both ears, close around the neck, on the chest, on each of the arms and on each of the forearms. Yajñāsūtra is made of 108 Rudrākṣa

beads. One who is engaged in the worship of Śiva should wear the sacred Rudrākṣa, thereby there is no occasion for any kind of sin.

**8 Pañcākṣarījapasthala:** Pañcā means five, and akṣara is syllable. Pañcākṣara mantra is Na maḥ śi vā ya - Namaḥ Śivāya – Namaśśivāya. It means obeisance to/for Śiva. It is said that there is no greater mantra than the Pañcākṣara mantra, just as there is no greater principle (tattva) than the principle of Śiva. It represents the cause of the world/universe: the five gross elements, the five subtle elements, the five sensory organs, the five motor organs (see 'The Creation' article), the five Brahmas (Sadyōjāta, Vāmadēva, Aghōra, Tatpuruṣa and Īśāna), the five actions of Śiva (Sṛṣṭi/creation, Sthiti/maintenance, Laya/absorption, Tirōdhāna/covering, and Anugraha/conferring grace) along with the five causes (Bhava, Śarva, Mṛḍa, Rudra and Hara). All these sets of five are understood through this great five syllable mantra as these are all the manifestations of the mantra. Japa is meditational saying of the mantra. Three types of japa are described. Vācika/vocal japa is when the mantra is clearly pronounced and is heard by those on either side of the person. Upāṁśu/lip-movement japa is when the mantra is faintly uttered but not heard by others. The Mānasa/mental japa is when the mantra is not uttered at all; it is cherished in the mind. The second type is superior to the first, and the third type is said to be the best.

Because the Pañcākṣara mantra represents the creation and the principles (tattvas) of Śiva, the question then arises as to whether reciting it alone leads to liberation from the worldly life. Then it is said that Śivāgamas and Vēdas advocate the Ṣaḍakṣara mantra where the Ōmkāra (Ōm) precedes the Pañcākṣara mantra. The

single syllable called Praṇava is Ōm. Ōm is derived from Sō'ham meaning 'He is I' with the deletion of sa and ha. It represents Parabrahman which is Śiva free from all the worldly differences. Ōm is Niṣkala meaning pure consciousness. Meditation upon Ōm results in liberation. Thus Ōm represents Niṣkala Śiva as pure consciousness, and Pañcākṣara mantra represents Sakala Śiva in the form of the universe. Śiva who is of the nature of both Niṣkala and Sakala resides in the Ṣaḍakṣara mantra. It is stated that after doing Prāṇāyāma three times (see 'Prāṇa and Kuṇḍalini' article) the mantra is to be meditated upon with deep concentration. Noble person who meditates upon the Pañcākṣara mantra preceded by Ōm will be relieved of bondage and will attain liberation.

**9 Bhaktamārgakriyāsthala:** This sthala describes the paths of devotion that are to be undertaken/practiced by the Bhakta. Nine types of devotion are mentioned. *Śravaṇa* is listening to devotional speeches; *Kīrtana* is singing devotional songs; *Smarana* is cherishing Śiva in the mind; *Pādasēvana* is serving the feet; *Arĉana* is worship; *Vandana* is salutation; *Dāsyā* is servitude; *Sakhya* is friendship; and *Ātmanivēdana* is self-surrender. The first seven are necessary to attain the last two, and the last one is said to be the highest form of devotion. One who has such devotion is dear to Śiva irrespective of the person's gender, wealth, caste or creed. Bhakti is either external or internal. Worship of Śivaliṅga in a place made sacred, and on a charming throne made shining with gems, is external. Fixing one's Prāṇa (vital-breath) on the internal Liṅga, and stationing one's mind in itself, not thinking of anything else, is internal. Service is rendered three ways – meditation is the mental service,

chanting mantra is the vocal service, and worship through action is physical service.

A devotee of Śiva should not touch or look at those who are averse to devotion towards Śiva; should not reside with them; should not take food with them. If danger is foreseen or should occur to the devotees of Śiva, one should be brave and take action to prevent such an event even if it may cost the one's life. If one comes across a person who curses Śiva, the one should just walk away. One should not go to a place where there is condemnation of religious practices. One should not take water or oil in leather containers. As long as a woman is engaged in the worship of Liṅga, there is no impurity during menses or during post-delivery period. **There is no greater gift than giving food and water; and there is no greater penance than non-violence.**

**10 Ubhayasthala:** This sthala indicates that Guru is to be treated as Śiva. Guru has Śiva's knowledge; Guru's word is the word of Śiva; Guru is embodied Śiva; therefore, worshipping Guru is the same as worshipping Śiva.

**11 Trividhasaṃpattisthala:** Trividhasaṃpat means threefold wealth. Guru, Liṅga and Jaṅgama are the trimūrtis (three aspects of the same form) of Viraśaivas. Jaṅgama is a movable Liṅga/Śiva. Jaṅgama is a Śivayōgi. Donating to Śivayōgi is as good as worshipping Śiva. Śivayōgi should not be insulted in any way. Śivayōgi/Jaṅgama is to be served and worshipped similar to worshipping Liṅga and Guru. A devotee, who considers Guru, Liṅga and Jaṅgama as one and the same, has attained this sthala.

**12 Āaturvidhasārāyasthala:** This sthala is about four types of essential things. Similar to receiving Pādōdaka of Śivaliᅅga (water that has washed Iᅅᅅaliᅅga), the devotees should always partake that of Guru and Jaᅅgama. Sprinkling of Pādōdaka on the head is auspicious, sanctifying, and bringer of fulfillment to all. Similarly, wearing on the head of leaves and flowers dedicated to Śivaliᅅga brings accrued benefits. Whether it is leaf, flower, fruit, water or food, one should partake only after offering to Śivaliᅅga. Everything including cooked food is offered to Śiva; everything then returns to the devotee as Prasāda. This sanctified Prasāda is to be taken by the devotees. It appears that Prasāda, Pādōdaka and everything else are considered as one type of essential thing, to constitute a total of four with Guru, Liᅅga and Jaᅅgama.

**13, 14 and 15 Sopādhi, Nirupādhi, and Sahaja dānasthalas:** Dāna means donation. These three sthalas refer to three different types of donations. Sopādhiakadāna is when the donation is given with the expectation of something in return. This strings attached donation will not result in liberation, and it is not accepted by the Viraśaivas. Nirupādhiakadāna is when the donation is made without any desire for something in return except the desire of dedicating it to the Lord. Here, no strings are attached, and is acceptable. However, this type of donation implies duality, meaning that the giver and the Lord are two different entities. The third type Sahajadāna exemplifies the oneness philosophy of Viraśaivas. The recipient, the donor and the donation are all Śiva. With this type of donation, the devotees do not feel that it is theirs to give. Everything came from Śiva and is going to Śiva. All the Śiva's devotees are beneficiaries of such donation, and this type of donation is the best. A devotee, without any



desires, who is absorbed in the practices of all the above sthalas including the Sahajadāna, arrives at the Māheśvarasthala.

## **Aṅgasthalas of Māheśvarasthala**

A Bhakta who has intensified his devotion to Śiva, who has the knowledge of what is eternal and what is not eternal, who has completely renounced the worldly desires, and who is deeply involved in Sahajadāna, has become a Māheśvara. Māheśvarasthala has nine Aṅgasthalas.

**16 Māheśvaraprasāmsāsthala:** In this sthala the devotee not only has intense devotion to Śiva but also has firm conviction that Śiva is the master of everything and there is nothing else. The devotee does not have wavering thoughts of what else may be there or what other Gods are there. Māheśvara is the one who is brave and resolute with a firm conviction that Śiva is the one.

**17 Liṅganiṣṭhāsthala:** In this sthala, the devotee is focused on the Liṅga. Devotion towards Śiva is in the form of Śivaliṅga/Iṣṭliṅga worship. Irrespective of any obstacles, Māheśvara does not give up the worship. Māheśvara does not eat without worshipping, and only takes the food and water that has been offered to Iṣṭaliṅga. Māheśvara is peaceful, wears Vibhūti and Rudrākṣi, and is focused on the Iṣṭaliṅga.

**18 Pūrvāśrayanirasanasthala:** Pūrvāśraya refers to the devotee's practices prior to the initiation by the Guru, and nirasana refers to disregarding or detachment. Māheśvara should give up rites and rituals, and other previous practices, and also should give up any previously practiced faith. One who has received Dīkṣā by the Guru is considered pure or refined, and should only follow what is taught by the Guru. The order of life related to caste (varṇāśramadharmā) is of two types. One is ordained by Śiva as a result of the Dīkṣā,

and the other is as told by Brahmaṇā. **One who has received Śivadīkṣā should not make any caste discrimination, and should honor the nobility of all professions and the equality of all castes.**

**19 Sarvādvaitanirasanasthala:** This sthala states that at the Māheśvara stage, the devotee is too immature spiritually, and is still worshipping Iṣṭaliṅga, and therefore should disregard the notion of complete non-duality (advaitism). It is stated that total non-duality will come at a later stage when the Supreme Principle (Śivatattva) is realized through the knowledge of non-duality, and it does not occur to Māheśvara who is still ignorant.

**20 Āhvānanirasanasthala:** Āhvāna is invitation or summoning. As Guru has already invoked Śiva into Iṣṭaliṅga, one should not summon Śiva again into Iṣṭaliṅga before worshipping, and hence should not request Śiva to retire after the worship is completed. Śiva always is in the Iṣṭaliṅga once it has been sanctified by the Guru.

**21 Aṣṭamūrtinirasanasthala:** This sthala states that Māheśvara is to detach from the eight forms, namely, Earth, water, fire, air, sky, Sun, Moon and Ātman, just as, at this early stage oneness of Śiva and Jīva is not accepted. Māheśvara is to consider that the world stands for the body of Śiva and that Ātman is the controller of all the principles (tattvas). Thus at the Māheśvara stage one rejects the view that the eight forms are Śiva.

**22 Sarvagatvanirasanasthala:** This sthala states that Māheśvara is to disregard that Śiva is omnipresent, and continue to worship Iṣṭaliṅga.

**23 Śivajaganmayasthala:** In this sthala Māheśvara is to mentally develop a concept that Śiva pervades the whole universe while continuing to worship Iṣṭaliṅga. The world consisting of movable and immovable things is born out of Śiva as principles (tattvas) from Śiva, and do not differ from Śiva. Hence, Māheśvara, now, has to consider that Śiva is omnipresent except for the purpose of worship of Iṣṭaliṅga.

**24 Bhaktadēhikaliṅgasthala:** In this sthala Māheśvara is to visualize that Liṅga resides in the Bhakta's body, specifically in the heart. Śaṅkara (giver of joy/peace) resides in the entire world, especially in the Kailāsa, Mandara mountains, Himalaya mountains, Maru mountains, and the hearts of the devotees. Śaṅkara the Universal Self always resides in the hearts of the devotees. **Māheśvara who has detached self from all previous rites, rituals and religious practices, and who has learnt that the whole universe is a form of Śiva, and that Śiva always shines in the heart, becomes a Prasādi.**

## **Aṅgasthalas of Prasādīsthala**

Māheśvara, in whom the bondage has been destroyed through steadfast faith in the Liṅga, and who is having peace/calmness of mind, is said to be a Prasādi. Here, it appears that Prasāda means calmness, tranquility, clearness, etc.. Prasādīsthala has seven Aṅgasthalas.

**25 Prasādīsthala/Prasādamāhātmyasthala:** It is said that mental sign that shows purity, is Prasāda. The object offered to Śiva is Prasāda; the object returned from the grace of Śiva is the cause of mental purity of the devotee. One, who obtains such a Prasāda which is the cause of knowledge of Śiva, thus acquiring the purity of mind, is said to be a Prasādi. It has been stated that Prasāda does many things - Prasāda is like a physician curing diseases, like an elixir for good health, a purifier of senses and mind, and many other such things. Whatever that is offered to Śiva, be it leaf, flower, fruit, water, and then returned as Prasāda, is to be taken by the devotee. Similarly, the Śiva devotees are to accept the Prasāda of Guru and Jaṅgama/Śivayōgi.

**26 Gurumāhātmyasthala:** It is said that Śiva appears as Guru with Śiva's knowledge, for the good of all people. Wise devotees should not make any distinction between Śiva and Guru. The Guru is a teacher giving knowledge to devotees, and should not be insulted or compared to ordinary people. Devotion towards Guru should be the same as that towards Śiva.

**27 Liṅgamāhātmyasthala:** Liṅga is the ancient ever present Brahman. It represents the inseparable Śiva and Śakti, and is the Universe. It can not be known without the grace of the Guru. Sacred Liṅga which is

infused with Śiva's knowledge by the Guru is the Śivaliṅga/Iṣṭaliṅga. Yōgis and sages attain their status through the worship of Śivaliṅga. One should worship Śivaliṅga.

**28 Jaṅgamamāhātmyasthala:** It is said that the bond between Guru and disciple is the greatness of Liṅga; where as the greatness of Jaṅgama is the realization of the Supreme Knowledge in all. One, who has learnt that Śiva is one's own inner nature, is known as Jaṅgama. One, who is without impurities and sees through Śivayōga that the Universe is of the nature of Intelligence, is a Śivayōgi. Śivayōgi has the knowledge that Śiva is the cause of removal of darkness of the terrible cycle of births (saṁsāra). Śivayōgi is a pious person who has conquered desires, anger, lust and delusion, who is free from greed and ego, who sees a clod, a stone and gold in the same way, and who has realized Śiva in one's own Self. **Whoever has both the knowledge and thought of Śiva, is of the nature of Śiva.** When Śivayōgi enters a home, the house is sanctified. Śivayōgi/Jaṅgama is the means to liberation.

**29 Bhaktamāhātmyasthala:** Greatness of Bhakta (devotee) makes the greatness of Guru, Liṅga and Jaṅgama. Those, who worship the Supreme in their action, in their mind and in speech, are praised as devotees. Bhakta's devotion to Śiva takes one out of the fear of saṁsāra (cycle of births). For the devotee of Śiva there is no merit or sin from karma, for others there is bondage from karma. Irrespective of any caste, a devotee of Śiva is as respectable as Śiva.

**30 Śaraṇamāhātmyasthala:** Śaraṇa is the one who has completely surrendered to Śiva. Śaraṇa's greatness is the greatness of Guru, Liṅga and Jaṅgama.

Once, one has completely devoted one's mental, vocal and physical actions to Śiva, sacrificial rites and rituals are of no use for anything. Sacrificial Yajñas may lead one to Heaven, but it is not a permanent reward; it lasts until the exhaustion of merits (good karma). Complete surrender to the Supreme results in permanent liberation. **One, whose mind is turned inwards, and whose conscience is absorbed in Śiva, that person is liberated and the family is purified.**

**31 Śivaprasādamāhātmyasthala:** This sthala describes the greatness of Śivaprasāda which arises from the experience of greatness of Guru, Liṅga, devotees, Śaraṇas and others. Śivaprasāda removes afflictions arising out of terrible saṁsāra. For all lives deep devotion comes from Śivaprasāda which is available to everyone – one in the womb, one being born, one already born, or anyone irrespective of the caste or creed. Reason for the movement for the wheel of Saṁsāra is karma, and Śivaprasāda removes it. Śivaprasāda makes everything appear as Śiva. **One whose pure mind is always absorbed in the inner Liṅga, that person experiences Paraśiva. Prasādi who realizes this state of non-duality (oneness) becomes Prāṇaliṅgi.**

## Āṅgasthalas of Prāṇaliṅgisthala

During the previous stages of Bhakta, Māheśvara and Prasādi, action predominated, and the concept of duality progressed to the concept of non-duality. Here, in the Prāṇaliṅgisthala, the path of knowledge predominates, and the oneness philosophy gets established. Prāṇaliṅgisthala has five Āṅgasthalas.

**32 Prāṇaliṅgisthala:** This sthala describes what Prāṇaliṅga is and who Prāṇaliṅgi is. Prāṇa is the life energy which has five divisions – the same word *Prāṇa* refers to ascending vital energy associated with inhalation, but it could also be associated with both inhalation and exhalation, and is said to be located in the body in the area between the naval and the heart; *Apāna* is the descending vital energy associated with exhalation, and is said to be located in the lower half of the trunk; *Vyāna* is the vital energy circulating in all the limbs, and associated with ‘through-breath’; *Udāna* the ‘up-breath’ is connected with the speech and eructation, and denotes the ascent of attention into the higher state of consciousness; and *Samāna* the ‘mid-breath’ is connected with the digestive process, and is said to be localized in the abdominal region (see ‘Prāṇa and Kuṇḍalini’ article).

Those, who can control Prāṇa and Apāna by breath control (Prāṇāyāma), say that Prāṇaliṅga arises from the inner naval center through merging of Prāṇa and Apāna. Prāṇa gets absorbed into Prāṇaliṅga as the fog melts away in the sun; one who experiences this is a Prāṇaliṅgi. Yōgis see Parabrahmaliṅga in their hearts like a flash of light, during meditation. Ignorant ones can not see this. **In this Prāṇaliṅgisthala, those, who continue to worship external Liṅga instead of the**



**shining inner Supreme Liᅅga, are ignorant fools, it is said.** A Yōgi, who withdrawing from outside objects, concentrates on the internal Liᅅga, and always stays in that state, is called a Prāᅇaliᅅgi. One, who has learnt to ignore the external world born out of Māyā, and is always absorbed in the Liᅅga of the nature of consciousness-bliss, is a Prāᅇaliᅅgi. One, who feels the union of the Power of Śakti and its form the Prāᅇaliᅅga, is said to be Prāᅇaliᅅgi.

**33 Prāᅇaliᅅgārĉanasthala:** This sthala is about worshipping Prāᅇaliᅅga through Prāᅇāyāma (breath control) and meditation (see 'Prāᅇa and Kuᅇᅇalini' article). The body is a temple and the heart is the inner sanctum where the Supreme Liᅅga is enshrined. Worship of this sacred Liᅅga seated in the heart lotus, with flowers in the form of pure mental feelings, pervading the body with fragrance in the form of inner vital-breath, adorning with the inner ether, sprinkling with cool nectar from the moon at the crown of the head, closing the nine doors of the senses, lighting the lamp of knowledge, and with pure mental states – patience as the water for bathing Liᅅga, knowledge of differentiation as the sacred cloth, truth as decorations for Liᅅga, renunciation as the flower garland, deep meditation as the sandal-wood paste, non-egoism as the sacred rice akᅇata, faith as incense, the great knowledge of Brahman as the lamp, presentation of the Universe born of Māyā as the offering, being silent as the sound of the bell, dedicating the sense objects as the tāᅅbūla made of betel leaves areca nuts and lime, being free from illusion of senses as ritual of walking around the Liᅅga, and the power of knowledge of the union with Liᅅga as the act of obeisance – constitutes worship of Prāᅇaliᅅga.

**34 Śivayōgasamādhisthala:** This sthala explains the Yōgic meditation on the unity of Śiva and Jīva to accomplish Samādhi which is perfection in contemplation. Paramātman (Supreme Self) is described as beyond all principles (tattvas), glowing with existence-consciousness-bliss, self illuminating, can not be grasped, can not be described by speech or in the mind, illumined by the Great Śakti called Umā, and in the form of Haṁsa (Śiva, who is inseparably associated with Umā who is Śakti in the form of intelligence, is the Haṁsa/swan; it resides in a lake which is the minds of the devotees). The aspirant is to contemplate on the Paramātman as So'ham (He is I). Mahāliṅga is Parabrahman and Prāṇa is Jīva. One should be absorbed in deep meditation to accomplish oneness between them. Prāṇaliṅgi is to contemplate on the lotuses stationed in the six çakras/wheels. Brahman resides in these centers. In addition one is to contemplate on the thousand-petalled lotus at the crown of the head. In it an orb of the moon is to be visualized; at its center is the Kailāsa abode and in it Śambhu is to be contemplated (see 'Prāṇa and Kuṇḍalini' article). Those whose minds are turned inwards experience the bliss of Self.

**35 Liṅganijasthala:** This sthala explains what Liṅga means. Internal Śivaliṅga is the Universal Self, and it is considered by the wise as the true form of the Supreme Liṅga. The Universe gets absorbed into it, and then again it manifests out of the Liṅga which is the eternal Brahman. Parabrahman is designated as Śiva who is said to be Liṅga. Prakṛti which is the cause of the worlds is not Liṅga. There is no principle above Liṅga. Liṅga is the Supreme Brahman which is in the nature of existence-intelligence-bliss. Meditating upon it as one's own Self, attains that state.

**36 Aṅgaliṅgasthala:** This sthala explains who Aṅgaliṅgin is. It is said that Aṅga is the knowledge and the Liṅga is to be known; the one who knows both is Aṅgaliṅgin. Aṅga exists in Liṅga, and Liṅga exists in Aṅga; one, in whom both exist, is Aṅgaliṅgin. One, who always worships shining Liṅga existing inside, is Aṅgaliṅgin. One, who steadily concentrates on the Liṅga, gets liberated even though the one is still inside the body, becomes the wise one, and becomes a Guru. Prāṇaliṅgi, who worships Prāṇaliṅga with the concept that Śiva is one's own Self, and whose spiritual experience attains maturity, becomes a Śaraṇa.

## Aṅgasthalas of Śaraṇasthala

A Prāṇaliṅgi, who has gained Śiva's knowledge, who has realized the union of Aṅga and Liṅga, and who experiences bliss as a result, becomes a Śaraṇa. It is stated that a devotee, man or a woman, is to regard oneself as the spiritual wife of Śiva. Śaraṇasthala has four Aṅgasthalas.

**37 Śaraṇasthala:** In this sthala, Śaraṇa is to exhibit two aspects. One is that the devotee is to contemplate on the Self as the spiritual spouse of Śiva, and the second is that the devotee should not speak of another deity/God. The reason for mentioning the second aspect here again is not clear; it has already been covered in the Māheśvarasthala; Śaraṇa is already following oneness philosophy.

**38 Tāmasanirasanasthala:** Tamas is one of the three Guṇas (see 'Creation' article), and it is the veiling power that causes delusion and ignorance. Nirasana, as indicated before, stands for disregarding or detachment. Śaraṇa has neither the tamasic qualities such as ignorance, darkness, laziness, inertia, slumber, carelessness or falsehood, nor the qualities of Rajas, such as, passion, desire, anger, hatred etc.. However Śaraṇa does have Sattva qualities, such as peacefulness, restraint, discernment, forgiveness, compassion, truthfulness, and the sense of righteousness. Purity of mind is the essence of Jñānayōga.

**39 Nirdēśasthala:** Nirdēśa means guidance. Once the darkness of Tamas is removed, the Guru imparts the knowledge of guidance. It is said that Guru alone can reveal the Supreme Principle (Śivatattva) to the embodied souls. Guru with the spiritual knowledge can

cleanse the mind of the devotee. Gurus are the abodes of compassion and are totally absorbed in the non-duality of Śiva. Śivajñāna is the knowledge that one's own self is Śiva.

**40 Śīlasampādanasthala:** Śīla is a deep spiritual desire, a longing or yearning. Sampādana is earning, acquiring or attaining. In this stage, the devotee is said to have acquired this Śīla to know the principle (tattva) of unity of Self with Śiva. This is accomplished through the instruction by a noble person such as a Guru. Similar to the wife's devotion and love for her husband, the one who has undying devotion and love for Śiva, is called Suśīla (virtuous person). One who is engrossed in the knowledge that one's own Self is Śiva, is regarded as Śīlavān.

## **Aṅgasthalas of Aikyasthala**

Śaraṇa, who has attained bliss by contemplating on Prāṇalīṅga, and who then meditates on the one's identity with Śiva, becomes an Aikya. Aikyasthala has four Aṅgasthalas.

**41 Aikyasthala:** When Śaraṇa, who has pure intentions, and who is completely free of any kind of desires or pleasure arising of the sense objects, merges into the bliss of Śiva, that Śaraṇa, then, becomes an Aikya. In this stage the devotee is totally free from the three malas, and the devotee's mental activity is completely free from any blemishes. This devotee deeply contemplates on 'I am Śiva', and as a consequence becomes Śiva. Having attained this state, the devotee does not see the Universe created by Māyā; only Oneness (non-duality) remains. The Aikya crosses over the ocean of saṁsāra, and is free from the cycle of rebirth. The Śivayōgi experiences Śivānanda – the bliss of Oneness of Śiva.

**42 Ācārasaṁpattisthala:** Ācāra refers to the discipline of religious practices. When the knowledge of Śivādvaita has been firmly understood by the wise who are in the state of oneness, no action is expected of them. Even though still embodied, the Aikya will not be tainted by any religious practices whether performed or not. An Aikya continues good practices and sees everyone the same whether they have merit or not, and irrespective of any caste or creed. Yōgi, still embodied, is completely immersed in Śiva, and whatever Śivayōgi does, is Śiva's doing.

**43 Ēkabhājanasthala:** Ēka is one, and bhājana is resort or refuge. The whole Universe is Śiva, and the

Aikya has only one refuge in Śiva. The Yōgi sees oneness in one's Self – all the worlds, the peoples, and Śiva – all in one; and with that, oneness of Prasāda is achieved. Yōgi merged in Śiva, with purity in the heart and without any disturbances, is the one who is liberated.

**44 Sahabhōjanasthala:** Sahabhōjana means 'dining in the company of others'. Understanding that Guru, Śiva and disciple are all one's own Self, is like eating everything at once. Śiva, the Universe, and the Guru are in one's Self as One, and this is Sahabhōjana. As one contemplates on the Self, one's own Self flows into the Supreme Ether of Consciousness; this unionless union, according to the enlightened, is the Supreme Knowledge which is the nature of Sat-Cit-Ānanda (eternal existence-consciousness-infinite bliss).

After going through the spiritual practices of all the preceding sthalas, the Yōgi attains oneness, and becomes a container of the riches of liberation. **Although liberated, the Yōgi is still inside the body, and is called a Jīvanmukta.**

## Liᅅgasthalas

Śivādvaita Philosophy continues in all the Liᅅgasthalas. The devotee, who has completed the good practices of the Aᅅgasthalas, has become a Jīvanmukta. Jīva has attained Mukti; it has been liberated from the cycle of births. But the Jīva is still inside the body. Liᅅgasthalas pertaining to the ᅅaᅅsthala are for the benefit of the Jīvanmukta where Jīva becomes completely indifferent to or devoid of the body. There are fifty-seven Liᅅgasthalas that are distributed as sub-sthalas into the six main sthalas of ᅅaᅅsthala. Many terms are used for the Jīvanmukta, namely, Yōgi, Śivayōgi, Parayōgi, Paraśivayōgi, Guru, and many terms of the sthalas as they are attained. It is said that it may not be possible to depict the true meaning of the attainment of Oneness, because of the intricacies involved.



## Liᅅgasthalas of Bhaktasthala

Bhaktasthala has nine Liᅅgasthalas, and it is said that these nine sthalas are told first because of their pre-eminence.

**45 Dīkᅅāgurusthala:** Dīkᅅāguru is one who is adept in giving Dīkᅅa which involves giving the Supreme Knowledge to the disciple and eliminating the bonds of cycle of births. Jīvanmukta has become a Dīkᅅāguru. 'Gu' in Guru stands for what is beyond the three Guᅅas, and 'ru' in Guru stands for what is beyond 'Rūpa' which means beyond form or without form. Dīkᅅāguru is also called Ācārya because the one not only collects the Śāstra/Philosophy teachings, but also practices and teaches the path of good practice to the disciples. One who shows complete consciousness of all things through the powers of Ātmayōga is the master of the Universe (Jagadguru).

**46 Śīkᅅāgurusthala:** Śīkᅅā means disciple/pupil. In this sthala the Guru not only instructs the pupil, but also answers the questions posed by the pupil, pertaining to the doctrine. Śīkᅅāguru through the one's own state of illumined knowledge illuminates the portrait of Self in the pupil's heart.

**47 Jñānagurusthala:** Jñāna is knowledge. The teacher, who reveals the truth of the Vēdas to the pupil, removes all doubts about Śivādvaita Philosophy, and gives the right knowledge, is the Jñānaguru. The Jñānaguru is a treasury of knowledge, delivers special knowledge, fulfills the aspirations, and extends the grace to all.

**48 Kriyāliṅgasthala:** The Liṅga, in which all actions and deeds of worship end through the spiritual knowledge of Jñānaguru, is the Kriyāliṅga. All deeds through worship become Kriyāliṅga; so the Yōgis having given up all sacrifices, fire rituals and penances, are absorbed in the worship of Liṅga, and achieve all the actions through Kriyāliṅga.

**49 Bhāvaliṅgasthala:** Similar to the actions uniting in Kriyāliṅga, the feelings also become one with Bhāvaliṅga. The Bhāvaliṅga marches in the path of knowledge, and does not have any defects or impurities of Iṣṭaliṅga made out of stone or soil. One, who ignoring outside Liṅga, worships with feelings, the inner Liṅga, in the form of consciousness in the mind, is a Bhāvaliṅgi. One, who practices Yōga, who worships Jyōtirliṅga with feelings in the three lotus energy centers (see 'Prāṇa and Kuṇḍalini' article), and who realizes it with Self-experience, that person, does not worship Iṣṭaliṅga made out of stone, mud or wood. It is said that the inner worship of Śiva is for the enlightened.

**50 Jñānaliṅgasthala:** When the knowledge revealed by the Bhāvaliṅga completes its union with Liṅga, it becomes Jñānaliṅga. Brahman of the Upaniṣads, which is different from the trimūrtis (Brahma, viṣṇu and Rudra), and which is beyond the three Guṇas (sattva, rajas and tamas), is the Jñānaliṅga. Action is associated with Sthūliṅga (gross Liṅga), and feeling is associated with Sūkṣmaliṅga (subtle Liṅga); above these two is Parātman (Supreme Ātman) which is associated with knowledge. Sthūla and Sūkṣma, the creations of mātā, are artificial; awareness of the Supreme is everlasting. One, who knows Brahman which is in the highest place, is the Jñānaliṅgi.

**51 Svayasthala:** Svaya refers to oneself. One, who knows oneself as the Liṅga, is the Svayaliṅga. When the knowledge of the Jñānaliṅga is absorbed into the Self-knowledge, it is Svayaliṅga. Meditation, Śiva-knowledge, alms and solitude are the four practices of the Śivayōgi.

**52 Ćarasthala:** Ćara refers to a person who wanders on one's own accord. Here, it is much more than that. Śivayōgi has no notion of 'I and mine'; wanders everywhere without any discriminatory feelings; sees everything the same; sees everything as Brahman; continues to experience the Supreme Bliss of oneness; does not experience amusement or sorrow at comments or insults; wanders with the mind turned away from any wrong conduct; and stays in the true Self-experiences of the bliss of awareness. Ćara is a Jaṅgama.

**53 Parasthala:** Para means 'supreme' or 'highest'. Parasthala is the state of realization that there is nothing higher than the state of Self. This state is beyond Karma or anything else, and is the state of the Absolute Brahman. One who attains this stage is a Parayōgi.

## Liᅅgasthalas of Māheśvarasthala

There are nine Liᅅgasthalas in Māheśvarasthala.

**54 Kriyāgamasthala:** Kriyā means 'action', and Āgama means 'traditional text'. Śivayōgi of the Supreme state is Śiva. Any worship of Śiva is action. The traditional texts are in favor of such action. Such action, performed according to the prescribed methods, and not prohibited by the sacred traditional texts, is Kriyāgama.

**55 Bhāvāgamasthala:** Mental cherishing or feeling is Bhāva. Similar to the actions as above, Śivayōgi continues mental cherishing by way of meditation. It is said that action without feeling is like speech without any meaning. Śivayōgi worships with pure thought and intentions according to the traditional texts.

**56 Jñānāgamasthala:** Similar to Kriyā and Bhāva, Śivayōgi continues to experience and express the Śiva-knowledge which is needed for the emancipation of ordinary people. The conviction, that there is nothing other than Śiva, and I am Śiva, is the best knowledge. Śiva knowledge dispels the darkness of Ignorance.

**57 Sakāyasthala:** Kāya refers to the body, and Sakāya means 'embodied' or 'one with the body'. The body as seen and known by others is the means for action, thought and knowledge; but, although the Paraśivayōgi is considered as Sakāya, the one is totally free from any attachment to the body (mind is also considered as a part of the body). This sthala explains the importance of the body - without the body there would be no action, no feeling, no faith, and no knowledge. The body is still needed to serve others.

**58 Akāyasthala:** Akāya means 'one without a body. The Parayōgi does not have any mental state of possession of a body, and is free from any relation to Māyā. Parayōgi has no delusion arising out of the senses, and is totally detached from the body. Having been one with Śiva, the Parayōgi considers Self as not a human being or God, but Śiva.

**59 Parakāyasthala:** Parayōgi is beyond the reach of Māyā who is the cause of Prakṛti, and is in the original truth-knowledge-bliss state of Śiva. This is Parakāya state. The Parakāya considers the whole body and the whole Universe together as the nature of consciousness, and thus, is like Śiva.

**60 Dharmācārasthala:** Dharma refers to righteousness and the code of conduct; ācāra refers to spiritual practice. The spiritual practices of the liking of Parakāyayōgi are the codes of conduct for the good of all. The list of the codes of conduct includes, but not limited to, the following: non-violence, truth, non-stealing, celibacy, kindness, forgiveness, charity, worship, recitation of the Mantra, and meditation. The Mahāyōgi does not give up this practice, and sets an example to the ordinary people, by practicing it.

**61 Bhāvācārasthala:** Mental action with the concept that everything is to the glory of Śiva, is Bhāvācāra, and it is to be practiced by all. Mahāyōgi is not affected by the merit or demerit of such practices.

**62 Jñānācārasthala:** Dedicated spiritual practice based on Śiva-knowledge is Jñānācāra. The Śivayōgi's Jñānācāra is an example of enlightenment for all the embodied. This Śiva-knowledge (Śivādvaita Philosophy) consists of oneness of the Self and Śiva. The

enlightened person with pure feelings from pure practice sees the one and the only luster of Śiva everywhere, gets rid of the knowledge of the ordinary universe through the right knowledge, and moves around as the Jīvanmukta.

## Liᅅgasthalas of Prasādisthala

There are nine Liᅅgasthalas in Prasādisthala.

**63 Kāyānugrahasthala:** Kāya refers to the body, and anugraha refers to conferring grace. One, who does favor by just being in the body, and who serves the ordinary people this way, is called a Kāyānugraha. Similar to Śiva granting favor to the beings by taking the idol form, the Yōgi, by remaining in the body confers favor to all. The Jīvanmukta wanders in the body doing good to everyone, but is not aware of the body, and has no limitations from it.

**64 Indriyānugrahasthala:** Indriya means an organ, a sense organ; here it is used to mean senses. The mere sight of the Parakāya induces discriminative power in the senses of all people. Outward operation of the senses reveals the world and the worldly life, but the inward operation of the senses results in wordlessness. Although the Yōgi is endowed with all the senses, the Yōgi perceives only Śiva and nothing else. Senses go where the mind goes. In the Parayōgi the mind has merged in Śiva, so, the consciousness, the senses perceive, is Śiva.

**65 Prāᅅānugrahasthala:** Prāᅅa is the life-breath or life-energy. Śivayōgi, who has realized that everything is identical with Śiva, and then realizes that prāᅅa is absorbed in Śiva, does favor to the life-breath of all beings. Prāᅅa sustains the life functions of the body; energy for this sustenance is Śiva. When prāᅅa merges into Śiva, the body of the Śivayōgi is sustained through the residue of the innate power.

**66 Kāyārpitasthala:** Kāya refers to the body, arpaṇa is submitting in dedication, and arpita is one who does the arpaṇa. The Śivayōgi relinquishes all bodily attachments as arpaṇa. When surrendered, the form of Śivayōgi is the form of Śiva.

**67 Karaṇārpitasthala:** In this sthala, the Śivayōgi relinquishes all the senses as dedicated offerings to Śiva. For ordinary people, the senses including the mind which is said to be the Lord of the senses are means of enjoyment. But for Śivayōgi, all the senses become materials of worship.

**68 Bhāvārpitasthala:** In this sthala, the Śivayōgi relinquishes the feelings and other mental inclinations as dedicated offerings, and becomes a Bhāvārpita. In ordinary people, Bhāva is the cause of bondage, and when Bhāva is rendered pure, there is liberation.

**69 Śiṣyasthala:** Śiṣya means a disciple. This sthala describes what śiṣya means to the Guru. The disciple has to have aspiration to be liberated through Śivayōga, and then only the disciple will always be instructed by the Śivayōgi. The Jīvanmukta is the spiritual teacher, a friend, and a philosopher to the śiṣya. The śiṣya's attachment to the Guru is always firm in mind, speech, and physical action. Śiṣya is self-restrained, never disobeys the Guru, and treats the Guru as Śiva. Śiṣya obtains the Śivādvaitajñāna through Śivayōga taught by the Guru.

**70 Śuśrūṣusthala:** The Sanskrit verb root 'śru' means 'to hear'. Śuśrūṣu means 'one desirous of hearing'. Śiṣya is fond of hearing what the Guru is teaching. Guru teaches and answers questions posed by the śiṣya in such a way that the śiṣya is always desirous



of hearing what the Guru has to say. Having respectfully asked by the disciple, the Guru teaches the fundamental truth – Śiva of the nature of existence-intelligence-bliss is the Supreme truth, Śiva is the eternal Reality and there is nothing else, Śiva is to be realized with the firm conception 'I am Śiva'. Once the Śivādvaita knowledge is firmly established, then, the disciple will be liberated while the body is still alive.

**71 Sēvyasthala:** Sēva is service, and Sēvyā is the one who is served. When the Supreme Knowledge imparted by the Guru, becomes firmly established in the mind of the disciple, the śiṣya becomes worthy to be served by all. The disciple, then becomes the Sēvyā, and is to be treated same as the Guru.

## Liᅅgasthalas of Prāᅅaliᅅgisthala

Prāᅅaliᅅgisthala has nine Liᅅgasthalas. In the last three sub-sthalas of the Prasādisthala, the guidance provided by the Guru to śiᅅya is explained; this context of advancement of the śiᅅya under the guidance of the Guru continues.

**72 Ātmasthala:** When the disciple described above as Sēvyā, discards the individuality of the Self, and assumes the state of the Supreme Reality in accordance with the teaching of the Guru, then, the disciple is Ātman. This Jīvātman, residing in the disciple's heart, flashes like a lamp. Although it is said that Ātman is without a body and is all pervasive, it still resides inside the body made up of Māyāśakti. Ātman is made to be in association with the body to enjoy the remaining merits of karma. Due to this nearness, and due to the influence of the malas (impurities), the Ātman still possesses the notion of I (ahaᅅkāra), resulting in the misinterpretation of the non-attachment of the body. The influence of the malas is eradicated by the grace of the Guru.

**73 Antarātmasthala:** Through the knowledge given by the Guru, the embodied soul, which has been called Jīva, has given up its attachments and has become the inner Ātman. The state of Antarātman is described as between the Jīvātman and Paramātman due to the presence of characteristics of both. In this sthala, by virtue of the knowledge, that the person or the body is not the nature of Ātman (rid of the ahaᅅkāra notion), the Ātman becomes Antarātman.

**74 Paramātmasthala:** When the ignorance of the nature of the malas (impurities) is eliminated, the Antarātman becomes Paramātman. The life principle of

the entire universe, which stands above all principles, and which is completely devoid of malas, is Paramātman. Paramātman shines with brightness enveloping the whole universe, and also shines as inner light in the individual souls.

**75 Nirdēhāgamasthala:** Nirdēha means a state of bodylessness. The Śivayōgi, after realizing that the Self is the Paramātman, although still within the body, is not affected by the disturbances of the body, and takes the state of bodylessness. One with the traditional thought of 'I am Śiva', who is in the state of Paramātman, has no association with the body.

**76 Nirbhāvāgamasthala:** Similar to the above sthala, Śivayōgi, who is free from thoughts that are not in accordance with the true nature of Self, attains this sthala. One who has ascended to the state of oneness, has no delusions of any kind. Śivayōgi at this stage does not surrender to hunger, and does not fear old age or death.

**77 Naṣṭāgamasthala:** Naṣṭa means loss and Āgama means traditional text, but here, it means knowledge of differentiation or conception of difference. Absence of this type of knowledge of distinctions (Bhēdaśūnya) is characteristic of this sthala. The triad of the knower, the known and the knowledge, is absent, and only the state of consciousness is present.

**78 Ādiprasādīsthala:** Ādi means the original cause/source/reason of all. The substratum of it all is Ādi. Prasādi is the one who receives the gracious favor. The Śivayōgi, who is in a state of tranquility, has received the gracious favor of the source of it all, and has become the Ādiprasādi.

**79 Antyaprasādisthala:** Antya refers to the final state/resort of all. The state, into which all things are absorbed, is Antya. All the creations of Māyā, such as Gods, beings and things, get absorbed into the Supreme Principle, and hence there is no specific knowledge of these. Śivayōgi, who has realization of Paramātman, and who has received the Ādiprasāda, now receives Antyaprasāda, and becomes Antyaprasādi.

**80 Sēvyaprasādisthala:** Sēvya means worthy to be served. Guru is worthy to be served by all, and Guru is Śiva. The gracious favor is the manifestation of the Supreme Bliss. The identity between the Guru and the gracious favor in the form of the Supreme Bliss is the Sēvyaprasāda. Śivayōgi, who is content with the Supreme Bliss of knowledge, has no inclination to enjoy anything else. Śivayōgi, at this stage, is not bound by the practices of tapas, mantra, yōga, meditation, and such. Śivayōgi is only absorbed in the knowledge of the Self.

## Liᅅgasthalas of Śaraᅅasthala

There are twelve Liᅅgasthalas in Śaraᅅasthala.

**81 Dīkᅅāpādōdakasthala:** Dīkᅅā, as had been indicated before, is the spiritual initiation process, where Guru infuses (dī for dīyate meaning gives) Śivādvaita knowledge into Śiᅅya, and removes (kᅅa for kᅅīyate meaning destroys) the fetters of bondage due to malas (impurities). Pādōdaka is the water that has washed Iᅅᅅaliᅅga; it also stands for water that has washed feet of Guru or Jaᅅgama (pāda means foot, and udaka means water). Here, it says, Pāda is Guru, and Udaka is Śiᅅya, and the union through Dīkᅅā is Pādōdaka. Similarly, it says, Pāda is Supreme Bliss, and Udaka is Knowledge, and their harmony through Dīkᅅā is Dīkᅅāpādōdaka. Through spiritual initiation, the notion of duality between Guru and Śiᅅya is removed, resulting in acquisition of Dīkᅅāpādōdaka by the Śivayōgi. Hence, Śivayōgi does not aspire for anything else.

**82 Śīkᅅāpādōdakasthala:** Śīkᅅā means spiritual instruction. Similar to the realization/enlightenment of the Supreme Bliss through Dīkᅅā as above, here, there is enlightenment through the spiritual instruction by the Guru to the Śiᅅya. When the Supreme Bliss without limitation of place and time is experienced, there is nothing else to be seen, heard, or known.

**83 Jñānapādōdakasthala:** That knowledge of Bliss attained through spiritual union is Jñānaguru. Oneness of Śiᅅya (Ātman) and that Jñānaguru results in Jñānapādōdaka. In this state of Supreme Bliss, there is no thought about the world.

**84 Kriyāniᅅpattisthala:** Kriyā refers to action, and niᅅpatti means termination. Any action performed by the

Śivayōgi, appears imaginary, and all merits of any action/deed have become terminated. Irrespective of any action performed or not by the enlightened Yōgi, there is no accumulation of any merit of the deeds. In the Śivayōgi, who has experienced the Supreme Bliss, there is no distress of any karma.

**85 Bhāvaniṣpattisthala:** Similar to the above sthala, in the Śivayōgi who has attained the Supreme Bliss as above, all mental conceptions cease to exist. When the conception of 'I am Śiva' merges into Śiva, the Śivayōgi is in a state of unity with Śiva.

**86 Jñānaniṣpattisthala:** Similar to, and following the above two sthalas, the knowledge of the day-to-day worldly affairs disappears. In the Śivayōgi, who has completely merged in the Great Bliss of Śiva who is of the nature of the Supreme Ether, there is no knowledge of any other things.

**87 Piṇḍākāśasthala:** Here, piṇḍa means body, and ākāśa means space (also ether, cosmos, sky). Similar to the space being in the body, the Ātman is also in the body. The concept, here, is that, although the Ātman is in the body, it is not confined by it; it is all pervasive, infinite, and encompasses the space. The state of awareness of this concept of Ātman encompassing the space is the feature of this sthala. It is said, that the body is illumined by enlightenment, and that the body is a temple made up of 36 principles (tattvas; see 'Creation' article). In it there is a lotus-seat in the form of pure mind. In this embodied being, Paramēśvara shines in the form of Supreme Ether, and resides in the cavity of the heart-cave. It is said, that this Śivapuram (the body forming Śiva's city) is of seven ingredients, and that there is the heart-lotus abode with subtle

ether. There, Śiva, in the form of Saċċidānanda (being-consciousness-bliss) always resides, shining like the ether reflected in water. This is to be cherished.

**88 Bindvākāśasthala:** Bindu means 'dot', 'drop', 'dew drop', but here it is used to mean small. Ether is known to be all pervasive, and spreads above all beings; similarly Ātman is knowable. Air is all pervasive and assumes the life-breath of all beings; similarly Ātman is all pervasive and is in all beings. The heart-lotus resides in all beings; therein, Śiva gets reflected as the small Ātman. This is to be cherished.

**89 Mahākāśasthala:** Maha means great. The great ākāśa (ether/sky), in the body (piṇḍāṇḍa) and outside all over (brahmāṇḍa), has no difference. Similarly, Ātman, in the Paramātman and the Jīvātman, is the same (does not differ). Furthermore, Śiva, the Supreme Brahman, is the Supreme Ether – it is indescribable; is without any comparison; is beyond speech and mind; is complete; is Reality and Bliss; is Supreme Consciousness; transcends time; is above arts/creativity; is not subject to modifications; is understood by Self-realization; and is the source of all luminaries (stars). All this is said to be Liṅga, and the Universe does not exist without it. The un-manifest Supreme Ether is the brilliance of Liṅga where the Yōgis merge. The Divine Consciousness in the form of Supreme Bliss is the highest sacred state; that is said to be the Supreme Ether. Without any relation to adjuncts (upādhi), and with pure consciousness, the Supreme Ether is the canvas for a splendid picture of the Universe.

**90 Kriyāprakāśasthala:** Kriyāprakāśa refers to the inner action of contemplation on Śiva, resulting in the inner vision or revelation that Śiva is one's own Self. The

Śivayōgi turns the mind inwards, and delights on a vision of Śiva inside. Realizing the Śivatattva, which is beyond Guṇas, as one's own Self, the Śivayōgi experiences extreme delight. All the action of the Paramātman flashes inside with delight.

**91 Bhāvaprakāśasthala:** Similar to the above sthala, here, all the inner concepts and thoughts, that appear, do not differ in the Ātman. All conceptions that arise are Śiva, and nothing else is conceived.

**92 Jñānaprakāśasthala:** Again, similar to the above two sthalas, here, whatever knowledge there is, it is not different in the Ātman. The contemplation consisting of concentration on the oneness of Ātman is the nature of the Bliss of Consciousness. The knowledge of the definition of Brahman as the undivided bliss and existence is the Knowledge of Brahman.



## Liṅgasthalas of Aikyasthala

There are nine Liṅgasthalas in Aikyasthala. In the Śaraṇasthala, it is the experience of the Bliss of oneness. Here, in the Aikyasthala, it is the Higher Knowledge – the Supreme Knowledge of oneness.

**93 Svīkṛtaprasādīsthala:** This sthala is about accepting the Prasāda in the form of the Supreme Knowledge. The Śivayōgi contemplates on the formless Reality; does not focus on any symbol. In the Ātman, made up of Ćit (intelligence/consciousness), there is no Primary meaning of duality of Śiva and Jīva; and also there is no Indicated meaning of non-duality of Śiva-Jīva. It is all attribute-less Ātman and nothing else. Without any obstruction, the Supreme Knowledge in the form of Prasāda is accepted. Having secured the realization, the Śivayōgi stays in one's own Self. As all the Principles (tattvas) have already merged in the Jyōtirliṅga which is inside, the Śivayōgi is not contaminated by anything. As all information has been offered and then merged into the pure Ātman which is Śiva, the Śivayōgi takes the Prasāda.

**94 Śiṣṭōdanasthala:** Śiṣṭōdana means 'remnant of food'. Māyā has been absorbed into Ćilliṅga (Ćit-Liṅga; Liṅga in the form of consciousness), and has been overwhelmed by the brightness of Self-awareness, and hence, what remains of Māyā is the remnant of food for the Śivayōgi.

**95 Ćarāĉaralayasthala:** Ćara means movable, and aĉara means immovable; laya means dissolution or absorption. When the universe, with the movable and the immovable things, merges in the Liṅga, the movable-immovable vanish in the Śivayōgi who is without any bodily characteristics. As the Śivayōgi has

attained the Supreme state beyond wakefulness, dream and deep sleep states (attained the fourth state – the Turīya state), there is no evidence, there is no means to know, and there is no ordinary knowledge. Then, it says, after reaching beyond the fourth state (Turyātīta – state beyond the fourth Turīya state), far from the speech and mind, the Śivayōgi does not see the world again. The Śivayōgi does not see anything else, does not know anything else, and does not hear anything else.

**96 Bhāṇḍasthala:** Realization of or understanding the basic station of everything, is Bhāṇḍa. Vimarśa is said to be the basis of creation, maintenance, and dissolution of hundreds of crores (one crore is 10 million) of worlds of the Brahmāṇḍa. Vimarśa has been translated as 'Power to judge' or 'Power of discrimination'. Vimarśa is part of Śiva, and hence, it is in the Śivayōgi, and is part of the Ātman. The Śivayōgi, who is endowed with Vimarśa, is Parāhantā (has the notion of Supreme I-ness), is sarvajña (omniscient), all pervasive, all-witnessing, and omnipotent Mahēśvara. Vimarśa stations the Śivayōgi in one's own Self without anything else.

**97 Bhājanasthala:** Bhājana refers to refuge, resort, or receptacle. Bhājana is where Vimarśa the cause for creation, maintenance, and dissolution of the multitude of worlds appears. Where Parāśakti (Supreme Śakti) called Vimarśa is established, there is Brahman, and that is Bhājana of the universe. The syllable 'a' is Śiva, and the syllable 'ham' is Śakti. The word 'aham' meaning 'I' is Śiva-Śakti, and that is Brahman. Having attained the Supreme 'Aham', the Śivayōgi appears as the Ātman of the Universe.

**98 Āṅgālēpasthala:** Āṅga, here, refers to the body, and alēpa means not associated with. The Śivayōgi, whose form is well known, is not bound by the time, place, and other things. The great Yōgi, who is the Ātma of the whole Universe, is not affected by the worldly associations. There is no restriction or prohibition; and there is no indecision or mental impression. The Śivayōgi has no form of God, no form of human, no form of animal, and no other form, but is said to have Omni-form.

**99 Svaparājñasthala:** Sva-para-ajña means not aware of one's Self or any other Self. The Śivayōgi has entered into oneness, and does not know one's Self or any other Self. There is no delusion in the form of 'I' and 'You'; there is no union or separation; there is no conception of knowable or knower; there is no bondage or release; no joy or sorrow; no ignorance or knowledge; no superiority or inferiority; not above or below; no behind or in front; neither far nor near; is in all forms; is in consciousness-bliss-true form; is in the nature of Supreme Ether; and that is pure Parabrahman. In the Yōgi, who has attained oneness in Parabrahman, there is no awareness of one or the other. Due to oneness in the form of brilliance, there is no space-time limitation, and due to lack of awareness, there is no Self or other; and this state is Svaparājñasthala.

**100 Bhāvābhāvalayasthala:** Bhāva is feeling, and abhāva is non-feeling, but here, bhāva is positive conception, and abhāva is negative conception. Laya is dissolution. The accomplished Yōgi, who has become one with the Ether of consciousness which is a state similar to void (similar to Śūnya), has no feeling of 'You' or 'I', and has no conception of the positive or the negative. Nothing appears as form or non-form to the

Śivayōgi who has discarded Bhāva and Abhāva, and who shines with the brilliance of consciousness. Positive and negative notions are not evident in the Liṅgaikya (one totally merged in Liṅga), and this state is Bhāvābhāvalayasthala.

**101 Jñānaśūnyasthala:** Jñāna is knowledge, and the literal meaning of Śūnya is 'void', 'emptiness', or 'nothing'. The type of knowledge that determines the difference between Bhāva and Abhāva, depending upon the 'Para' and 'Apara', is the discriminative knowledge. This type of knowledge is not present in the Brahman. Attaining the state, where this discriminative knowledge is absent, is ascending to the Jñānaśūnyasthala. When water is poured into water, and when fire is offered into the fire, these do not appear separately. Similarly the Ātman is absorbed into Brahman, and does not appear separately. Without any modification, without any form, and without any boundaries, Parabrahman always stands without any differences. The knowledge that depends on the function of 'tripuṭī' (triad) as the knower, the known, and the knowledge, is absent in this state of oneness. Especially because of the absence of this type of knowledge, this state is considered to be similar to Śūnya. The knower and the knowledge is Śūnya; attributes like knowledge are also Śūnya. The beginning and the end, and everything in-between and at all times, are Śūnya. Simply characterized by the brilliance of Saçcīdānanda - Sat meaning truth, being, or eternal existence, Çit meaning pure knowledge, consciousness or intelligence, and Ānanda meaning infinite bliss – the Paramātman is like Śūnya.

In the one who has attained identity with Oneness, the knowledge is Śūnya; the means of getting values of life is Śūnya. There is no cause or consequence; and there

is nothing beyond it. The One is immortal (eternal). The One is in infinite bliss. And the One has become the Supreme Knowledge itself. The One with one's own illumination is the Jyōtirīṅga itself.

**ŌṂ NA MAḤ ŚI VĀ YA**

**ŌṂ NAMAḤ ŚIVĀYA**

**ŌṂ NAMAŚŚIVĀYA**

## PRĀṆA AND KUṆḌALINI

Prāṇa, an old Sanskrit word used in the Vēdas where it meant 'breath of the Cosmic Person', means breath of life in general. It also means life, life-force, life-energy and vital-breath. Prāṇa is a dynamic form of energy (kinetic energy), and is responsible for all the life-forces that make the embodiment of the Divine possible. Source of this energy is Liṅga. Viraśaivism considers that Liṅga has taken triple form in the body, prāṇa and mind, in the form of Iṣṭaliṅga, Prāṇaliṅga and Bhāvaliṅga respectively.

Prāṇa, the life-energy courses throughout the body through a network of currents/pathways/conduits/channels - **nāḍi**. Although these nāḍis may have correlation with the anatomical structures such as blood vessels, nerves, nerve plexuses, spine, spinal canal, spinal cord and brain, these nāḍis were visualized or perceived by the ancient yōgic seers to be currents of prāṇa in the body, and therefore not to be confused with the physical structures within the body. It is said that these cannot be seen by dissecting the body, but can be visualized during yōgic meditation. Tantric manuals state that there are innumerable nāḍis that traverse the body. Of these, 770 are considered to be of primary importance. There are three main nāḍis. The central/axial current pathway **Suṣumnā** nāḍi courses from the base/root position (mūlasthāna), deep in the pelvis at the level of the lower end of the spine, to the top of the head. The two spiral currents, **Īḍā** (comfort) nāḍi located to the left of Suṣumnā at the base, and **Piṅgaḷā** (tawny) nāḍi located to the right of Suṣumnā at the base, spiral upward around the Suṣumnānāḍi, and end at the level of the

upper part of the nasal passages; each ending on the opposite side of Suṣumnā.

Prāṇa courses through all these nāḍis in a discontinuous fashion, and pools in some areas along the Suṣumnā to form vortices or wheels (**ĉakra**) of energy centers. These centers are also called lotuses (**Padma**). There are seven main ĉakras/lotuses. The lower six lotuses face upwards and have a total of fifty petals connecting fifty Sanskrit letters (akṣaras) in the form of sacred spells. The lotus at the top of the head, faces down, and it has one thousand white petals with the fifty Sanskrit letters going around and around twenty times. The seven lotus centers are listed from the base to the top of the head.

1. **Mūlādhāra:** Mūla is base or root, and adhāra is support or prop. It is located deep in the pelvis at the level of the lower end of the spine. This lotus has four petals representing the four directions of space. The Vīraśaivas believe that **Āĉāraliṅga** has its seat here.
2. **Svādiṣṭhāna:** Sva is self or own. It is located at the level of the genitals. More than any other center, this one relates to desire, especially the sexual urge. It is depicted as a six-petaled lotus whose petals are connected with six afflictive emotions of lust (kāma), anger/aggression (krōdha), greed (lōbha), delusion (mōha), boasting/ego (mada), and envy (mātsarya). **Guruliṅga** is said to be seated here.
3. **Maṇipura:** Maṇi is gem or jewel, and pura is city or town. This ten-petaled lotus is located at the level of the navel (nābhi). It is

connected with the digestive system. **Śivaliṅga** is seated here.

4. **Anāhata:** Anāhata means unstruck. Nāda is the unstruck sound. It is located at the heart. Anāhata is also known as 'heart-lotus' (hṛt-padma, hṛdaya-kamala). Ever since the time of Ṛgvēda, the heart has been considered as the abode of Ātman (Ātmaliṅga, jīvaḥṁsa, individual soul). The heart lotus has twelve petals; the petals are arranged in two layers. The lower eight petals tend in a downward direction; where as the upper four petals tend in the upward direction. **Jaṅgaliṅga** is said to be seated here.
5. **Viśuddhi:** Viśuddhi is purity. It is located at the throat/neck, and is also known as throat-center (kaṅṭha). It is a sixteen-petaled lotus, and is linked with vowel sounds only. **Prasādaliṅga** is said to be seated here.
6. **Ājñā:** This 'command' center is situated in the middle of the head in the brain at the level where biṅdu the kuṅkuma dot is placed on the forehead (the third-eye position on the forehead). The yōgic masters consider this center as a place where mental telepathic communication can take place. This lotus has only two petals which connect to two seed letters (bījākṣara) 'harh' and 'kṣarh' representing the last two letters of the Sanskrit alphabet ha and kṣa. **Mahāliṅga** is said to be seated here.



7. **Sahasrāra:** It is located at the crown of the head. It is also known as Śivapura - Paramaśiva is said to be seated here. **Brahmā-randra**, meaning Brahmic-fissure, is another term used for this lotus because some yōgis believe that at the time of liberation, consciousness leaves the body through this fissure or exit-point, to merge with the Brahman.

Siddhāntaśikhāmaṇi states that the Supreme Brahman which is the Mahāliṅga is found as **Jyotirliṅga** (lustrous Liṅga or Liṅga with light emanating from it) in three places inside the body – in the Mūlādhāra, in the heart lotus Anāhata, and in the brain at the level of the region between the eye-brows which is Ājñā.

**Kuṇḍalini Śakti:** Kuṇḍalini Śakti is the **Divine energy**. Kuṇḍalini means 'she who is coiled'. Śakti lies dormant (coiled-up) in the Mūlādhāra. For explanation purposes it is compared to a resting coiled snake in a lid-closed basket container of a snake charmer. The coils of Kuṇḍalini convey the notion of potentiality. It is the potential type of energy. Kuṇḍalini, the Divine energy, is more powerful than Prāṇa, the life-energy.

All these - Prāṇa, Nāḍi, Ćakra/Padma, and Kuṇḍalini – come into play during the practice of **Prāṇāyāma**, particularly in the Prāṇaliṅgi stage and onwards of Ṣaṣṭhala.

Self-experience is the main characteristic of **Prāṇaliṅgīsthala**. The seeker's vision tends inwards and gets clarified. The body is a temple that enshrines the Divine. The vital-breath which courses through the body, worships the Liṅga with the flower of right

aspiration. The breath, when regulated, emits fragrance which serves as a wreath of flowers for the Liṅga enshrined in the body. The breath regulation, **Prāṇāyāma** which means storing and distribution of vital-energy, is practiced only in its elementary form by the Viraśaivas. It is performed while seated in the simple cross-legged position. It is not deep breathing which may lead to complications. Every aspect of breath-control is to be performed in a relaxed manner, and there should not be any jerky/sudden movement. There are three aspects – inhalation, retention and exhalation. Inhalation is accomplished by taking in a large breath of air smoothly. Retention of the breath is a natural breath-hold, and it should not be forced. If stability of the breath-hold is lost, the breath has to be released. Duration of retention is what is comfortable for that person. Exhalation of the breath is gradual and smooth. During this process of breath regulation, one feels a gradual expansion of the chest, and feels the air reaching all parts of the lungs. This allows full utilization of the life-breath. This process moves life-energy through both Īḍānāḍi and Piṅgaḷānāḍi, from their upper ends, down to the lower ends at the Mūlādhāra. The life-energy then rises up in the Suṣumnānāḍi, and reaches all the way to the top center Sahasrāra/Śivapura. The energy is also distributed throughout the body via the innumerable smaller nāḍis. All this occurs during the phases of inhalation and retention. During the phase of exhalation, the energy courses back in the reverse order. Breath-control directly affects the ascending and descending currents of life-force. In an ordinary individual, the currents exist in a haphazard manner, and pose as obstacles for a free flow of vital-energy. The yōgic meditative practice of self-purification places these currents in a proper order of alignment. When breath regulation becomes

effortless, the person is totally absorbed in its fineness. Prāṇa and mind become intricately connected with each other in Sahasrāra.

The ultimate purpose of Prāṇāyāma is to effect the flow of Prāṇa through the central passage Suṣumnā, which then draws the much more powerful energy of Kuṇḍalini into the Suṣumnā. Before Kuṇḍalini can ascend the axial pathway, all impurities must be removed from the network of nāḍis and padmas. If not, it may result in serious physical and mental imbalances. Therefore, prior to embarking on Prāṇāyāma, one must purge all desires and emotional afflictions such as lust, anger/aggression, greed, infatuation, boasting/ego and envy/jealousy. This purifies the disorderly nature of Svādiṣṭhāna and Maṇipura. Then cultivating kindness, compassion and other such virtues, enhances the purification of heart lotus Anāhata. Breath control then aligns the life-energy currents into proper order, so that Kuṇḍalini can rise up into Suṣumnā unimpeded.

Once activated, Kuṇḍalini forces its way through Suṣumnā, and causes each pool of energy center (padma) to vibrate intensely and fully. It opens up the closed-petaled lotuses (it blooms). As it goes from center to center, it leaves the previous center in a state of "void". At each center there is profound purification; all the centers are increasingly homogenized until they vibrate in unison. The nectar of life is released from the Shasrāra. It is then that Ōm̐ is heard in the state of ecstasy. Śakti "voids" the respective Liṅgas seated at the lotuses, and finally joins Śiva in Śivapura/Sahasrāra. There is synthesis between Dṛṣṭi (vision) and Sṛṣṭi (creation), the vision being the subject and the creation being the object. The inner light pervades the whole universe.

The union of two things is indispensable in every one of the different yōga systems. In Jñāna yōga it is the union of Ātman and Brahman, in Haṭha yōga it is Prāṇa and Apāna, in Layayōga Nāda and Biṇḍu. Similarly, in Śivayōga, the union of Śakti from Mūlādhāra and Śiva abiding in Sahasrāra is accomplished in Anāhata the heart lotus.

In this course of spiritual practice, the model of Prāṇa and Kuṇḍalini assists the practitioner, in the person's inward odyssey from the Many to the One.

**ŌṂ**